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# FOREWORD

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During the long period when I was Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the Victoria and Albert Museum I received, as may easily be imagined, some strange visitors. There were those who had something to sell which had "been m the family for hundreds of years"; there were those who had a drawing "signed" by Leonardo da Vinci; those who looked through magnifying glasses and "found" inscriptions which no other eye could see; those who had produced a number of drawings "in trance", and thought the Museum "might be interested" - and a host of others. I was (I hope) always polite; I listened to their stories and, when they had gone, entered a short memorandum of the interview in a special file which was labelled, succinctly, "Lunatics".

I confess that when Gerald Gardner, having asked to see me, first entered my office, I thought he was shortly going to be included in the same category. With his halo of snow-white hair, his pointed beard, the voluminous pockets from which he produced an astonishing variety of objects, and the long handled geologist's hammer which he used as a walking stick, he seemed, at the very least, a man out of the ordinary. After two minutes' conversation I decided that he would never go into the "Lunatic" file. Indeed, he' was one of the sanest men I ever met.

It is true that he talked of strange things but he did so in a natural and humorous way that soon convinced me that I was in the presence of a man of a scientific and scholarly mind: a learned man, moreover, who had written the standard work on the Malayan kris, and was an anthropologist and archaeologist of distinction.

But there was something else. It was impossible to meet Gerald Gardner without realising that he was a great human being. He radiated friendliness and understanding, In spite of the screaming headlines of the sensational press he was quite plainly and obviously a <u>good</u> man.

That first meeting is now many years ago, and I have seen no reason to change my opinion of his character, or my respect for his learning. Although I do not share all his opinions, he has taught me much. He has helped me in my own researches, and I am proud to think that I may of some little assistance to him in establishing his Museum of Magic. That, and his books, are his lasting memorial, but it is his friendship which those who have been privileged to know him, prize the most.

# 1

## PORTRAIT OF A WITCH

The east wind whirls over the Pennines, across Lancashire, along the line of the Mersey and out over the Irish Sea. In its path, half the way to Ireland, the beaches and dun hillsides of the Isle of Man receive and check it. It cries through the branches of trees, over the bracken-covered hills. In the towns of Man - Douglas and Peel and Castletown - it whisks along narrow streets, beats against squat, four-square houses.

Castletown houses have an air of being miniatures, and look almost as if they had been stunted by the wind; they cluster round the brown cubes of their Norman castle as though for shelter. As a result, most of the town's pleasant streets converge on the square which lies outside the castle walls. One of these is Malew Street. It runs, curving slightly, toward the edge of the little town. Its houses are brightened by restrained colour-washes - grey, or faint pink, or light green. An exception, one of the few, is a low, rough-stone house, built, L-shaped, at the corner of Malew Street and Crofts, a short road that leads into it.

Inside, the difference between this house and its neighbours is even more marked, for the walls of the low rooms, of the narrow staircase, of the huge study upstairs, are covered, encrusted with swords, spears, daggers, pikes; clumsy mediaeval blades and bright Toledo rapiers stand side-by-side with curved Saracen scimitars and snakelike kris from Malaya. This is the harvest of a lifetime's interest. Between dull or gleaming steel, books lean and lie in untidy groups - books on folk-lore, on archaeology, on weapons, on the Far East, on psychical research, on Magic, witchcraft, extra-sensory perception, secret societies.

Upstairs, writing in his study, sits the man who owns collection, who is the master of these varied interests. He is an old man, but there is an energy in his movements, in the thick white hair which stands about his head like an aureole, in the white beard, and in the brightness of his eyes, which speaks both of an undiminished zest for living and an

uncomplicated acceptance of passing time.

He has packed into his lifetime a number of careers, any one of which, for a man with less drive and curiosity, might have been sufficient to retire from with honour. He was an expert on natural rubber by the time he was in his early twenties; he became a pioneer in establishing the extent and complexity of the ancient Malay civilisation; he is the world authority on the kris, and an acknowledged expert on weapons in general; he spent many years in government service; is the author of five books, two of them novels. Since 1952 he has been the owner and curator of the world's only museum of witchcraft and magic.

It is this last which gives the clue to his culminating and crowning interest, for the name of this man is Gerald Brousseau Gardner, and he is modern Europe's foremost witch.

What impression does the old gentleman give to those who know him... and those who do not? People who are under the illusion that witchcraft is the same as black magic and every kind of sorcery, tend to see him as something mysterious, unfathomable. They allow their imagination greater reign.

Thus a journalist in Le Matin: "Dr.Gardner is a grand old man, over 75 years old. He has a triangular face, a beard fierce as if in battle; eyes blue, astonishingly young and sparkling. His entire body is covered with magical tattoos. His right wrist is decorated with a heavy bracelet of copper, indicating his grade in the Order, in which his name is Scire O.T.O. 4/7. At his side he carries a sorcerer's dagger, covered with cabbalistical designs with which he traces the magical circle, whilst he holds in the other the hammer of Thor. I suddenly had the impression of seeing before me an Egyptian Pharaoh, charged with magical power."

Some of the facts are correct: though the tattooing is rather less extensive than our emotional visionary thought, and he wears a Witch Bracelet, not one of the order of Oriental Templars.

Marjorie Proops, in the Daily Mirror, with her more flippant approach gave the woman's point of view: "The witch turned out to be an elderly gentleman named Dr.Gerald Gardner, with wild white hair and mesmeric eyes like blue marbles, and was tattooed all over with cabbalistic signs He wore fancy costume jewellery, also dotted with cabbalistic symbols, on wrists and fingers."

It is only fair to add that this lady gave some space

in her account of this Gardner lecture to some of the debunking of "obscene rites", which other journalists attempt to blame on Witches.

Le Peuple of Brussels brings us back to the Gallic flavour: "The Mephistopheles of Britain, over 77 years of age, has slanting eyes and a pointed beard... this excellent man does not practise Black Magic... and he does not believe in its existence. The only real magic is that which assures happiness for all."

His books on Witchcraft as the survival of an ancient pagan religion common to many peoples of the world have thrown more light upon this strange subject than almost any others published for centuries. He is the very first practicing witch to appear in print, saying what he wants to say. He has been praised, insulted, reverenced, quoted, televised, persecuted and vilified. Yet, despite all the high powered grinding of the twentieth century publicity machines, Gardner, has remained a mysterious and almost aloof figure, holding steadily to his beliefs: beliefs which he finally came across at an age when many men have long sunk into the sullen reiterations of prejudice.

As an anthropologist, he felt that he must publish the greatest discovery of his life, just as he had published other pioneer work on weapons, on Oriental civilisation.

It may be said that his whole life has been a journey towards his beliefs. On the eve of the Second World War, with his initiation into witchcraft, he reached the goal of what, in retrospect, he could feel was a lifelong spiritual journey: a journey towards truth. This was the moment of discovery and revelation from which stem both the controversies which surround him and the calm and certainty with which he faces them.

His museum, ten minutes away from his home, stands in the shadow of an old mill, traditionally associated with local witches. If you see Gardner here, among the relics of three thousand years of The Craft, you will feel that he is a man with a purpose. That purpose is all around him, on the three floors of the museum and in the books which line many of the walls there. You feel that he believes passionately in the religion of witchcraft, that his museum and his own books exist only to aid him in his task of washing a way the ancient taint of evil which surrounds it. Museums to him, have a mission - or should have. In 1944 he gave an address on this subject:

"Museums, called by the Greeks the 'Temples of the Muses', should be places to foster the love of learning and beauty, the love of country and liberty; places which would inspire youth to defend these things."

# 2

## THE EARLY DAYS

We tend to make rapid judgments about families as about people, which on closer acquaintance we often have to modify or change completely. The Gardners of Liverpool are no exception. They were of burgher stock; their association with the town went back for centuries. A Gardner had been on the Liverpool roll of burgesses as far back as 1797, and the family firm of timber merchants founded in 1748 could claim to be one of the oldest, perhaps the most ancient, still thriving in that city. They were throughout evidently a solid, conventional and close knit family, stolidly following an ancient pattern of behaviour. Yet on closer examination there are details of remarkable individualism which might force one to modify this judgment.

To begin with - though this perhaps is not so rare - the family had never forgotten that it was of Scottish ancestry, and they traced their descent still further, to Simon le Gardinor, born in the fourteenth Century. Through three centuries they had remembered the highland country of their grandsires; one wonders if perhaps they still regarded themselves as in some essential sense foreign from those about them. Then there was the long association with the sea which they boasted; nothing unusual about this in a merchant family prominent in a seaport, except that in this case there was about it a hint of piracy, and a far stronger suspicion of smuggling. Certainly, when their old house in Liverpool was demolished, behind one of the chimneys was laid bare a secret passage, made of barrels laid end to end, which led down to the harbour. In the light of this discovery, the family tradition of having one son of the house always in the Customs Service assumes a very piquante aspect.

Then, again there were undoubtedly more than a few romantic characters perhaps unexpected among the branches of such a family tree. Such a one was Alan Gardner, who, joining the Royal Navy in 1755, at the age of thirteen, was commanding his own ship before his twenty-fifth birthday. He fought under Rowe and Rodney in the West Indies, was

with the former on the Glorious First of June and, after that battle was created a baronet. In 1797, as a Vice-Admiral, he lost his temper while parleying with leaders of the Spithead mutiny, lashed out at one of them, was captured after a free-for all and had the noose around his neck, ready for the lynching. "Pull away and be damned to you", he roared out, and - such are English revolutions - the mutineers swung from anger to admiration in a twinkling, released him, and cheered him as he left to board his own ship once again. He thus survived to become an M.P., and later a peer - Baron Gardner of Uttoxeter. In 1807, now an admiral of the blue, he became C.-in-C of the Channel Fleet, the fleet which perhaps above all others deterred Napoleon's invasion threat. In 1809 he died - leaving his descendants to determine upon whom the title really devolved; a claim being taken to the House of Lords, and providing law libraries with a thick book of the arguments.

There was his nephew, one of those fabulous, half-mythical adventurers who can dimly be discerned among the gunsmoke and glitter of Britain's early days in India. In service with Maharaja Holkar, the Mahratta leader, he married a princess, of a family much honoured by the Imperial Moghuls. Later, after he had represented the Mahrattas in talks with the English, Holkar accused him of treachery, and insulted him in open durbar. Gardner, in front of the courtiers and servants, tried to cut the Maharaja down; although he failed, he managed to escape in the confusion. After this there are glimpses of him - strapped to a gun, awaiting execution in one place, leaping down a fifty-foot precipice into a stream in another. Eventually he arrives In a British camp, disguised as a grass-cutter. in 1919 he appears as Gardner of Gardner's Horse, an irregular cavalry unit in the East India Company's service. Twenty years later he dies, after retiring to the NorthWest Provinces. Even the Dictionary of National Biography shows more than a passing interest in him.

There is some evidence, too, for a certain amount of marital unorthodoxy among the family. When the courts were trying to discover who was the true heir to the Gardner barony, a judge commented that one of the difficulties was that "bigamy seems almost hereditary in the Gardner family." Certainly there is more than one case of this sociable misdemeanor recorded in the family annals, though, despite those scandal-hungry days of the early nineteenth century and after, there is no record that anyone was ever

prosecuted for it.

Into this family - conventional, limited, apparently confined within rigid upper-middle-class values, yet with its own secrets and unorthodoxies - Gerald Gardner was born, at Blundellsands on June 13th, 1884. Perhaps his destiny was already indicated by the date of his birth, for thirteen has always been a number of magical significance. There was, however, nothing in the least unexpected either in his surroundings or his immediate family.

His father was a sturdy man, kind and gentle, with nothing of the heavy Victorian paterfamilias about him. He had been made a Justice of the Peace, travelled extensively for the family timber firm, returning gratefully at intervals to his Lancashire home. Gerald's mother, despite a certain comfortable placidity, dominated the house, not merely as manager and mistress, but also with her wide, mainly literary interests. She belonged to the Browning Society, and was of the number who are convinced that Bacon wrote Shakespeare's plays. The house would buzz with bazaars and meetings which Mrs.Gardner would arrange to further her causes.

There were four children, all boys. Of the eldest Gerald remembers little, for he was already at Oxford and very grown-up. When Gerald's memories began the youngest, a year his junior, was Douglas, and though he shared the nursery with him, it is Bob, ten years his senior, whom he remembers best, for Bob was his especial friend, and could command delight by drawing pictures for him; this is a skill Gardner has always respected.

The family lived in a huge Victorian monstrosity of a house, its brickwork, stained glass and dull gables surmounted by an ornamental tower. By the side of the building, at the limit of the garden, there ran a velley, a paradisal jungle for boys and the reason why the house was called "The Glen."

Opposite lived Uncle Joe, his father's brother, a pompous man with a forked beard, who later was to cause his heirs much anxiety because of his wayward but persistent philanthropy. He gave the people of Blundellsands a park; he planted esparto grass to stabilise the sand dunes. Accusing the local curate of Popish tendencies, he joined the Methodists and built them a chapel. Then, quarreling with them too, he returned to the Church-of-England fold by the simple expedient of erecting a new church near the park he had earlier donated. His youngest son, whom everyone called

Kiddy Billy, and whose long golden hair used to fly in the sea breezes, was Gerald Gardner's playmate.

This then was the background to his childhood, the big house with its dark "glen", the gentle father and the busy mother, the friendship of his brothers, the embracing security of a prosperous family business, and the consequent closeness of the family group. All was normal, fitting easily into the pattern of life expected from such people in such a place. Is it possible therefore to look here for the roots of Gerald Gardner's later highly individualistic development? I think it is, and I believe that the clue can be given in one word: asthma.

In the childhood of many men who have later made an individual contribution to life there can be found some reason which has caused them perhaps even forced them, to live a little apart from the group. In Gardner's case, this factor was the asthma which afflicted him then, and which has never in the whole of his long life completely left him. It cut down his active games with the other boys, it caused constant discomfort and occasional acute distress, it forced upon him long hours of immobility. Not that he ever felt that he had been unjustly treated, that Fate had in some fashion victimised him. The asthma was a fact; it had always been with him, and was to be endured without unnecessary complaint. There had never been a time when he could remember life without it; it was as if it were a condition of his existence. But it forced him apart from those about him, and would soon have an even greater influence upon him.

He remembers, dimly, in his earliest nursery days, a forceful nursemaid named Elizabeth, who had care of him and Douglas. Sometime during his third or fourth year, she seemed to fade out, and in her place emerged, erupted almost, a flamboyant, deep-bosomed, blarneying Irish girl in her early twenties. Her name was Josephine McCombie, soon shortened to Com. She was to prove the dominant personality of his childhood. She soon had his parents in the hollow of her hand, and she, doctors and the onset of winter managed to persuade them that abroad, in the sunshine, was the best place for a small, asthmatic boy. Thus, at the age of four, Gerald Gardner began his globe-trotting.

In this fashion the first important deviant influence had become the cause of the second. For on his travels with Com he was to find loneliness and unhappiness, from which the only escape was partially into the noisy adult

world she surrounded herself with, or fully into daydreams and finally books. He was to be surrounded by intrigues and passions incomprehensible for many years, to become inured to ships and carriages and hotel rooms, to accept strange sights and far countries as the commonplaces of his childhood.

The first voyage was in 1888 His mother saw them off at Lime Street. Then, her anxious leave-taking behind them, the clicking of the wheels steady in their ears, they settled for the journey. Gerald asked Com to read Ivanhoe to him - and she refused. This was the first intimation of the new regime: the real Com, but for the five-year old boy the incidents of travel were exciting enough soon to wipe this hint from his conscious mind. In their London hotel there was the surprisingly small room - which without warning began to move! ... the first lift he had ever seen. There was his first electric light, though about the telephones the was almost blase; they had one at "The Glen", and visitors from miles around had arrived to speak through it. Then came the Channel trip, Gerald's first sea-voyage. But he was sick, and saw little. Then the train, high and strange, with everyone speaking French, and later the wonder of eating and sleeping while still in movement. Now Nice, the sunshine, the blue Mediterranean, palm-trees and an atmosphere of opulence. Here he saw the Battle of Flowers, with horse-drays piled high with colourful set-pieces, and people everywhere pelting friends and strangers with the blossoms, coming by in carriages and landaus and firing multi-coloured broadsides. The son of the sober merchant was a little shocked: surely this was a terrible waste of flowers?

This journey set up a new pattern of Lancashire summers, playing on the beach at Blundellsands with his brothers and cousins, and lonely Continental winters with Com. In 1891 there came a change; Com and he went to the Canary Islands. He remembers the brightness of the huge geraniums that grew beside the roads and near their hotel; more vivid is the impression made by the knives which were worn by all the men. Already weapon-obsessed, he bought one with the first pocket-money he was given there - but Com took it away.

Perhaps she was right; he was, after all, only seven. One feels, however, that she would have taken it from him even if there had been no good reason. Whenever they were away from home, one of Com's main interests seemed to he

to deny him whatever he wanted. If he asked for something, it was refused; if he acquired anything, it was taken away. He was not allowed to talk to other children. Too many requests, and he might be beaten.

Com herself, laughing, flirting, showing off her pretty singing voice (or an equally pretty ankle in an open-work black stocking) clearly looked on these trips as mainly manhunts. For her the chief virtue of the small boy in her charge seemed to be his usefulness as bait. If some eligible young man was not responding to the more conventional approaches, young Gerald might be called upon to sit next to him, to engage him in conversation, to make friends with him, and, finally, drag him, willing or reluctant into Com's clutches.

Evening after evening he would sit unnoticed in a corner of her room, while she sang for, and flirted with, her guests. It is perhaps little wonder that later in his life he found the alcoholic conviviality of the white man's tropics small temptation.

They did not stay long in the Canaries. After a few weeks an east wind blew up, and brought with it sand out of Africa. The sand pervaded everything - roads and rocks and meadows, the bright flowers and the small boy's lungs. Com and he sought the first ship out, and found their destination was Accra. In those days, Accra was almost like something out of the Wild West; the men were as rough, and as tough, as the legendary cowboys, as quickly rich and as suddenly dead. They were the Palm Oil Ruffians, and Gold Coast Lambs: traders who had made swift fortunes in the sale of palm oil, and were not averse to spending it as quickly. They roared into Accra with money to burn, and a good time they would have.

For the seven-year-old Accra brought one abiding image - the shining muscled backs of the Negroes bending to the thrust of the paddles in the surf boats which brought the passengers to land, the speed of the boats as they flew over the foam of the breakers, and Com's screams of fear as they whirled toward the beach. In the town itself there was the primitiveness of most of the buildings, contrasted with the impressive strength of the fort, and a continued awareness of the stuffiness of his own clothes as he walked among the near-naked Africans. There was the constant talk of murders, and of the victims nailed to the Crucifixion Tree in Benin.

For Com the place was a small Eden. She took a room,

had a piano installed, within a few days was queening it among the hard-drinking, woman-starved planters. Every night there were gay parties, Com holding her own with the whisky glass and the wit, singing the gay or sentimental songs of the time, while the boy would watch and listen, hating both her and her companions.

This little Saturnalia, however, was soon ended. The pace was perhaps a little too hot; in any case, a scandal seemed to be in the making, and to prevent it local missionaries began to exert pressure. After three weeks Com and Gerald were at sea again.

This time it was in Madeira that they decided to stay. Here there was an immediate contrast to the wildness of the Coast. Madeira was fashionable; mothers and daughters were there in profusion, ranging far in search of a suitable quarry. The Empress of Austria moved graciously about, attended by her dwarf. People were in some awe of him, and said he was very clever, wise, a professor at some university. With hardly less reverence they would pass on the rumour that, in the heat of the afternoon, the Empress on her walks would shed two or three of her petticoats and hand them to the attendant midget, always in his place a few steps behind. Certainly Gerald saw them often, the tiny man, his head low, heavily burdened with what might easily have been the superfluous imperial petticoats.

Also in Madeira was his local squire: a huge, burly man, with a red drinker's face. He would buy hundreds of the local canaries, loved to hear them sing; when drunk he would let them loose, shouting "I'm happy - let them be happy too." His father had had his small eccentricities too. One thing he hated especially, and that was to get his clothes wet. If it rained while he was out, he would take everything off and, stark naked, would sit on his clothes until the downpour was over.

Gerald himself would have liked to get away. Not that he was homesick; home perhaps was too little seen for him to miss it deeply. It was rather that he hated Com, would have been glad to go anywhere to escape her authority. She, as usual, had settled blithely in; screens around the bed, the inevitable piano, Gerald's burgeoning, now reluctantly permitted, weapon collection on the walls; and she was ready to entertain. She began to collect her court; there was Stewart, a bulky six-footer, who had shouting-matches with his wife that the whole hotel might have joined in. He had come from South Africa, and before that had been a

cowboy in Mexico. There was Clifford England. a short, sturdy man who liked his whisky, chain-smoked incessantly, and regretted the youthful days when he had been at sea. Com seemed to bring back a little of their wildness, though he was also one of the few men about her who took an interest in the small boy or talked to him at all.

Young Gardner, for his part. was bored by the continuous party in her room. He would get away and try to add to his accumulation of weapons. One could find Napoleonic cutlasses and bayonets, from those whose grandfathers had fought in those wars. One could find, perhaps, local daggers, or knives imported from Africa. Or he would look for Billy Dewey, an eighty year old with a long white beard, who, a violent Nonconformist, would denounce "these Popishers". He and the old man would have long religious arguments and discussions  a thing unheard-of in his own home.  It have Gerald a taste for speculation of this sort, and first opened up to him the possibility of trying to find his own answers to perennial metaphysical questions. Or he would teach himself to read.

This he accomplished by intelligent use of the old Strand Magazine. He would look at the pictures in it, then plague people to explain the letters above and below them. Later, when he had the letters firmly in his mind, he would practice on the fairy tale published at the back of each issue. At last he realised that he was reading, and rushed triumphantly in to Com, shouting "I can read! I can read!". It must have been a moment as blinding as that which led  to Archimedes' "Eureka."

This is probably the third significant and formative factor in his childhood.  For the self-taught, learning assumes its proper value, measured in the sweat of effort and self-discipline. Gardner made himself a scholar, perhaps he learnt thus early the handicap of ignorance.  He became a scholar, an expert, a novelist, perhaps because he learnt thus early the immense importance of the printed word.

Now he could complete his leisure time in reading. He fell upon books omniverously. He read everything he could find, good or bad, "suitable" or not. Whatever books other guests left behind when they returned to England, he would find on the shelves and read. It was in this way that he came across a book which was to be the first real step in his life's destined journey. It was <u>There Is No Death</u> by Florence Marryat, and purported to explain and prove the

truth of spiritualism. For the small boy, too young for ordered speculation or objectivity, this volume established in the main only one thing that when Com told him that he was bound to go to Hell, she was wrong. There was nothing of Hell in the book; none of the communicating spirits mentioned it. It was, if not definite then at least very likely that Hell did not exist at all.

Winter after winter Com and Gerald returned to Madeira. Little changed in her behaviour towards him; at home, where she was always sweet and obliging, she took care that his parents either never heard or did not believe his stories about their trips abroad. On the island she neglected him as before. More swains were added to her circle, among them a youth not much more than fifteen; his name was David Elkington he had stopped at Madeira while on his way to South Africa, had met Com and fell under her magic spell. He mooned after her in a persistent yet indeterminate way, like the adolescent that he was. Com was bored by him, moved to another hotel to avoid him. He followed, still enslaved. He and Gardner would go for long walks along the beach; David would shoot down seagulls on the wing with his walking-stick gun, an efficient little four-ten. It reminded the young boy of his brother Bob, blazing away off the balcony at home with his Martini-Henry, or Kiddy Billy's elder brothers shooting at marks with their revolvers.

David went on at last to South Africa. The summers in England became more varied, with visits to London and the Isle of Wight. In London, it was the Wallace Collection and the Tower which most drew Gardner; there he could see great racks and cases full of weapons. He remembers too the delight of window - shopping, the streets full of horse-traffic, with an occasional red flag proclaiming a mechanical interloper, and the cabbies hurling insults at the drivers of the few electric-powered taxis. On the Isle of Wight he continued his wild, miscellaneous reading. Here, in the library at Ryde, he found more of Florence Marryat's works, and dates his firm belief in the survival of the spirit from this time. Later, he was to find much to confirm this faith. At the same time he found it increasingly difficult to believe in the accepted concept of God; instead, the new idea of many local gods and spirits seemed to him more acceptable. At the time when these ideas were developing in his mind, he was still only twelve years old.

Faithfully, year after year, they went back to Madeira.

David returned from his South African trip, and settled near the object of his seemingly hopeless love. Nor can it ever have seemed more hopeless, for after years of cynical angling for the admiration of any passing male, Com herself had finally fallen in love. The man who had thus melted her iron heart was a charming dark-haired six-footer called Rowley.

He was general factotum to an extremely rich man, a Mr. Thornton. Thornton was big and fat and sandy-haired, an easily amused man who found Com's passion for his companion a great diversion. When he discovered however that Rowley's increasing devotion to the nurse-maid was beginning to cut into the time and effort he was prepared to spend in Thornton's service, his attitude changed. He moved out of the hotel, taking Rowley with him. Now it was Com's turn to feel the pangs of frustration, to throw pride over board. She followed them, and settled into the same hotel.

The unfortunate young David, in the meantime, had departed for England, and from there to Ceylon, where he had been set up in a tea plantation. Regularly, enormously long letters would arrive from him; these Com would call the "Epistles of David", and throw away unread.

In 1897 Thornton made another move. He took Rowley back to England. In the summer of that year, Com and Gerald followed them. Thornton had a huge house at Richmond, and they visited him and Rowley there several times. But for Gerald there were other interests. The streets of London were full of the soldiers of the Empire and in Hyde Park their tents stood like some huge crop ready for harvest. They were there to celebrate Queen Victoria's Jubilee. This was perhaps the last great jamboree of Empire, the last time that the British really felt themselves, without a stirring of objectivity or doubt to be the masters of all that really mattered in the world. There was in the Capital a sense of excitement, an awareness of the glamour of far places, that was infectious. Every walk that he took with Com brought something new for him to notice. Once, near Marble Arch, an open carriage came by; inside it a tiny dumpy, elderly woman in black sat almost immobile, only her head moving up and down with the regularity of an automaton. There were, indeed. rumours that this persistent nod of acknowledgement was caused by some mechanical device planted in the carriage behind the old lady. Young Gerald stared - but not at Queen Victoria; for him the fascination lay in the plumes and

breast-plates and gleaming horses of the guards who accompanied her.

The vast and staggering procession of the Jubilee he remembers as though it had been the unwinding of a brilliant multi-coloured tape. Bands, banners, potentates, privates; Africans, Gurkhas, Sikhs; the tramping of boots and the jingling of harness; everywhere the glow of flags and the glint of steel; it was the parade to end all parades, an hours-long exposition of the martial variety of the empire on which the sun never set. For Gerald Gardner, fascinated by soldiers and their arms, it was a day and a sight he would never forget.

The next year Com made a decision which was to affect the rest of his life. She had arrived, as might have been expected, at an assessment of her prospects. David had returned to England on leave, and had formally asked her to marry him. She was in her early thirties, he over ten years younger. She was in love with another man, Rowley. But she was in her thirties - her future was indefinite and might well be insecure. Rowley seemed to have no prospects; David was the son of wealthy parents, and the owner of a Ceylon tea plantation to boot.

All that summer she considered with increasing emotion what she should do. There were long, tearful sessions with Rowley, during which the whisky flowed as freely as her tears. She thought, hesitated, approached decision and drew back again. But the economic facts of life are hard; by September she had chosen security. She would go to Ceylon, and she would marry David. The boy who had once bored her with his moon struck devotion had won her in the end.

To this decision, however, another was appended. Gerald was to go with her; he had been her companion for so long. Ceylon was so far away, she would be lonely without him. And it was tropical, always warm; so suitable for an asthmatic. His parents agreed; he could work on the plantation, learn about tea. They would pay for his upkeep while he was there. Gerald himself was nothing loth. Ceylon was the other side of the earth; it was a land of mystery and adventure. Who could tell what fantastic ordeals awaited him? There were jungles in Ceylon, and perhaps wild animals and dangerous natives; wasn't it in the strange and fabled orient?

Com, however, had a breathing-space of nearly two years before she had to make her sacrifice. Life went on

as usual, with nothing but the faint excitement of expectation to give it a new tinge. But at last, in 1900, just over the threshold of the new century, the voyage began. Clifford England, that faithful suitor from the early days in Madeira, came with them as far as Marseilles. They left behind everything that was familiar, their friends and their home. But Gerald Gardner was giving up more than that. He was travelling out of his childhood. It had been a strange time, without most of the things other children had taken for granted, yet which had taught him much. It had taught him to think for himself, to cope with loneliness, to set a proper value upon many of the amusements the majority considered important. Now it was over. He was sixteen and, agog for Asia, was sailing toward manhood.

# 3

## CEYLON

Port Said: a gateway to the Orient, yet with little message for him. Upon a youngster's mind the mixture of races and colours, the crowded streets, the mounted police, all had their impact. Excitement there must indeed be, beyond that slender minaret, somewhere into Africa.... yet that call within him knew that here was not his destiny. Com and he looked at some shops. In one window lay a number of the inevitable filthy pictures. They rushed away.

As the ship passed along the series of connected lakes that formed the Canal, Gardner felt the pull of this ancient land; yet, exerting its delicate influence, finally edging out of his mind all thought of Egypt, was the tug of the true Orient: somewhere that contained a mystery to be experienced rather than thought about. Something that, he was sure, came into the soul in a way little understood by those who merely sought strange sights, or wonder-working conjurers, impressive temples, mysterious priests. This experience, he knew, was to be something unique, some communion which belonged to the very land of Ceylon.

Although he was by now an experienced traveller, he took littie part in the time-consuming activities which the ocean-liner hands considered their very life's blood. The card-players set up their tables and sipped innumberable excise-free pink gins. Deck games, dances, flirting with the fresh faced daughters of colonial civil servants; these delights were offered. But his early training of reflection, contemplation and utter reliance upon his own personality was almost unaffected by the impact. The synthetic glitter of life abroad a ship such as this, he realised, was not as meaningless as cynics tried to make it seem. It had its place, it carried out, dutifully, its effect upon the minds of those who needed it.  One might even take part in group activities, if the mood were there. But he felt this need so little that the reality which was being so energetically forced into being as it was lived aboard ship receded, almost, into another dimension into which he stepped as and when he

felt the interest sufficient and not at any other time.

As the ship moved towards Colombo, some attempt at assessment of young Gardner1s character became possible on the part of those who were in contact with him. Are we to suppose that a delicate, withdrawn youth in his seventeenth year, interested in such things as reincarnation and weapons, taking little part in the wholehearted enthusiasm characteristic of this kind of community, was little noticed, thought a prig? This is the impression that one might too easily gain from going through the subjective aspect of the boy's mind.

And yet we have it upon record that he was very much liked. His sense of humour, always puckish, bridged on many occasions any gap between this thinking and that of those who lived life for the day, the hour, the moment. And, of course, there was the underlying serenity of character which has always marked him out from his fellows. Not a sense that he is always right, or even that all will come out well in the end; but a feeling that there is a certainty, an inevitability in life which most people desire and yet so few can attain. He was sure. Not cocksure, certain of himself in the adolescent manner that might be expected from his age. But sure that time and events were working towards their appointed end in a manner which was necessary - and hence not to be disturbed.

This sensation, which is implanted in the minds of devotees of many Oriental systems of thought, can degenerate, placed under Western speculative study, into a fatalistic, blind belief in Kismet. The nearest that can be approached to capturing the feeling is that one must do his best, seek his vocation, and struggle hard; leaving the rest to the influence which seems to be shaping the course of time as we know it.

Colombo harbour was very still in the dusk, with the dark town lying beyond, beckoning. Then a sudden brilliant blaze of light: "G.O.H." - the illuminated sign of the Grand Oriental Hotel. This was a good indication of what the place was like, a disappointment because it was too European. Something like an English seaside resort, young Gardner thought. Yet nothing could spoil the famous evening after-glow, which seemed to bathe the very mind in a sea of light, light such as one had never felt before, and which gave a flavour of something immense, something eternal, something of the very spirit of Nature herself.

Against this background of mystic thought, Gardner

found himself abruptly jerked into consciousness of the mundane relationships of those near to him. Com and David were soon married in the enchanted isle: she was thirty-six and David twenty-three. Com, Gardner reflected, always made everyone do what she wanted; she and Gerald were here because of her will. To what extent was she an essential part of the development of Gardner's life? Nothing, he reflected, was ever meaningless, and this was rather a time to look forward to what events had in store.

The party went on to Kandy, home of the near legendary kings of ancient times. David had rented a bungalow, while his new one was finished. On the very first night, whilst they sat at dinner in the glorious. warm dusk - all the bedrooms were thoroughly ransacked by thieves. Oriental police methods would proved an interesting study, thought Gardner. There was nothing of the mystic East however, about their solution of the case: "You left the windows open!".

Here, for the first time, Gardner was allowed to be really alone. Something about the jungle, the fertility of vegetation and fauna, spoke to him, gave him a nearness to a reality which he had long sought. He took long walks, getting used to the strangeness and the closeness of it all. Coming home covered with leeches, he was happy; the sense of adventure was here, as well as the idea that he belonged nearer to whatever it was that gave life and might maintain a link with it. At about the same time, a neighbouring bungalow was occupied by Arnold Bennet and Aleister Crowley the magician.

Ladbroke Estate was the name of David's plantation: hills covered with low tea-bushes, surrounded by much higher, jungle-covered slopes, and a good five thousand feet above sea level. The atmosphere was wonderful; but Gardner had to work for the first time in his life, although his father was paying the high rate of £300 a year to keep him. "Creepers", as trainee planters were called, did not usually have to contribute more than fifty pounds.

Gardner may have liked the place, the local people and the loneliness, but he certainly did not like the dreary endlessness of the work. No room for imagination here, no way in which one could bridge the gap between his thinking and that of the Ceylonese. The day started at six in the morning, when the coolie-roll was called and work was assigned to everyone in groups. Then came breakfast, still

in the cool of the morning; and now the chasing up of the workers. There was an hour's break for lunch, then hard at it again until four in the afternoon, when the tea-picking was finished for the day. One more hour passed in supervising the weighing up of the crop. Most of the time it was raining; the hushes were dank and the men worked soaked and stripped to the waist.

The young man spent two years thus: working outside all day, contemplating the immense beauty of the "selling light" of the evenings in particular. This was the time when the best sales of land were made. He thought about the meaning of life, and the possibility of reincarnation as preached by the Buddhist monks of the island; and what the principle behind it all might be. Might there be something there, waiting to be recognised? Somehow he thought that there was, and that the reward for this understanding on his part could be great in terms of spiritual contentment.

By now. holding down a hard job and feeling the independence of manhood, Gardner was away from Com, and seeing her in even clearer perspective: he realised that she was less able to get him to do what she wanted. Much to his amusement, she and David were now quarrelling very frequently. The cause was mainly that David did not approve of her drinking, the habit of many a year, acquired in her restless days. She did not always fight outright on the basis of quantity; for she could devise more than one ruse to give the impression that she was imbibing less than actually was the case.

Gardner was useful with his hands. Com had him carve her a glass-carrying tray. The hole for her tumbler was deeper than that for the others; she could fill the glass more full. This particular idea did not, however, pass undetected for long: and there was a terrific row when David found out the deception.

By 1902, Gerald had had enough of this life. He decided that he could get a paid job, and soon landed one at Nonpareil Estate, below the Horton Plains. This was a deep valley; one cliff gave a drop of two thousand feet, sheer, with the Estate lying in the jungle-covered valley below. Looking from the top, Gardner felt as if he could have dropped a biscuit straight down to where his bungalow lay. In reality, however, the house was some distance from the cliff.

He liked this place, although old Atkinson - the Manager - lived about three miles away, and he did not see

another white face until his parents and an American cousin of his mother's came out to visit him.

Gerald could spend more time in the jungle, in walks and in talking to the people, studying their beliefs and taking a part in their lives. There were leopard about, but they caused no trouble, as there was plenty of game for their food.

The bungalows were wooden framed, covered with mud, all plastered. Across the ceilings of cloth, snakes made indentation as they hunted the rats which always somehow managed to get into the houses, within weeks after the ceilings had been put up.

One day, Gardner was hunting deer in the jungle, when he lost his way. Caught by the sudden sundown, he decided to lie down and sleep. He had always thought of the darkness as being in some way friendly, and was quite used to the jungle and its noises. The coolies who were sent to look for him went a hundred yards or so among the trees and squatted, not even bothering to look for him. They knew that he was at peace in the wildness and among the animals: he would come home in due course. The jungle have him shelter, as it did all who were its friends. Next morning, Gardner found his way back, exhilarated by the experience, unable to understand the uneasiness which the unknown had created in the minds of his well-meaning friends.

Here it was that his parents came to visit him, and to find out what they could about rubber, whose wide-spread cultivation was now being discussed. His father had sustained large losses in South African mines, and wondered whether he could buy some land to get into the rubber business if it had any prospects. Except for flying visits home this was the first time for fourteen years that Gerald had really seen his parents at all continuously.

Jenny Tompkins, the American relative who came with them, gave him a Bible to read, and insisted that he study it: "I read it from cover to cover when I was your age" (she was about fifty then) "and I have never believed a word of it since!".

Atkinson had land, and sold Gardner senior some: Belihuloya. It may not have been known then that at that height, while the trees would grow, they did so very slowly. But all low-lying rubber estates were infested with fever. In any case, the land was bought, and Gerald was chosen to plant it up. It was an extremely difficult tree to rear - everything seemed to attack it, and coolies were employed

to keep the insects off. This, then, was the start of Atlanta Estate. Large quantities of seeds were planted. and Gardner hoped for the best.

There was a good deal of social life at Balagoda, near Atlanta, with socials of sorts and tennis tournaments. There was a resthouse there too, and a varied population. Gardner, with his sense of communion with greater things better developed, could now enter more freely into that side of life, and cut quite a dash as a pioneer and jungle-wise he-man. His knowledge of weapons and hunting, and his feel for the creatures of the wild established him as a personality within the range of understanding of his contemporaries. There were some real characters among them.

One of the leaders of the social whirl was Old Man Holland, a writer and singer of spirited songs. He was very old and thin, hollow-chested and rather consumptive looking: hut he was really tough. He could drink more than anyone else, shout louder, take the initiative - the archetype of a leader in those parts.

Another local character was Smale. Half German and very much the Prussian type, he knew how to enjoy himself. He had a big laugh, drank beer when others were gulping whisky - but tended to be the one to stop a fight rather than start one.

Colonial, almost frontier venturers, without much time for things beyond their ordinary ken, these men yet had their merits. They lived a hard life, and looked the part. There was very little dress sense of the more impeccable tupe. Everyone wore khaki, ragged at that, nobody minded what he or anyone else looked like: they were here to do a job, and were doing it. This in itself was refreshing. Life could be hard. The pay was only £16 a month - but there were the compensations of a free bungalow, a houseboy for the domestic work. And whisky was only half a crown a bottle. The intrepidity which is such a marked feature of Gardner today first saw its dogged birth in the delicate youth who went to South-East Asia in 1900 and made himself into a tough man among tough men. To all intents and purposes he was the successful planter of the far-flung outposts of the Empire holding down a hard job and accepted to be as rugged as the rest of them. In his heart remained the streak of mysticism which was to guide and shape him, whatever others might think about the reasons for his actions. The intuition, the feeling in the solar plexus which piloted his decisions, was something

that he kept very much to himself. It gave him the guidance, he felt, to choose the experiences which he needed.

By now his interest in anthropology was strongly developed. The thinking of the people, their belief in the supernatural, and the consequences of that thinking, fascinated him. When he found the interplay of these factors with social institutions, he was more than delighted. Thus he followed the great railway tunnel fiasco with thorough absorption.

In the early years of the century. a large railway tunnel collapsed, and would have to be repaired. According to a widespread belief among the Ceylonese, the only way to hold a building really firm was to place a few human heads in the foundations: a way of thinking which is common to communities in many other parts of the world. The word went around that as this would be a large undertaking, many heads would undoubtedly be needed. Where were they to come from? It seemed more than likely that the British tunnel builders would seek these locally: nobody would be safe - headhunting was to be expected.

Afghan (actually Pathans from the old North-West Frontier) moneylenders toured the whole country, lending a few rupees here and there at exorbitant rates of interest: whether the peasant wanted to borrow or not. These gigantic warrior types were known and feared for their ferocity, and it seemed probable to the gentle Ceylonese that they were the most likely men for the head-hunting job - acting, of course, on behalf of the Government. Did they not carry big sticks, sometimes battle-axes, threaten to chop off the head of a defaulter as soon as look at him?

Now rumours circulated that the Afghans were actually at work. Headless bodies, it was averred, had been found; the Government was paying the Pathans so much a head. Everyone knew how much they liked killing; and as for money, in exchange for exercising their traditional bloodlust. Something must be done, for 20,000 heads were being mentioned ...

Then the moneylenders themselves began to disappear. A watchman posted at each village gave warning of the giant's approach. The whole populace turned out, seized the Afridi, Waziri, Mobmand or what have you, and sent him to his Paradise, burying the body quickly where the jungle covered it.

When the police investigated the cry went up: "The Pathans must have been working for the Government. Why, otherwise should the police (who also serve the Govern-

ment) be interested?" The call went out to kill all Indians: Ceylonese considered their would-be murderers as of that nationality, little realising that in continental India itself millions of peasants were just as terrified of the ugly aliens from beyond the ranges of the Hindu Kush, the Hindu-Killer mountains.

A mob, armed with shotguns and numerous as the teeming flies of the city's bazaars, was soon on its way to Columbo, rallied by agitators, and itself as terrified in attack as the citizens were in preparing for flight.

There were no reliable troops available. The police were Sinhalese, who were as panic-stricken as  their civilian opponents. Half a dozen European volunteers with a Maxim gun were placed to guard a bridge by which the howling mass was fast approaching. The attackers refused to stop, calling upon tke British to stand aside, to let them through. If there were no Pathan moneylenders in Colombo, there plenty of prosperous Indian shops.

The officer, under orders to prevent the interlopers getting into the city, where lives and property lay wide open to their attentions, opened fire. Several rioters were killed; the city was undoubtedly saved. The Liberal Government then in power acted in accordance with its conscience - and the British officer was sacked, sent home in disgrace.

This whole incident, Gardner observed, gave an excellent example of everyone acting according to his lights. Under no circumstances could anything else have happened. Priceless opportunities for sociological study occur in places and at times when stress is applied to groups or individuals, with emotion magnifying the inevitable results of social conditioning.

When the scare died down (after the tunnel was rebuilt) the moneylenders returned to their own ways; and the Ceylonese to their borrowing habits, undisturbed by the memory of the peculiar relationship which had existed between them in the time of terror.

Gardner made a close study of moneylenders of a more organised, if no more relentless type; for they were an integral part of the social system of the country. The Indian Chetties thrive wherever Tamil coolies are to be found. Forming a distinct caste the Chetties are invariably fat, and have such an inbuilt feeling for money that they are emotionally disturbed or elevated by the way in which it employed: whoever is using it.

Given to enormous eating, the story goes that they have a string tied loosely around their stomachs,  which

tightens when they have had enough to eat. They stop eating when it snaps. The Chetty usually lends money on good security such as land, and every large village has a Chetty's house, where he lives surrounded by his debtors. Nowadays nicknamed the "Chetty Welfare State" is the system whereby nobody who owes a Chetty money may be allowed to be in want. If a man loses his job, the Chetty will help him to find another one; for he must be enabled to keep up his payments. To keep him in a steady earning bracket, if he has no land, very powerful strings are sometimes pulled.

Even the moral attitude of the debtor is carefully looked into. If he seems to be spending a disproportionate amount of his money on women, a wife or wives are provided for him. Moneylending to the Chetty is a career which he takes seriously and he works at it all the time. When those indebted to Chetties are getting better jobs than people who are debtfree, the question is often asked as to whether it is not better to borrow something just as an insurance policy against unemployment.

Why does almost every Tamil coolie from India owe a Chetty money? First, there is the "keeping up with the Joneses" which means that feasts must be celebrated with extreme lavishness. A wedding will cost the equivalent of several month's pay: and it must be just so. The Chetty will always oblige. But from that day on, the coolie is working for the moneylender: and everyone else who is in debt to that usurer will be an eye, a hand and a tongue to keep the bond in place.

At every estate payday Gardner saw, the Chetty will be there. No matter how hard the manager tries to keep him away, a good proportion of the money earned will go into his pockets. There seems no way to stop this system. Even though the interest rates are high, the Tamil will always borrow. If he has spare cash, he will spend it in a reckless spree in the nearest town. After payday - Sunday - he will be on the Chetty's doorstep, and raise a few rupees to buy rice for the rest of the week.

But the Chetties are also bankers. Hard-working peasants who practise thrift and keep out of heavy debt somehow, will in three to four years save enough to send, through the Chetty, money home to India to buy their own piece of land. The house is built, the farm rice-crop or cotton-plantation, started by relatives. Within another year or so the family will return, as landed proprietors, with

working capital.

Chetties seldom lend money to Europeans; the average planter is too poor to give good security. His only asset is his job, and that has little permanence. If he is in debt, the employment can easily be in jeopardy. In the old India, many a Sahib, civilian or military, was in the hands of the money-lending Banya. Ceylon, however, found that it was easier to maintain the discipline without which the Chetty might be able to control an estate manager and thus in the end by running a whole estate.

It was often said in Ceylon that some Visiting Agents, who inspected Estates on behalf of the companies which owned them, were put into this lucrative job through capital supplied by moneylenders. What easier than to raise money from the Chetty, buy a controlling interest in the company vote oneself into the position of V.A., and then sell the shares - repaying the Chetty with interest? It was believed that this had been done more than once; and that it could be done again and again by one man.

Whether this belief was due to the fact that V.A.s were greatly feared for their power to have a man fired, and knew their power, is uncertain. Such an Agent toured the tea and rubber estates - quarterly, six-monthly or yearly, to make his report.

Old Man Holland, that redoubtable he-man and poet, composed some inspired lines on the subject of the symbol who was hated and feared by young and old among the planters in that tight community, partly in Tamil, which gives a unique picture of the feeling which a V.A. aroused:

"If you can't add up the check roll
and you stumble over rice,
Now, all you gay young planters,
you just take my advice:
Suck up to the Agents, and the
Agents they will say -
Oh, he'll never make a Planter -
so we'll make him a V.A.!"

The chorus is a little more telling. To the incessant beat of a tomtom, it works up to what might almost be considered a group-curse:

"For the V.A, is a B.... r
and a man we all detest.
He's a sina-sadi (low caste) B....r,
if you take him at his best;
We give him of the best we have and

stand him drinks was well:
But still he is a B.... r and we
wish he was in Hell!"

The planter had to get his place in the best possible order for the Agent; give him food and drink, feed his horse and groom, and generally behave as if a distinguished man was in the house.

The V.A. songs of Old Man Holland have long survived their composer. Gardner, many years later, heard one of them sung in Bournemouth by a lady who thought that they were exotic native airs, and had no idea of their meaning. Tamil was not her strong point. As planter's songs, Gardner the folklorist felt that they should be preserved: for were they not an important part of the life of the times? Certainly they were inevitably sung whenever the occasion arose. Even in hotels and resthouses, when a V.A. walked in, the tune, if not the words, of the V.A. Chorus would break out - but only from the throats of the planters whom these terrors did not visit. Sometimes, Gardner remembers with pleasure, the V.A. would get quite annoyed, for they knew the words, too.

In 1905, Gerald returned to England with his father, who had come to have a look at the Estate. The rubber would take some time to grow, so a home visit was indicated. The contrast to what he had been used to showed in some measure the extent of the change which had come over him. England seemed so tame and respectable, with very little scope for a he-man.

It was with few regrets that Gerald returned to Ceylon when his leave was over. His father was not too well off, he had gathered that during his home stay, and so he took various jobs where a man of experience would be valuable, returning to Atlanta from time to time. The rubber was growing well enough, but very slowly.

Gardner was in the Planters' Rifle Corps, and used to go to camp in the lush green freshness of Ditalawa, where the Boer prisoners were kept, while he was manager of a tea estate. He had seen the Boers, enormous men who lived in eighty-foot huts, with Maxims posted on hills all around. All had been polite, he recalled, but perhaps that was because Com had been with him at that time. At one time there was a tremendous camp break-out, and the ringleaders were sent elsewhere. The available handcuffs were not big enough for their massive wrists, and new ones had to be forged.

The Rifle Corps used to march past to a tune which authorities fondly imagined to be "A Life on the Ocean Wave" but the volunteers knew that it was really one of the immortal songs by Old Man Holland:

"A life on a tea estate,
Is a life that is dull and drear;
The same monotonous round,
The whole of the live-long year..."

The rest is unprintable, but it describes how the planters did in fact have some pleasures.

Until 1908, Gardner worked as hard as anyone on the tea estate in the Kelina Valley. It was dull and lonely for those who had no inner reserves to fall back upon. He caught up with his reading in anthropology and comparative religion, making copious notes of local customs and reflecting about the destiny of mankind.

Breaks did come: but they tended to be for the purpose of going to Colombo, to see the Agent's "where there usually usually a row about something or other". His researches led him to suppose, and some intuition bore it out, that there was a contact between his inner call and the craft of the Freemasons; and he managed to get some weekend leave to attend their lodge, the Sphinx, 113, I.C. in Colombo. Attending lodge meetings, however, was at some considerable sacrifice of personal comfort. It meant walking fifteen miles to the railway station, with a coolie carrying his tin box - to keep out the rain - containing his dress clothes. In those times, a Mason had to be properly prepared indeed for the meetings.

Once, when he had arrived in the Capital and started to dress in the famous C.O.H. Hotel, he found that his boy had packed brown shoes with the evening suit. All the shops were shut. They had to be blacked, and ruined well and truly before Gerald could show himself to the assembly. He has ways had a very soft spot for the Craft, and nowadays feels that there are close similarities in the craft of the Witches; in fact he goes so far as to say that Witchcraft is the original Lodge.

Other relaxations there were few, though they did include the singing of yet another of the prolific Old Man Holland's songs; this time dedicated to the Public Works Department Engineer - a character whose inefficiency was considered equalled only by the extent to which his job was a sinecure:

"Low through the districts, like lightning he gleams,
Cursing the natives and damning the streams;
Fudging an Estimate, signing a Plan;
Thus you will find the P.W.D. Man.

He'll build you fine offices - give him ten years;
He'll build you fine houses - forgetting the stairs!
And lest the Last Trumpet your feelings should shock -
He'll build you fine cemetaries: upon the bed-rock!

His barrages look so awfully grand;
Just rough stone, no mortar, laid flat on the sand;
Though built to withstand a Niagara's power -
They scurry down stream at the very first shower!

Do not cavil at him - see the hours he keeps;
Look at him in his office - how soundly he sleeps.
With his feet on an Estimate, his head on a Plan:
Quietly we will leave our P.W.D. Man!"

There was, of course, tea and a little rubber as well, which had been planted as a windbreak. Gardner experimented with a method of processing it of his own devising, rolling it on the kitchen table and trying, without success, to dry it in the sun. This was before the system of smoking rubber was discovered. He did, in fact, have several theoretical lines of approach to the problem, but before he could carry out many more tests, other matters intervened.

His father found that he could not keep up the payments on Atlanta, and sold if for about what he had spent on it. This was a great relief, for the latter part of the Ceylon chapter, in spite of its many interests, had been a decided strain. For one thing, it had prevented him from journeying farther afield: to Malayasia, where he felt lay the next stage in his development.

He answered an advertisement for planters in Borneo; a land of headhunters, unknown tribes, really thick jungle - and more.

# 4

## THE HEADHUNTERS

Singapore, after the isolation of his life in Ceylon, seemed to burst about Gardner like an explosion. From the moment that he went ashore from the German ship that had brought him from Colombo he felt himself caught up and buffeted by the speed, the noise, the crowds. This was even then a city of many races, of wealth and bustling commerce, of tremendous and continuing expansion. Chinese, Malays, Indians, Europeans, all were engaged in a battle to keep and extend their footholds on this small but vitally important island. As he passed the statue of Sir Stamford Raffles, Gardner wondered whether that great man even with his unusual foresight, had ever envisaged that his controversial purchase would one day hold so vivid and clamorous a scene.

He was quite happy to get out of the hot, crowded streets and into the cool and punctilious atmosphere of the Raffles Hotel. The next morning, he began to enquire about the ship to take him to Borneo. A rickshaw carried him down to the harbour, and the small vessel was pointed out to him.

"You'd better get aboard at once", he was told, "It might leave before nightfall".

With some excitement Gardner took this advice. Installed in his tiny cabin, he began to consider his future. At last, he felt, he was on his way. At last he was going into the real wilderness. Borneo - the word itself evoked images of thick jungle, lurking savages, mountains, rivers, solitude .. it held all the indescribable fascination of the far-distant, the unknown. Evening fell, darkness made a frame for the lights of Singapore, untll one by one they went out. Then night itself faded; dawn came up, lighting the slow, heavy waves of the famous harbour. The ship was still where she had been. Morning wore on, lunchtime came - still there was no sign of imminent departure. Gardner, puzzled, walked up and down the deck. Then, impatient, he began to make increas-

ingly sharp enquiries. At last he got the information he wanted - the ship was not due to leave for another two days.

Soon, however, there came distraction for him; with bag and baggage preceding him a fellow-passenger arrived. He was a tall, broad-shouldered man in a white Straits uniform; above it a sunburnt, craggy, bruiser's face. Despite the toughness of his appearance Gardner soon found him to be an exceptionally pleasant companion, and in the gloaming they set out together to wander through the narrow lanes and crowded streets of the city. Toward the end of the evening, Gardner made a suggestion, why shouldn't they go down Malay Street, one of the most famous "red-light" areas in the East? His new friend declined politely. Gardner pressed: it would be an experience, it was after all, one of the sights of the town, there was nothing wrong in just having a look. The other was adamant, and regretfully Gardner allowed himself to be led back to the ship. The following morning the Bishop of Borneo came aboard - and Gardner realised that his boon companion of the night before had been His Grace's Chaplain!

At last, the holds full, the passengers aboard, the little vessel nosed out of Singapore harbour and set her course for Borneo. Their first landfall was Lebuan, a small island off Borneo. Gardner stared at it with excitement: if the whole country was like this he decided, he was going to have a happy future. The town was ramshackle but attractive, its old colonial houses giving it a certain dignity, and its climate, tropical but cooled by the surrounding sea, was delightful. Jesselton, therefore, the capital of Borneo, came as a severe disappointment. It looked as though it had been put together out of old soap-boxes, and seemed tiny a huddle of bungalows, adozen shops, a small harbour. But beyond it he could see, rolling dark-green and blue of the horizon, the jungle. That was the wilderness he had come to Borneo for; perhaps he was not to be disappointed.

As Gardner stood on deck, gazing at the small town, a man's voice intruded into his speculations.

"You Gardner?"

Gardner agreed that he was, and the other somewhat roughly identified himself as Graham, the manager of Mawo Estate, where Gardner was to work. They shook hands, and then Graham nodded.

"The boy'll see to your bags", he said. "He'll go with you to Membuket. Get there as soon as you can". He turned on his heel, walked down the gangplank and

into the mysteries of the town. Gardner gazed after him, at first bewildered. But he was no stranger to the brusqueness of men who had been a long time in the solitude of lonely plantations; he told himself that it had been no more than the natural impatience of a man, long deprived of a social life, to get to the nearest saloon. The boy had appeared and was now collecting the baggage; soon Gardner was following him ashore and into his new life.

Mawo Estate, Membuket, was about fifty miles from Jesselton. Gardner's first sight of it was of a small, palm-leaf bungalow standing in a few acres of cleared ground. From this point, the jungle seemed to rise, thick and silent, on every side. He felt a moment of elation: this was what he had come all this way to find. This was the true wilderness.

Life on this estate, however, did not go smoothly. The prime cause of the difficulties was Graham. He was a man who had first come out to Borneo as a valet, had then done various odd jobs, drifted into tobacco planting with the Dutch, and from there had moved into rubber in British North Borneo. He had recently married a small, blonde lady, and she, it seemed, had been trying to 'improve' him. Certainly the manager spoke with an accent which, with considerable application, he fought to keep genteel. Despite his best efforts an 'h' would occasionally fall, and he would then go back again and again to try and retrieve it. While this was happening, there had to be no laughter, nor a reaction of any kind; one kept a wooden face until the manager had arrived at some pronounciation satisfactory to himself.

There was almost immediate friction between him and Gardner. He expected the new man to take his hat off when they met, and to make other similar gestures of a forced respect. This was a custom he had learned while working among the Dutch. Gardner, used to the easier disciplines of British plantations, refused to do as Graham wanted. Then there was argument about the methods of work and the layout on the plantation; Graham, again under the influence of his Dutch conditioning and tobacco ways, wanted the whole estate marked off into ten acre lots, and wanted all the land cleared, not just those strips where the rubber trees were to be planted. Gardner did not feel happy with the superfluous regularity of such methods, and gave his experiences in Ceylon to support his arguments. Graham drew on his quite different training; the two men repeatedly clashed. Much of the work which Graham's plans made necessary devolved upon the estate surveyor. This man, Hofmann was a

Eurasian, officially classed as a "native". Gardner did not much like the subservient position into which this description put him.

Life on Mawo was enlivened soon after Gardner's arrival by a fresh recruit - Dickie, a Scotsman taken on as accountant. Like many of the men who went East - and like so many others who stayed in the tropics too long - Dickie was an alcoholic. By some mischance he had married a woman who was what he called a "teetotal fanatic". Urged on by her, and by his family, he had repeatedly taken the then fashionable Keeley Cure. This consisted of letting the addict have as much whisky as he wanted - hut whisky mixed with something intended to make the patient sick. Dickie, who had never before been anywhere where he could get as much drink as he wanted, poured down the medicated spirits with relish. One sanatorium after another seeing the whisky bills rising, had returned him to his family as "cured". There had then been a short but desperate search on their part to find another institution where the same process had always begun again.

In the end, Dickie said, his wife had arranged to send him to a mental hospital. Apparently amenable, Dickie stipulated only that he might remain free until the date of a certain football match which, he said, he badly wanted to see. The concession was made and during this respite Dickie had answered each and every suitable advertisement and had finally found this post in Borneo. One night, near the date fixed for his incarceration, he had crept out of his home burdened by no more than a clean collar and a tooth-brush, and taken the train to London Docks and found refuge on board ship. Soon he was on the high seas.

His lack of money he had ingeniously circumvented. At each port he had gone ashore, shown his letter of appointment, on the strength of it bought numerous articles on credit, and had then sold them at what he said had been a handsome profit. This was the man who had now come to swell Graham's staff.

The manager tried his best to keep Dickie off the bottle. Orders were given that no shop was to sell him drink, but with the application of the true alcoholic he still managed to get hold of some. At last, Graham and his wife could stand it no longer - and sent Dickie to live with the teetotal Gardner.

The second night that Dickie was with him, Gardner suggested that the Scot had perhaps had enough whisky for

the evening. In a second the other broadly-built and heavy, was across the room. He clutched Gardner's throat, then pushed, and fell on top of him. With a weight of sixteen stones squeezing the breath out of him, Gardner began to twist and squirm to get away. Dickie was now throttling him with his immense paws. Gardner thrust the heel of his left hand under Dickie's chin, pushing his head back, struck out with his right fist at his Adam's Apple. The other's hold weakened, and in a moment their positions were reversed. Gardner, with a leg-lock on the big Scot, was in a position to lay down conditions.

"You're not getting up from here unless you behave - now and later".

Dickie nodded his surrender, and slowly the two men got to their feet. Dickie flopped into an armchair, wiped his forehead with his hand, then demanded more whisky. Afterwards, he quite often attacked one or other of the men who lived on, or were visiting. the estate - but never again troubled Gardner. Once, when he was drunk, some of the men tried to set him on to Gardner. Dickie, his indiscriminate fury tapped in this way, began to blunder across the room to where Gardner waited for him. Then he came abruptly to a halt.

'I'm not going to hit Gardner", he said, plaintively, He hurts."

Gardner developed quite an interest in the problem of people who get 'fighting drunk' after this incident. Slow to anger himself, he was almost always a spectator in the brawls which were inevitable in the Colonial society of the Far East.

He concluded that "If an aggressive drunkard is hurt while in his cups, he will never again go for the man who punishes him; Dickie was the first of this type I have seen, and many subsequent cases bore out this observation".

Truculent drinkers are often said to have post-alcoholic amnesia. Be that as it may, why do they fight at all. At least in some cases, drunken people know that they will not be punished for what they do under the influence of alcohol - and take advantage of this.

If there was no more trouble from Dickie in terms of direct physical violence, there was plenty caused by his lust for drink. He would beg for it, demand it, almost weep for it life was so awful, he would say, and one little peg could make it seem so good - only one, just to make the world seem all right, just to let him be happy. Gardner,

mindful of Graham's orders that Dickie's alcoholism was not to be pandered to, would at first refuse, and then, pretending to give in, hand Dickie a glass of whisky laced with quinine. But adulterated whisky was nothing new to Dickie - he drank it easily, without a sign; he seemed to be able to filter the alcohol from the other contents of his glass.

Then came a period when all drink was refused Dickie. He could get it nowhere, no one would give him even a "snifter". Gardner noticed that, every time Dickie had had a bath he would seem considerably happier. For a while he wondered why this should be so; could this be the way to a new type of cure? Closer investigation destroyed the hope; Dickie had got one of the servants to bring him gin from some distance away - the man had to swim a river on his route - then he had the spirits mixed jugful for jugful with his bath-water!

His later history tailed off in a predictably tragic manner. Many months after Gardner had left Borneo, he had the breakdown in health and mind that had long been expected. He was sent from Mawo, to Jesselton, and thence to hospital in Singapore. The authorities there decided to ship him back to England, to the tender care of his family. The day after his return, he committed suicide. As a kind of marginal comment on his career, Graham discovered that he had opened, emptied and carefully re-sealed, all the bottles of chiorodine and pain-killers that had been kept on the plantation in case of emergency.

As Gardner began to settle down at Mawo, the curiosity which he always felt about his surroundings and fellow-creatures began to assert itself again. He began first by studying the jungle and some of the creatures that inhabited it.

Unlike the monkey - more like many a human being, in fact - the orang utan seemed to spend much of his time doing absolutely nothing. Sitting for hours on end upon a branch, the creature would gaze fixedly at the ground, as if absorbed in thought - and not very pleasant thought, either, to judge by his expression. Gardner noted, however, that despite the ferocity of his appearance, the orang utan seemed to be a vegetarian, and a fairly faddy one at that, sampling and rejecting much more than he ate.

In a fight, however, the orang utan can more than hold his own. Dyaks have told Gardner that in contests with the crocodile, at those times when the orang is searching for his food on river banks, it is the Man of the Woods who is invariably the victor. Certainly the Dyaks themselves, when

hunting one, only approached it with the utmost caution.

They would kill the beast partly for food, and partly because, when aroused byhunger from its lethargy, it would destroy whole crops of breadfruit. They would shoot it with poisoned arrows, but despite their caution a hunter would occasionally find himself wrapped in the animal's enormously long arms, and would feel its ferocious teeth in his flesh. Other anthropoids inhabited the forests: the solitary gibbon with its long-armed acrobatics and sad, wailing cry, and the kahau, a long-nosed monkey which lives near the banks of lakes and rivers. The latter Gardner has often watched making prodigious leaps of fifteen feet or more from branch to branch, its chestnut and yellow fur gleaming against the dark green gloom of the jungle.

Sometimes, too, there were glimpses to be caught of the black bear, climbing toward the succulent top twigs of the trees, of the herds of deer which roamed the less heavily-wooded valleys (eating the flesh of one species of these, the Dyaks warned, would produce a bad skin rash), or of the porcupine again a local species. which, so the natives said, was the only animal which could feed of the Upas tree, from whose sap the Dyaks and Malays distilled their fatal weapon poisons. Between the trees flew and fluttered the vivid colours of the butterflies, while, near the rivers one might be startled by the hurtling body of one of the island's frogs.

But it was people that interested Gardner more. He loved the jungle, its colour, its silence, its animals and insects, but most of all he wanted to meet and gain the friendship of the men who lived nearly all their lives within its heavy, columnar gloom - the Dyaks.

All that Gardner knew about these people when he landed at Jesseltown was what most strangers had heard about them: that they were headhunters, killing for the joy and prestige of adding to a grisly collection of trophies. Now he decided he would get to know them and their ways better.

He found them an alert, athletic people, lighter in colour than the Malays who had settled on the coast, with jet black hair. Despite their equivocal attitude to the shedding of human blood, he found that, in personal relations, they had a high standard of morality. They seemed lively and talkative people, not suspicious of the stranger, and with a strong sense of humour and play which found expression in all sorts of games and contests. All dressed in loincloths, but tribes were recognised by the head-dress they wore -

the most spectacularly dressed were the Saghai Dyaks, who would wear leopard skins, and head-dresses of monkey pelt and the plumes of pheasants. Most of these people, like the majority of primitive races, were fond of decoration, metal ornaments, or necklaces of human or animal teeth, while many of the tribes had long traditions of complex tattoo designs.

With his lifelong interest in the subject, Gardner was fascinated by their weapons. Most of them still stuck at that time to the characteristic sword, shield and spear of their race, all native made. The shield was wooden. However, their most deadly weapon was the blowpipe. This, called the sumpitan, was a slender tube, about seven feet long. It would project a nine-inch dart, usually dipped in the poison of the Upas tree. Gardner was extremely impressed by the accuracy with which they used these.

Headhunting, when he was in Borneo, had already, officially, declined into unimportance. As Gardner got to know the Dyaks better, however, he discovered that what is out of sight is certainly not out of mind. They had not for gotten their traditions, nor destroyed their trophies - the latter merely lay hidden now, usually in a convenient hollow tree.

The head-collecting custom started because, like savages elsewhere, no young Dyak could get married without producing proof of his warlike prowess. This proof he would supply by showing the girl of his choice, and her family, the head of some enemy - and in the days of intertribal warfare, enemies were not far to seek. The head would then be preserved, tufts of grass pushed into the ears and cowrie shells into the eye-sockets. It would then be hung in a place of honour in the warrior's hut, to be joined at intervals (if the man was both ambitious and proficient) by others cropped from the necks of rival tribesmen. On fete days and great occasions, they would be taken down, and the man would sling the bunch over his shoulder or tie them to his waist before joining some wild celebratory dance - just as, at some social function in the West, a man might wear his military decorations.

Hunting, building their elaborate huts, and, for those near rivers or the sea, constructing their prahu canoes (often more than fifty feet long) took up most of their time. They had not fully reached the stage of crop cultivation, and many affected rather to despise those people who had. Nevertheless, under tuition they often proved themselves to be not

merely industrious but extremely skilled as well, and with the example of the Malays before them, the ideas of agriculture and the ownership of land were slowly gaining ground. Indeed, Gardner found that many of the virtues imagined by the Europeans to be the prerogative of the "Christian" life were to be discovered in the Kampongs of the Dyaks - not least among them the fact that in many tribes they marry only one wife and remain studiously faithful to her for a lifetime.

They tended toward the worship of a multitude of small and local deities - a feeling with which Gardner regarded himself as instinctively in sympathy.

Towards matters occult their behaviour was, for a European used to either the laughter or the hushed whispers common in the West, extraordinarily refreshing. There was no question for them that magic might or might not work. It did. There were powers which could be evoked or propitiated. The spirit survived physical death. They took for granted that the limits of the human world were only limits of ordinary human vision - the world itself extended unimaginably further. They accepted without question the continued existence of those who had lived with or before them, and the reality of those who had the power to summon and control their spirits.

Gardner himself frequently visited the seances which were held in kampongs close to Mawo Estate. He had come to know the family of a girl who often served as medium at these meetings, and was therefore allowed to accompany her on many occasions. The pawang, witch doctor - in his middle thirties, of the Tutong tribe, was a relation of the girl's mother's by a previous marriage. He was a property-owner of some substance. The hut was a typical one, roughly about ten feet high. The walls were of plaited palm-leaves, and the floor was composed of slats of split palm, with half-inch spear at any intruder discovered lurking below the building. Only the places reserved for setting and sleeping were solidly planked - this to prevent the possible intruder making his own ~ spear-thrust in the reverse direction. On the walls there were the man's tools and weapons, but nothing purely decorative. By the time Gardner arrived, there would usually be a small crowd, mostly all of the medium's family, already gathered. At one end the pawang would be seated and in the air would be the scent of gum incense and of bunga melor - jasmine.

At first, as at any other family gathering, there would be an exchange of greetings and gossip. Then, the pawang would begin a monotonous chant, and continue this for perhaps an hour. When he thought the time had come, he would make the girl, still dressed as usual in her sarong and white kabaya jacket, lie down on a special mat. Under her head there would be a bantal, a square, native pillow, which, Gardner noted, had been decorated with a fringe of silver threads.

The pawang would then squat beside her and, still talking and chanting in a low voice, would make a few  passes above her, hands moving from her head to her feet. If she did not go into trance immediately, he would repeat these gestures until she had; there was not about these movements, however, the steadiness and regularity associated with hypnotist's passes in Europe. After a while, the pawang would touch her; if she did not move, he would begin his questions.

Gardner, the first time he was present at one of these seances, was particularly surprised by the medium's speech. Her voice when in trance would alter completely, becoming very low, and at the same time rather squeaky.  This, he was told, was the voice of one of the spirits that the pawang owned, or at the least controlled absolutely.

After a short pause the girl would give a name, and wait until someone claimed the spirit it belonged to. If no one did, she would continue calling out names until she came to one which meant something to one of the people present Now her voice would change once more; with each spirit which spoke through her, the tone wouldalter a little.

The spirit, when claimed, would be asked questions How should a certain piece of land be divided? What was the reason for the hostility of some distant cousins, and how could it be combated? Why did the sago crop in a particular field so consistently fail; what could be done about that? To all these questions the spirit appeared to give answers which satisfied its kith and kin. On one occasion the children of a man recentlydead were pushed forward so that he might see how they were looking. The whole thing seemed to Gardner curiously reminiscent of a phenomenon of his childhood: of the time when, many years before, his family had installed a telephone at their house in Blundellsands and neighbours and relations had come in on many occasions just to be able to use it. These people he was now amongst seemed to use the medium in much the same matter-

of-fact way; it had been strange, yet perfectly explicable, to make contact with people who were many miles away, and now it was equally strange, and equally explicable, to make contact with those who had died. There was no temptation to speculate about it; it obviously was so - had one not heard the voice of the person one had meant to contact?

On two occasions, Gardner remembers, the quiet and simplicity of the little meeting was dramatically disturbed. The medium suddenly began to shout, then sat up, her arms waving violently, her face contorted. Two or three men had to rush forward and hold her down while she writhed and threshed about. At the same time the pawang was thrusting his hands forward as though ordering some intruder to go away. And indeed, as Gardner learned when the commotion finally ceased, that was precisely what he had been doing. The girl had inadvertently been the means of summoning up spirits of men belonging to the Murut tribe, a peculiarly violent group who lived some distance away. When they discovered that they had been called to a meeting where there was no one who had known them or who wanted to make contact with them, they had lost their tempers, and it was this which caused the contortions of the girl. She reported that after both these incidents she suffered from bad dreams for several nights; it was, however, not unknown that such a thing should happen, and it did not deter her from offering herself as a medium again.

After several spirits had been successfully called, and had established contact with their closer relatives, the pawang would relax.

There are no more", he would say  the signal for the girl to wake. Then more talk, some farewells, and the party would break up. Gardner was enormously impressed with the undramatic nature of it all; there was no deliberate charging of the atmosphere by darkness or special apparatus, there was no esoteric or extraordinary ritual. Contact with the dead, he was told, was a fact of every-day existence, as manifest and no more unnatural than contact with the living.

These people, Gardner discovered, had their own local Good Spirit, who lived at the top of a big mountain.

"When you die", they advised "you had better go there.  It is a hard climb, but when you arrive you will find better padi (rice), than there is here, better sago, much more game and as many fish as you can catch". And in order that he might find his way back to them. who were his friends, they gave him a few directions by which to find his way.

Gardner pondered on how the idea of Heaven seems to have the same basic constituents no matter what race or belief led one to it. And then it suddenly struck him that the Borneo Heaven was every Englishman's dream - to have a little place in the country, where he could hunt and fish to his heart's content, and where he would no longer have to work.

That relations with the Dyaks could have their harsher side, and the fear in which the other peoples of the Island held them, was shown by the panic which swept the whole area of Membuket on one occasion when rumours of head hunting parties in the neighbourhood were seriously believed.

The first evidence certainly seemed concrete enough. Several headless bodies had been seen floating down the river from the thickly-wooded hills and mountains of the interior. People began to murmur, and in the coolie lines the question, "Where are the Dyaks?" soon became the statement "The Dyaks are near!" Then scraps of paper were found lying about, on which had been written, "Orang datang poton kapala", which means "People are coming to cut off your heads". This reported message was later discovered to be the work of a somewhat simple-minded native proud of having mastered the artofwriting, but at the time and in the gathering tension and suspicion, it made a deep panic-impression on those who read it.

The real trouble began with a nightmare. One of the Chinese coolies yelled out in his sleep, and immediately all hell broke loose. In the darkness crazed Chinese and Malays could be seen and heard running about, screaming at the top of their voice aud laying indiscriminately about them with axes, parangs or chunkels, which were mattocks about six feet in length and no pleasant thing to have swinging at you on a dark night. Several of the men were injured.

The next night no one would go to sleep. In the coolie lines, gongs were being beaten continuously, both to keep away whatever threatened, and to keep awake those who awaited the attack. Nevertheless, shadows bred their usual fear; toward midnight terrified coolies came screaming to Gardner with talk of men under the houses. They wanted him to come at once and shoot into the darkness between the piles on which their houses stood; only then would they feel themselves out of danger. Gardner, however, like most people who. have handled firearms for a long time, refused to fire at what he could not see; however, he went with the excited coolies, shone a torch here and there, talked examined, soothed, until slowly the panic ebbed.

Not for long, however; on the way back to his bungalow, a new cry went up. There was a party of Dyaks lurking in an abandoned house just across the river. So once again Gardner picked up his Winchester and led the rabble of shouting Chinese and Malays to the river bank. In the moonlight he could see the building clearly. There was no movement anywhere near it, nor could shouts in Malay, various Chinese dialects, Dusun, or Iban produce any answer. Nevertheless the men who had first reported seeing figures there were adamant that they had made no mistake. To pacify them Gardner decided that this time he would put a few shots across the river; they could do little enough damage.

At this moment, however, one of the native girls suggested that she should call out in yet another dialect, Besuia. Gardner, happy to try anything, agreed that she should - and this time there was an answer. Slowly, from the shadows below the house and from behind the rotting walls, a small party of Besuia appeared. They had been passing, had heard the clamour from across the river, had assumed that the Dyaks were attacking, and had taken refuge in the house,. determined to sell their lives dearly. They had refused to answer any of the earlier challenges because they had argued that these had been in languages or dialects which the Dyaks might be expected to know, and they had no intention of letting themselves be lured out into the moonlight. When they had heard their own dialect, however, which few Dyaks could speak, they had decided to come out. Gardner himself was feeling rather weak; in his imagination he could see the destruction his fifteen-shot Winchester would have made among these people if he had fired. The forty-four Winchester had a soft lead bullet, which. expanding on impact, would have made a nasty mess. But this incident did not end the panic.

The next day a squad of police, headed by an inspector, appeared. Their train was pushing two wagons loaded with telegraph poles, and the rumour immediately spread that they were going to build a fort, so desperate had the situation become. In fact, the had found these trucks on the single-track line from Jesselton, and had had to push them in front of them in order to make any further progress.

Eventually these headhunting rumours were traced to another source as well as the simpleton's scrawled messages. It appeared that an oil company had been prospecting some little way off, but with small success. They had therefore posted a reward of 10,000 dollars for anyone who could give

them information leading to a strike of oil. This had so played upon the mind of one native that one night he had had a dream: a hantu, a very powerful spirit, had appeared to him and said: "Give me ten heads and I will show you where the oil maybe found."

In the morning he had told everyone about this, then got himself ready, sharpened his spear, taken his blowpipe and made off to collect the necessary offering. However, the police had got wind of this, had swiftly headed him off and scared him away. As a result, his village had become extremely angry, pointing out that if the authorities had allowed him to collect his quota of heads (it was said that he had already taken several) the hantu would have shown him the oil and the whole village would have become rich.It had probably been this mood, and the sullenness and perhaps threats with which it had been accompanied, which had originally led to the wild rumours and subsequent panic.

Excitement sometimes had to be made in Borneo - it did not always just happen.

Gardner once went to a district town, where he was told that he would now see a curious local custom. This turned out to be the Egg-fight. The local police inspector asked his Japanese housegirl to bring the eggs. She came back with ahuge bowl, containing perhaps five dozen of them raw.

Each one of the several Europeans there grabbed a handful, and threw them at each other. Two direct hits smashed into Gardner's eyes. He joined in as soon as he, could see: "And bad shots were all over the place, especially on the walls".

Boredom and high spirits made people find their own fun. The same police inspector once got tired of his old piano, had it carried into the garden during a party, stuffed it full of fireworks, poured paraffin over it, and set it alight. As the revellers danced around it, some of the fire works shot out, setting the town alight in two places.

British North Borneo was a curious place in 1910, Gardner remembers. It was under a Charter Company. The story went that Gladstone did not like the Rajah. The country people saw how Rajah Brooke had improved affairs all around, and wanted to join him. To prevent this, it was said, Gladstone had the Chartered Company formed, and gave it full control. People said that the Company was a simple London one, which knew that the Chartered Company of South Africa had large gold mines, and wondered why

none had been found in Borneo.

In a place like this, all fun was not innocent. Fighting used to take place "quite frequently"  between planters. Gardner well remembers encounters which used to take place at Bidor.  Two young men were each told that the other had said something about him. The first tackled the other about it; said it was a lie, was immediately hit on the jaw for being called a liar.

"He collapsed into his chair and was rather silent for a minute. But we carried on talking, drank and had dinner, and kicked up monkey-shines as usual. Next, day the man who had been hit said, 'That's funny, my jaw aches'. We told him what had happened, which he had completely forgotten".

Gardner records that he met several cases of men hit on the jaw losing all memory.

Despite such occasional excitement as these, life at Mawo continued along the lines of concealed rancour and half-hidden hostility between Gardner and Graham which had by now become normal there. The plantation was slowly being cleared, the jungle being thrust back at Graham's orders, as though it had been some hostile army. Indeed, for most of the settlers, this was precisely what it was; only Gardner, it seemed, had an attachment for it.

There came a time, however, when Gardner fell victim to the disease most white men in the Far East contracted sooner or later: malaria. Shivering and feverish, he stayed in bed. The illness, however, left Gardner only slowly and at last it was decided that the climate did not suit him, and that he should leave. Because of the behaviour of Graham, Gardner was not sorry to be going, nor was the manager sad to see him go.

There was an ironic touch to Gardner's last evening there. Graham had hired a Frenchman from Mauritius to take Gardner's place, and for days had been singing his praises and hinting at the many ways in which the newcomer would show up Gardner's many shortcomings. On the last morning when they should both have been at work, Graham arrived at Gardner's bungalow to say his final farewells - to find Dickie and the new man both equally paralysed with whisky. The sight of Graham's face at this moment was, Gardner felt, compensation enough for the many slights and insults he had been made to suffer.

Weakened as he was by fever, Gardner decided to take a short holiday before finding himself another job in a more

congenial climate. Since it was unlikely that he would ever return to Borneo, his mind now turned toward a small corner of the island which had long aroused his curiosity. This was Sarawak, the land of the white Rajah; before leaving he felt that he had to take a short look at it.

Sarawak, in the north of Borneo, with its population of over 300,000 people of all races, is the colony ruled by the Brooke family for over a century. The first Rajah, Sir James Brooke, bought the land in 1842 from the local rulers. After many years of vigorous government he was succeeded by his nephew, whom he had taken away from Edinburgh University and trained to be his heir. This was the Rajah still on the throne at the time of Gardner's visit.

His port of call was the town of Brunei. With its graceful houses built on piles and its wide, brown canals many travellers had, of course, dubbed it "The Venice of the East". As Gardner travelled between the red-brown, wooden walls of the place, he thought about the time when Sir James Brooke had taken Brunei, which until then had been reputed impregnable; and he tried to imagine the scene as the first Rajah's paddle-steamer had chugged along these same canals, towing behind it an armed sailing ship which ,at a range of a few feet, fired broadside after broadside into the flimsy houses and inadequate defences of the town. These imagined scenes of war made even more poignant for him the gentle beauty of the unscarred walls which now rose again on every side.

After he had been in Brunei for a short time, he decided that he would like to take a trip up-river. He was offered a week's journey by launch into the interior and back for about 30 dollars. This seemed to be a better than reasonable price - and the first morning of the journey he discovered why. The money did not include meals, nor was there much provision made in the interior of Sarawak for the hungry traveller. As a result, he made the boat stop at the first sizeable village they came to, and there did the necessary shopping, buying bread, bananas and a selection of tinned fruit. The first day he opened one of these tins; prominently labelled lichees, he found that fruit inside. The following day, he opened a tin marked pears; it contained lichees. Later again, he opened a tin ostensibly of rhubard; it contained lichees. So, eventually and wearily he discovered, did all the tins; the labels had been an imaginative whim of the Chinese manufacturers.

He learned little new on this trip; he had made journeys

into the jungles of Borneo before, and the monotony of tree and water, broken only by an occasional village, was no more than he had come to expect. After his return to Brunei, he continued his journey to Sarawak proper, and in Brooketown he met the second Rajah himself.

Brooke had been told that a strange European, no frequent phenomenon in those days, had arrived in the country, and had therefore sent word that Gardner was to come to meet him. He was an extremely tall man, broad-shouldered and deep-chested, with a strong nose and chin and big, bushy eyebrows. Although he wore a plain, white drill uniform with no decorations or signs of rank, Gardner felt that there was about him a strong air of power. His quiet, cordial manner was in some indefinable way also distant and stand-offish; this was perhaps not more than the necessary dignity of his position.

The Rajah shook hands with Gardner, and for a while they talked about the country, its places of interest, history, possible future. When he heard of Gardner's researches into the beliefs and customs of the Dyaks, he became deeply interested. He himself knew a great deal about them - the Dyaks made up the great majority of the population of his State - but knew only too well how few Europeans were prepared to take such studies seriously

He heard all court cases himself, since he was determined to bring law to the country. His ways of doing this were characteristicafly direct. One case which came up for trial while Gardner was in the country concerned a gang of Chinese robbers. Brooke found the case against them proved; most of the gang he ordered to be branded and sent over the border with the promise of immediate execution if they were ever seen in Sarawak again. The three ringleaders, accused of leading the rest astray, he sentenced to death. They were immediately led to the banks of the river, and were there shot - the river, because the crocodiles which swarmed in it saved the expense of disposing of the bodies out of public funds.

The capital of the country was Kuching, a white, clean, little town whose European population was never more than fifty souls. If anyone wanted to settle there, this little community put him through a simple but practical test. He was made drunk, and if he then behaved reasonably, he was considered worthy to remain.

A feature of the town was its jail, and the convicts who were its nominal prisoners. These convicts were to be

seen all over the town, working on the roads, the gardens, the buildings, even as servants in some of the larger houses. Each party of felons, some of whom were in irons, was guarded by an armed warder. When they had finished their allotted tasks, they were given the rest of the day off, provided they reported hack to their palm-leaf hut jail by 5 p.m. If they did not, they were allowed no food and might be locked out of the jail for that night. They could, of course apply for permission to eat out, and this was usually granted. Non-compliance with the rules was punished by a beating; It seemed to Gardner that the difficulties confronting a prisoner determined to escape were not insurmountable. The only permanent and efficient guard seemed to be that kept over the harbour and all out-going ships and boats. He soon learned why this was. There were only two ways out of Kuching - by sea or through the jungle. Because the searoute was closely guarded, whoever wanted to flee would have go into the jungle. But this was the home of the Dyaks; and although the white Rajah had put down their favourite practice, he permitted headhunting in one instance - if the quarry were an escaped convict. Since the trophies were still considered signs of prowess, courage and viril- ity, the rare chance of adding to their collections would inflame the hunters, and at the alarm signal from the jail all work, all other activities, would stop; to a man they would take to the paths and rivers of the jungle, not to return until one of them had claimed the head of the fleeing prisoner. Nor was their enthusiasm dampened by the bounty of 25 dollars which Brooke had put on every such head produced.

With this glimpse of a corner of Asia which has, in its essentials, now disappeared, Gardner's Borneo adventure came to an end. He had come to find the wilderness and he had found it, found it and penetrated a few of its secrets. He had come to know much of the lore and worship of the island's natives, had made many friends among them, had shared a small portion of their lives. Most precious of all, perhaps, he had learned to adopt their belief in the naturalness of the occult, had come to take for granted as they had some contact with those who had died, the possibility of developing faculties of concentration, mind and energy which in theWesthad fallen into general disuse. This was a development in his thinking which was to bear fruit many years later.

His mind was not, however, on the past. As his ship bore him once more toward the wide, palm-lined avenues

of Singapore, he felt again as he had on his first arrival in Asia. The future was uncertain; probably he would return to Ceylon, but he did not know when, or what he would do when he got there. The whole continent seemed again, as it had been eleven years earlier, alive with possibilities of fortune and adventure.

# 5

## RUBBER, OPIUM, SMUGGLERS

"It's too much to hope that you're a teetotaller", the company agent said, wearily.

"As a matter of fact I am".

"Well, that's a good thing. The last assistant we had over there got D.T.'s. We don't want that to happen again".

With this point settled, the interview was over; Gardner stepped out into the noisy streets of Singapore the holder of a new post - assistant on a rubber plantation at Sungkai, in central Malaya.

The year was 1911. He had come to Malaya on a sight-seeing holiday, to bridge the gap between leaving Borneo and returning to Ceylon, where he had intended to work again. Suddenly, in Singapore, someone who knew him and his experience had suggested him for this job, the interview had been arranged, and now here he was, on the verge of working in his third Far Eastern country in eleven years.

The journey to Sungkai was fairly easy, nor was the area in which it stood in any way wild. There wereflourishing estates all around, for rubber was booming, and this was one of the best areas for its cultivation. The estate manager, a tall, plump, rather shabby man called Brown, with a huge, moth-eaten moustache, met Gardner and showed him his bungalow, and, over the inevitable whisky, explained what his duties were to be. Tapping, it seemed,was just beginning there, and Gardner's first job was to teach its routine to the coolies. Later, when the rubber factory was ready, he would supervise its working. He was twenty-six; the malaria was less frequent, life seemed good, and Graham was a thing of the past.

Life soon resumed an accustomed pattern for Gardner. Among the trees and strenuous duties of a plantation, one country was much like another, one tropical sky no different from the thousand under which he had passed. This was work that he knew, and he was fairly happy. A month after he had started there, Ward, his predecessor, arrived back at the plantation.

He had just spent severalweeks in hospital, recovering from the effects of an excessive intake of alcohol - the "D.T.'s" the agent had mentioned in Singapore. He was perfectly frank and cheerful about it - but admitted that he would have to be more careful in the future. Even so, he was far from being completely cured. While out on inspections with Gardner he would stop every three hundred yards or so, take off his shoes, and scratch and pluck at his feet. One day, not unnaturally curious, Gardner asked him what the matter was.

"It's the white ants", Ward replied.

"The white ants?"

"Yes. They used to be all over me, all over my body, but since I went into hospital, they've only been on my feet".

"Oh", Gardner said, relieved. "That's your substitute for pink elephants?"

"Yes, I suppose it is".

Gardner was slightly confused by the implications.

"Yes, but, good heavens, if you know the whole thing's delusion...

"But I feel them", Ward insisted. "Oh, I know they're not really there, but I can feel them. They tickle. If I stop and pick them off, it's better for a while".

And indeed, for the rest of his stay on the plantation, he would at intervals remove his shoes and tackle those hallucinatory white ants of his.

About this time Gardner was twice in danger of his life, both times escaped unscathed. The first occasion had not been entirely unexpected. Every month Gardner travelled by train to the bank at Ipoh, about fifty miles away, to fetch the coolies' payroll. On almost every occasion he returned by the same train. This once, however, he was delayed, and came back by a later one. There was, nevertheless, a European on the train he usually took, who went on to the plantation in a rickshaw, as Gardner always did. His name was Cornwall; he was an American contractor responsible for building the coolie lines and the factory at the plantations. Halfway to the estate, as his rickshaw was passing a patch of thick bush, there came sudden shouts and the breaking of branches. Out of the thicket leaped four or five ragged, shouting men. This was one of the many gangs of dacoits - robbers - which ranged, then as now, the thickly-wooded central areas of Malaya. Swiftly they surrounded the rickshaw, thrust their pistols and kris in Cornwall's face, and demanded the money. The rickshaw man fled, but Cornwall,

a man with a great deal of physical and moral courage, lashed out at the gang's leader with his foot, fumbling for his pistol. But they were too many; he was dragged out of the rickshaw, and his struggles ended by a bullet in the shoulder. Then, after beating and searching him, the bandits fled. When, a little later, Gardner came along the same road, he found the police already there, searching the bush and round about. Cornwall had been taken to hospital. Friendship is often built on unlikely foundations; on the basis of this incident, Gardner and Cornwall forged a close and fruitful relationship, which lasted the whole period that Gardner was in the district. Cornwall was to introduce him to the kernel of Malay life.

It was some time, however, before Gardner saw Cornwall again. He went down with a bad fever soon after the American received his wound, discovered that he was passing blood, from this and other symptoms diagnosed, correctly as it turned out, that tropical killer, black-water fever, and, despite high temperature, fits of trembling and extreme weakness, travelled by rickshaw and train to the local hospital.

At the hospital there was consternation. It seemed to them unthinkable that anyone with blackwater fever should have been able to travel so far. However, they put him to bed, treated and reassured him.

"You'll be all right", the doctor told him. "Sent a chap home only a week ago, came in much worse than you did". He didn't add that that had been the first cured case of blackwater fever released from the hospital in months. Indeed, in private the doctor was far from optimistic.

"Make sure you've got his firm's address", he told the matron. "When he dies we want to be able to recover the funeral expenses". But Gardner did not die. He was too weak to care much about it either way, but nevertheless found the strength to fight off the fever. Several weeks later, shaky but recovered, he returned to the plantation.

There things were not going too well. Brown, more decrepit than ever, was taking to the bottle hard. After a while he had to be removed from his post, and Gardner became manager. The promotion brought him face to face with a problem which seemed more intractable to him than any ambush or disease. This was the balancing of the accounts. The field work went by default as day after day he wrestled with unyielding and meaningless columns of figures.

"Look, it's easy", Freeman, the company agent, assured him during his periodic visits. And he would sit before the books and, with Gardner wide-eyed at his elbow, reduce their chaos to neat, carefully written totals. Despite this example, Gardner found the job no easier. After a while, he too was sacked. He was followed by a serious, non-drinking young man, a wizard at accounts who turned out to be perhaps cleverer than the company had intended. After three years, they had, reluctantly, to call in the police, and he became one of the few white men to see the inside of a Malayan prison.

Gardner, after a year in Malaya, was now once more at a loose end. He remembered an encounter which he had had several months before with a man named Attenborough. Gardner had been on one of his monthly payroll trips. On the train from Ipoh he had shared a compartment with a pleasant man, slightly lame, with whom he had a long talk about local customs and artifacts The stranger, Attenborough, had then spoken to him about the collection of Brunei brass he said he owned, invited Gardner to his house to see it, and had written his address in Gardner's notebook. He lived near Bidor, the town nearest Cornwall's place too, and since the latter had also invited him to stay, Gardner felt that a suitable occasion to visit both had now arrived.

He decided to see Cornwall first. It was the first time that he had had a chance really to get to know this strange American. Cornwall was a man few Europeans would have much to do with. He had, "gone native". Even Gardner, who had expected it, was surprised at his appearance as he came to the door. His head shaved and covered only by a small skull-cap, wearing a sarong, darkly sunburnt, only the bright blue of his eyes betrayed his European origins. He lived in a small, neat house with his Malay wives and their children, continuing his contractor's business, and quietly practising the religion of Islam, to which he had not many years before become converted. He had no regrets at the isolation in which tie other Westerners left him; his friends were the Malays.

Cornwall knew quite a lot about the magic of the Malays, Saki and Borneans, as well as something about Voodoo. He and Gardner agreed that there was plenty of evidence that magical power existed: not everything could be explained away by coincidence, and so on.

They laughed over the story that Grandfather Joseph

was a witch. But Cornwall was convinced by happenings in America that witches did exist and were an organised body; though he thought that they might have died out by now.

He was a good and interesting host, sitting late into the evening with Gardner, discussing the beliefs and customs of the natives, and the various cults, devoted to the occult, which had at one time and another flourished in Europe and the United States. On many evenings, too, the Malays would come from miles around to spend an evening of dancing or fencing with the kris.

After about a fortnight, one of the most interesting he had spent in the Far East (and setting a pattern for many shorter, subsequent visits), Gardner finally left to travel the few miles which separated Cornwall's house from Attenborough's.

Somewhat to his consternation, Attenborough had completely forgotten him.

"I suppose you've come about the job", he said, as he met Gardner at the door of his house.

"Oh, no", Gardner replied. "I've come to have a look at your collection of Brunei brass".

"Brunei brass? I haven't got any Brunei brass".

This seemed to be stalemate;  after a short and puzzled pause, Gardner pulled out his notebook and showed Attenborough the address he himself had written there.

"Well, that's certainly my writing", Attenborough said, and then, laughing, led him into the house. Gardner explained where they had met before, and slowly Attenborough remembered him. He could not recall having said anything about Brunei brass, all the same; he had had some when he had been in Sarawak, he said, but had sold it all before leaving.

"What are you doing now?" he asked Gardner.

"Well, nothing, really. I'm thinking of going to Ceylon I've got friends there, and I'll get a job...".

"But there's a job here". Attenborough exclaimed "Right up you street. The work I thought you'd come for when you first appeared".

Attenborough worked for the Borneo Company. Near Bidor, where they already had a tin mine, they had cleared land several years before in order to sink another shaft. The price of tin, however, had dropped, until this development threatened to become unprofitable. On the initiative of some local manager, fifty acres of the land were planted with rubber.  It had for a while been thought that more

would be planted, but nothing had been done, "We're miners, not bloody farmers", one Director had said. Now, however, the price of rubber had risen high enough to make a plantation an extremely desirable investment. The company had decided to exploit the rest of the land, and needed a man with experience in planting to supervise this, and work the fifty acres already growing.

Gardner decided then and there to take the job and thus, for the second time fortuitously, found himself work in Malaya. He soon settled in the new post; it was, in fact, the best he had ever had. Attenborough managed the nearby tin mine, and was helped by Grellet, a silent, mysteriously ailing Swiss, and by "Long" Acton, nearly six-and-a-half feet in his socks. Acton, a descendent of the famous legal peer, stooped and loose-limbed, had a horror, never adequately explained, of European women. A local doctor, unaware of this, once brought his wife to visit him. As they approached, they saw Acton, stooped and furtive, leap out of the back door of his bungalow and gallop toward the jungle, where he disappeared in a turbulence of leaves and branches. They asked a small boy who worked for him whether he could call Acton. The boy was doubtful, but wandered toward the trees. As he came abreast of Acton's still quivering bush, an enormous foot appeared from behind it, swung, and lifted the small boy yelping off the ground. Back he came, crying. Between sobs, "Tuan not in! Tuan not in!" he called out to the surprised and thwarted visitors. After a while, this attitude of Acton's became a local legend and a joke; women would visit his bungalow in order to produce the usual extraordinary reaction. That his antipathy did not extend to all women is proved by the fact that he lived quite happily with a Siamese consort and had over a dozen children by her over the years.

Another extraordinary character on the staff of the mine, though he seemed to have some roving commision which allowed him to appear only intermittently, was a small Scotsman, Macgregor. Like many of the Europeans out East in those days, he had a story of mild disgrace to explain his presence there. He had been sent to college by his parents, only to be expelled during his first term. Instead of telling his parents, he got a job in a coal-mine, arranging to have all his letters sent on to him and going home as usual for holidays. His wages, his allowance, and the money for the college fees, enabled him to live on a royal scale for nearly two years. Then an uncle of his, visiting

the area, called at the college for news of him, and learned about the expulsion. The police were called in by his parents, he was found and brought back in disgrace. Home influence seems to have done little to steady him; he got into a number of scrapes over women, some of them married, and was eventually, like so many others with more energy than moral sense, shipped out East. He was a stern Jacobite, full of jibes at the English and "the man you call George The Fifth". But in 1915 he rushed back to Europe, to die in the mud of Flanders for the king he didn't recognise.

Gardner's work, shared by an Eurasian named Hartley, was hard. He had little time to relax in the nearest town, Bidor; however, he often saw Cornwall, and spent many evenings with him and his wives and their Malay friends, or in the jungle, round the fires of the Saki.

Soon, however, he was to have another time-demanding interest: an estate of his own. Most of his colleagues seemed to own land. Hartley had a little rubber estate, and left at the end of 1912 to run it himself; Acton, too, had been buying himself land. It seemed to be taken for granted that everyone should do so, and so Gardner, for once, happily followed fashion. His estate was called Bukit Katho; at the time when he bought it, only one sixtieth (nine acres) of it had been cleared - the rest was jungle. It stood at the end of a cart-track from Bidor; jungle was all around, on the low hills of the plantation, and beyond it, rolling dark-green and blue for mile after mile toward the mountains of central ridge. Tiger and elephant were in this jungle; the former killing people occasionally, but the latter much more generally destructive. Quite often there would be stories of elephants obdurately walking through houses in their search for food, walls and roofs collapsing about them. On other occasions, they might blockade a section of the road, smashing - whether in fury or with playfulness no one could be absolutely certain - every vehicle which came along. Many of the native houses were built for emergency near some substantial tree, into the higher reaches of which a ladder gave permanent access. Yet the smaller, less dramatic, dangers were worse, especially that of the scorpion, which would lurk in a boot or something similar, ready to sting the unsuspecting. And there were always the mosquitoes and their whining attacks, their malarial stings.

Gardner, however, took no notice of such chances of destruction. He liked the jungle, and this land was his own He could only work there in the evenings and on Sundays,

but he hired his own coolies and slowly began clearing the plantation. After a while he was joined by three of his colleagues from the Borneo Company, and between them they soon owned 600 acres.

The onset of war, remote in Europe, left Malaya much as it had been. Occasionally Reserve officers would quietly disappear, to emerge once more among the citations and casualty lists from the French or Belgian battle-fields. Local Germans, of whom there were several near Gardner, stayed quietly where they were for a time, leaving a small wake of social unease wherever they went. Then, little by little, most of them slipped across to neutral Sumatra, after drawing the money from their unmolested bank accounts, and went to the War.

A few of the older Germans stayed.

The only difference that was felt at first was an increase in the number of robber gangs which laid their ambushes in the narrow, jungle-bordered roads. It was now that Gardner's kris majapahit, bought after the Cornwall wounding, came into its own; it seemed to be a powerful deterrent.

One excitement of the War in which Gardner was involved was the mutiny of an Indian regiment at Singapore. Hearing that the Sultan of Turkey, the Commander of the Faithful, had declared Holy War on Britain, they decided to do their bit. After killing a number of Europeans, they attacked Government House. The Malay States Rifles (European Volunteers) were called out by their celebrated Sergeant - Major "Slosher". Called up for garrison duty once a month, they had no time to collect anything but boots, rifles, and cartridges. The Volunteers besieged the mutineers in their turn. This diversion kept the mutineers busy, and they wasted too much time there to make them any more than of nuisance value.

All volunteers were now called up. The great fear was that the Moslem Malay States Guides would mutiny, too- and there were photographs circulating of the German Kaiser, showing him wearing a turban. The story went that he had embraced Islam. The possibility was that the Guides might seize trains and come to Singapore to help in the expected risings. Gardner was sent with his unit to Ipoh to hold the railway line at all costs, and also to disarm the Indian police. These refused to surrender their arms unless the Malays were disarmed too: so they were both deprived of their beloved rifles. The police continued on duty, this time with seven-foot clubs. The first day he was in camp, Gardner

was arrested and brought up on the charge of being absent from guard duty. He pleaded that, on arrival, he had gone to the notice-board, and seen that he was not down for any duty. "Their answer was that someone had sent me a post-card, to the Estate that morning, warning me to be ready for sentry-go". It took some time to get it into the heads of the authorities that a postcard posted about the time that Gardner was in the train coming up to Ipoh was unlikely to - be delivered to him. He was found not guilty, but given double guard duties for a week or so. The Guides did not rise after all, and the Volunteers dispersed.

No sooner was Gardner back at Bidor than another scare blew up. The tiny Saki reported seeing white men carrying rifles, deep in the jungle. These must surely be Germans. Of course they were Germans. How many? Well, it was difficult to be sure; reports varied. Hundreds there certainly were. The Saki were asked whether they would capture them. No, they would not. The Germans had guns, which they fired off constantly. It would be too dangerous to try to capture them. They could, however, easily kill them, if desired. They would use their blowpipes, the darts dipped in instantaneous poison. They were ordered not to kill, but to follow the interlopers to some spot where it would be simple to capture them. This was the course finally adopted; when the "hundreds of Germans" finally emerged from the jungle, a large detachment of Volunteers, Gardner among them, was in tense ambush, waiting. There was great disappointment when the "enemy" turned out to be a small expedition of three men and three boys collecting specimens for Tiaping Museum.

The end of the war in 1918, like its beginning, made little difference to Gardner or the rest of the population of Malaya. Months passed, each bringing its quota of work on the plantations and its moments of curiosity and excitement in the company of Cornwall, and of the Malays arid the Saki. Slowly, however, things became more difficult. The price of rubber dropped and dropped. The faces of planters grew longer and longer. When Gardner returned from leave in 1920, he had lost his job.

There followed then a period of "sweating it out". He went to Bukit Katho, working the plantation in a desultory fashion with Bevan, a half-caste whose wages Gardner now had to share. He saw more and more of Cornwall, for, as always, he used his spare time for his researches into native lore and magic. From time to time he worked for

the Public Works Department leading gangs of workmen in the repair or rebuilding of stretches of road. Nevertheless, time passed slowly and heavily, and there seemed few prospects now in a country whose staple industry had been undermined and half destroyed by the economic machinations of the outside world.

In 1923 Gardner saw advertised Govemment posts, for inspectors of rubber plantations. It was at that time official policy to try to keep up the price of rubber by limiting its export. To do this, each plantation was allowed to sell only a certain quantity of rubber, an amount assessed on the size of the property, past yield, and similar factors. This computation was made by inspectors, and on the basis of their reports coupons were issued to each plantation, without which they were unable to sell their raw rubber. It was for the post of such an official that Gardner now applied.

He was accepted, on a temporary basis, and was made inspector around the town of Muar, in Johore. No one in Perak had ever heard of this place, but Gardner travelled down hopefully to Johore, found the Muar river and a town called Bandar Maharani (Queen's Town) at its mouth. There he asked for the whereabouts of Muar - to discover that this was the alternative name of the very town that he was in. The previous Sultan of Johore, a great friend of Queen Victoria's, had changed its name when he had conquered it about fifty years before.

Gardner enjoyed his new work. He was alone for much of his time, travelling from one plantation to another, spending much time driving down the narrow, tree-shaded roads or tramping along the narrow tracks that led from one small settlement to the next. He had to keep a careful watch on the planters' claims. Sometimes genuine mistakes were made, but at places land which had never (or had not recently, been under cultivation, was solemnly entered in the claim for coupons. Nor could anyone really blame the planters for this; upon those coupons their livelihood depended; whatever rubber they produced not covered by the coupons would simply lie uselessly about the plantation.

At night, he would stay in the rest-houses which have always been a feature of travel in the Far East. Often, for days on end, he would see only the occasional planters, and no other white face at all. On one occasion, however, he was joined by a large, amiable European, a man called Gawler, who had been given the title of Datu by the Sultan of Johore. Datu Gawler was an influential man in Johore, and,

despite his amiability, Gardner was a little uneasy at his presence. Was it merely chance that he was there, or was the inspector being himself inspected? In the course of the conversation, Gawler dropped a clue. He said, casually, "I suppose you know that there were nine of you taken on for this job?"

"Yes, I knew that", Gardner answered.

"Only two of you left now", Gawler said.

For a wild moment Gardner considered all the possibilities of sudden death which might have carried off the others.

"Why, what on earth happened to the rest?"

"Sacked! They nearly all took bribes". Then he paused and leaned forward; Gardner felt that the whole point of the other's visit was about to be made plain.

"We knew about the others. We know you haven't taken any money - yet. We're very satisfied with you, so - don't be tempted in the future".

It was advice that Gardner did not need. The taking of bribes belonged to a compendium of activities which he could not imagine being involved in. He assured Gawler that there was no chance that he would become corrupted.

Quietly the months passed. Gardner moved about his area, walking from one estate to the next, interviewing, measuring, checking crop returns, noting down the relevant evidence, then leaving and going on to the next. Often it rained, and he would arrive at the local rest-house soaked to the skin. Discomfort, however, at this or any other time, meant little to him; he was happy with this work, glad to be seeing new parts of Malaya and to be making new contacts, both among Europeans and Malays.

Synovitis in his knee put an end to this episode in his career. He found himself, in a very short time, unable to get about at all; soon he was in Singapore hospital, undergoing heat and radiotherapy, chafing at his immobility. One day a native dresser made a mistake about the duration of his treatment; the result was a bad burn on his leg. While this healed, pillows kept his leg bent and when, at last, the bandages were taken off, Gardner found to his horror that the joint refused to straighten. Now he began to be seriously worried: if he were not back before six weeks had passed, he would lose his job, which he still held, technically, on a temporary basis.

One day, lying despondent in his hospital bed, he began to long for fresh air and freedom almost with the intensity of a convict. Outside, the sun shone with an even, tropical

brilliance. Gardner called the sister to his bed.

"Sister, can you wheel my bed out into the sunshine?"

The sister was reluctant for a while.

"It isn't regular, you know. And what about the others?", she said, but allowed herself to be persuaded without much argument. For a long time Gardner lay thus in the sunshine, feeling its rays penetrate the skin, feeling health and vitality creep back into his body. Later in the day, the sister came out to him.

"I've come to rub your leg again", she said, briskly. Gardner lay back and submitted to this daily therapeutic ritual. And, to their amazement, on this day, suddenly and without warning, the recalcitrant leg straightened under her ministrations. This near-miracle had far-reaching effects on Gardner's opinions. It made sunshine and fresh air suddenly appear to him as the positive forces they are, instead of the taken-for-granted elements they seem to most of the world. It led him, much later, to accept medical advice and take up nudism seriously. It helped to break down the last vestiges of that late-Victorian stuffiness which had surrounded his childhood. Gardner is an empiricist; sunheat had worked, and later in his career in Malaya and after he had returned to England, he was often to use its healing and stimulating powers to good effect.

For six weeks after his return to duty he suffered in the confinement of an office; the Government, mindful of his recent breakdown in health, considerately put him among the forms and files of the Lands Office. But six weeks is not long in Purgatory; at the end of that time, Gardner was given a new, and active, post. With promotion to the rank of Principal Officer of Customs he was made Inspector of Rubber Shops. These inspectors had to make certain that all the rubber bought by the merchants had been obtained against the proper quota of coupons, and this meant inspecting their offices, wharves and warehouses.

These were big places, many of them, their windowless walls making a sinister gloom in which reluctant employees would be forced to bring or indicate the stacked bales to the inspectors. Often there would be, on these occasions, small dramas of chase and capture and an exchange of bullets. On one occasion Gardner accompanied his Head ofCustoms to the warehouses of a big rubber dealer suspected of the illicit buying and export of rubber. At the door an employee of the company met them. Whom did they want to see? Oh, he thought he had gone out. He frequently

was out at that time of day. Was there anything anyone else could do? No? Well, should he go and see if the manager was perhaps in?

At this moment there came a shout, and one of the men who had been posted at the back of the building called out that their quarry was escaping. Gun in hand, they ran to the spot; the man had disappeared, but the direction of his flight was known. The police were called out and before continuing to search his chief ordered Gardner back to the dealer's office, there to make certain that nothing was touched.

Gardner, annoyed at having been thwarted of the chase went back as he had been ordered. The place was very quiet; against one wall stood a row of heavy safes, containing who knew what incriminating secrets; elsewhere there were papers, files, letters, dust. Gardner waited. After a while, the door opened and one of the clerks came in. Then came two warehousemen, then another man from the office. Slowly all the employees gathered. Without a word they watched Gardner. Then someone said, "If you don't want to be killed, go!"

Gardner put a hand on his revolver. As he watched them, he half hoped that one of them would make a move. Time passed, tension gathered. How long would it be before they would try an attack? At last a new sound broke the tension. There were footsteps outside, then the Head of Customs burst into the office.

"Got away", he said, grimly. "Be half-way to Sumatra by now. At least we've got this stuff"'. He turned to one of the clerks, subdued, almost cringing, now, who was standing against the wall.

"Where are the keys of the safes?" he asked.

The clerk looked down, shrugged slightly. "Keys left with the boss, sir. I'm sorry; I can't open them".

"Well, they're not staying here for you to open when we've gone.

He gave crisp orders; his men ran forward, lifted the safes one by one, carried them down the stairs and out to carts that had been sent for.

"The safes will be down at my headquarters", the Head of Customs said. "I'd better be brought the, keys by tomorrow".

Then he and Gardner left. The next day they waited; no one came with the keys. But the Customs Chief was a determined man; he called for the police armourer to open

them. The armourer worked on them for two days, but as the contents of each one were searched, the faces of the police and the Customs men became gloomier and gloomier. There was nothing in any of them to incriminate the dealer or his associates.

"These safes cost 1,500 dollars apiece", someone said, thinking of the price of replacement that it seemed more than likely would have to be paid. As the door of the last safe swung open, there was a great deal of tension in the office. Hands stretched, sifted and sorted papers, ledgers files; there was nothing.  As the men standing about the room were already looking at each other in dismay, the Head of Customs pounced. He turned with a small piece of metal gleaming in his hand. It was a Customs seal!

"There you are", he said, "As simple as that. With that in his possession, he could get anything through. But that firm's done its last piece of business".

On other occasionsGardner would sail on the Custom's off-shore patrol. The Dutch had no restriction on the export of rubber from their nearby East Indies territories, nor cared much where the rubber had come from as long as its export duty was paid when it left them. There was, as a result, a profitable smuggling trade in rubber going out (the traffic which in the end ruined Cornwall), with guns, ammunition, opium or hashish brought in on the return trip.

Whenever there was a steady east wind, straight off shore, the Customs knew that there would be an attempt at smuggling that night. All available men would  be called out to lay the nautical ambush. The contrabanders, sails stiffened by the wind, would come swooping out of the Muar and Batu Bahat Rivers as night fell. Out in the deeper water the Customs launches would be waiting, almost invisible against the swell. They themselves could see the smugglers approach because of the silhouettes of masts and sails against the night sky. As the interloping boats came close, they would be hailed and asked to stop. Of this challenge they never took any notice. A shot would then be fired across their bows. If they still refused to heave to the Customs launch would come in close, grapple with hooks, and send a boarding party in. Sometimes the smugglers would throw the hooks back, and there would be a sharp and ugly fight before the smugglers were overpowered and their craft taken in tow. Several Europeans and many Malays were killed in these sudden engagements under the stars of the dark tropical skies.

Later a simpler method of immobilising the smuggler's boats was worked out. The Customs men would shoot at the topping line of the approaching sailing boat. This was the rope which lifted the boom and sail, and many a time Gardner heard the rattle and swish of these coming down as a well-directed bullet parted the rope. The boats would then wallow in the water, ready to be boarded. Even then you might find yourself in a fight, for there was no way of knowing if the smugglers intended to resist arrest until they actually took a stab at you - and when they struck with a knife, they struck like lightning.

This was a exhilerating time for Gardner, and even now he will look back with a certain nostalgia to those moments when the launch, its, engine silent, would rise and fall on the deep waves of the Indian Ocean and the sounds of the land, thinned by distance, would reach them through the evening air. And to the moments that followed, moments of speed and effort and danger, of sudden gunflash and sharp command, of chase and battle and achievement.

In 1926 he was in Singapore to give evidence during the hearing of an appeal when he met an old acquaintance, Datu Gawler. Gawler greeted him heartily, and then said, "Well, I suppose we'll all be having free smokes now, eh?"

Gardner was puzzled. "Free smokes?" he asked. "I don't understand".

Gawler stared at him. "You mean you haven:t heard?"

There was an exasperated tone in Gardner's voice as he counter-questioned, "Heard what?"

"That you're to be in charge of chandu shops. Surely they've told you?"

"They've told me nothing. I don't know anything about it".

Gawler drew a deep breath. "Well", he said, "the Commissioner of Customs was in a state some days ago because he hadn't heard from you. I don't know what he'll be like now; you'd better get up there, as quickly as you can".

It was, in consequence, a rather nervous Gardner who presented himself at the Commissioner's department.

"Why the deuce are you so late?" was the repeated question. But the solution was in the Commissioner's own office - the letter, written three months before, appointing Gardner to his new post, was with its copy in the files. Had it not been for this evidence, one wonders whether Gardner would have been confirmed in his appointment.

What was the new post? Gardner himsell was not very certain; he knew that chandu was the Malay-Chinese word for opium, and that the government was trying to regularise, control and, in the end, put an end to it sale and consumption. Now he had to learn about its system for doing so.

All the opium smokers in the country had been registered, on the basis of doctors' reports, and past consumption. Only these were allowed to smoke opium, and they could now legally buy the drug only from the Government shops. It was these establishments, with all the opportunities that existed for the corruption of the staff, that Gardner was now to inspect. He had to make sure that they had either all the opium that had been delivered to them, or money to cover its sale. Deliveries of opium to each shop were calculated on the basis of sales made during the preceding month. A loop-hole in the system was discovered early; clerks would put down fictitious sales, get more opium and sell it on their own account. Every few months one of these clerks would disappear, taking his small fortune to the safety of Sumatra.

Each of the chandu shops would be staffed by three clerks and an Indian watchman - the latter, perhaps because his addiction tended to be for hashish, usually rather contemptuous of the activities about him. The opium itself was sold in little pots or, more usually, in tiny twists of paper. These twists were sent to the shops in locked tins, ten thousand twists to each tin. Checking these was no light job, for Gardner was usually alone and had to go through each shop's stock laboriously, item by item.

The Government also ran a few shops where smoking was permitted as well. Here, in the gloom and the sweet, cloying smell of the opium fumes, there would be room for about twenty men, lying two by two on the wide shelves or bunks that ran around the shop. On each of these bunks there would be the lamp, necessary to heat and reheat the opium in the pipe, to keep it in the right condition for smoking.

Gardner is a man who, on the whole, tends to view his world and his experiences with curiosity rather than prejudice. As a result he was able on this, his first contact with drug-taking and addiction, to approach the matter without the "blinkers of a sanctimonious moralising which limited the view of so many of the Europeans who had to do with the problem of opium in the Far East". It is, therefore, not surprising that Gardner's conclusions do not always coincide with those of others. He is not, of course, a medical man,

nor are his ideas the result of experiment or years of dedicated observation; he himself will not insist that they are necessarily true. But they are the result of several years of close contact with those who sell and use the drug, and he expresses them with his usual straightforwardness.

"There's a great deal of nonsense talked about opium", he says. "I never saw the shambling, broken-down old wrecks of propaganda and fiction, nor anyone even seriously the worse for it".

He thinks that opium does not produce a stupor or vivid dreams until one has reached the stage of being poisoned by it, and that not more than one in every ten thousand becomes hopelessly and helplessly addicted to it. Its most rewarding effect, he considers, is the deep relaxation it brings; coolies might work six hours, smoke a pipe or two, then work another six hours. It seemed to him that it practically eliminated the necessity to sleep.

Much of what he calls the false idea of the effects of opium has, he says, been spread by missionaries. They used to go to the coolie lodging houses, where men would be resting after a twelve or fifteen-hour day, and take the exhausted figures on the beds and pallets of these places to be the victims of addiction. Gardner adds that the placidity opium induces is of social benefit; the normally argumentative, pugnacious and, at times, insanely angry coolie is soothed and relaxed, careless of insult and happy to be left alone. Gardner contrasts this with the effects of alcohol, the drug most socially acceptable to Europeans.

Gardner goes further. He claims that many of the human wrecks put forward by missionaries as evidence of the destructive powers of opium have frequently been pronounced by doctors to be sufferers from tuberculosis. Medical opinion is quoted by him as saying that such people can be kept alive by the drug. The placidity which opium induces may be an essential element in the cure of tuberculosis; and it has an actual healing effect upon lung tissue. His observations led him to conclude that opium might also build up some sortof immunity to minor diseases and fever. This does not mean that Gardner advocates drug-addiction, any more than does anyone who prescribes opium in any of the forms in which it is provided in modern medicine. But he adds, as proof of his seriousness, that if he were ever to become a sufferer from tuberculosis, he would probably start taking opium to counteract its effects. The main evils associated with it, he feels, are that it tempts people to

spend more than they can afford, and also that the desire for it may produce poisoning.

What certainly is dangerous, Gardner concedes, is tai chandu: twice smoked opium used by poorer people. The first smoking produces alkaloid poisons in the residue which are extremely dangerous when inhaled again. To prevent any trade in this, the Government used to buy it back from smokers at a relatively high price.

Gardner's view of hashish, brought in on the return trips of the rubber smugglers from Sumatra, is quite different. He thinks that this is an extremely dangerous drug, swiftly enslaving those who smoke or chew it. The Indians or Pathans, the most usual customers for it, would frequently go fighting-mad with it, only for their mood to sag into slacklipped red-eyed apathy. Often the chandu-shop watchmen, under the influences of hashish, would allow the premises they were paid to guard to be broken into and robbed.

Europeans were not allowed to be registered as smokers of opium. The drug that was most common among them, as far as Gardner could tell, was cocaine. This they would get from amenable Malay or Indian doctors: it tended to make them sharp, quick and very hard workers, but made them at the same time extremely irritable. It says something for the tolerance of the European society at this time that people would put up with this irritability without taking offence saying merely, "Take no notice - he takes 'snow', you know, that's why he's so odd".

The work tookGardner up the rivers that wound, brown and placid, through the thick jungles of Johore. Several times a month he would leave the neat bungalow where, surrounded by his ever-increasing collection of weapons, he lived with his wife (and, at intervals, the ghost of an irascible Scotsman buried among his women-folk in a small cemetary nearby) and take his place in the neat, white launch which carried him to the towns and villages where the opium shops were located. He would inspect the stock, collect the money, meet and greet old friends, then step aboard the launch again, hear the motor cough echoes from the high jungle at the river' sedge, and travel quietly back to his base

Now, with time on his hands to think and read and study, he started to fit together what he had learned of the traditions of the Malays and the Saki, and to take an interest in the history of the land he was travelling through. He began to break his journeys in order to examine the sites of the ancient cities of these people, whose past was beginning

to fascinate him more and more. In Gardner the time when he had been wholeheartedly planter or civil servant was almost over; more and more the folklorist archeologist in him began to take over. This transition was to continue during all the rest of his time in Malaya, until when he left in 1936 to go into retirement in England, he could think of himself primarily as an archeologist forced to leave the scene of his researches; the boy who had once had to teach himself to read had become a scholar.

# 6

## THE MAGIC OF MALAYA

Through Cornwall, ostracised by the Whites as much as he was trusted by his Malay co-religionists, Gardner was able to penetrate deeper into the minds and practises of the Malays than most foreigners. Skeat, in a hefty tome called Malay Magic, had given a large number of magical processes, and many accounts of the beliefs. But Gardner was to find that a good deal of this material was speculation, or second-hand. His knowledge of the Malay language, improving as it was by dint of constant contact, enabled him to enter into the atmosphere and thinking of the Malay, and plumb the depths of his attitude towards life; and his superstitions.

Through the Malays, in their turn, he got to know the Saki, those little-known jungle folk, whose exact ideas and way of life were rather different from the tall stories which had been brought back with fanfares by the "intrepid explorers" whose books and articles - not to mention lectures - had established so many reputations for self-styled experts on "Native Life".

The Malays were none too happy about the Sakis, and a barrier of many centuries between them was only just then breaking down. For time uncounted, the Malays had considered the pigmies little different from animals. True, they carried blowpipes and used bamboo spears: but they were thought animals nonetheless.

They were so elusive that only the credulous really believed in the very fact of their existence for long after the British advent in the Peninsula. The Malays had insisted that there were such beings; but the white man laughed, and attributed the tales to legend, to imagination. Who, after all, had ever seen a Saki?

About 1890, however, an Italian sailor, lost in the jungle, was found and looked after by a people who fitted the Malays' description of Sakis. Little by little they had become less shy, though next to nothing was known about their ways or beliefs: except for the blowpipes, of course.

Gardner made contact with them, gained their confidence by trading tobacco for chickens, and supplied them with other small items that they wanted.

They were about four and a half feet tall - for full-grown males - with the women a little shorter, on average. Their way of life was simple in the extreme. Settling for a time in a jungle clearing, they planted tapioca, hunted for what they needed in th6 way of meat. Then they left, having killed off most of the game in a fairly wide area. The general belief about them was that they ranged through the whole extent of the inaccessible jungle, places which were inhabited only by animals and insects. But they told Gardner that they were limited to certain places: for they feared the really "wild people", who dwelt in the middle of the tangled growth. Who these people were is still uncertain: though there are tales in Malaya and Siam of a strange, half-human creature which bears a close resemblance to theHimalayan Yeti (abominable snowman) and which sometimes comes out of the jungle and plays pranks with innocent Malays, sometimes hugging them and then dissolving into helpless laughter at their discomfiture as it speeds back into its tangled fastnesses. In spite of the war with the Communists in Malaya, nothing further has been discovered about these beings.

Gardner worked out from what he heard from the Saki that their circuit was generally about twenty to thirty miles. They would disappear from any given point for about nine months, then be seen again, living in their rude, temporary shelters.

The Malays often shot them on sight, terrified of their blowpipes, and regarding them as something that must he got rid of. But, although they had not developed far culturally, they were not easy marks. Those who live in the jungle have their own wisdom, which is just as much intuitive as based upon transmitted lore; and the Saki were masters of jungle living.

They did not seem to Gardner to have reached the Stone Age, let alone the IronAge. Blowpipes of reed, spears of fire-hardened bamboo - these were their weapons. The tools which they were so proud of were sharp bamboo splinters and bamboo stakes. Their methods of ambush were cunning and completely suited to the surroundings. They would lurk in front of a traveller, watch for his approach, then stick two-foot, sharpened stakes in his path. If there was no track, as there seldom was, it would not he possible

to see the weapon fixed among the brush. The consequence more often than not was impalement or a very nasty gash.

On their spears and on their blowpipe darts, they used poison: made from the Upas tree, locally called Ipoh, from which the town Ipoh takes its name. This was effective for all game up to the size of monkeys. For larger animals, the poison was ipoh ackah - ipoh mixed with the juices of a certain root: its manufacture a very closely guarded secret, known only to the people who actually made the poison and supplied it to the hunters.

The Upas tree is scientifically known as Antaristoxicaria. The poison is obtained by cutting a slit in the bark, and leaving a piece of hollow bamboo under it to collect sap for three days. This tree is a very tall one, with a smooth trunk, and does not grow in all parts of the Far East.

The Malays often came to the Saki for help in carrying out magical undertakings; and it was interesting to see their methods of curing, finding things which were lost, or attempting to peer into the future.

Magic, to the Saki, was a matter-of-fact affair. It was real, it was true, it was part of life. Few of the things which really primitive people did, Gardner realised, were meaningless. Actions and even beliefs were generally related to actuality. Looking at the Saki and other primitive beliefs from this point of view might allow one to hazard the idea that magic did work. He had already had experiences in which it seemed to work. When you were in a community in which you were the only person who thought that there was any doubt possible about this, the whole slant of thinking was changed. It was impossible, he realised, to try to explain to a speculative or analytical philosopher the change in quality and feeling which comes over a person surrounded by such a community. How did the Saki know that magic worked? Because it did, they said. Did they base their lives upon it? Yes, they did, in their own way. Could they live without it? There would be no point in so doing.

To perform magic, a crowd of women would dance and sing, throw herbs into a fire, and work themselves into a frenzy. Disease was driven out of the body by spells, being caused by demons. Gardner, finding this concept in a Stone Age type of people, concluded - several years before the diffusionist Robert Lowie (in Primitive Religion, in 1924) that it was probably a survival from the Stune Age times of human development.

Socially, however, hunting was more important to the

Saki - just as those who supply the immediate needs of a community are often looked upon elsewhere as more worthy of respect than magicians. It was a later stage of social evolution which brought the medicine-man or priest into kingly status, and placed all secular activities within his purview. And at hunting the Saki were adept. If they heard a sudden noise in the jungle, they would step into a bush holding arms and hands like imitation branches, following the natural lines of the trees. One could literally walk around the bush patch where they were hiding, and see nothing. Recalling tales of pixies (probably a folk-memory of the tiny picti, picts) of Britain, Gardner wondered whether this "frozen" stance could be a cause of the supposed vanishing of pixies, the subject of so many tales.

A film unit arrived while Gardner was carrying on his researches into the little people, and sought his help. They were not interested, he soon found, in the genuine thing; but in "strange rites", for the gaping cinema-goers at home.. It would take too long to get the whole story of Saki activities out of the pigmies, they would make up a story, and have it acted out. Besides, the Saki might be on their wandering way by then: and every film company has its shooting deadline...

They bound a puzzled Saki hunter to a tiny Saki malden, to be part of the ceremony that their script-man had devised; decided upon an Upas-tree ceremony, for getting the poison for the arrows. The Saki co-operated and allowed themselves to he posed by the white colleagues of their friend Gardner: they were amenable; but they were very, very perplexed people by the time the unit left. What was the religion of the visitors, they wanted to know. Gardner was not sure.

His interest In weapons and his new, close friendship with the Malays inevitably drew him to the study of the Kris - the wavy dagger which has been brought back by so many former residents in Malayasia, but about whlch, he noted with surprise, there was virtually no literature, certainly no book. The kris, it seemed, was considered by everyone - collectors, weapons experts, museum curators - as merely a weapon, simply the characteristic form which the dagger had taken In these parts. And yet, he noticed, the blade was treated with respect by the Malays. It came in distinctly different varieties. Some kris at least had distinctly talismanic virtues. Many tales of magical kris and their makers were told.

Was there really a magical, amuletic kris? Nonsense,

said the planters, the civil servants, the museum people. Gardner was far too full of ideas; he thought that everything had a meaning which it did not necessarily have. But, he argued, was it not necessary to ask the Malays something about their weapons, about their varieties, their history? No, everything that was known had been written by Raffles - and Raffles' name was sacrosanct.

But Gardner knew better. He arranged for Cornwall to invite some of his Malay friends, to show him their dances, their knives, tell him the tales of old. Raffles had only mentioned ordinary kris in his book, which everyone quoted, but had never read through. And they came, bringing old weapons, wrapped in cloth and disguised, because they were not now officially allowed to carry them.

He had to see quite a number of ceremonies and dances before he came to the kris-dance; and many of these evenings were pricelessly entertaining. Sometimes there were dancing girls. They were courtesans, the inheritors of the Hindu civilisation which had left its mark in this Moslem country in the folk-customs. The origin of their craft was in the temple dances of Hindustan. Like the temple performers of India, when they danced they were considered invoiable by men, and nobody attempted to touch these sinuous creatures, as they mimed the feelings of the heart of India. Their dances were the familiar highly stylised ones - with significant arm and finger gestures, and low monotonous singing.

Then there was the real thing: the purely Malayan Kris-dance. Men would arrive, dressed perhaps in silk sarongs, and sit about, chatting, listening to the music, until the atmosphere was right. Then, two by two, they would perform their ritual dance. These, like the ancient performances of the Indian school, were very stylised, very slow, with complete turns and jumps and elaborate wrist movements, maintaining the same tempo until the end. Music would come from a drum, perhaps a flute, sometimes a concertina - or even a gramophone. People would collect from miles around, knowing that a rare event was going to take place. Here was a mystery and a talismanic weapon if there ever was one. The respect with which the blades were treated, the light in the eyes of the performers, the reverent silence of the watchers, these things and what they said convinced Gardner that there was even more to it. And then he heard the whisper of the magical dagger that could perform wonders - the Kris majapahit, the

wonder-working weapon.

Later, there would he kris-fencing. Men would challenge each other, quietly, with dignity, as if they were about to take part in a ritual which had the sanction of respect from byegone ages. It was difficult, Gardner thought, to put across the emotional pitch that one felt when one was one of the spectators, accepted by the Malays as one of themselves, rather than a newsreel cameraman, or some stuffy white Tuan wanting to be entertained, and cholerically insistent on a more spicy or dramatic rendering of what held a tenuous mystery, something felt rather than seen. Gardner had, upon Cornwall's invitation, repeated the Confession of Faith of Islam, the Declaration of Unity which is the only requirement for those who wish to be admitted to the community. So far as the Malays were concerned, then, Gardner was indeed now one of them, and welcomed: just as when Cornwall had repeated it he had been received into the Moslem fold, and, of course, placed beyond the pale of the British community ... "I bear witness that there is no Deity but The One, and that Mohammed is his Messenger..."

As the kris-fencers crouched and shuffled around one another, in the evening light, surrounded by the mass of silent figures, Gardner felt fresh waves of spirituality pass through him. The performers wore ordinary clothes,but a sheath would he tied to the kris, and that would be padded too. Sometimes in the midst of an interlude of very slow circling, one man would make a lunge, stabbing with great speed and dexterity. Excitement grew to fever-pitch as the contestants closed in upon one another. The victor was decided, however, by the acclaim of the multitude. The crowd would see the vital blow - to the heart, stomach, sometimes the neck - and shout "You're hit!". Some of these bouts lasted for along time; or it might be a protracted evening, with eight or nine fights.

Then the old people would sit and talk, and tell tales; tales of Sembelan Poluh Sembelan, the magical spear. This was tied to the central beam of a house in the neighbourhood. Once a year it was taken down for cleaning, and then replaced. It was possessed by a hantu - a spirit - and it must not he allowed to work loose. The hantu caused it to rattle when any member of the family was going to die: a story reminiscent of odd omens associated with so many old houses in Britain.

The name of the spear means ninety-nine, and the story was thus, sworn to by all present: from this place, a

young man left, to make his fortune, leaving the girl whom he loved behind. After many years, he returned to seek her out, only to find a wedding feast for her in progress. Whether he had by now become a magician or not is uncertain, but his further actions and their results were rather strange. First he sat down quietly among the guests. Then, suddenly, he stood up, and threw his spear at the bridegroom. He, mortally wounded, plucked it from his breast, and hurled it at another man. In this way, the spear passed from one person to another, killing again and again, until it reached the ninety-ninth guest: who, realising that it was enchanted, stuck it in the ground, where it stood still.

In between the dancing and the singing, the feasts and the expeditions to see strange weapons and hear of stranger tales, Gardner heard tantalising tales of the Kris majapanit, the most curious of all magical weapons.

Over a period of twenty years in Malaya, Gardner followed the clues to the majapahit and other unusual kris, and became the world expert on every variety of the weapons. His beautiful home housed a magnificent collection of oriental weapons, many of which went to the Raffles Museum in Singapore.

Today, the British Museum has a Kris majapahit, and another magical variety - the Kris Pichit, a tiny talismanic dagger - presented by Gardner. Although the Singapore Museum had four majapahits, they had no idea what they were. The majapahit was almost a legend; many people did not believe that they really existed at all. By dint of considerable discussion and proving points, one by one, Gardner was able to establish their actual identity.

These weapons, whose powers are known and believed by Malays of all stages of culture, have small figures, sitting or standing, on the hilt.

One Malay story told of the deadly majapahit that a woman, alone in her hut with her husband away, was attacked by a tiger. As soon as the animal had ripped at the thin, palm-leaf wall, getting closer and closer, the Kris majapahit leapt off the wall, out of its scabbard, and buried itself in the tiger's heart.

The kris contains a hantu - a spirit, which has in some way become attached to it. These daggers are very old; they are not wavy like other varieties of kris. Small, slender and thin, the iron of which they are made is black. The handle and blade are all in one, and the handle is a figure of a man or a woman. Many Malays said that the larger

figures are male, the smaller female. They might represent some ancient gods or spirits which were the tutelaries of the enchanted blades.

Faced with this fascinating folklore, Gardner felt that here was a real field for original research: the world should know what the Malays felt about their romantic and ancient national weapon. But the quest was not without difficulties. Up to the nineteen-thirties, neither the British Museum (South Kensington), the Wallace Collection, the Tower, Windsor or any other museum he visited in his search in England had a specimen. Professor Balfour, of the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford, thought that they were used as currency.

All Malays agreed that the majapahits were very poisonous: the "depth equal to the white of a finger-nail was enough to kill". This could have been due to poison in the iron of which the dagger was made, thought Gardner; or because in former times the weapons had actually been poisoned at the tip. The kris of the majapahit type brings luck to the owner, and the hantu may preserve him against dangers of all kinds. But they are only lucky if the spirit likes the owner. "You must treat them with respect", Gardner noted. "Other stories are that they banish all fear and that you can go anywhere in the jungle if you have one, as tiger or elephant would all turn tail if you showed one to them. Some say that they will jump in the sheath to warn their owner of danger".

Two men told him that in a fight one simply draws the kris, and it would guide the hand and fight for its owner. The magical character of the weapon was established beyond all doubt by Gardner's researches. The importance of this work in building up Western anthropogical knowledge could not be overestimated. Like other pioneers, he proved his results only against stiff opposition. In one museum, when he spoke of the kris majapahit, an official flatly refused to believe in the vast complex of folklore about the little dagger: "Why do you not ask the Malays who work in the museum?" said Gardner. "Even the doorkeeper could tell you a great deal about what all Malays believe about this most important of their cultural objects". But this is not always the way in which the academic mind works; and Gardner's unorthodoxy in squatting down with the natives and learning about their ways was looked upon askance. The conflict was there: the battle between the search for knowledge and the belief that,

after all, there were some things that were just not done.

One of the things which were not done was to fraternise like that with the natives, even in the cause of science... Slowly, piece by piece, hearing stories, checking and rechecking, Gardner not only discovered for the Western world the story of the kris majapahit, but also devised theories to account for some of its mysteries. For him the search assumed the thrill which is known only to the trail-blazer, the man who is working in a field which is his, alone.

How old, for instance, was the majapahit, where did it come from: a place called Majapahit in Java was destroyed by a confederation of Moslem States in the fourteenth century of our era. If the kris came from there this would make these articles 600 years old and over. But, if one were to go by place-names, one might assume many things that might not be true. There was a place, for instance, called Pontianak; and also a Choul of the same name. They did not necessarily mean that the one originated from the other.

Not all Malay explanations, for that matter, could be believed.

Some Malays said that in olden days there was a king by the name of Majapahit, who made the undulations in the miraculous blades by squeezing the red-hot iron with his fingers. Dr. P V. van Stein Callenfells, the Dutch archaeologist, assured him that they belonged to the early Iron Age in Java, about the fourth century of the Christian era - but he admitted that scarcely anything was known about them.

It was generally believed that it was the Dutch who knew all about the kris; so Gardner took special leave, forfeiting pay and pension, to visit the Dutch East Indies. He found that they knew less than he did even at the earlier period of his investigations.

Some of the majapahits, the Malays confided in Gardner could draw fire. If a house, for instance, was burning, and the kris was pointed at it and moved in an arc, the fire would follow the movement of the dagger and leave the house. These powers, as in many other forms of magic, must be used only in cases of real need. If a fire were lit just to test the kris, it would not do its work: and the hantu within it would bring bad luck upon the experimenter. Nobody would play about with spirits, or challenge them.

But this kris could be your friend. Gardner managed to get hold of one of these rare, miracle-working objects. There were gang robbers about, and many people had been

killed bringing money for payday to the mines. Gardner knew that the Chinese, too, believed in Malay magic, and if he had such a kris, it might help him. "There were men you knew well" said the Malays, he noted, "who had the reputation of carrying a kris majapahit. They were invulnerable as a result; so it was not worth wasting cartridges shooting at them".

The little dagger certainly did the trick for him: "So I betted on the superstition of the people. In all countries robbers are the most superstitious of people. I spread the yarn of what I carried. Anyhow, though several attempts were made to get me while carrying money, none came off. Several times there were bad floods, and ambush parties waiting for me were cut off and nearly drowned. At last, I was reckoned 'unlucky' to meddle with - and generally got the job of fetching the pay, which I liked, as it meant a trip to town at the Company's expense".

Gardner embodied some of his investigations and conclusions in papers which he wrote for the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society; which gained him a good deal of academic recognition when they were published. Meanwhile he worked upon his magnum opus - Kris and Other Malay Weapons, which finally established him as the world authority. This is still the standard work on the subject.

A story is told of him during the period of his researches, when he went to the Philippines to contact museum authorities about Malaysian weapons. "Yes, we have some academic literature in reprint form; it will give you just the answers you need". When the booklets arrived from the library, Professor Otley Bayer, the Director, looked at them and said: "Aw, heck! You wrote them yourself!"

Delving again into the magic of the kris, he heard of some which could kill at a distance (like the Australian pointing stick), simply by being pointed at a victim. This legend was the cause of a Raja and his followers being wiped out when they faced a Dutch regiment in the East Indies, armed only with a magical kris; this the ruler levelled at the invaders and was mowed down by machine guns. Was this failure an indication that magical arms did not in fact work, Gardner wanted to know from his Malays. Not at all: it could mean that the hantu had refused to act for that particular person...

Malays said that a magical kris should be kept tightly sheathed at all times when not in use, and pointing upwards or downwards - otherwise the evil influence would do harm and cause sickness. "How much the modern Malay believes

I cannot say; more than he admits, I believe. That older people believe in it I had proof, when a highly educated Malay lady screamed and nearly jumped out of her chair, because a sheathed kris majapahit I was showing inadvertently pointed at her". If enlightened Westerners cannot break a looking-glass without at least a momentary anticipation of seven years' bad luck, it seemed not impossible that in Malay many might not be prepared to risk illness or death from the magic knife.

Attempts to explain the origin of the belief in pointing to produce death or disease are many, and Gardner mentions some of them. "Malays have a much-feared form of sorcery, tuju - pointing out a victim to a spirit of evil, or setting the spirit at him. The pointing is usually done with the finger, though I have heard of ahuman bone being used. Perhaps the idea of pointing the kris is in setting the spirit of the kris at him".

Quite apart from the magic nature of the kris, Gardner often thought how pleasant it would be if the weapon were retained as an item in the ceremonial dress of the Malay gentleman. He noted with pleasure that "in Perak one often sees a Malay nobleman wearing his kris as a badge of rank, and may even see it worn by a magistrate sitting on the Bench". The kris is not a mere assassin's weapon, something used by stealth in the dark. As a part of the Malay heritage, Gardner felt, it should be more widely worn. In the days when every man carried his own, kris-fighting filled the function of duelling among the Europeans. It actually contributed towards better law and order. Where any man is liable to spring to arms in the defence of his honour, he is less likely to be attacked.

He quotes Raffles approvingly, in saying just this: "The knowledge that such an immediate appeal is always at hand prevents the necessity of its being resorted to".

Many legends surrounded the extraordinary Kris pitchit, Gardner found. If he had seen only eight majapahits, only three of the reputedly miraculous Kris pitchit had for long come his way. Over the years he was to find many more; one belonged to a resident of Kedah, one was in his own possession, and the third was lent by him to the Singapore Museum. They are all very thin, with blades damascened.  Their special feature, from which they take the name pitchit (squeezed) is the round depressions on either side of the flat of the blade, which appear slightly raised on the other side, exactly as if someone had taken a strip

of clay and squeezed it between the tips of his fingers. It could have been made by taking a red-hot blade, and squeezing it out with tongs shaped like the finger tips.

The finger-marks seemed to have been made in the process of manufacture, he observed, as the damascening follows through the marks.

How was this effect achieved? Some say that they were fashioned by Orang Wali (saintly hermits); some that they were made in the olden days, either at Majapahit or elsewhere. Others hold that they can be made by any efficient witch doctor (pawang); most people think that they are lucky, although the tales about them are sometimes confused with those about the miraculous majapahit.

Gardner formed two working theories as to the possible method of manufacture, one which seemed to him to fit in every detail could account for the kris if it were:

> "made in the ordinary way by some Pawang (Witch Doctor), the finger-marks being hammered into the red-hot iron; then, at night, in the presence of witnesses, with much ceremony, the handle is heated red-hot and the Pawang with well-oiled fingers, quickly pinches along the blade, and when it is cold shows the finger-marks as proof of his power".

He tried hard, but in vain, to locate pawangs who were said actually to make these kris; but they were always in the next village, and then the next. The weapons are so rare that he thinks that there "must be some basis" for the story of complicated manufacture, if not magic. He believes that these very thin blades are actually squeezed out by fingers protected by some fire-resisting substance, a treasured secret of the pawangs. This is the second theoretical possibility.

Searching for weapon-lore brought Gardner face to face with another set of legends which are in some way paralelled by magical thinking in the West. This is the doctrine of invulnerability; charms against wounds, or the use of secret ceremonies made men believe that they could not be harmed, even in the fiercest battle.

Invulnerability had its light side. There was the true story of the Malay civil servant who was ambushed by

a malcontent in the open street. The official parried the first thrust with his umbrella and said sternly: "Don't do that, you fool,you'll only spoil your weapon Don't you know that I am invulnerable?" The assailant, of course, slunk off without further ado.

Invulnerability, like drawing fire away from houses or killing by magic, seems to be successful in the Malay belief, only under "genuine" circumstances. It cannot be reproduced experimentally. This may point to the presence of the emotion-concentration theory. Magic, it is held, works at least partly because of the amount of emotional force which the individual puts into it.

An enquiry took place into the death of a man who had stabbed himself to death in the presence of many witnesses. It was discovered that he had been paying court to a neighbour's wife, and the aggrieved husband had threatened him. "He therefore went to the local pawang", Gardner records, "who for a fair sum proceeded to make him invulnerable, a process that took several days. At the end of tius time the pawang gave him a kris and said: 'Stab yourself, the blade will not pierce' . He did so, and the kris did not harm him. But when he tried to repeat the performance to show off to his friends, it killed him".

The magician gave evidence in court that he had made many men invulnerable, and that it had always worked before.

The silver (or rather. golden) bullet superstition exists in Malay as well as in the Middle East and Europe. The Sultan of Malacca was said to have at his court as a showpiece an invulnerable man. Anyone could shoot at him who liked; the bullets were to be seen popping off him. But when the Sultan of Johore sent a marksman armed with a golden bullet it killed him.

His close contact with the magical thinking, the legends and the folk-practises of Ceylonese, Dyaks, Saki and Malays, as well as his reading of the work published by more and more Western investigators, was convincing Gardner of the necessity for a new attitude towards the whole question of the supernatural. As a scientific worker, he was bound to seek and if possible to find a rational explanation for the wonders which were reported from all sides. Legends, when they took very similar forms in various countries, were generally attributed to culture-drifts: stories following trade-routes, and so on.

Yet, at the same time, he was continually coming across instances of beliefs which were misinterpreted or

ignored by more conventional workers. How much more priceless material, he wondered, had been shrugged off - both here and elsewhere - because it was not possible to find an explanation in the light of contemporary knowledge? Further, he noted that while the Malays and other Asian people were fond of inexact and escapist thinking, they were so often correct in matters of feeling and understanding.

His later experiences, with the witches of Britain, convinced him that magic did work, probably by elevating the concentration faculties of the mind in a way which made it impossible for it to be reproduced experimentally. Unlike most people with a pet theory, he had three frames of reference: the Oriental magicians, the spiritualists in London, and the followers of the Craft of theWitch in Britain. All of them, he is convinced, have something in common, something which we call magic, but which one day may find recognition (just as the Kris majapahit, which "did not exist') had eventually to be acknowledged through painstaking study and experience.

Some magical tales, at least, may be works of pure fiction. Others, again, could be caused by faulty observation of events, or distortion in transmission from one person to another. Behind many such accounts, however, Gardner was sure that there was something. So he collected unusual stories of the occult.

A Javanese was reputed to have a magic flute by which he charmed the hearts of girls and women; none was safe from this pied piper, and many husbands and fathers complained to their Sultan. "Kill him" was the advice, "one who has outraged your women..." But they could not: he was protected by a Kris majapahit, which he always wore; its magic made him invulnerable.

And so he had to be overcome by a trick. One day, when he came to the Sultan's court, the prince admired his kris, asked whether he could have a look at it. Bound by Court etiquette to hand it over, the magician stood defenceless. Taking advantage of this moment of weakness, the betrayed menfolk rushed their enemy, and did him to death on the spot.

Apart from illustrating the diffusion of the belief in invulnerability conferred by a magical kris, Gardner thought that a tale such as this might show echoes of the mesmeric possibilities in music. On the other hand, the tale might be a fusion of more than one other, original tradition. Or, taken another way, the man may have had hypnotic power, attributed

to the wiles of his flute and reinforced by a legend put about by himself that he could suffer no hurt because of the magical knife. So very little research had been done on this field, and there were so few people who would even give the possibilities a moment's attention.

On his many expeditions up the rivers Muar and Johore, Gardner would carry on his search for magic and belief, trying to fit the pieces into the pattern of archaeology and anthropology which he was preparing. The arrival of Islam, he found, with the Koranic interdiction of magical art, had killed many of the old beliefs. Still surviving was a little harvest magic, some fortune-telling, and some processes for finding lost articles.

Seeing into the future was done by taking the sap of a certain tree, and burning the aromatic resin, producing sweet smoke favourable for the raising of spirits.

One of the oddest beliefs which he unearthed was the implicit one that there was a sort of fourth dimension, a country within the country, into which people could, and sometimes did, disappear. And, like similar legends in other countries, the people there had no sense of time as we knowit. There are many folk tales of this kind in Europe.

The Malays had sometimes heard the sounds made by people of the lost dimension - the orang bunyan - laughter and music which had no human source. The unknown people were usually pleasant, like the fairies of the West. But they could become very hostile if they were offended, and even kill.

One tale was told him about a rickshaw man, who came running, terrified, into town. He was almost immediately followed by a girl, in much the same state of fright. When their story was sorted out, it seemed to be an authentic account, thought the Malays, of the appearance of the orang bunyan. The woman was a fille de joie, and had been approached by a man, who asked her to accompany him to his house. She agreed, and they hired the rickshaw to take them there. On, on went the two-wheeled cart, with the rickshaw man padding away in front. When they reached the jungle, with no human habitation in sight, the stranger stopped the rickshaw. "This is my house" he said, "can't you see it?" There was a considerable argument; then the man disappeared. The rickshaw man fled.

Then there was the account of the schoolboy at Muar, who never reached his home after classes. The police were called and searched everywhere they could think of,

even dragged the river. After five days, when all hope was lost, the boy reappeared, looking well-fed and healthy. Some kind ladies had taken him into a tree, he said; they had looked after him and given him good food to eat. From time to time he had seen people searching for him, but they told him that it did not matter, and so he did not make any sign. Eventually, the strange creatures had said that it was time that he was going back, and again he had obeyed them. Asked to describe them, he could only say that they were more beautiful than any human beings that he had ever seen.

The third characteristic story of this unknown land was that of the old man, whom Gardner saw paddling up the river every morning, to return to his village at nightfall. Some years before, ran his lucid enough story, he had found himself - during a day's fishing - in an unknown part of the jungle, where he met a strangely alluring girl. Although he already had a wife and children, he married her, felt that he had to do so. He lived with her for thirty years, having many children, getting older, and growing a long white beard, normally impossible for a Malay until old age.

One day he found that he was again in a familiar part of the forest, on the river again, and he returned home: to find that he had been gone only between three and four years. But to all appearances he was an old man. Now, oblivious of his real wife and children, he paddled daily up the river, seeking the other, enchanted land.

What could the explanation for all this be? Either there was reality in the legends and accounts of people who claimed to be eye-witnesses to these things, or some sort of mass illusion was at work. The Malays, certainly, seemed to believe what they were saying. But, with their loneliness and hard life, they had developed a love of the marvellous, tended to abstract thinking. True, in the jungle it is somehow easy to believe anything. But Gardner was still puzzled.

Certain it was that there were unusual aspects in Malay temperament. There was, he discovered, the state of mind called Latah - the compulsive imitation of words or actions by the person who is said to "be Latab". It may be associated with hysteria. When aperson prone to it is given a sudden shock he (or more often she) will immediately imitate what is said or the gestures that are made by the person who had administered the surprise. He may know that he is Latah (like the people who know that they are "ticklish") but is unable to prevent himself being put into

the state. Whether this condition is akin to hypnosis is not certain. The imitation of acts, Gardner felt, might be due to a desire to obey suggestions implicit in the act. While numerous Europeans shrugged off Latah as a childish game which had no true existence as a phenomenon, Gardner realized that the victim was really helpless in its grip. Sometimes, of course, it took the form of a game among the playful Malays, especially when girls shocked one another into it. One remarkable indication of the compulsive nature of the imitation noted by Gardner was that the subject would even copy the most obscene gestures made to her, although in the normal state she might be the most prudish of mortals.

Although the Malays did not believe that the Latah phenomenon was due to any supernatural cause, there was evidence to indicate that they thought that latah-prone people were capable of exercising magical influence under certain circumstances rather more than was the case with ordinary individuals.

That the influence of latah is not attributed to Djinns indicates that the phenomenon was known before the present belief in such spirits had found a shape. The idea of the Djinn, brought to the Malays by Islam, has been altered to some extent by the local pre-Islamic beliefs. Gardner turned his attention to Djinn-lore among the Malays.

He found that they believe in two different species: those who possess people, and those which have an independent existence outside. They are usually thought to be evil, like those of the Arabian Nights; and the external ones cannot afflict the personality without the aid of the "inside" ones, who live in the internal organs.

He was reminded of Christian Science belief by the therapeutic theory on Djinns which was outlined by Malay medicine-men when he had gained their confidence. Disease may be caused, they believe, by the outside Djinn acting upon the interior ones, for these latter control the mind.

What form do the outsiders among the Djinn take? They are very numerous, and live in the jungles and among the hills. They are beings of the earth, and cannot be thought of as celestial beings, or angels. They have no distinct shape and their substance is mutable. They were created from fire. Some of them are true believers, others are not.

Plungingfurther into the magic of the Malays, Gardner studied the powerful form of ritual called Main Petere, presided over by a pawang (magician), who works it by means

of a pact with friendly demons.

Rituals designed to use the powers of the demons always begin with a prayer seeking the pardon of the Almighty for carrying them out. After this repentance, the proceedings start. All diseases are due to demons; therefore by setting one group of them against another the ailment can be driven out. This is not merely a symbolic act, for the pawang is convinced that he is in fact dealing with a supernatural agency. By means of his special knowledge of rituals, and through his training, he can control such forces.

Gardner managed to arrange to be present during one of these ceremonies. In a large room, late at night, strings of sweet-smelling Bunga Malor (Indian Jasmine) had been hung; for this flower has a special attraction for spirits, and fulfils the function of the perfumes used in similiar rites by other peoples. One of the added powers of this flower, according to Malay belief, is to increase the love of man for woman, and the other way about.

The pawang takes up his position in the centre of the room, while the appropriate ritualistic items are arranged. On a large tray is a plate of cooked rice coloured yellow with turmeric, an egg, three skeins of white thread, betel-nut ready for chewing, a little pile of small coins, and a beeswax candle on a springy support of ratten cane. These are the offerings for the Pengaras Guru, the chief magician.

While the drummer beats out an insistent rhythm, another tray or plate is prepared. Containing similar articles to those in the first offering, it is placed upon a mat. Added to it with due gravity is some rice toasted in the husk, a pancake and a cup of water from a running stream. This is the Kenderi - the sacrificial offering to the spirits that are to be be called up. The pawang's assistants start to play various instruments; a European violin gives out a high Oriental melody; one man beats a brass bowl, preferably endowed with the sanctity of having been brought from Mecca, with two bamboo drumsticks. The drummer is continuously at work, while the Eastern three-stringed instrument, the Rabab (the rebec, precursor of the violin), adds its quota to the background of weird melody - the fiddler making sure that he sits in the East. The food provided for the musicians always takes the same form: toasted padi-rice in the husk - a plate of bananas, scented water with the odour of roses and green coconuts, of which the juice is taken by the band.

An incense-burner with charcoal and benzoin (gum benjamin) in it is placed before the violinist, or the chief

musician.

When all is ready, the pawang takes some of the sacrificial offering, and spreads it upon a banana leaf. Thus does he formally offer the food to the spirits. Seating himself in the West, he recites a very long prayer and invocation setting forth the intentions of the ritual. The words may vary, but they always begin with the formal prayer used by Moslems to defeat the presence or actions of Satan:

> Bismillah ar-Rahman, ar-Rahim!
> Ya Allah! Audhubillahi mm ash -
> Shaitan ar Rajim!
> "In the Name of the Merciful and Compass-
> ionate God! O Allah!
> I take refuge with Allah from Satan the
> Stone One!"

Then the pawang calls upon the Djinns, in much the same way as the Moorish magicians set forth in such books as that of al-Buni: though the wording may vary slightly, and seems to be adapted to the needs of the moment. The magician is working up the atmosphere to the required tension:

> "O Mamuk, the black spirit of the Thunderbolts!
> O yellow Spirit of Ranjuna's Bow!
> O Phantom of the Village!
> O Seven Princesses of the Village!
> O Irun Dana of the Well of Blood!
> O Spectre Huntsman with the Seven Faces!
> O Pan Djinn, Spectre of the Sea!
> O Ajal Djinn - Death's Commander!
> You, and many others, evil Djinni, keep away,
> Keep away!"

Having disposed of the attentions of unwelcome spirits, the pawang sits facing the East, and draws over himself a cloth or shawl. A brasier must be before him, with glowing charcoal in which aromatic and pleasant odours are burning. As he sits there, he calls his own spirit, his "control", to come into him. The repetition of this call continues while the violin player starts his special song: the Gerak Orang Lupa, as the pawang slips into a trance. In this state he is called the Orang Lupa: the man who has forgotten.

The object of the song is to hasten the appearance of the spirit, or, rather, to help it to function through its host. The special chant starts with the Profession of the Islamic

faith, and then invokes the power of the "old-time Dewas through their original king":

| | |
|---|---|
| "La-illa-ha-illa-alla" | (there is no God but Allah) |
| "Muhammad-ar - rasul -allah" | (Mohamed is the Messenger of Allah). |
| "Come, King of the Djinns; | |
| Come, Sulang Tama Sari | (leader of the Djinn procession)!" |

While this repetition continues, the pawang is seen to move. Then he rolls his head violently. He starts to speak incoherently, waving his arms to indicate the spirits that are surrounding him. Presently he chooses the one he wants, and beckons it. In a state of ecstatic frenzy, the pawang rolls his head, while the musicians increase the pace of their music. When the magician raises both hands above him, the chant and music stop instantly.

Now the pawang is possessed by the spirit which he has selected. He is in a position to heal the sick, by drawing the spirit of disease from him. If the performance is for the purpose of locating lost or stolen property, he is said to be able to indicate where it is. The ritual may have been staged for a young man to awaken love in a girl. In this case the pawang sends the spirit to enter the head of the girl, to obsess her with thoughts about the swain. In such instances, a large bunch of the Jasmine flowers are given to the youth to hang above his bed. Asked whether women ever used this magic to attract men, the Malays whom Gardnerhad become friendly with said of course they did; how otherwise could one explain so many apparently unattractive women who were being pursued by hordes of young men who ought to know better? And they named them.

But this ritual is usually used for constructive purposes of a greater social value.

The attitude of the pawang towards the spirits was something which interested Gardner greatly. They, like most non-Europeans, had escaped the concentration of thought upon the devil which was the outcome of Western religious development. Evil creatures had none of the immense terror-value for them they would have had for the people of the Middle Ages in Europe, and still has for, say, Christians who follow closely the teaching that the Evil One can get control of a person's soul. It was here that he saw

that the attitude towards the power of evil even in a relatively primitive people did not have to border upon the psychotic. Later anthropological work confirmed what scientists had been saying for some decades: that you have to believe in a terrifyingly powerful devil only if this belief is part of organised teaching which conditions the people by fear. It is, he noted, by no means as universal as had been assumed by the pious among the Catholics and Protestants alike.

The Malay attitude, though perhaps naive, was less dangerous to sanity than the theological erection of a terror figure for the devil. Evil spirits were wicked because they were not Believers. As he himself concluded, the feeling about them among the Malays was something analogous to the thinking of Europeans about the African negroes a couple of hundred years ago. Wicked because they were not Christians, they could be captured and made to work as slaves.

A Djinn, then, was something naughty which might be used by any true believer who had the power and knowledge. Before the mania in Europe which mounted to such an extent that people believed that devils could attack them at any moment, the magician of the Middle Ages prayed to his God to force these elements to work for him - just as the Malay does today. This accounts, of course, for the mixture of the sacred and the profane in so many magical books.

The methods of "raising djinns" used by the Malays, Gardner observed, shares the mechanism employed by people in many different countries to attain contact with a power which they believe to need such physical encouragement. A state of emotion is built up, during which, it is believed, access may be had to whatever power is invoked. Understanding the exact nature of that power is not important; any more than its name is important. What does count, owever, is that it is thought to be in a specially-powerful relationship with your objectives. Mescaline, hashish, dancing, concentration - whisky among the Scots - these are some of the elements which go towards the "opening of the inner eye" which is supposed to bring about the union of the man and the power within and without.

Concentration of thought and belief may account for the widespread belief in lycanthropy - human beings turned into animals. The Malays, like the Europeans of olden times, have a firm belief in the possibility of such a transformation. Were-tigers are said to be common among the people of Krinchi, and Gardner tried to find out a little more about them than was current in ordinary legend.

Krinchi people come from the north of Sumatra; as merchants and pedlars to Malaya. Gardner found a village on the river in Perak, about which a story is told which might be thought to shed at least some light upon the origins of tiger-man tales.

Late one night an old pedlar was walking towards the village. He heard a tiger roar quite close to him, and hastened his steps, only to find in his path a tiger trap dug deep into the ground. As the animal was very close to him, he decided to take refuge in the trap: on the principle that if a tiger could not get out after the trap was sprung, it would not be able to get in if he were in It, and had sprung it.

Diving into the trap, he pulled the bait. The door, weighted with huge rocks, crashed down. The tiger tried to enter, but passed on at dawn. The old man went to sleep. Some women came along at length, and he told them his story. They, for their part, realised that the facts must be a little different. They rushed to the village and announced that a were tiger had been caught, but had turned into a man at dawn.

The men came out with guns and spears, heard his explanation and were puzzled. Finally they called their Imam, a religious teacher, to make the pedlar swear to the truth of his statement on the Koran. Surrounded by the uncertain throng, he willingly took the oath. As he was being pulled from the trap, someone said: "If a True Believer swears upon the Koran, we must believe him. But a tiger would swear falsely on fifty Korans". So he was shot in the trap.

Yet stories are current of tiger spoors which turn into human footmarks; of men who retain after reverting to human shape the spear-wounds which they have suffered while in tiger-form. Many of these tales are remarkably-similar to those which have been told and retold in Europe and which are still believed in out-of-the-way places, particularly in the Hungarian vampire country. For better or worse, Gardner was unable to get conclusive evidence of the existence of were-tigers.

Even diviners were generally baffled when asked to say whether they could detect a man-tiger; although the activities in more conventional kinds of divining were quite impressive. Using a rod fashioned from seven rattan canes carefully polished and tied together at one end, the diviner has several functions. He can cure people of sickness, discover lost or stolen goods, and tell whether an evil object

(designed to emanate a curse) has been buried under a house.

A typical ceremony of Malay radiesthesia starts with the diviner oiling his hands and the canes. Chanting an incantation to the effect that the canes are to provide a true answer to the problem, he holds the bundle over burning incense. As he does so, his hand begins to shake, and the canes rattle. This is the signal that the canes are ready to "do their work".

If he is searching for something, the diviner may not expect that the rattling of the canes will lead him exactly to it. When he reaches the appropriate position of his goal the canes cease to talk, and the object is somewhere near.

Gardner observed these men at work on numerous occasions. When they told him that the canes were announcing the path that a thief had taken with his loot, the investigator was not inclined to believe them. But in the finding of lost objects and buried curses, they undoubtedly did seem to score successes. Whether they had themselves concealed the things, in the hope of being called in would always remain a mystery, he decided. On balance, however, he was inclined to believe that there was "something in it". After all in spite of a great deal of disbelief in the efficacy of the divining-rod, hardheaded American businessmen continued to employ diviners, looking for metals,oil and water.

On the lighter side of magical studies, Gardner often found pawangs who were themselves looking for good spells to use in the discharge of their duties. Pawang Selleh, of Johore, was one of the old, traditional type. He had an inexhaustible supply of magical stories and legends, many of them the kind which were collected by Sir Richard Winstedt, when he was Director of Education there.

This pawang's main activity in the magical sense was to make good crops and good weather for the community. His main difficulty, as confided to Gardner, was that theological barriers were standing in his way. What would have passed, in this Moslem land, in his father's time as a permissible piece of magic, was not allowed. Once he appealed to Gardner, piteously:

"Tuan, do you know of any spell which will keep rats out of the ricefields? How can you do it without the help of the gods? And the Imam (religious teachers) here will not let me do that, and everybody blames me."

He had a great reputation for recovering stolen property, however.

A system of little balances (which he was reminded of

when Gardner first saw Western radiesthesia demonstrated) told him which direction a thief had taken. Sometimes these oracular weights said that the miscreant had gone too far away to be caught. Gardner followed up a number of cases which satisfied him that they had been, in some inexplicable way, right; and the property was recovered. At times the pawang would describe the thief, but say that the property had been taken beyond the sea to Sumatra, eight hours' sailing - so that the goods could not be discovered. But even in some of these cases the thief was eventually taken on his return. With a little persuasion, he might be induced to give up the money he had made in this way. The pawang, like his opposite numbers everywhere, did a line in love-charms; he helped in lawsuits, was believed in by people in general and certainly had implicit faith in his own powers.

Meanwhile, Gardner kept up his correspondence with other workers in the field of comparative religion and folklore, and continued the studies which have given him such an encyclopaedic knowledge of the occult. Everywhere in Malaya he encountered the theory that disease are chiefly caused by demons. Comparing this with parallel work, he noted Dr.Charles Singer's dictum, that Greek medicine's demonism was reinforced by the demonism of Christianity, after its penetration by Babylonian theories of the same kind.

This kind of interaction was also visible in Malaya. It was only in comparatively recent times that even the Western world was able to believe that much disease was not due to bewitchment.

Christianity, he realised, had not itself done much more than propagate this superstition. His isolation from contact with the conventional Christian conditioning, together with his wide reading in the spirit of the objective study of religion which was at that time spreading, made him see the great world religions in a far more detached light than was possible for many people.

As he read the works of Singer, his inner prompting told him that New Testament Christianity held little for him: "The pathology of the New Testament is mainly demonic, and many of the miracles of healing are exorcisms. There were devils of blindness, dumbness, madness and epilepsy; and Luke the physician regarded the "great fever" of old Simon's mother in the light of a demon; for, Jesus, he says, stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her".

He spent some time verifying some of Skeat's processes, as given in his monumental Malay Magic, in order

to check their accuracy aginst the thinking of the Malays. Among those which he found to be general was one connected with the wax image type of curse and combined with a "cursing of footrpints".

In this, the pawang would make a waxen image the length of a footstep, and representing a corpse. If blindness was to be inflicted by magical means, the eye in the model is pierced; or the stomach for pains in the belly, and so on. To kill, the head was transfixed with a twig. Then the image was enshrouded, and prayed over (with the burial service) as if it really were a corpse; later being buried in the middle of a path which the original of the figure must traverse. The magician usually repeats a formula protesting that it is not he, but the Archangel Gabriel, that is burying the victim: and similarly, "it is not wax that I torment, but the liver, heart, spleen (etc.) of so-and-so..." This, he observed, very much resembled what European witches were often accused of doing; and he concluded that it was undoubtedly much used in folk-magic the world over.

He was later to find, in visits to the prehistoric caves in France similar methods of sympathetic magic used in the illustrations, painted perhaps twenty-five thousand years ago, of animals pierced with spears.

Parellels withWestern crystal-gazing were to be found both in Malaya and Borneo. Gardner saw people looking at bright lamps, or upon the full moon, or even gazing into a bowl of water, to attain the state which made divination possible. The people, he found, had heard of gazing crystals, but did not use them, probably because they were not to be had. From what he heard, water was considered to be the most successful medium in these countries. His own efforts with crystals were not outstandingly successful, but his mind went back to the times when he had seen - and felt - things which seemed to be meaningful, by gazing into the bright glow of the fire.

An evil about to befall someone may be seen in the gazing-bowl, or it may be averred from some other source. Malays, Gardner discovered, had a great protective formula against the major catastrophes. It only had one drawback: unless every word was pronounced with perfect accuracy, it killed the invocant - or made the misfortune much worse than it would otherwise have been. The words are:

"Tebat, Tobati, Tobat, Tobat, Tobati, Tohidak,
Tebat, Tobati, Tomazat, Tebat, Tobat."

The Malays did not know the meaning of the words, and repeated them without much caring. In this they resembled certain European charms in the Middle Ages (and everywhere, at different times), such as the formula GUT, GUTT, GUTTINI, ETC.* Gardner thought these Western words probably originated in such places as Sumeria or Babylonia. Aleister Crowley believed, as the mediaeval magicians did, that spells in "unknown tongues" had more effect than others. Personally he thought that it was a question of the effect upon the mind of the operator. In any case, the origin of the mysterious words used by the Malays was not far to seek. They were of the characteristic repetition-formula type used by the wandering Arab and Persian fakirs and walis. Even the words in this series were decipherable as Arabic ones, invocations asked for "Heallng, in Thy Name; Heal! I repent! By Thy Unity!" Whether used to avert all catastrophes or not, the words undoubtedly were originally given out by some sage as a charm against disease.

The religion of Islam might be well established in the Malay Peninsula, with its regulations superimposed upon the heretical magic of the pawangs, but there is still a great deal of superstition just below the surface. Gardner collected an unusual item about the enchanted guns of Panchor, which went far to show just this.

Up the Johore river is a small fort on a hill; on it was a pair of cannon, which the Sultan was determined to have sent to Johore - Bahru, because the local people were alleged to pray to them, and they would be less accessible there. Many men, the story goes, tried to carry them down, but they could not do so, because of the weight of some other unascertained cause. Finally an ancient pawang strode up to the guns, picked them up, and carried them down the hill, one under each arm.

These pieces were placed in the Fort at Johore Bahru, where a sentry is placed to prevent any act of worship being performed in their vicinity. The reason for the sanctity of the guns is not known. Gardner had a good look at them. They were, he saw, about twelve feet long. One had the original muzzle blown off and a brass muzzle cast into it; it could certainly not be used in war.

In the dusk, Gardner saw people making their way by stealth to pray to the guns, and make offerings to the Djinns

* Cf. KUT, KUTT, KUTTANI (-INI) = Arabic (ANDALUSIAN) anti-evil charm.

which inhabited them. One story about the guns was that when a number of pilgrims were returning from Mecca, there was a terrible storm. The crew went to the holy men, and asked them to pray for the tempest to cease. But the storm became worse. Then they prayed again, and it worsened again. Finally, someone said: "Let us pray to something which works. Let us pray to the Guns of Panchor this time" - they prayed and the storm abated. When they arrived at Johore Bahru, many people came to welcome them, to take them to the mosque; but they went straight to the Guns, to give thanks for their deliverance.

These guns are of European make, and there is nothing superficially remarkable about them. The tempest incident itself might have been sufficient to endow them with the powers which they are said to have, of answering prayers. There are parallels in Asian history of objects of worship being established in one incident, also sometimes in connection with storms. One of the most remarkable is the event which established Hasan ibn Saba as the leader of the Assassins, who terrorised most of the Middle Eastern courts during the thirteenth century. Hasan offered to calm a storm while travelling on shipboard, providing the passengers would acknowledge him as God if they were saved. They did, and were saved. Many years later it was stated that he had told an intimate that he knew at that moment that he had nothing to lose...

Relics of this kind, and also the many stories current among the Malays about their ancient civilisation, prompted Gardner to embark upon some of the most important work of his career. He determined to prove that there had in fact been an ancient Malay culture, with substantial buildings, with a gold coinage, with an importance of its own - and with large, ocean-going ships. Could all these things be mere figments of the imaginations of the people among whom he lived and worked. Again, when he put these ideas up to White officials, they scoffed. The Malays were at a low stage of civilisation. All influences came to them second-hand from India; first Hindu, then Moslem. They could not build big ships. If they could have done so, they would have traded far and wide. If they had done that, they would have articles of commerce and so on from other great civilizations far afield. And so they went on. And yet, in the end, Gardner was to prove everyone of his contentions, and change the story of prehistory in the Malay Archipelago.

# 7

## SECRETS OF THE PAST

Magic and strange weapons apart, Gardner realised in his comings and goings with the Malays - with the ordinary people of the villages - that what could be seen above the surface must constitute but a part of the country's heritage. Here was a field that had hardly been touched, and a method of approach - through the tales and ideas of the people - which was not open to most of the other Europeans, who were involved for the most part in matters connected with the British side of Malaya: administration and commerce.

By the time he reached Johore, therefore, Gardner was ready to carry his probing into the past a stage further. If the Malays said that they had had, for instance, stone forts and contacts with people whom he took to mean the Phonenecians, why should he not try to find archaeological material to shed light upon this?

He had to tread warily. He heard that there were ruined buildings at Johore Lama, but the people feared that the Sultan would not approve explorations. He was said to believe the Archaeologists only wanted to dig up dead people. As the Sultan of Johore was an independent prince under British advisers, one could not risk making a fornial approach, only to be turned down. Too much, potentially, was at stake. If diggings were to be forbidden, priceless evidence of Malayan prehistory might be lost.

Curiosity, however, impelled his footsteps to Johore Lama, where Sultan Mahmud Shah had fled when the Portuguese captured Malacca. Sultan Alauddin, son of the defeated ruler, decided to build an impregnable fortress, coupled with a city and trading centre, as his new capital: this was the legend. He must have been the founder of the royal dynasty of Johore, whose fortress withstood many a battle until 1687, when the Portuguese finally destroyed it after a terrible battle with the Malays.

Alauddin Shah, according to an appendix to the Malay Annal (Saraja Melayu, the oldest Malayan historical docu-

ment) had built here no mean city, including a mosque, audience-hall and drum-stage, together with extensive fortifications.

Gardner had asked various authorities about the possibilities of exploring this place; whether there might be "finds" possibly lurking there: pottery, coins, jewellery. "Nothing there" was the invariable reply. Very little was "known" officially about Johore Lama, and therefore there could hardly be anything there...

There certainly did not look as if there would be much there, in spite of the persistent rumours, the legends, the old documents. "Perhaps a couple of old tombs", people said. There was a village nearby, he noted, when he first went to look the place over. But the fort and the city were grown over, invaded very thoroughly by the jungle, as the hordes of Portuguese had invaded it nearly three hundred years before. He poked around, did a little exploratory digging: and he found four miles of earthworks. This was something worth reporting, indeed: trenched fortifications, tombs outside, pieces of pottery - even Ming porcelain.

It was true, there was little to be seen from the approach side, from the river. Coconut trees, jungle, the headman's house, perched up high. Gardner, however, had not been content with merely looking at the place in passing. He landed on some flat land at the river's edge. No signs of a fort. Huts aplenty, and planted coconut-groves. Climbing up the incline towards the headman's home, he realised with the thrill of discovery that this was an artificial, not a natural, embanknent. There was another row of walls behind. These, he was certain, were the walls of the fort.

Gardner went to Singapore, greatly excited by the discovery. Museum authorities whom he consulted there refused to listen to him. A famous archaeologist had said that there was nothing there. How could there be anything there? "But I have seen it - come and I will show you", Gardner was beside himself. "Why should I struggle all the way to Johore, when I know that there Is nothing there?" The logic, put this way, was unanswerable. A sense of complete unreality gripped him. How could people think like that? What was the next move? Obviously, if people did not believe that there was anything to be found, he would just have to go back, with his own resources alone, and try to find something more. After all, he did have the place to himself, was the first person to take the thing seriously...

From now on, he spent one day a month haunting the Museum in Singapore. Hardly anyone there would see him, much less discuss his finds.

He dug at Johore Lama, helped by some children, who were less conspicuous than adults, and would not be so likely to attract the unwelcome attention of the Sultan. He identified what is probably the real site of the ancient City of Singapura. Then he worked at Kota Tinggl, where the only diggable place in the town was the Royal cemetary, and the gravediggers let him have some things which they had found. His finds here included material from the Han period (200 B.C. to 200 A.D.) - pottery, beads, ancient coins. His enthusiasm now fully aroused, as the only worker in the whole field of archaeology, he dug and sifted at Syong Penang in the jungle. Fortunately Chinese pepper planters had been here making clearings forty years before, and although the jungle had crept back, it was not as bad as it might have been.

The walls here, too, were about ten feet high, and he found cut stones which must have lined the earthen fortifications. Some of these were brought down to Singapore Mueum. Gardner's exhibits there, "Early History of Johore" were most popular.

One of the most startling discoveries was that of the gold coins of the Johore River sites. He took the first he found to the Raffles Museum in Singapore, and there he found little was known about them. Europeans had always said that the Malay claim that they had had gold coinage was nonsense. "They will say anything" was the comment. Now that he had found this coin, however, and then several others, people began to accept their existence. As in the case of the kris, which was discovered to exist after Gardner had pointed it out, the golden coins of Johore became a rationalised "obvious fact". The Sultan's aunt, for example, was found to have a bracelet with at least half a dozen on it. Gardner was able to see another psychological volte-face: at one moment there were no Johore gold coins, the next they were the accepted thing. No credit, of course, to anyone, not even G. B. Gardner...

At the same time, Gardner's coins were rare indeed, none could deny that. He took them to London in 1932, and submitted them to the British Museum but very little information was available. Casts were sent to Amsterdam, Leiden and Batavia, but museums there were unable to shed any further light upon the discoveries. From the inscriptions

on the coins, Gardner was able to establish the dates of the Johore Sultans under whose reigns they had been struck. They were from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. For the historical record, Gardner clinched the evidence by a quotation from Robert Quarkin, an English factor in Malaya in 1614, who recorded that he had received no less than 308 pieces of Johore gold currency by way of ordinary trade.

But there was a final objection. Now that it was established that Johore gold coins existed, some said that they were not really used as money. They were found mainly in cemetaries, and the theorists hazarded that this must be because they were minted at a Sultan's death to scatter to the crowd. Back to old English records, Gardner had to prove that British travellers visiting Sultan Mahmud Shah and others reported seeing gold coins. Why were they found in cemetaries? As the discoverer, he took on the challenge to answer that one too:

"Anyone," he said, "who has visited the old tombs of the Sultans on the Johore River will have noticed how people still bring offerings to the graves. Although they have usually forgotten their names, and while I have never seen money left there nowadays, I have no doubt that this may have been done in the olden days and I have heard a Malay nobleman - Datu Daud - tell the following story many times:

"'Once when I was young, it was put to us that we should go and pray at the Tombs of our Ancestors - so I went with - and (naming some high officials) to the tombs, and they said to me, "you read the Koran, as you are clever'. So I stood at the head, and they stood on either side of the grave, and I began to read the prayers, holding the book before me. When I looked up, to my surprise, my companions had vanished. On lowering the book I found that people had put a lot of ten-cent pieces amongst the offerings on the grave, and my friends were on all fours, scrambling for them. So I fell on my knees and prayed to Heaven to forgive their irreverance, but first I made them give me my share, and I got one dollar and twenty cents'."

Other important coin discoveries were made and the finds published by Gardner in specialist Journals on the subject. He found eight-sided coins (the shape being talismanic, in accordance with traditional Islamic lore); and a rare one with the variously-numbered petal heraldic flower of Moslem chivalry upon it. This item gives a good example of the jumping-to-conclusions habits so common in students of antiquity. The six-petalled flower with a double-

ring centre had actually been identified by one writer as a "Portuguese coin" because It had this "Catherine-wheel" on it. As Gardner has pointed out in the case of the kris, any reasonably well-informed Moslem nobleman would have identified it as readily as an Englishman could have recognised a cricket bat.

By 1932, Dr. (now Sir Richard) Winstedt became General Advisor in Johore, and he was to help Gardner in many ways. He became interested in the diggings along the Johore River, and unofficially advised Gardner in many ways. He helped him, too, in identifying such rare items as an octagonal Kedah coin in silver, issued in the reign of Dhia'uddin Mukarram Shah, in 1665, which appears to be unique. Gardner's contact with Windstedt was extremely cordial, and he has always admired the latter's immense scholarship.

Johore Lama had certainly been a place of importance both in peace and in war. Little by little, over the years, Gardner collected by painstaking search hundreds of gemstones, more hundreds of beads and other small pieces of jewellery. The problem was now to find out whether this populous city had had extensive overseas connections whence the beads might have come; or were they of local manufacture? The rather rough stones, about eight hundred in all, appeared to be Indian, of fairly early date. Out of the six hundred beads, about twenty per cent were classed as belonging to the Roman Empire - from the first two or three centuries of the Christian Era.

In addition to these, Gardner found about eighty early Indian stone beads, and others of very great age. There was one Hittite stone bead of 700 B.C. and one glass bead similar to those made in Italy at about the same date. Two of the glass beads were of Phoenician or early Cypriot type. The remainder were mostly of crude glass of no specially assignable origin, either Arab or early European: most probably of local manufacture, and seemingly of an early date.

These extraordinary discoveries alone would have been enough to make any archaeologist excited. How and when, for instance, did the Roman beads reach Malay? Did they come in Roman times? Were they brought by Arab traders? Or could they have been brought after 1500 A.D., by European traders? Careful weighing of all the possibilities was necessary.

The last possibility was easily dismissed as most improbable. European traders could, and did, obtain Western

glass beads in such numbers and so cheaply that it was more than unlikely that they would trouble about antiquities. Furthermore, if Europeans had brought them, there would undoubtedly have been some European beads of late date mixed in among the finds.

How about the Arabs? The same argument applied to a certain extent. The Arabs made excellent glass beads, and they still use glass beads of their own making. If they had brought them, they would have left traces of Arab beads of late manufacture. Instead, there were the Indian beads and gemstones.

The Malay annals and folk-tales narrate at length the wars and disputes between the Malays and certain Indian kings - Raja Keling and Raja Chulan. Gardner realised that Keling was the Malay name for all south Indians; meaning the people of Kalinga, the Orissa coast. Raja Chulan, according to Winstedt, was the Chola King. Piecing the tales together, Gardner decided that it was possible that these peoples had brought the beads in trade.

He remembered that as late as 1928 there was a man still alive who stated that the Chola Kings had had a city (Kota - Batu - Itam, the Blackstone Fort) on the upper waters of the Johore River. He had actually offered to take people there. By 1932, however, he was dead, and his conducted tour had not, it seemed, taken place. Although he thought that the Cholas might have been the source of some of the beads, Gardner felt that there was a more ancient period to be assigned to the appearance of others.

Goods, he noted, are usually traded in the period of their manufacture. Merchants from the Roman Empire took glass, and other things, to India. The sea-trade between India and the Malay Archipelago in ancient times, in which Gardner now became interested, seemed to afford an excellent explanation of the presence of those tiny objects in his field of study. In an erudite piece in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, he expanded the theme:

> "Periplus mentions the import of crude glass into Malabar and the import of tortoishell obtained both from the Isle of Chryse and from the islands along the coast of Damirica (the Tamil country). The Periplus also refers to the native vessels sailing to and from Damirica which put in at Camara, Poduca and Sopatma,

> 'and other very large vessels made of single logs bound together, called sangara; but those which make the voyage to Chryse and to the Ganges are called collandia, and are very large'. The same traveller writes: Sailing with the ocean to the right and the shore remaining beyond to the left, Ganges comes into view, and near it the very last land towards the east, Chryse... And just opposite this river (Ganges) there is an island in the ocean, the last part of the inhabited world towards the east, under the rising sun itself; it is called Chryse'. If a mariner should follow these directions, he could find Chryse in Johore", Gardner points out, "the Malay name for which is Hujong Tanah, 'The End of Land'".

That there was commerce between south India and the Malay Archipelago in the early days is also certain from other sources, Gardner notes. Javanese historians mention settlements of south Indians there from 70 A.D. onwards, and those settlers always came by sea. This brought Gerald Gardner to another important part of his investigation: the exact type, as well as the existence, of the early ships which traded between India and Malaya - and perhaps beyond.

The Malay States had always been famous for their gums, incenses and spices, and the Roman demand would encourage the trade, probably through Indian middlemen, Gardner concluded. Gems, stones and Roman beads would be a part of the payment:

"Thus the Roman beads found by me on the Johore River, in conjunction with ancient gemstones or stone beads, were probably part of this early overseas traffic between Malay and India, and thence to the Roman Empire".

Whether the single Hittite bead or the early Italian one were traces of an even earlier connection it was not possible to say. Further explorations of ancient sites would have to come before this mystery could be solved.

In February 1935, Gardner and his wife attended the Second Congress for Prehistoric Research in the Far East, in Manila. Chasen and Dennis Collings from Singapore were there, too, as well as the redoubtable Professor van Stein Callenfels and Prince Abdul Hamed from Malaya.

The lovely old town, with its Spanish houses and

churches, and its old wall, circled like a moat, little resembled his beloved Malaya and his pioneer digs at Johore and elsewhere. Neither, for that matter, did the new, contrasting, American town, growing up, encroaching like a besieging enemy. But here he met a French lady archaeologist, Dr. M. Colani, who had found beads like his. Through them she thought that she had traced the trade-routes by which they had come from the ancient centres of civilisation to the fringes of the Far East. But, on the whole, the Conference held little for him; there was too great an accent upon palacontology, he felt. With notable exceptions - those who gave the impression by their dogmatism that they knew all about everything - Gardner noted how tentative, how cautious, how uncertain people seemed. Even in almost the middle of the twentieth century, scientists were but feeling their way forward, step by step. New evidence might make a difference of a quarter of a million years in all their thinking. So much guesswork, so much opinion. There seemed no basis for intelligent argument.

He renewed his long-standing friendship with Dr. Th. van der Hoop, the Director of the Java Museums, who had told him, apropos of his projected Kris book "Publish at once. We do not know half of what you have written,and this knowledge is dying out"

Then, back to his jungle friends, his Malay companions and their music - and his all-important dig at Johore. It was not until 1953 that really careful research was done at the Johore site whose examination Gardner had pioneered. Cutting trenches through the undergrowth, archaeologists from Cambridge found evidence that this was indeed the famed fort of Johore Lama. Collapsed gun-platforms, beams and the trading-ship which the lone explorer had first spotted were laid bare. And the villagers remembering Gardner and his hard work, spoke of him to the journalist who covered this exciting story for the Malayan newspapers. Far above this scene of "Thrilling New Discoveries of Malaya's Past" - as the headlines shrieked, hovered the memory of the man who, unrecognised, laboured in the stifling heat, twenty years before. Photographs of those days show a sturdy, beshortened figure, the clear blue eyes staring straight ahead, gun on hip, as he surveys the archaeological territory which he has opened up for the white man.

"Ming from the River's Mud" breathed the headlines; "Secrets of an Old Fort Bared" cried the bated-breath departments. It is perhaps as well that Gardner's innate modesty had never allowed him to seek the prominence that

his own discoveries of Ming, the old fort and an ancient trading-vessel might have brought - without any of the resources of a modern scientific expedition.

The keel of a big boat, the presence of beads and so on from India and further afield, convinced Gardner that there must have been a sea-link between India and Java as well as other areas of the Malayan Archipelago. Carrying the search as far afield as necessary, he sought some sort of representation of a ship in traditional carvings. There was no manuscript where such a thing might be illustrated. Folk-tales said that there had been such ships. This, however, was not evidence enough ("the Malays would say anything"). Then the search narrowed down a trifle. There were accounts of many large ships carved in the temple of Barabouda, in Java. Gardner went there.

As soon as he saw the carvings, he realised that here was something of the greatest importance. These were not Indian craft. There were many carvings of Indian ships in Indian temples: and there was no resemblance at all. A discovery like this is generally made no more than once in a lifetime by an archaeologist. Excitement caught at his throat as he looked at the pictures more closely. They had outriggers, which no Indian ship had. These were either imaginary craft, or they were ships that would sail, could undertake the long journeys that would be necessary to cross the vast oceans. The question now was: were these vessels made?

The general impression among students of the subject was that there were no such craft, never had been. Everyone knew that the Malays did not know what they were talking about. There were no boats like this, now, Gardner pondered. But the Dutch, as was a matter of historical fact, had destroyed all sizeable boats they found when they invaded the Indies; and forbidden the building of any more, to keep all the carrying trade in their own hands. A landslip in Raffles' time had revealed these wall-carvings, which had been buried to prevent their defacement when the Moslems invaded the country centuries ago.

And here, on the temple walls, carved about the year 800 A.D., were representations of ships, a great Indian fleet, which had seized Java about 70 A.D The Javanese artists had commemorated the invasion. Why did they not illustrate it with pictures which looked like the hostile fleet? Gardner realised that even in the Middle Ages of Europe,

artists used the fashions of their own day and place to represent more ancient scenes. Biblical subjects were a case in point. Why, therefore, should an Indonesian sculptor not use as his models for the invading force of centuries before his time, ships which were used in his country during his own lifetime? Preposterous, said the pundits. Very likely indeed, said Gardner.

There remained one proof yet. The earlier Portuguese had left records that there were architectural vestiges of old-type ships in contemporary Malayan vessels.

Therefore, Gardner decided, he would make a model. He reconstructed the ship from the largest shown on the wall pictures and from details available from the smaller boats actually in use. Everything was verifiable from native sources. Eventually there emerged a two- masted, ocean-going ship of no insignificant shape and plan. As far as human effort could make it, the strong possibility was established that here, thanks to the painstaking labour and thought of one man, was the ancient trading ship of the Malays. The Singapore Museum wanted his model now, and he gave it to them. Later, in London, Gardner's ship was to become so famous as a piece of really unusual detective work in the true tradition of inspired archaeology, that Laird-Clewes at the Victoria and Albert Museum wanted one like it. So Gardner was given a room in the Museum, and worked there for a couple of years, on this and other projects. Academic acceptance of the theory was as good as clinched when he published his results and a picture of his model in the Royal Asiatic Society's Journal, in 1937.

On August 22, 1953, the Straits Times was at last able to say:

> "What is believed to be the first discovery of a stone fort built by Malays has been excavated at Kampong Johore Lama, a Malay village about fifteen miles from Singapore on the right bank of the Johore River, by an expedition of archaeologists and students. The fort was built by the second son of the last Sultan of Malacca and founder of the present Johore Dynasty... the expedition also dug out an old boat buried on the beach... An enormous quantity of Ming and Ch'ng pottery (was found) nearby."

Gardner had been vindicated. Not the least excited about this was Donna, whose loyal support of his theories had become almost proverbial.

He took his archaeology seriously, in spite of controversies and disappointments. Some of the archaeologists were more inclined to listen and talk things over than others; but mostly, he felt, because they were the ones who preferred their work to playing cards to taking part in the all-pervading social whirl. Again, there were so many of these delvers into the past to whom only their owndiscoveries and theories were of any interest. Some people, again, wanted to know what "the point" was in all that he was doing. Things were always being dug up, weren't they? What difference did a bit more or less here or there matter?

And there was the background of his work, in opium-inspection.

The official duties and the self-imposed digging and asking questions. He took trips several times a month, collecting information, following up ideas, collecting from the opium-shops in the course of his Government job. The country became as familiar to him as anywhere he knew - a powered boat on mud brown water; blue sky above; the intense green of the jungle on either side, unbroken by any other colour. It was almost silent, except for the purr of the boat's engine, the scream of a monkey - or the occasional harsh cry of a bird. At night, thinking of his discoveries, he would watch fireflies in the dusk - lighting up and going down together, as If linked by some impalpable system of communication.

There were the Saki, who showed him how they made their blowpipes; the people in the villages by the riverside, who became his close friends. Now and then there was a more glittering interlude. Such a time was when he was with Sir Richard Winstedt at the Coronation ceremony, when the Sultan of Johore married Mrs.Helena Wilson. All had to sit still, not moving a muscle, for two hours. The crown, he noticed, was too small, and the lady was afraid that it would fall off, which would have been a very evil omen.

Then there were the trips abroad in search of parallel archaeological material, which sometimes made for unusual experiences. In 1934 he took a trip to Saigon, in French Indochina, now the Capital of Vietnam. The Silver Pagoda, he found, had a solid silver floor. There were over eight thousand Buddha figures, all either gold or silver and solid metal. The largest of them, the archaeologist noted with

mounting delight, was eight feet high, solid gold, encrusted with diamonds.

He went on to China and noted that the guidebooks of Hangchow said that Marco Polo went there and was made a god: and the people erected a temple to him. Gardner decided to go there. He made offerings to the deified Marco and signed the Visitor's Book. He noted later that in spite of having been given an impression to the contrary, he had not yet been made a god himself, but this could have been due to Communist interference: for political passions were to tear that country apart.

Interludes during these travels enliven many of his memories, and show a fascinating side of his character. Here we have the puckish observer of humanity who exists side by side with the dedicated archaeologist and Government officials.

Ticket-collectors on the trains, he noted with amusement, were escorted by eight bodyguards toting Mauser pistols with stocks on them... carried at the ready, "Because some people found it cheaper to kill the collector than to buy tickets".

When he was returning from Hangchow, news came that some unnamed warlord was moving fast to attack the railway. This was enough for the train crew. He is characteristically economical of phrase about this tense interlude: Each station we came to was packed with passengers; but though they shouted and howled we ran through them taking no notice. Some people say we were shot at, but I saw nothing. And we got back to Shanghai safely".

His interest in magic and magicians was, of course, continuous throughout this period. He concluded from his investigations at this time:

> "In many countries of the Orient mystics are revered and regarded as holy and above other men because of special abilities to foretell the future, explain the past or illuminate happenings of the present. Now, if their prophecies go wrong, however much they try to explain it away, people will not believe in them. On this argument alone we must assume that they have at least a good average of successes. How do they do it? By starving themselves or weakening the bodily functions in some way.

> "The magician may at the same time be a religious maniac. But I do know that some maniacs can foretell the future at times. In the East, in any case, there are people who do foretell the future sufficiently often for it to be worth people's while consulting them. They do it by taking away a part of their life - dying in part, if you like - in order to obtain this power".

Gardner managed to keep up with local European happenings, some of which had their own mystery. One such event was the mysterious death of a man whom we will call Smith. Jones was a big, slow man, completely dominated by his wife and looked down upon by the rest of the English community, because his job was not very responsible. The lady was slim and active, and always trying to get herself into Society. They had one small son, whom they both adored and spoiled. They had a friend, Smith, connected with shipping who would be in Singapore for a week or so every three or four months, when he would visit the Jones family.

On one such visit, he persuaded Jones that his wife was looking pale, and that a short sea voyage to Sandaken (in British North Borneo) would do her good. He, too, was going to Sandaken. She could come with him on a slow boat which made a round trip.

The lady returned with many stories about Borneo. Gardner always kept in touch with Borneo people, and knew a good deal about the place. It seemed to him that there was some disparity in her tales and Borneo as he remembered it. Then a shipping agent told him that the pair had in fact disembarked en route for Kudat, together, and stayed there for a time.

Donna was very amused; and said, "That fat lump of a husband can't see what's before his nose". But Gardner told her that he hoped that he never would.

"Why?"

"Have you ever seen him really angry. He goes white. There is a saying that if a man goes red when he is angry, look out for hands and feet, and battering rams. But he will have forgotten it all the next day. Look out for the man who turns white. He will say nothing at the time, but look out for the knife in your back in six months' time".

Donna said that she hoped that he never knew, in that

case; but she believed that the man would never hurt anyone whom his wife loved, so highly did he regard her.

Things went on as usual, Smith came every three months. One day, however, the wife rushed over to Donna's bungalow. "It's terrible, he's dead! He was with us to dinner last night. He left about one o'clock, got to his hotel at about half-past two he rang and said he was ill. He made a great deal of fuss. The Manager was called, but it was three before he came, and by then he was dead".

"Isn't there going to be a funeral?" Gardner asked.

"Oh, no. The police asked a lot of questions, then they said that they were quite satisfied and they gave orders to bury him... I'll never see him again".

She was crying continuously, and Donna eventually took her home.

Gardner thought that this all looked very curious. Why no inquest, after a sudden death hke that. But if the police were satisfied, it was none of his business.

Next day, Jones was taken to hospital with a nervous breakdown. Gardner went to see him. He looked very jittery, but otherwise not especially ill. With the tail of his eye, Gardner saw two men in khaki uniform pass the window and look in at them.

Jones saw them, and screamed, then pointed. His face was a study in terror. Gardner looked at him.

"what's the matter?"

"Police; they're looking for me, they are looking for me."

He broke down completely, crying and sobbing. In another moment, the two men came in. They were two Malay officers from the Fort, just calling to see how he was. Coincidentally, their uniforms were just like those which police inspectors wore.

"Only a man whose mind was running on police would go off the deep end like that" Gardner thought. Jones stayed some time in hospital, then was sent home.

Gardner often argued the case with Donna. He thought that Jones put something into Smith's last drink. What this might have been is anyone's guess. Donna insisted that he did not do it, saying that no woman would stay with a man who had murdered the man she loved.

Gardner felt that it depended upon the individual. The

woman had no money of her own, she loved her child. She might even be inclined to respect her husband for defending his rights, however unorthodoxly he had done so.

Donna told him that money was not everything: she herself had had to leave home without any money "when Father chucked us out". Her father, it seemed, had sent his son Jack to a theological college, intending him to become a clergyman. Jack did not like it and ran away. The Reverend Rosedale "did the heavy Victorian father, and forbade him the house".

In 1916 he enlisted in the army. The night before he was to be sent to France he called at the house, and his sisters smuggled him into the kitchen, to say goodbye. But Father found out, came down to the kitchen, and told them all to leave. The girls went to an uncle (their father's brother, also a clergyman) but as soon as he found out that they had been expelled from their home for disobeying their father, he sent them away. They eventually found refuge with friends, who got Donna a job in a nursing home, and Queenie at a school. Jack, long after his father's death, became a Presbyterian Minister, and finally a missionary.

England, if this was family life there, was very different from how things were in Malaya.

# 8

## GLIMPSES OF ENGLAND

The grey line of the horizon, thinning and fading all the time, was the coastline of Malaya. Below him, foam curved gleaming swaying from the white side of the ship. Smoke from the funnels hung faintly against the sky's tropical blue. After thirty-six years, Gerald Gardner was leaving the Far East. After half a lifetime away, he was going to make his home in England again. He felt a sense of regret for what had been left behind; an uncertainty in the future. He knew Malaya and its people; belonged there, in a sense. He thought of the Saki and their hidden jungle cries; put out to warn each other of the traps which they had laid for strangers. He remembered their animal-like jungle cries; how he knew when they were close, lurking half-invisible behind trees and bushes. He had shared with them the silences and the gloom, the constant small yet vivid life of tropical nature. He would never walk through its green shadows again; and he was already feeling this loss keenly.

On the otherhand there was his destination, where he was born. A country which he had almost always found cold in every way. Its climate menaced him; the people were difficult to make contact with. Was he really a foreigner in England. It had even been his intention to retire in Malaya; yet here he was, making the journey "home". Donna had insisted upon settling down in England. Good companion of his adventures, loyal supporter of his often unpopular theories, she had never been really happy in the East. She was popular and charming, but the climate did not really suit her. Gardner believes, however, that her insistence upon coming home might have been due to a prescient idea that she expressed. Something might happen to Malaya. The Japanese invasion and occupation was enough to fulfil this foreboding to the limit of its possibihties.

He tried, pacing the deck on his morning constitutional, to organise his mind to some idea of what awaited him. His main difficulty, he realised was that apart from the general impression of coldness, he had a very fragmented picture

of England. For forty-six years, if he was to include his sailor-suited period in Madeira, he had only caught glimpses of Britain. He was like a man passing through a series of tunnels, capturing fleeting impressions of the countryside between bouts of darkness. His few and occasional months of leave were almost all that he had to go on. There were the newspapers, of course, which had kept him in touch with events in that incomplete way which every exile knows. What other Westerners said when back from their leaves was too often monosyllabic, or confined to probably exaggerated tales of social conquest.

Yes, just as the man in the train, each time his windows gave him vision, saw the landscape subtly or abruptly altered - so had his England changed on every visit. Those of older generations had died, friends and relatives had dispersed about the world, some new relationships had been established. New interests had been taken up. Staring into the deep green waters he thought himself backto his first leave. When had that been? Not many years, certainly, after he had reached Ceylon - he had been only twenty-one. That would make the year 1905. Where had he gone then, thirty years before, whom had he met?

In 1905, girls wore long skirts and feathery hats; motor cars were innovations, bicycling still highly fashionable, the Socialists still in their political infancy, the Empire firm, Germany's rising power still a mere fist of a cloud on the horizon. England was in the lush flowering of the Edwardian era. Gardner had come straight from the Ceylon estates, looking brown and acting the tough young man - who could blame him, with adventure before and behind, with the world at his feet?

He met his elder brother for the first time in many years. Harold and his wife Edie lived at home with the senior Gardner, and seemed to Gerald to put on a great deal of "side", after his unconventional years at Atlanta. Harold was a barrister, and she was the daughter of a Prebendary. He had always taken the social prominence of the Gardner family somewhat for granted, and felt a little odd at being faced with it in this self-conscious form. It was something like the difference between knowing what one was, and trying to make sure that others did not think that one was otherwise. Still, he reasoned, times were probably changing. Harold was a good lawyer, but seemed to lack the gift of the gab necessary in court. They had three daughters, Bobby, Betty and Dorothy, born about 1910.

The second brother, Robert had married Louise, "a very sporting kind of girl", and they had two sons, Ralph and Leslie.

His mother was still very much absorbed in her local activities, and the company at the house seemed to be divided into those who had some knowledge of the outside world - and those who wanted to remain very much within their own circle.

Gardner remembers, as a man of twenty-one, being taken to a church bazaar by his mother; shown off to some venerable ladies as something ofa strange animal: "Gerald from Ceylon, you know". Gardner recalls "The old lady said, 'Oh, I have a young lady here from your part of the world; Miss de Souza, from Brazil'. I said that this was the other side of the earth, and nobody seemed at all pleased. Had I committed a solecism? The girl and I looked at each other for a little - she was a miserable-looking little thing - not knowing what to say. Then I had a brainwave. Brazil: Portuguese... Sol said something in Portuguese. She brightened up at once, and we went around enjoying ourselves. I had picked up a good deal of the spoken language when I was in Madeira.

"Later, the old lady caught my mother and said: 'Your son Gerald told me a most wicked lie'. Mother's claws were out, as they sometimes had to be in an environment like this. 'What did he say?' 'He tried to make me think that he did not live near Brazil. But look at them. They both speak the same heathen language'."

He did not get on at all well with people of this kind, and the difference between his own experiences and thinking and theirs seemed to become more marked as the days went by. He longed for a more robust kind of life, and asked an American cousin, Harold Tompkins, whether people were any more lively in America. Did they, for instance, carry guns? "Most people seem to tote them in England", was the answer.

Further questions elicited the fact that he thought that the British always carried guns on trains. At last it was discovered that the route which Tompkins had taken out of Liverpool, past Blundellsands to Alcar, a rifle range. Trains at that time were often crowded with reservists and territorials, on their way to rifle-practice.

There were several private armies in existence at that time, and in his search for a freer, more venturesome life, Gardner joined one of them; for he always felt at home

with weapons, as if some sort of inherited memory told him that this was a part of his true self. He joined the Legion of Frontiersmen. The members were mostly Colonials, seasoned men, wily in bush or desert and always carried guns. This precursor of the Commandos was formed to give instrurction in fighting in rough country. This was a time of reaction against the lack of British preparedness which had been revealed so dramatically in the Boer War, when hardly any of the willing citizens who volunteered in such numbers had so much as seen a rifle.

This Legion and similar movements were to prove most successful in the struggle against the Germans, eight or nine years later. Gardner was able to study fighting methods which he carried back to Ceylon, where he was a member of the Planter's Rifle Corps.

Still, the time seemed to drag, and he therefore accepted an invitation which arrived unexpectedly from Nellie Surgenson, the god-mother whom he did not remember having met before.

It was a small house, full of people, of which he says "the whole village seemed to come through the house at times" had a big garden, and gave him a glimpse of family life of a far less conventional kind than he had seen before. Just how many people actually lived there was uncertain! Gerturde and several others. The atmosphere was relaxed and gay, and he had a feeling that he really belonged there.

Gertrude was the life and soul of the party; played the piano and sang.  He guessed that she would be about thirty, so bewitchingly vivacious did she seem. He had no money, though his hopes of rubber were good, but he "did not speak", however strongly he felt attracted to these truly delightful people. Later he was to find out that she was over thirty years older than he was.

Nellie, kind and motherly, pleasant and friendly to everyone, was the placid centre of the activities of the house. If those interests - the jokes, the songs: the picnics and outings - seem nothing out of the way, it must be remembered that for Gardner, his youth dominated by the boisterous figure of Com and his early manhood spent in heavy work on plantations where social amenities hardly existed, the normal pleasure and enjoyments of a boy or a young man could come as nothing but an exhilarating surprise.

Delighted he certainly was. He returned to Leighton,

not far from "The Glen", full of reproaches. Why had his mother never told him of the Surgesons? Why had he not visited them before? Why, if they were god-parents, had he never even heard of them? His mother became strangely evasive. They just didn't visit the Surgesons much, she said.

There must be a reason. "We don't see much of the Surgensons". Digging deeper, he insisted; we are relations, are we not? Why should we not have more comings and goings with them?

"Oh yes, we are related, but we do not see them much".

Perhaps Ted had been in jail; that was about the worst thing that could happen to a person...

"They are nice people. But why don't we ever see them?"

"No, we don't see much of them".

Could it be that one of them had been hanged? They did not seem the criminal type...

"But why not meet them: are they not nice?"

Mrs.Gardner lowered her voice to a whisper, looking around carefully to see whether they were overheard. "We don't see much of the Surgensons. You see, Gerald, they are Methodists. .."

She could not understand why Gerald laughed.

Once he had found his way to the Surgensons' house, he went there many times. There were two nieces, known as E and M, both schoolgirls. Ted was a short, sturdy man, then about fifty-five, but still very spry. He had done some amateur boxing; like his wife his high spirits kept them young; he pottered, kept bees, grew all sorts of good things in his beautiful garden quite a haven for Gerald after the stuffiness of a straitlaced Victorian, solid family home.

Ted believed that he could see the Little People, and that there were some in his garden. He kept a part of it wild for them, feeling that they were there; sometimes he could see them. This matter was more or less taken for granted by most people. The comment was: "Old Ted, he sees things, you know".

There is no doubt, because of this group's impact, that G. became, and remained until her death, the closest friend he had in England.

At the Surgenson's there was a faint and inconclusive interest in the occult; the sort of desultory attractions which is often found in this kind of community. Edith, another sister of Nellie's, had some reputation as a palmist and

crystal-gazer. Despite stories of her success, Gardner remained sceptical. Ted himself was uncommunicative about his fairies, for the most part.

"I can often feel they're there", he would admit, "and sometimes I've seen them". Even on the rare occasions when he would discuss his mysterious friends, he was never dogmatic. He went so far as to agree that he might be imagining the whole thing - only he didn't think that he was.

Also of the circle were a doctor called Gardner, and his sister. Although they were often there, they were a little older than the others, and tended to stay near Nellie. Occasionally someone would tease them, asking whether they had done any magic recently; or if they had attended any good Witches' Sabbaths. Why should they have, Gardner wanted to know. Because, of course, their mother had been a witch. He was extremely intrigued by this. Who had their mother been? And why had they the same surname as he had? Were they relations?

He asked at home about all this, but once again only received evasive answers. Nobody would really discuss the matter. At last, however, he got the truth, which his brother Bob was able to supportwith corroborative evidence. Grandfather Joseph, the founder of the timber firm in its present name (who had died in 1865) had married a shrew. Everyone agreed about this: she had been a thoroughly unpopular woman. As a result, Grandfather reached the end of his tether, cut through it and freed himself. He stayed at home, but kept the lady somewhere up north. There is some doubt as to whether he really married her. At all events, he had a second and happier home, where there were strange goings-on.

This Ann, the tale ran, had led him into wicked ways. She had been a witch, and had taken Grandfather Joseph up into the hills where secret meetings and horrible rites were held. This had set the final seal upon the scandal: no one in Leighton now spoke of it, because, if the neighbours got to hear...! In any case, the two Gardners who so frequently visited the Surgensons were said to be the issue of Grandfather Joseph.

Everyone had said that Gerald was very much like his grandfather; and this was more often than not bracketed with some hesitancy which he did not at the time understand, for the old man had been immensely popular. Now he realized what was behind the talk. All this Gerald found very interesting, but slightly absurd. Especially ridiculous seemed the fact that Ann was a witch. Witches

flew through

the air on broomsticks - which was impossible. Being impossible, this sufficiently disposed of the subject. The matter had at first aroused neither uneasiness nor expectation in him: it had been simply incredible.

But the elders, once committed, stuck to their story. Ann had witchpower, and she took Grandfather to meetings in the hills. Bob, of course, knew all about it; and he said, "Whenever your Uncle Jim is ill, he always sends for his half-brother". He laughed at the term Witchcraft, but showed some measure of knowledge: "Strange things go in the hills there, you know".

He had little time in which to consider this or follow it up; within a few months he was aboard ship, bound once more for the Far East, not to return for more than a decade.

The England of 1916 had changed a great deal. The World War had been under way for more than two years. Zeppelin raids had brought death and destruction even to the civilians. The bloody battles had seen to it that few homes in the country were without their share of grief. Women now worked side by side with men in factories, in railway stations, in offices, motor cars were common, and the post-war possibilities of the aeroplane were frequently discussed.

At first Gardner tried very hard to get into the Services. The Admiralty wanted to help him. "It's a shame", the recruiting man said, "that anyone of your name shouldn't be able to get into the scrap". It seemed possible that he would find a place in the Zeppelin-hunt an ack-ack unit near London, but in this as in so much else, health was the vital factor, and he was not accepted. Instead, he was taken on as a hospital orderly in Liverpool. The idle month he had before he would be called on to start there he spent in Tenby, where his brother Bob had taken a house to which he had invited the Surgensons and all their friends.

To Gardner, looking back, this month seems almost an idyll. For the first time in England he felt completely free. Although many of his friends were in uniform, or perhaps because of it, they all seemed gayer, more natural. Pretty girls seemed more attractive, dull ones were transformed, their hair allowed to go free, their figures shown off in that innovation, the new bathing dress. G., still happy, still teasing and laughing, was there too. Beset by war and even the chance of defeat, England seemed to Gerald Gardner for the first time a country worth living in.

He arrived at the hospital just as the first casualties

were coming in from the Somme. Caked with blood and mud, they were brought in from the hospital trains, to be given their corner among the over-strained resources of the wards. Gardner reacted with fury; more than anything else, he would have liked to join the comrades of these wounded and fight against those who had maimed them. He knew, all the same, despite his anger and his wish, he would never be allowed to go; in the meantime, he flinched from no task, however nerve-racking or menial. If he could not get to France, he could at least help those who had gone,and who were now suffering the dreadful consequences.

Towards the end of the year,with the first cold, Gardner got a recurrence of malaria. The doctor prescribed two grains of qulnine a day. Gardner, used to thirty, asked for more: the doctor called him a drug-fiend. Winter clamped down harder, and the fever got worse. When he found that he could no longer do his work in the hospital, he knew that he had no more reason to stay in Europe. He went back to Malaya - but for the first time it was with reluctance and with a heavy heart.

## 9

### MEDIUMS AND MESSAGES

Again it was over ten years before Gardner returned to England, hurrying home, on compassionate leave, because ofthe illness ofhis father. The year was 1927 - radio, cinemas, motor cars, aeroplanes all now commonplaces; women emancipated and enfranchised, their bare knees everywhere; the General Strike still recent memory, and poverty rubbing shoulders with the Gay Young Things; ragtime rasping from the gramophone or feet shuffling outside the Labour Exchange - the music varied with one's environment. Again much of England seemed changed almost beyond recognition. Not that Gardner had eyes for it at first. He hurried home to Blundellsands to see his father. His mother had died in 1920; it seemed likely that his father would now follow her. The old man was glad to see him, despite his weakness; but he frightened his son by talking of his wife as though she were still alive.

Gardner could see him only at long intervals, and then for no more than five minutes a ta time. He was anxious and unhappy, and this time there seemed no one to turn to. For Ted Surgenson had died, leaving Nellie heart-broken with grief. She was no rock to cling to now. Worse than this, G. had died four years earlier. For Gardner, England had contracted once again, had become cold and unwelcoming as it had ever been.

Unhappiness apart he became bored. His father got no worse, and he had time to think of other things. His eldest brother, Harold, every inch a lawyer, lived in "Leighton", (they had left "The Glen") and his wife, Edie, was its mistress; they had few amusements to offer. When, therefore, someone mentioned a spiritualist church near Liverpool, he felt a twinge of curiosity. He remembered the books on survival after death he had read as a boy, and the demonstrations he had watched In Borneo. Was it possible that as close to home as this he would discover the truth about spiritualism as It existed among Europeans? He decided to investigate.

If Gardner had expected something similar to what he

had seen in Borneo, he was to be disappointed. There was no question here of complete possession or deep trance. In a building dingily reminiscent of a Nonconformist chapel, about fifty people were sitting with the subdued air of a congregation. There was a short service, and a man addressed them as a preacher might have at any religious gathering. Then the medium, a woman, appeared, sat down facing the audience, and went into a trance. Gardner leant forward; now perhaps there would be some revelation, some discovery of the truth.

Instead, it was all a little dreary, smacking slightly of the possibilities of fraud. The medium would call out some name - perhaps George, or James, or one equally common - "There is a spirit here, named Edward. Does anyone here have an Edward?" It was only when he had been acknowledged that she ventured into the first, tentativedetails of description: "He is tall, bearded, standing just beside you. He is very happy, and tells you not to worry. Everything is going to turn out well".

Gardner felt faintly disgusted with this; the whole performance was cheap and sugary. From every spirit there came facile encouragement - everything everywhere it seemed was for the best. Most of what went on seemed to be based entirely on the audience's will to believe. At the end, there was a silver collection.

Despite this disappointment, however, Gardner retained his interest. Whether this was pure curiosity, the desire to repeat his Borneo experiences in a more familiar social context, or an intuitive awareness of the knowledge he was to arrive at, he does not know. Whatever the reason, he began to enquire about mediums, only to find that "the good ones were all in London". Most frequently mentioned was Hewart Mackenzie, in South Kensington. Gardner determined to make the trip to London, and seek out Mackenzie.

It must be remembered at this point that Gardner, no matter how much he wanted to believe in spiritualism (he was, after all, a rather lonely man at this time), had trained to be critical. He accepted nothing without evidence, and had the kind of mind which tried systematically to eliminate any basis upon which dubious evidence might be built. He decided to take precautions against the foreseeable type of fraud of which a medium might be guilty. He told no one he was going to London; he spread the news that he was about to visit Com, now an old lady living with her husband in

retirement near Hereford. He actually went and stayed with her for two or three days. When he left, he told her he was returning to Lancashire. Instead, he travelled to London.

In his case he had nothing which might reveal his identity to any possible searcher. He booked no room at an hotel; instead, he chose one at random, in the Cromwell Road, after he had arrived in London. On the morning after his arrival, he set out to find Hewart Mackenzie's headquarters, with nothing to identify him on his person. Instead, he put in his pocket three letters from someone to a friend of his; anyone searching his overcoat for information would thus find a completely false collection of personal details. He felt now that he had covered all the obvious loop holes, that he was now in the perfect position to investigate; the more so as he was no celebrity like Oliver Lodge or Conan Doyle, whom a medium might reasonably be expected to recognise from photographs.

In the event, he covered himself even more. He had come to London to see Mackenzie; it was remotely possible that someone in Blundellsands had come to know of this, and had passed on the information. But Gardner did not go to see Mackenzie. Walking toward South Kensington, he happened to glance at the nameplate outside a pleasant, early Victorian house. "The London Spiritualist Alliance" it read. He stopped; this, he realised, was the place to go to. Not even himself had known that he would pass this house, nor had he ever heard of the Alliance. Here there could be no possibility of fraud based on inside information.

Inside, in the corner of a large room, surrounded by gleaming glass cases displaying the Alliance's publications, the secretary of the organisation sat behind a neat, wooden desk. Gardner asked her politely whether he might have a medium, please. But they were not, as he had hoped and imagined, so easily on tap. The secretary gave him a list to choose from, but the one she pointed out as probably the best was booked for three months ahead. Gardner was on leave, and was, besides, not a man to wait three months for a project to mature.

"Who can I have at once?" he asked.

"You could have Mr. A. in half an hour."

"Good", said Gardner. "And after him I want one more".

The secretary was horrified. "Oh, but that's not possible", she said. "It's much too exacting; takes far too much out of you, you have to rest and relax in between".

"That's all right", Gardner insisted. "I'm quite tough".

After a little more argument, it was arranged. He would have one medium that morning, another in the afternoon, and a third the following morning. The charge was fifteen shillings each, which he paid then and there.

He hung up his coat, the misleading letters bulging its pocket, in the hall, then settled to wait the half hour before the medium was free.

Mr. A, turned out to be a fat, rather unkempt, Celt, who led him to a small room on the second floor. When they had settled in chairs facing each other, Mr. A. said, "Now, sir, I'd like you to talk to me. I'm a normal medium; I don't go into a trance or anything like that. I'd just like you to talk, about anything you like. When I get the timbre of your voice, I'll be able to understand and know things".

Gardner, sceptical of this approach - how difficult it is to talk without giving enough away to lead an alert mind toward the truth - spoke carefully about the weather, about plays he had seen, books he had read. After a while the medium interrupted him.

"I can see you out East. I'm not sure where. Certainly foreign, far away".

"Well, that's right" Gardner agreed reluctantly.

After a pause, the other said, "I can see an old man with a beard. He says he's your Uncle John".

Gardner spoke decisively. "I never had an Uncle John".

"He says that's who he is".

"I can't help that". He thought for a second, then added, "I had an Uncle James".

"He's here too. But this is definitely John".

"Well, I don't want to hear from him. I never had an Uncle John".

The medium sighed. "All right", he said, and, after concentrating, went on, "There's a lady here now. She's fair, blue-eyed, a little plump I get the name.... Anne". She says she's your cousin Anne,

Gardner was once more emphatic. "I never had a cousin Anne".

"But she says she wants to speak to you".

"Well, nevertheless, I never had a cousin Anne".

"Don't you know anyone called Anne?"

"Oh, yes, I know two. But neither of them are cousins, and they're both alive".

Once more there was a pause, as the medium, discarding the intrusive Anne, probed further. Then he said,

"Well, theretes a lady here, very short and rather plump. She says she's your mother".

"What's her name?"

The medium frowned. "She can't give her name".

"The other two could. Why can't she?"

"I don't know. She can't".

"All right", Gardner said, rather disgruntled. "What does she want?"

"She wants to speak about your father. She's afraid he might die. They're all very worried about him".

"Well, I am too. Can she say any more?"

"Only that she's very fond of you".

"Then she can tell me her name?"

"No, she can't. She isn't able to".

There was a short silence, and Gardner asked, "Is there anything else?"

"No".

"That isn't much use.  Can you get anyone else?"

Mr. A. shrugged. "No, I'm afraid I can't. The power's finished".

It was a disgusted Gardner who walked down the two flights of stairs, picked up his coat, and went out into the Kensington streets. He felt that his journey to London had been wasted, that he had paid out money and spent time for nothing. Had he not already made the arrangements, he would not bave bothered with the other two mediums he still had to see. He comforted himself with the thought that he had given away very little about himself, except perhaps the negative knowledge that he had neither an Uncle John nor a cousin Anne. Apart from that, it was at least good to know that none of the information contained in the letters made an appearance.

The afternoon's medium was alady, tall and thin, who operated in another room on the same floor. She was a writing medium; she would sit before a big pad and, in a semi-trance, write down communications from the spirit world.

To Gardner's surprise the morning's pattern was followed again. There were Uncle John and cousin Anne demanding a hearing despite his irritated protests that he had never owned any such relations. Cousin Anne produced more information about herself this time - that she had died four years before, of cancer, in London - but Gardner would have none of her.

Now the automatic writing on the pad changed its char-

acter. Once more, it seemd, his mother was trying to get through to him. As in the morning, he asked the medium to give her name, and as in the morning was told that his mother couldn't.

"Well, can she tell me anything that would prove she was my mother?" he asked.

"If I tell you about the old house we lived in?" wrote the medium.

"All right, describe it".

"It had a small tower, and there was grass all round, and the sea was close; and in the distance there were hills".

Gardner, thinking back, interrupted. "There were no hills there. It was flat".

And now, dramatically in the silence, the medium spoke for the first time. Her voice was agitated, she said, "Look across Cheshire to the Welsh hills!"

Gardner frowned, then almost gasped. "I suppose that's right", he said.

The medium continued writing, putting down the names of his brothers and of their wives and children, all quite correctly and then adding the name "Elizabeth".

"Who's Elizabeth?"

"Your old nurse".

And for the first time in years, Gardner remembered that dim figure who had, many vears before, presided over the nursery at "The Glen".

The medium wrote for only a few minutes longer. As in the morning it seemed that his mother was worried about his father's health, and that this concern was shared by all those with her who had once known him. Then the writing stopped, and the medium awoke.

Gardner left, taking care not to be followed; he was still satisfied that he had given nothing away. He thought about it on the way back to his hotel, and later, as he wrote down in his notebooks details of the afternoon's seance and decided that he had been witness and, in a sense, victim, of a telepathy act; accomplished, highly-developed, but thought-reading nevertheless. The introduction of the names "John" and "Anne" puzzled him, but he felt that, as stock names, they were probably part of the usual technique of these people. They were very common names; one would be bound to have a simple positive or negative reaction to them. In either event, It was possible that one entered into some state helpful to the thought-reader.

However, it was quite eagerly that he appeared at the

Alliance's headquarters the following morning for his third

visit. The medium he saw on this occasion was also female; a gaunt woman, fairly forbidding, with a definite, if slight, occult quality about her. She led him to yet another room on the second floor, sat down opposite him, and very quietly went into trance, taking about thirty seconds. In trance, her control appeared - a somewhat stagey French doctor, whose heavily accented voice the medium accompanied by a variety of gestures.

First to appear, on this as on other occasions, was the persistent Uncle John. Gardner met him this time with downright indignation.

"Get out", he said. "I never had an Uncle John. I want to speak to Mother".

In this desire he was thwarted, however, for next to appear, following the usual programme, was his ubiquitous Cousin Anne, described by this medium in the same way as the other had done the previous afternoon. If this was collusion, why the persistence of unrecognisable characters?

"She has been dead four years", the medium said. "She died of cancer. She says you know her very well".

"But that's absurd", Gardner insisted. "I haven't got, and never had, a cousin Anne".

"Yes, yes, you know her very well". The medium was quite agitated. "You know her as G".

The single letter, so suddenly produced, was a shock to him, but he was determined not to accept identification so easily.

"That's not a name", he said. "That's just an initial. I want the full name

But the whole name was not forthcoming. G., the spirit insisted, was enough, and after some argument, Gardner capitulated.

"Is that really you G.?" he asked.

The reply left him no room for doubt. "Yes, you bloody fool. I've been trying to get hold of you for ages".

Gardner began to feel, at this point, as though he were actually facing her. Without difficulty he conjured up for himself her face and voice. He became very easy and unrestrained; he felt as happy as he had been when with her.

G. herself proceeded to issue orders. He was to get hold of some wayward relative of hers that he knew about and "give her hell". G., apparently, did not like the life she was leading and was determined that Gardner should go as her emmissary and get this girl to change her ways. Gardner said he would try.

"You'd better", G. commanded, through the medium, and then asked him what sort of leave he was having.

"Dull", Gardner said.

"Well, don't worry. Something nice... It's happened or nearly happened. Time's difficult here, but it's going to happen very soon".

"What is it? What is it going to be?"

"You'll find out. It'll be nice. Very nice".

Gardner caught G,'s old, teasing tone in this answer, and knew he would get no more information.

"Well, it had better happen soon", he said. My leave's up in two weeks. I've got to get back".

"Oh, you won't get back to your chan... chan... chand... I won't say it. It's not English. I won't say it, it doesn't mean anything. It's nonsense. It's Chinese. But it's not China; it has to do with it, though - with your work. In any case you won't get back; you won't get back until Christmas".

Gardner laughed, "That's impossible, I have the ticket booked".

"Well, you'll jolly well see".

After a slightpause she went on to speak of Gardner's father. The crisis of his illness would come, she said, at the beginning of November. If he survived that, he would last several more years. In the meantime, she added irrelevantly, he had been doing some legal work signing papers for a man named Thomas. Then she said, "Your Mother is here. She's still very fond of you".

"In that case", Gardner asked, feeling almost a sense of grievance over her reticence, "Why didn't she give her name yesterday?"

"Because she couldn't get it through. Names are very difficult here. Surnames are almost impossible to pass across".

"Well, tell me why you call yourself Anne".

He waited for an answer to this question, but there was none. In a few moments, the medium woke up from her trance.

When Gardner left the London Spiritualist Alliance that morning, he was certain that he had spoken with the spirit of Nellie Surgeson's sister, Gertrude. Despite his scepticism, and the tests and precautions he had taken, he had been convinced. Subsequently, he was to get nothing but confirmation of the truth of the facts she had given him through the medium, and of the predictions she had made.

In a sense, this seance was a watershed in his life. He had almost always believed in spiritualism, and in the existence of a spirit world. In Borneo, he had seen impressive confirmation of this certainty. But never before had this touched him directly, nor had he ever been able to prove, to his own satisfaction, the truths of his beliefs. Now he had done so; from now on he had a personal, as opposed to a merely intellectual, conviction that life survives what is called death. It might be thought that this conflicts with that other pillar of his beliefs, the idea of reincarnation. One can't, after all, be a spirit There and a new body Here, at the same time. But, like the Buddhists, Gardner believes that there may be, by our time scheme, great gaps between incarnations. It may even be that the spirit must pass through various stages of development before appearing in this world again. To him, the idea of survival is one mystery of which there may be several, not in any way exclusive, manifestations.

With this new conviction that not only was there no death in the sense of oblivion, the subject-matter of the messages given by G. was swept from his mind. He wrote the whole thing down in his notebooks for further checking; but the "something very nice" of G 's predicting was temporarily eclipsed. It was only after his whirlwind courtship that he realised that this was what she had meant, what would stop him from returning to Malaya when he expected to do so.

It happened that evening. He had met Ida, his brother's sister-in-law for lunch, and invited her and a step-daughter to a theatre. He had never met the step-daughter, and had only asked her in order to add a little to the gaiety of the outing. But from the moment he saw her, took her hand, greeted her, everything else was wiped from his mind. This was the woman he would marry.

The next day he met Ida and Donna, the girl, again, this time taking them to tea at Kew. There were various other people present, and he was unable to say what was in his heart. He slipped Donna the first present he ever gave her - a silver cigarette case. The following day he went to the hospital where she was a Sister. "You are coming back to Malaya with me, as my wife", he said. She had no good arguments to offer against this proposal; nor the desire to use them if she had. It now remained to persuade the rest of the world.

Ida herself had no objection. Indeed, she was rather

pleased. The Matron at the hospital would be more difficult. It was extremely unlikely that she would let Donna go; all the more so because Gardner would not be able to say that he had known her for more than a few days. And Gardner's leave was nearly up. He would have to get the wedding arranged.

Out into the streets of Kensington he walked, looking for inspiration. A real, sturdy, old-fashioned constable was pacing his beat. Gardner decided to tackle him. "Could you please direct me to the nearest church, I want to get married, and I have not got much time".

The other gave him a long sorrowful look. "If you want my advice", he said, "Don't".

But he directed him to a church. "Oh, yes, we can marry you", said the beadle. "But there are the banns and all that sort of thing. It will take a few weeks".

"But I only have a couple of days".

"Can't be done, not without a Special License".

"Where can I get one of those?"

"Only from the Bishop. We can't give you one here, you know".

Donna had insisted that the ceremony he held in a church. Now he had to have a special license. The trail led to the Bishop of Kensington - who was holidaying in Switzerland. There would be no time to wait for a reply to an application.

The same day, riding miserably in the Tube following a rumour that there might be a church somewhere where marriages could beheld without such long-drawn-out formalities, he spotted a pleasant-looking clergyman sitting near him. Gardner has a way of tackling everything and anything that looks promising, if it seems connected with the job on hand. A typical Gardner dialogue then took place, something like this.

"Excuse me, I want to get married immediately".

"I am afraid that you cannot, without a special license".

"But the Bishop of Kensington is away, and I have no time to contact him

The parson thought for a moment. "I can let you have the address of the Bishop of London's private solicitors. They maybe able to arrange something for you. It is exceptionally fortunate that you would have asked me, for you have no other opportunity".

He wrote down the address. Thanking him briefly, Gardner leapt from the train. He saw the lawyers, and got

the license next morning.

Now he had Matron to tackle. He went to St. Thomas's. The matron refused Donna leave. "Thought you'd been here long enough to get rid of that nonsense", she told her. But she wanted to see Gardner.

Matrons are formidable at the best of times, and this one was no exception. She asked to see his papers, to be assured of his bona fides  That over, she told him, "You go off, make a nice home for her in Johore. In a year or so I will let her go out to join you".

Gardner dug in his heels. Something, he was certain, wanted him to go through with this and he would win. He insisted that she come with him then and there.

"Well, she can't", said the Matron. "I've forbidden the marriage".

"I'm going to marry her, even if it means dynamiting the hospital. In any case you can't keep her here. She has to have days off, leave; she has to come out some time. I'll pick her up then and marry her".

"I'll prevent it somehow".

"I've got a special license". He showed it to her.

"Then I'll take you to court over it".

"Do. You can come over to the Johore courts; we'll be there".

At this Matron, baffled by so much determination, capitulated.

Thus the "very nice thing" came to pass, and Gardner was married. Among those who attended the church was the Matron. won over to giving her blessing as well as her consent.

Married within three days, Gardner was able to claim the two months' extra leave to which he was entitled after getting married, but not for getting engaged. The fact that things went through so well makes Gardner feel that "at various times in my life some fate makes me do something and makes it possible for me to do that thing".

After a honeymoon at Ryde, during which Gardner taught his bride to shoot with a pistol, he took her to Blundellsands; not, however, to "Leighton", where Harold's wife Edie had already expressed a pious horror at the speed of the courtship, but to the house of his brother Bob, nearby.

In these familiar surroundings, he had time to remember his old friends, and G. especially, and the contact he had had with what he was certain was her spirit. On the

second night of his stay he decided to mention his visit to the London Spiritualist Alliance to Bob. His brother was very interested, and Gerald in a speculative mood, asked him whether he could account for the fact that while some of the medium's information had been so accurate, in other places it had been so hopelessly wrong.

"Why", Bob wanted to know. "What was wrong?" "Well, that Uncle John for instance".

"What's wrong with that?"

Gardner, a little puzzled by now, said, "But I haven't got an Uncle John".

Bob laughed. "Oh, yes you have", he said firmly. Then, seeing bewilderment on his brother's face, added, "But I suppose you never met him - he died when you were very young. But there definitely was an Uncle John".

This was exciting news for Gardner. His certainty had been confirmed; how could there have been anything faked in the mediums' information, anything even in the way of mind reading, if he himself had not had that much know ledge? Bob, also keenly interested, went back to the records Gardner had kept of the seances.

"Look at this", he said after a while.

"What?"

Bob held up one of the sheets of paper the writing-medium had used. "This handwriting is exactly like Mother's", he said. "Look, I'll show you".

He went to his desk, brought back some specimens of their mother's writing. The medium's script was almost exactly like it - much more like it than they could manage when they tried to copy it: even with the original in front of them. Gardner began to feel like someone faced with a recalcitrant puzzle, the pieces of which had suddenly and accommodatingly decided to fit themselves together. Excited, the two brothers decided to speak to the eldest, Harold, about all this. Harold, lawyer to the fingertips, would not believe in the possibility of spirits communicating with live people after death.

At the same time, he thought that there might be some sort of miracle which could account for the strange development. He was certainly puzzled about the reference to legal work in the medium's message. Gerald Gardner himself, aware of how ill his father was, had been dubious about the possibility of his father having any legal transaction on his sick-bed. Harold now admitted that he had taken some of a client's papers to their father for him to sign. He had done

it reluctantly, but the matter had been urgent, and there had seemed no alternative. He had, he added, taken the papers in himself; not even his confidential clerk had known that he was doing so. He knew the only other person who had seen the signature, and felt that the only explanation other than a miracle was a gigantic conspiracy. with the agents of spiritualists all over the place.

Intent on filling in the remainder of the puzzle, Gardner now set out on the errand G. had given him. He met her relative in Liverpool, and passed G.'s strictures on to her. When he said that G. had called herself cousin Anne, the girl broke down and wept. She was now certain, she said, that the message had been authentic; it was only to her mother that G. had ever called herself Anne. Her name was Anne Gertrude. Certainly Gardner had never heard her called by that name, had not even known that she had a Christian name other than Gertrude.

In London, he had applied for the two months extra, unpaid leave he was entitled to upon marriage. Now permission to take it came through, and he and his new wife spent the next six weeks travelling through France and Spain, taking ship at last from Marseilles. They arrived in Malaya on Christmas Eve, and as they steamed into Singapore harbour Gardner realised that G.'s last prediction had been fulfilled.

It was in 1932 that Gardner left Malaya again - not, this time, directly for England, but to stay for a short while in the Middle East. For Gardner, in the interim, had built the foundations of an archaeological reputation, and now had in his pocket letters of introduction, given to him by McAlpine Woods, an archaeologist friend of his, for Sir Flinders Petrie at his dig at Gaza. After a week in Egypt, dazed, as so many have been before him, by the wonderful relics of that rigid and monolithic civilisation he arrived with the dawn at Gaza.

Sir Flinders's Camp turned out to be an unimpressive collection of mud huts near the river; one of these huts, ten feet square, standing close to the river, accommodated Sir Flinders and his wife. Beyond the living-quarters was a low hill. To Gardner's inexperienced eyes this seemed merely an unimportant natural feature, a meaningless swelling of the land; nowadays he would recognise it on sight as an archaeological site of the greatest potential.

Sir Flinders himself, a small man with a leathery, dried-up look of the European who has been too often out under alien suns, met him and showed him his hut. His

gear stowed, he was then taken over the dig itself. In imagination Gardner had seen great walls, the pillars of vast temples, the carved, enigmatic faces of gods voiceless for five thousand years. Instead he found an unexciting scene reminscent of pictures from theWorld War's campaigns. Trenches, about four feet deep, ran haphazardly in various directions, expanding now and again to reveal apparently meaningless complexes of foundations, low walls, doorsteps. Here and there hired Arab labourers were digging in desultory fashion while one or two of the Flinders's staff sifted the disturbed earth. Mud and dustwere everywhere. It all seemed very desolate, almost pointless; far from the scenes of rediscovered splendour he had imagined.

It did not, however, take long for Sir Flinders's explanation, and his own explorations, to make the geography of the site plain to him, and to allow him to reconstruct, with his inner eye, the city that had once stood there. The foundations of the outer wall were plainly to be seen, surmounting a steep escarpment, made almost unclimbable by chalk which had been laid upon it to a depth of about two feet, then hammered flat and smoothed, until at the time of the city's greatness, it must have been almost as slippery as ice.

Sir Flinders also showed him something he had always wanted to see - a secret passage. Gardner has always had an almost boyish interest in war and fighting; this is an attitude for which the proved existence of secret tunnels is almost indispensable. Now he could explore one. It ran from inside the city walls to a small building about a mile from them. That it was of the greatest importance to the city's defence was shown by the fact that, after having been swept away on one occasion when the nearby river had changed its course, it had been laboriously recut.

Another find that especially interested Gardner, since it connected this Middle Eastern site with the British Isles, was Irish gold. The Irish were among the first people to master the art of soldering gold; they would take two strands, or strips, connect them by soldering, and then twist them together. This find confirmed another made by Schliemann at the site of Troy - a find which experts at that time had pooh-poohed.

Gardner worked on at the Gaza dig, learning from the master a great deal about the latest techniques of archaeology. Before he left, he spoke to Sir Flinders about the difficulties he had had in getting his own work in Malaya recognised. But the old campaigner was encouraging.

"Archaeologists are the most jealous people in the world", he said. "But you must butt on. You've found the beginnings: you've proved that there really was a Malayan civilisation. Now others can follow the trail". And Gardner reflected that, although he would have loved to remain in the Middle East, the work he was doing in Johore was his own no one else was working in the field there, nor had anyone before him dug anywhere in Malaya or found anything.

After a short stay among the prehistoric caves of France - a period of man's development which Gardner more at home with the artifacts of homo faber, has never felt excited by - he finally returned to England. Here he learned that his father, whom he had meant to visit in the Canaries, to which he had retired, had finally died. It seemed that his last link with his Lancashire past had thus been broken. And indeed, despite his sorrow, he found England a freer country than before, perhaps even because of this final severing of connections with the past, perhaps because it had in fact changed in the few years since he had seen it last. Of course, he caught his habitual cold, but in other respects he felt tbat the country had improved.

There was also the fact that he now began to see England from a completely new angle - that of the practising archaeologist. He went to an archaeological congress, and there made contact with such men as Keiller, well-known for his work at Avebury and Windmill Hill. He began to realise that in England too there was a great deal that was ancient; that although time and industrialism had buried much of the past, it still obtruded in many places. This was an awareness which was to have much influence upon his later beliefs.

It seems a pity to Gardner, however, that so few people care about this past. They pass sites of the greatest interest every day, even live on top of or among them, yet, even when shown, care nothing for them. On the other hand, of course, there are many local beliefs and traditions which people are afraid to mention to the pundits for fear of being laughed at. Nor is this fear without foundation; for years the locals who insisted that the Stonehenge stones were "foreign", perhaps from Ireland, were ridiculed by the professors, who knew for certain that the Romans had built the great ring. Only recently was it discovered that the stones put up long before the Roman conquest did in fact come from elsewhere - from Wales, which would be on the route to Ireland. Sometimes, of course, there is reality to support

tradition. There is a story among New Forest folk that around a certain tree in the forest, called the Naked Man, witches used to dance. Few believe that the legend is true - yet witches dance there yet! "The Tree was blown down just after the War. But I hear they still use the site".

Thus this leave was largely taken up with archaeology. Gardner and his wife joined digs in Devon and other parts of the country, made many contacts; his knowledge of weapons, extensive by this time, he found extremely useful. He found time, however, to try to carry farther his experiences in spirituaiism, deciding that this time he would try other organisations and mediums. He soon discovered that there was often what might politely be termed a difference of quality between one organisation and another.

The first place he essayed was an agency, which had a small panel of mediums. Through them he booked a trance medium, and asked her questions on what was admittedly a difficult and esoteric subject - the history of his especial love among Oriental weapons, the kris majapahit. He got no answer, only a great deal of mumbling, a calling of names meaningless to him, and finally the injunction, "Come back". Then, perhaps to assuage any doubts he might have, he was told that next time he could, if he wished, take photographs of various psychic manifestations. It would only be necessary to leave the photographic plates with the office for the week preceding exposure, in order that they might be "magnetized". The seals on the packets they assured him, would remain unbroken; the pictures of emanations he would obtain would be both wonderful and convincing. He would not waste time or money on this.

The next place he tried worked on a "teleprinter" basis. Operations here were conducted in a large room, in a Victorian house in North London. In the centre of the room stood a typewriter, its keys so finely adjusted that if one even blew on them, they depressed. As they did so, the corresponding letter would light up in a panel on the wall. In near-darkness, the medium entered and sat in a chair surrounded on three sides by curtains. She was then attached to the chair, bracelets around her wrists snapping into fasteners on the chair arms. Gardner, with the legitimate scepticism of those who search for incontrovertible truth, asked if he might look at these fastenings. He was told he could not - all sorts of people had inspected them already, and all had agreed that no one could get out of them. Reluctantly, he had to accept these assurances. Now all

went dark, and those waiting sat, tensely expectant.

In a few moments, a speck of brilliance was to be seen upon the medium's bosom, grew and extended, until it looked like a ray of light. At the end of this a hand appeared. On each chair arm a white blob remained. Were these really, Gardner wondered, the medium's hands; they might have been - but equally they might have been gloves, even handkerchiefs, anything white. The hand, hovering at the end of the ray or light, moved down toward the typewriter's keys. On the wall the letters lit up in turn. But the information thus conveyed was, as far as Gardner was concerned, completely pointless, and it was with a sense of frustration and bewilderment that he returned to his hotel.

Then there was the meeting he went to, held in a private house, in which sheets of cardboard, covered with phosphorescent paint, were held up in a darkened room. Against these, the silhouettes of the relevant spirits showed themselves. In this way his mother, he was told, had put in an appearance; he studied the shadows, but could see little resemblance between it and the figure he remembered as his mother's. A small boy appeared, too, giving his name as Teddy Green. He asked whether Gardner remembered him.

"No, I don't!", Gardner said, forthright on this as on most other occasions. "Where did I meet you?"

"At school", the shade of Teddy Green replied. But Gardner, of course, had never been to school; he felt that young Teddy had come to the wrong person. A rather strange ring he had brought with him, made in Malaya, was twiddled by an inexplicable apparition, and a voice murmured "Edith". But he knew no Edith who had died. Again it was with a feeling of some resentment that he left the meeting.

His attitude to these strange sports of the spiritualist movement are important. They prove that Gardner's scientific attitude, his insistence upon being satisfied, as a jury must be, beyond all reasonable doubt, never left him. Certainly he believed, and still believes, in the possibility of contact with those who have died. But this bias did not lead him, as it has led so many others, to a wholesale acceptance in any and every so-called psychic manifestation. On the contrary, if anything, it made his standards of judgment even higher. This has, I think, to be borne in mind when considering the validity of his later beliefs, and the honesty with which he came to hold them.

During this leave, too, he finally went to Hewart

Mackenzie, whose organisation he had intended to visit in 1927. The medium there, in deep trance, got the name Anne, and tried hard to hear more, but could make nothing of it. The spirit, he said later, had been very advanced, and the pitch of the voice consequently too high for him to understand what it was saying. They were very sorry that his visit had had such meagre results - an apology he could not remember having received at some of the other places he had visited, where the results had been infinitely thinner.

Another interest, later to be important to him, now makes its first tentative appearance. Ever since, in the Singapore Hospital, his leg had been cured by it, he had felt certain of the therapeutic effects of sun-shine. In Malaya where it was not difficult to find seclusion, he had sunbathed fairly frequently in the nude, and had delighted both in the vigour and in the feeling of freedom it had given him. Now, having heard about the existence of nudist clubs, he began to ask many people about them. He was, however, "frozen off", as he puts it. That sort of thing, he was told, was only done in Germany; it might be all very well for the Germans, but in this country, thank heaven, other standards of decency prevailed. People were, indeed, extremely shocked at the question. As a matter of fact, they were wrong - one or two clubs had already been started in England, but it was to be several years before Gardner was to discover this.

Once again his English life came to an end; the archaeology, the search for a good medium, the putting down of roots. Once more he was off to Malaya - for the last time, as it turned out. In 1936 he was due for leave. It was discovered that if he came back from that, he would only have eighteen months left to serve, and it was therefore decided that he should retire at the same time as he went on leave, losing none of his pension rights.

Now here he was, at fifty-two, with Malaya, which had come to be his adopted home, no more than a grey line above the blue of the water, sailing into a new life, toward a Europe unrecognisable for the one he had first left in 1900. Now, in Germany, men had found new war-cries, more fierce than any heard in the jungle; in Spain, a Civil War was starting which was to lay bare the sad anatomy of the devastation air attack could cause civilian populations; in Italy, black-shirted fanatics dreamed of the revival of a dead empire; in Britain men believed in the goodness of

human nature, and that goodwill was a substitute for effort and vigilance in the preservation of peace. This was the continent toward which this great, white ship was bearing Gerald Gardner.

# 10

## INTUITION AND ECSTASY

Second sight, being a "sensitive", having a power to know unfallibly just what course to take; these are associated states which Gerald Gardner has devoted a great deal of time to understanding. The problems of studying the subject-matter here are complicated by several emotional factors. In the first place, religious people of all denominations, when they have developed extra-sensory powers, have invariably attributed their acquiring to their religion. The fact that followers of totally different cults have reported almost exactly similar experiences worries them not a whit.

Gardner discovered that it was almost impossible to separate a discussion on, for example, Christian mystical experience from the mystic's preconceived ideas that the experience was a form of special grace, given in exchange for belief and striving: by the one and only source of such blessings. Precisely similar attitudes prevail in other communities, he noted.

Was it possible, as an anthropologist, to cut out the theology, and study the mechanism of the practical mystic? He made a start with the people who felt that they achieved some sort of divine communion with the use of drugs. This shortest cut to the apparent experience of contact with something divine, he found, was in itself a complex one. In the first place, the reactions to the taking of drugs were very variously described. Some people claimed that they did not become addicted. Some said that they saw visions, heard heavenly voices, attained a sense of supernatural perception. What could account for these differences: especially when some people said that they did not see anything at all?

Whatever the drug-taker might think. it seemed palpably obvious that the experiences in the drugged state approximated to what the subject thought he was going to see, feel or hear. If he already had some, however elusive, psychic insight, this insight would he sharpened: but a great deal would depend upon the dosage. Drugs might be the

easiest way to open the "psychic" eye, but could also be the most dangerous. Mescaline, so highly esteemed by presentday experiemnters, did seem to provide the escape and the catharsis that were needed. Whether a psychological addiction could come about, whereby the taker felt that he simply must have another session of mescaline in order to re-enter the fantasy-world which it provided for him was another matter.

The question of dosage and control over the use of the drug was also fundamental. The Indians who take mescaline, for instance, do so in moderation. and only on special, ritual occasions. They confine the administration of the Payotl extract to certain times and certain individuals. In this way the expectancy of the illusions is directed,and the irresponsible use less likely to take place. Fungus containing delirient drugs is used in many countries under the control of medicine-men and the like.

The white man, he concluded, abuses Mescaline. Taken by drug-addicts or people who are not rigidly controlled it would be likely to create a habit, without the grace of the visions which it was supposed to produce: without, that is to say, the experience which came through the combination of control, direction and intention. It would degenerate into just another addiction-drug.

It was an instructive reflection to see what had happened to the use of tobacco, when it came into general consumption. Nicholas Monardes, writing in 1569 observed that the Indians made themselves drunk with tobacco, and lost their senses. Early accounts emphasise that tobacco was used in ritual (e.g., "peace-pipe") ways; and probably coupled with a heightened state of suggestibility. These factors in themselves would be sufficient to account for the production of trance, especially in those who were not physically accustomed to the ingestion of nicotine. If the whole is coupled with the fact that the tobacco would be taken by magicians who were trained through practise to fall into a state of ecstasy, the whole picture becomes clear.

In de l'Ecluse's _Histoire des Simples_, of 1619 we find just such a development recorded: American Indians, he says, puff the smoke of burning tobacco and fall into an ecstasy. In this state they believe that they can foretell the future.

Such accounts have frequently baffled pharmacologists. who cannot see in "the tobacco plant which is used today" the power which it seems to exert over the primitive Indians of

North America. It may, however, be pointed out that there might well be enough composite effect to procude the desired result. May not something have been mixed with that tobacco, say hemp?

His own psychic feelings ("hunches" and the like) come to him through a strange yet certain feeling in the solar plexus. This phenomenon became so well-established that his wife was in the habit of asking him to refer problems to what his tummy might have to say about it". The association of intuition with ecstasy he discovered to be very close. He could induce it by Witch methods, but only when he could get the right people to help him. This, of course, involves a belief in some substantial reality of the supposed "force" which produces or promotes the psychic contact.

The exact effect of drugs administered under ritualistic circumstances was a field almost unbelievably large in its extent, he decided. Such experiments should be carried out with a properly qualified physician at hand; and particularly one who was familiar with the expected effects of the drug which was to he used.

Even in ordinary legend and repute there are signs that the "opening of the psychic eye" might be possible through more easily accessible methods. Many Scotsmen, for instance, will aver that whisky can open this eye. It had to be taken without moderation, and with a certain firm intent. Gardner himself, however, is a near-teetotaller, and has a particular aversion to whisky - so personal investigation along those lines was next to impossible for him.

Does this intuition occur whenever needed? Not for everyone; and one can lose it. Practise and belief are the requisites, with the witches, just as with the other ecstatic religions of long ago.

The disturbance of consciousness which has been observed in yogis is a step towards the development of intuition and of ecstasy; but only partially produced by chemical means. Gardner noticed that the restraint of breath, which causes the lungs to contain an unusual amount of carbon dioxide gas, is one of the most important factors. Under the physical heading, the sitting for long periods in cramped or unnatural postures would affect the circulation and hence the blood-breathing apparatus. These, in turn, have their influence upon the brain: and trance might well he a result, especially if helped by the meditation and contemplation which was aimed at throwing the practitioner into a trance.

On this subject, Gardner decided that the climate of India and the diet of the yogis helped to offset possible undesirable effects caused by these practices. Some weight is given to this conclusion by the fact that when these exercises are attempted by Westerners, unfortunate results may follow. There is not much evidence available on this part of the investigation, but Oriental practitioners working in the West have said that unpleasant or indecisive results are likely in any case unless the mystic is operating under the continual care of a guide who has himself been through the same stages; or, better, who is trained as a teacher.

The ordinary improvements in digestion, general well-being and the like reported by Western superficial practitioners of yoga can be accounted for by suggestion: auto-suggestion. Western yoga devotees have been given a similar sense of achievement by being given "dummy" exercises to perform, and asked (as a control group) to report whether they feel "better", "healthier", and so on.

# 11

## CITY OF THE GODDESS

When Gardner left Malaya on his retirement, in January 1936, he had an introduction to J.L. Starkey, Director of the Wellcome Archaeological Research Expedition excavating an important biblical find: the ancient city of Lachish in Palestine. The site was twenty-five miles south-west of Jerusalem, and had been a fort on the western frontier of Judah. Exciting finds were made there, some of which were to influence Gardner's later thoughts on the religion of the ancient mother-cult.

He was glad to be in the Middle East again. For some years, he says, he had felt that he had had an odd feeling of "belonging" to that area. For one who believed firmly in reincarnation, this sensation had a special meaning. Hence his desire to join the Lachish excavations.

Starkey and his assistant Harding (later to become Director of Antiquities in Jordan) made him welcome, had heard of his Far Eastern archaeological pioneering. Gardner saw a large valley, about a mile wide; and in the centre a hill, dark against the night sky. He was accommodated in a rough hut of stones set in mud.

In the morning, he was able to see the hill of Lachish for the first time clearly. This was natural in formation, but scarped all round in most places, with the chalk thoroughly beaten in. The city had flourished until destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar about 2,500 years ago. Still visible were lines where the Babylonians had put wood against the limestone walls and burnt them, to powder the stone away into soft lime. In this process it is possible that most of the inhabitants suffocated. The line of the walls followed, he found, that shown in an illustration by a contemporary Babylonian artist, now in the British Museum.

As with all archaeology all was not glamour. There was a great deal of back-breaking work to be done. Gardner tackled a mysterious pit. He also worked on the gate fortifications, and there important finds were made. These were potsherds with early Hebrew characters on them, written in

ink with a reed pen. Until then only four pre-exilic Hebrew inscriptions had been found. Up to the time of this Expedition, it had been thought that the pre-Captivity Israelites were illiterate. If they had been able to write, it was felt, something written from that time would have been found. The iron ink writings, made with reed pens and in several different handwritings, showed that papyrus had been in use, and that many people could write. Why write on pieces of pottery? One letter apologises for writing a message "to so great a man" on a potsherd; but, owing to the war the stocks of papyrus were exhausted. Papyrus would last well in bonedry Egyptian tombs, but must have rotted in a much damper country like Palestine. Writings upon stone would have been destroyed by the Maccabees, if they had mention of the old gods.

In Lachish they found a fine temple to the Great God Jehova (Yahwa), with Astaroth beside him. In Palestine Astaroth, (Tanith, etc.) was the wife of Baal or Yahwa. Though the Bible states that Elijah won at the Mount Carmel conflict, and speaks of his massacre of priests and priestesses, yet later, Gardner notes, Elijah laments at Horeb the wholesale killing of the Yahwaist priests and the throwing down of all the altars of Yahwa. He thought that he was the only priest of Yahwa left alive (I Kings, XIX. 14).

Clay figures of the goddess Astaroth are found all over Palestine, indicating that she was reveranced there for a long time. In the city of Mizpah (Tel-en-Nasben) the twin temples of Yahwa and Astaroth stood side by side. At Lachish they shared a temple, as they did in Egypt for the Jewish communities until almost the coming of Christ. "And", Gardner says, "as Jeremiah tells us, the people continued in the worship of the Queen of Heaven, saying that when they followed the prophets they suffered captivity and desolation; when they worshipped Astaroth, they were prosperous (Jer. VII. 18; Jer. XLIV. 15 - 19), after the return from the Babylonian captivity."

The excavations threw light of the greatest importance upon the political, religious and military aspects of Judah at the actual moment of the final attack upon the doomed city.

Gardner was particularly interested in what he believed to be the certainty of the existence of twin-deity worship. Just outside the city a temple was discovered, in which were many treasures; three buildings on the same site, each side of the main hall for offerings, two robing rooms behind the altars: and two altars - one high and

central, the other

lower and to its left. On the smaller altar was a very beautiful statue of a female figure, carved in ivory and nearly life-size. This was Astaroth or Tamiz, consort of Baal or Yahwa, whose was the central altar. No one then, he says, had any doubt that there had been two deities...

Gardner arranged to dig there in the following season and, as the year's work was finished, moved on for a tour of Amman, the ancient Roman town which was now the capital of King Abdullah's Transjordan. Then the the age-old Nabatean city of Petra, with its rock hewn tombs and temples. He saw the place where Moses was said to have looked upon the land of Palestine, and went to Jerusalem for the Easter ceremonies; with the usual scuffling and fighting among the pilgrims which made this event so notorious.

Gardner thought that he would have a look at Turkey. He loved the beautiful approach to Izmir - the ancient Smyrna - the wide gulf sixty miles long, land under cultivation on either side. The town itself had not benefited by the republican regime after the downfall of the Sultan-Caliph. Houses were falling down, windows were broken. He went to see the neglected museum. Art was not a premium there.

Istanbul, though beautiful because of its past glories, and apparently thriving, was spoilt for him because Mustafa Kamal had made everyone wear western clothes. The result was that everyone looked seedy and dirty. They had not realised that the national dress had given them a dignity, had been associated with their history and their way of life.

Gardner went to see the Royal Palace, because it was now a museum; and the archery ground where 790-odd yard arrow flights were marked with commemorative stones. He noted that the Turkish bowmen had a short arrow, shot along a scoop, and the men would give a flick at the end. Most of the accuracy was sacrificed to distance of flight. Aya Sofia, the old cathedral which had been turned into a museum, was a wonderful place, but everything had been collected into cases, without anyone knowing what they were. The weapons interested him mostly: early breech-loaders and revolvers with magazines crosswise in the barrels. They were lopsided one way when full, the other when empty. There was an extraordinary prototype of a machine-gun: a number of barrels had been welded together, and were loaded together by means of a thick metal plate which locked behind the barrels. All were then fired at once, with tremendous impact.

The Duke of Argyll had two of them, in the early eighteenth century. Morgan the pirate at Panama once improvised a similar weapon from organ pipes.

Then Athens. It was Easter again, because of the difference in calendars. The museum here was wonderful, especially for its Cretan materials. Carrying on his antiquarian pilgrimage, Gardner decided to see Belgrade, Budapest and Vienna, looking at museums, making contacts with fellow-experts in arms and archaeology.

Budapest was a disappointment, with extreme poverty, though the music was beautiful. He was warned not to look at the hotel orchestra: the contrast between their wonderful, wild melodies and their appearance was too much. "They were awful, fat and greasy men, in full evening dress, and sweating".

A strange turntable down a side road by the hotel perhaps made the greatest impression upon him during this visit. The road led to the river. Drunks were led there, landmarks were pointed out to them. Then the turntable was slowly revolved, to the amazement, awe and fright of the unfortunate victims.

Then into Germany: on the frontier long swastika banners hung menacingly from the houses of Party members. He went to Nuremburg, not to see Nazism but the museum. Here they had instruments of torture, including an Iron Maiden. He thought that it was not genuine, and that there never was such an instrument in actual use. It was based upon stories of a statue of the Virgin Mary owned by the Holy Vehm, the secret society of the Middle Ages which was organised to put down crime. They had a secret tribunal at which men were ordered to kiss the virgin's effigy. It would then open and seize them. This maiden was a clumsy, pyramidal figure with a rough head on top, a door in front, and spikes inside.

Finally he found himself back in England. He had not wanted to return, but there he was, with his wife who had taken a flat in Charing Cross Road. Soon after his arrival he caught the usual cold took the usual remedies - and, as usual, the cold hung about him. The doctor said, "I could suggest something that would cure you, but I expect you will refuse to do it". It was a visit to a nudist club. "I'll die there", said Gardner, but the doctor was adamant that it would help him. He was thus introduced to a club in Finchley. This was a huge house, with a ballroom and gymnasium, club room and all. He made many friends there, and got

rid of his cold.

Denmark beckoned, with a meeting of the Historical Weapons Association, where he had a "glorious time". He read papers on the kris and the scottish dirk, was entertained at the Palace. The delegates exchanged ideas about weapons, and there were practical demonstrations. One flintlock was fired one hundred and seventy-five times in succession, without misfire, using power made from ancient recipes; until they got tired of loading it. Here he made a lifelong friend, Holgar Yacobson. He found that his book on the kris was used in the museums there, and that, although he had written it mainly for those who understood Malay, it was the only reference book in the world on the subject. and was the basis of virtually all study of Malay weapons.

He had intended to return to Palestine that winter, but Starkey was murdered, and the Expedition stopped, so he decided to go to Cyprus instead, on a lazy holiday by orange-boat, which took a month.

Cyprus was to provide him with some of the strangest experiences of his life.

# 12

## THE CYPRUS MYSTERY

A curious succession of dreams, almost as if he was living another, yet coherent and connected life, had been frequent experiences for many years. In this strange serial story, Gardner was in an ancient world where he was having a mighty wall built, to keep out invaders. It was like a Roman wall, it was in a hot country, because he was involved partly as an armourer. He "remembered" seizing all the bronze pots and kettles he could to cast into spears and other weapons. He had a strong curiosity about this secret life. The day before he sailed for Cyprus in 1938, he had another, different dream. It was about a man who found that he was not wanted at home: so he dived into the past, seemingly with ease - where he was wanted.

The other passengers on this slow boat drank or played bridge all day. Gardner said that he was writing a book, holed up in a corner and started a novel. When he landed in Cyprus, he found the land was exactly as he had dreamed. He added local tales, and the novel was published as "A Goddess Arrives".

He went to the Museum in Nicosia, where the Curator said: "You are interested in weapons. Tell me how the ancient Cypriots hafted their swords". He handed him a heavy bronze blade, shaped with a very thick mid-rib. It had a very short tang, with a hook on the end. Gardner looked at the problem, and tentatively suggested that the haft could be secured with cement. But no cement had been found in any of the tombs in which the ancient blades were located, even after microscopic examination. The alternative seemed to be to split the hilt, carve places for the tang, fix stout ferrules.

"But that's the trouble: there are no ferrules. We find even the tiniest bronze wires and rivets in these tombs, but not the slightest trace of ferrules. They could not have decayed. There just weren't any"

Gardner gave up the analytical approach, allowed his

mind to slip into contemplation:

"Then, suddenly and extraordinarily, my hands felt as if they knew. I said, 'Will you give me an old blade. These people had bronze saws, chisels and knives, and bores. Lend me some modern ones, and I will try'.

"My hands told me what to do. Next day I brought the sword back, hafted. They tried it many ways and found it good, and then they said: 'Take it out, and show us how you did it'. And it would not come. We had to get an axe and split it to get the haft off".

"I had bored a hole at an angle for the tang and another across it. Putting the chisel in this I cut a hole to take the hook. A saw cut took the sharpened shoulders and kept it from twisting. A wedge of wet wood locked the tang in position, and a plug of hard wood took the end of the hook, and stopped the blade from creeping up the hilt when thrust against bone. Now to do this I had to make the hilt a curious shape, and they said: 'Why did you make it that shape?' I said I had felt that it must be so. 'But you are right. We have found clay models, and they are just like that. The blade is for thrusting, not for cutting, and it makes it slip between the ribs'".

Afterwards he was to make hilts of this kind for the British Museum. Was this an inherited memory of a man who had once been a swordmaker in Cyprus? Gardner is convinced that this must be so.

The following winter, Gardner felt that he must return to Cyprus. Going to Kyrenia, he recognised places which he had seen in his dreams: one of them a hill called Stronglos, a small round hill at the mouth of a tiny river. He remembered it well from his dreams: but without the cuttings in the Rock where the 14th century Castle of Gastria, of the Templar type, had been. Floors had been cut out from the rock, and the castle had been built upon that; the different rooms were still distinguishable. About 1880, all stone in unoccupied buildings along the Cyprus coast had been bought by the Suez Canal Company from the Turks. As a result there were few fortifications or temples left, except inland, including Gastria.

This was the country of his dream; a place to be defended, a tongue of land with a knobbly rock upon it, beyond which lay the river, then a swamp, now hard ground, and a ravine. Part of his work in that past life, he thought, had been to build a wall from the ravine to the swamp. He remembers it all - foundations, earthworks, stones in position)

towers. He even knew instinctively the points of the compass - the river flowed from north to south.

Further strange experiences were still to 'come. His friends the Woods, were in Kyrenia. They wanted him to meet some acquaintances, at an out-of-town cottage. They took the bus there, knocked on the door, received no answer. They were walking away when suddenly down the path after them a lady came, the one whom they were visiting. She said to the Woods: "I haven't time to chat now. But I must speak to him", and dragged Gardner up the hill and away. She said that she had seen people coming and had hidden, but that she felt very strongly that she knew Gerald Gardner, had known him in a past ancient Egyptian life. He had been a priest, and she recognised him by his hair. Gardner had always thought that Egyptian priests had shaven heads. After this meeting he never saw her again.

He feels that Egypt is the favourite place for people to remember a past life, possibly because it is the best known. Perhaps it may be the most evocative. Certainly nothing of what the strange woman said to him made any sense or spoke to any part of him. His memories were different: vaguer, half-felt and of the Bronze Age. It might be partly in Syria, he feels, about 1,000 B.C, He hopes that his belief in reincarnation is true, but feels much more strongly the urge to go back in time, to re-live the past, if that were only possible.

In really ancient days it was not important to keep up a position, or even to make money. The people were more like the Malayan natives he knew; a little work produced you food, and there were always plenty of women to cook it. There was land for everyone, therefore more freedom: perhaps almost complete freedom. Society moved along automatically, everyone knowing what was expected of him. People, then were always "ready for a scrap". He remembers the Dyaks of the jungles in Borneo. The Government was all right, they said, but before there was one, there would be a battle every few years, and this gave point to their lives, something to talk about...

The summer of 1939 saw him back in England, and doing much "nuding". This was partly because he felt that he met people in this way whom he did not know existed in England; interesting people, prepared to talk, argue and discuss. Many had a faint occult interest; fortune-telling, palmistry, astrology, vague spiritualism. He felt healthier, too, and liked the lack of class -consciousness which naturism

brought.
    That summer, too, he attended the Congress of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences, in Oslo. Among the people whom he met there were Jacquetta Hawkes, Abbe Breuil, and Keiller with whom he dug in England. He read his authoritative paper on the prehistory of the kris before one of the world's most distinguished audiences.
    This period was an interlude, for he was chaffing to get hack to Cyprus. He went to Famagusta, where he met a wild-eyed, semi-Mexican woman who said that she was English. He hired her to look for the dream-place which he had found the previous winter. They found it; a line of hills, with a knobbly mound at the end. He asked if there was a river. No, there was no. No swamp, either. But he found that it was there. The river had silted up. In his dream, this was where he had kept his ships; where there had been a marsh in the dream were many drainage ditches. The dry patch where the wall is built corresponds in both dream and reality, as do the hills beyond and the ravine which cuts into them. As to the points of the compass, he recalls thinking that the enemy t'would probably attack when the dying sun was in the faces of his men". He bought this land, and intended to have a house built on it. The war was to prevent this; but events were to make it possible for him to help a friend in need through this property. This brings the story to that of Father Ward and his religious community.
    Father John Ward, before he saw the light, was Principal Officer of Customs in lower Burma, and hence Gardner's opposite number. He was an authority on Chinese secret societies, and co-authored a book on the subject which is still a standard work used by research workers and the police of many countries. Following his return home from the Far East, he had been Intelligence head of the Federation of British Industries for twelve years. Eventually he and his wife began to have visions.
    In these mystical experiences, they were warned that the end of an age was approaching, and that the civilisation of the West was doomed. To prepare people for the Second Coming of Christ, in accordance with their revelations, they gave lectures. Later, led by the Angelic Guardian of the Work, they formed the Confraternity of Christ the King. This sect required that all possessions be handed over to the Order, names were changed and the community did all their own work, even making their own shoes.
    Father Ward set up what was known as the Abbey Folk

Park, near St. Albans, and Gardner came across them by accident. Ward wore crimson robes. At first it was a lay Order, with the local clergyman celebrating Communion. Although nominally adhering to the Church of England, they had colourful Greek ceremonies, which were even attended by some of the local inhabitants. Then came a new Vicar, who objected to this. The Bishop forbade Ward to hold services.

Ward wrote for affiliation to his friend the Patriarch of Antioch, and was made a priest and bishop of the Greek Church. It seems that Ward was empowered to ordain priests. Since the Orthodox Church had Papal recognition, they wolild be able to set up as genuine churchmen.

''I do not for a moment doubt their sincerity" , says Gardner, "but it did seem to me that they fancied themselves as Abbot and Lady Abbess. Ward wanted a secret society, and liked to indulge his hobbies. Whenever he heard that the local council was going to tear down some nice old building, he would rush lip with motor-lorries and a gang of monks. They had rescued some marvellous examples of ancient buildings for the Folk Park".

The reputed Witch's cottage which Gardner acquired was obtained from Father Ward.

Meanwhile the religious struggle became more bitter. Certain curates who were ordained by Ward were said to be annoying their vicars because they claimed that his ordination was valid, as it had the authority of the Pope via the Orthodox Church. The story goes that one eminent churchman excommunicated Ward, who excommunicated him back, and declared him anathema.

There was no doubt that the Folk Park had an outstanding collection of remarkible objects illustrating the history of this country for countless generations.

When Gardner saw him, he had had to sell most of what he had, and wanted to go to Canada; but travel restrictions meant that people could not at that time go abroad without being able to prove need.

Ward thought that he might go to the Greek Church, his parent body. The Orthodox Church was powerful in Cyprus, where Gardner had his dream property, which he had decided to give to Ward. This gift meant that the Order had property which could be a reason for travelling.

When he went in 1949 to Cyprus again, he found that the Community had been safely settled there for years. Father Ward was dead by then, but Mother Ward was carrying on.

They were well liked, and were accepted as a genuine order by the Greek Church.

# 13

## INTO THE WITCH CULT

The really serious war scare came in 1938, when Gardner had returned to England from Cyprus. Determined to do his part, he joined the A.R.P. and trained as a warden. "When the scare was bad" he recalls, "shelter trenches were being dug in Hyde Park. So I bought a pair of rubber boots and went there. I found the diggers were being paid, and they did not want me, because volunteers doing the work for nothing might upset their employment; but a couple of halfcrowns settled that, and I was free to dig as much as I liked".

Civil defence plans were that in the event of war, every house within half a mile of each large London railway station was to be evacuated. The flat which he shared with his wife was just across the road from Victoria terminus: and he was determined that his collection should not be destroyed. The only place in England where he had friends was the region of the New Forust, and he managed to get a house there, where wife and collection were duly installed.

It was the end of the year; the naturist club which he had joined was closed for the winter, and he was thrown upon his own resources. On one of his long cycle rambles, Gardner came across a curious building in Christchurch. Cut in the stone the legend said: THE FIRST ROSICRUCIAN THEATRE IN ENGLAND. Later he was to find out what this meant. This was the discovery which led to his recruitment into the cult of the witches.

It was while he was here that Gardner became the centre of the great "Hitler Letter" controversy. When France fell, there was a great deal of British public opinion to the effect that surrender had not benefited her one whit. Gardner, with his guerrilla training, was convinced that every civilian was morally bound to carry on the struggle. With the strong possibility that the Germans would land on British soil, this feeling was one of paramount importance. He wrote to the Daily Telegraph:

"Belgium and France were lost because

> the civilian population bolted instead of staying and delaying the invaders. It has been proved in many wars that if the civil population will fight delaying actions they can be most troublesome to invaders and may even beat them.
>
> "It is part of German tactics to make it believed that civilians cannot, and may not, resist invaders; because the Germans well know how difficult they are to fight. In the last war the Germans encouraged civilians in East Prussia and Poland to snipe when the army had retreated.
>
> "The made-in-Germany rules of war mean that Germany does not obey the rules of war as they have been hitherto understood. Why should we? Everyone willing should be given arms when they are available and taught how to use them.
>
> "If the French villages had resisted, the German Motor-Cycle troops could not have come on as they did. If each village and town had defended itself, France would never have fallen as she did, and Germany might well have been on the way to defeat now.
>
> "Why should people who wish to defend themselves be prevented, just to make it easy for Germany? By Magna Carta every free-born Englishman is entitled to have arms to defend himself and his household. Let us now claim our right".

That correspondence continued for three weeks, with the balance in favour of Gardner, though there was also a dissentient note from the pacifists and supporters of international law. But it was the Germans who were most annoyed.

In under a week the Frankfurter Zeitung, an influential mirror of Wilhelmstrasse thought, splashed an attack upon the proposal. The Telegraph correspondent reported from his Swiss listening-post:

> "MAGNA CARTA LETTER. Zurich, Wednesday... Today's Frankfurter Zeitung, in a prominent front-page cable from Berlin, rants against the writer of the letter and the conditions in which it obtained publicity. The writer must know,

> says the cable, that human ethics have advanced in the last 700 years. His suggestion is condemned as medieval and as an infringement of international law. It is obvious from the whole German press, and also from official reactions, that the spirit of theEnglish people is entirely unexpected and most discomforting to the Nazis".

As Gardner's address was printed at the bottom of his letter, it was locally considered possible that some form of reprisal might be attempted. Be this as it may, it is a fact that the following week a German aircraft flew very low over the area. The following day nearby New Milton was bombed at noon. The raider flew so low that many people said "one of ours" and took no cover. A number of civilians were killed while shopping. Pacifists blamed Gardner. "If you hadn't written that letter that annoyed Hitler, this would never have happened".

He had been made a Sector Warden, with a white helmet; and it was thought that his letter might have had some effect upon Whitehall - for it was soon announced that the L.D. V. (Local DefenceVolunteers) was to be formed, civilian formations with rifles and uniform arm-bands.

Gardner, of course, rushed to offer himself. But he was told he could not be accepted because civil defence personnel were not enrolled into this organisation. Later, when the Home Guard was created out of it, he tried again, but was once more rejected. But Gardner was interested in weapons, knew how to use them, and had a collection. He armed his wardens with pikes and coshes. Carrying his own Luger with its snail magazine masquerading as a miniature machine-gun, he rather annoyed some of the stuffier elements at his A. R.P. Headquarters.

Now the local Home Guard was taken over by a Canadian, whom Gardner thought might have a more enterprising attitude towards self-defence. Together he and Major Fish looked up the regulations. There it was: A Home Guard commander could take on technical staff without headquarters permission. Gardner was enrolled as an Armourer, given a uniform and rifle.

There was a great deal of personal dissatisfaction among the A.R.P. men at the ruling that Wardens "must not do anything if invasion came except put out fires:" and people wanted to strike a blow, "even with brick-bats", as

Gardner put it. A meeting was called, at which all the Wardens were told that there was no chance of their being recruited into the Home Guard, which could not and would not take them... Gardner takes up the story:

"I had been carefully hidden among the crowd in Home Guard uniform. Now I was pushed forward, with lance-corporal's chevron and armourer's crossed-pincers badge on my arm. The wardens' spokesman artlessly asked: 'But what happens if the Home Guard does take on Wardens?'".

Gardner recalls with delight the solemnity of being called to the rostrum and asked to explain himself. He told how he was working hard, fitting Sten guns which badly needed his attentions. Told he would be dealt with later, he knew that there was not much that could be done about him. "They could sack me from the Wardens; but my house was the A.R.P. Post. They could stop the Home Guard from recruiting a Warden. Once taken on, however, there was no rule about giving him back, and a man could be a warden during raids and a Home Guard during the All Clears".

In the middle of his war work, Gardner had still found time to follow his interest in odd people and strange things. He had made extensive enquiries just before the war about the Rosicrucian Theatre. Local residents were not very informative. "They are a queer lot, the ones running the theatre", this was all that they would say.

He booked tickets for one of their plays. It turned out to be "Pythagoras" - a study of the great man. It told how wonderful all the pupils at his school were, how it grew; how he refused money for teaching those who had no merit; how he loved his wife; how wonderfully the pharoah received him. It related how unjustly his enemies hated him, how they hounded him and how they eventually burnt him.

All the costumes were home-made, and not very professional. Many of the parts were rather badly acted. Pythagoras was played by a short, sturdy, black-haired individual. He was no actor, and the lines which he had to say were little better. Mrs. Gardner, who was an experienced amateur actress, hated it all, and said she would never go there again,

Gardner, however, frequently visited the place, partly because he thought that there might be a real connection with the secret society called the Rosicrucians about whom he wanted to know something. He found out the story of the theatre.

When the famous Annie Besant died, there was a split

on the issue of the future leadership of the Theosophists. Some members wanted her daughter - Mrs. Besant Scott - others Bishop Leadbeater. The latter won.

The unsuccessful candidate then took up co-masonry (female freemasonry) which Annie had started in England. The centre of this was Southampton. Things seemingly did not prosper, and the lady went into partnership with a gentleman known as Aurelius, and they started the "Corona Fellowship of Rosicrucians". This partner of hers was the lead actor in Pythagoras.

His ideas could be very puzzling. The first time he met Gardner, he asked him: "Do you remember the days when you were a noble Roman and wore a sari?" He also showed him a genuine African witch-doctor's wand with a devil's head knob on it - which Gardner recognised to be a Persian or Indian mace, add not an unusual one at that.

Among the claims made by the gentleman were that he had been the sage Pythagoras, the magician Cornelius Agrippa and Francis Bacon in past lives. Gardner was informed that the last named was "'Im wot wrote Shakespear".

This was not all. The chief of the Order was immortal. Because people wondered why he did not grow old like them, he was compelled to slip away every few score years, to make another name in a fresh place. In the Ashram (temple) was a great plaque with the various identities under which he had lived through the ages inscribed thereon. Gardner became momentarily unpopular for asking facetiously if he was the Wandering Jew.

Eventually Gardner was let into a great secret. They had part of an old (Dutch or Italian) lamp, hanging by chains from a ceiling. This, it was confided in him, was the Holy Grail...

Mrs. Besant Scott was a rather pleasant, sometimes uncertain old lady. She spent quite a lot of her time trying to remember a former incarnation as Queen Elizabeth. She had no occult powers, she told him, and neither, she admitted, had her mother. But Aurelius was different. The High Priestess was there, too. This lady had discovered at a Liverpool meeting that she had been the wife of "Aurelius" in a past life. She had a keen business sense, ran the place, and had been Mary Queen of Scots in one of her incarnations.

It was a nice place, geographically speaking, an easy drive from Bournemouth. Members had donated land; the theatre and quite a number of bungalows had been built, where the faithful could live. The ritual was semi-masonic,

Gardner joined, because: "About this time war came, and Donna was called up as she was on the reserve of nurses. Nobody wanted me because of my age. I was an Air Raid Warden, and that's all. I was more and more thrown upon my little group of friends".

Gardner took a minor part in the society's activities, and some of the people were really pleasant. He acted the drunken monk in "Liveda" ("a devil" spelt backwards) when the play was produced In Bournemouth. Some of the plays were by Shakespeare, never before performed and unknown to the rest of the world: and quite rightly so, he often felt. In "Liveda", one monk corrupts others, and causes three of them to die. Their hearts are flung upon the stage. He prays to the devil, only for the ghosts of the monks to appear. Eventually he is sentenced to death by the abbot of their monastery.

At least some of the audience seemed to be people with too much money to have to work, but insufficient initiative to do much else but attend these plays.

Christmas, 1939 was the occasion of a prank which Gardner played upon the master. He gave a girl a bracelet to wear. A psychometrist was at once called, who said that the bracelet and its engraved characters were very old, had certainly belonged to an ancient Egyptian priest. Then Aurelius insisted that the characters were ancient Celtic. He pompously ended the discussion with the pronouncement: "It is ancient Celtic - older than anything you know".

Then it was revealed that Gardner had had the trinket made, and that the signs upon it came from Cornelius Agrippa's private code. Since he had once assumed this personality in his deathless existence, Gardner felt that Aurelius should have known this. In any case, this was the last time that he went to their meetings. A circular letter from the High Priestess is one of his memories, assuring her correspondents that there would be no war. It arrived on the day which war was declared. Aurelius had been more prudent; air-raid shelters were being prepared for him, though he also proclaimed the continuance of peace.

The movement foundered when the immortal died....

Now, at meetings, Gardner had noticed a group of people apart from the rest. They seemed rather browbeateh by the others, kept themselves to themselves. They were the most interesting element, however. Unlike many of the others, they had to earn their livings, were cheerful and optimistic and had a real interest in the occult. They

had carefully read many books on the subject: Unlike the general mass, who were supposed to have read all but seemed to know nothing.

Gardner always felt at home with them, was invited to their houses, and had many talks with them. The day came when one said:

"I have seen you before". Gardner, interested, asked where. "In a former life". Then all gathered around and agreed that this was so. What made it all remarkable to Gardner was that one of the number proceeded to describe a scene "exactly like one which I had written in A Goddess Arrives, which was due to he published any day then, and which in fact came out the following week".

Then someone said, "You belonged to us in the past - why don't you come back to us?"

"Now I was really very fond of them, and I knew that they had all sorts of magical beliefs" continues Gardner. "They had been very interested when I told them that an ancestress of mine had been burned alive as a witch at Newborough in Scotland about 1640; although I did not mention Grandfather. And I would have gone through hell and high water even then for any of them".

He felt sure that they had some secret, there must he something which allowed them to take the slights at the theatre without really caring. He still thought that they might be mooting Yoga, or something of that nature. He asked them why they were in this community, and whether they believed what Aurelius had to offer. They explained that they had been co-masons, and had followed Mabs (Mrs. Scott) when she had moved to this place; and added that they enjoyed the companionship.

Gardner felt delighted that he was to be let into their secret. Thus it was that, a few days after the war had started, he was taken to a big house in the neighbourhood. This belonged to "Old Dorothy" -a lady of note in the district, "county" and very well-to-do. She invariably wore a pearl necklace, worth some £5,000 at the time.

It was in this house that he was initiated into witchcraft. He was very amused at first, when he was stripped naked and brought into a place "properly prepared" to undergo his initiation.

It was halfway through when the word Wica was first mentioned: "and I then knew that that which I had thought burnt out hundreds of years ago still survived".

His first feeling about this was: "How wonderful; to

think that these things still survive", his interest as a folklorist stirred. Until then his opinion of witchcraft had been based upon the idea that witches killed for the purpose of gaining or raising power, and he had thought the persecutions of them fully justified. He found that his friends, after following Mabs to her settlement, had discovered an old Coven, and remained here because of that. 'I found that Old Dorothy and some like her, plus a number of New Forest people, had kept the light shining. It was, I think, the most wonderful night of my life. In true witch fashion we had a dance afterwards, and kept it up until dawn"

For the first time he realised that witch-power came from within the body of the believer. He felt that all this should he generally known, and that if he could make his new knowledge available to all, objections to the cult would die down. But his request to be allowed to write about it all was turned down. No one was ever to know anything. The embargo was not lifted - and then only partially - until Dorothy died.

What was the truth about the religion of witchcraft? The documents published by historical research workers and the information since made available by Gardner covering the last thousand years, show quite clearly that not one, but several pagan religions survived the imposition of Christianity upon Europe. Others may have arisen, or could have developed along their own lines. In the earlier writings and in ecclesiastic laws these beliefs are acknowledged to be religious sects or cults - heretical, and pagan perhaps, but religions nonetheless. It was a much later development in inquisitorial thinking which lumped them all together as one, diabolical conspiracy against the Church.

The fertility cult represented by the group in which Gardner had now been enrolled is one of these religions, claims to be the oldest, is called by its members the Wica. These, then, are the witches of today.

When Holland, Belgium and France fell, as Gardner puts it, "We expected Hitler on the seashore any day. We had no weapons worth the name. In my three-mile beach sector there were six shotguns, my Luger and Donna's revolver, and a few other pistols, with about six rounds apiece for them. Then there were my pikes and swords. By the end of that week, six soldiers and a sergeant were sent to defend the three miles. In another seven days these

had been augmented by fifty men under an officer. Later, dribs and drabs came; but, barring rifles and not much ammunition, they had nothing. No artillery, no automatic weapons. I tried to get an old Malay cannon going, with some blasting power for explosives, but nothing came of this".

This was where the witches again came, incongruously one might think, into the picture. Old Dorothy called up "covens right and left; although by Witch Law they should not be known to each other". And this was the start of "Operation Cone of Power", when the witches, as they claim, sent up a force against Hitler's mind. This is documentarily an important enough part of the history of witchcraft to quote verbatim from Gardner's own mouth. He refers to it in both of his witchcraft books, and it has been repeatedly referred to by reviewers and columnists. The most complete details now available are thus:

"We were taken at night to a place in the Forest, where the Great Circle was erected; and that was done which may not be done except in great emergency. And the great Cone of Power was raised and slowly directed in the general direction of Hitler. The command was given: 'You cannot cross the Sea. You cannot cross the Sea. YOU CANNOT COME: YOU CANNOT COME'. Just as,we were told, was done to Napoleon, when he had his army ready to invade England and never came. And, as was done to the Spanish Armada, mighty forces were used, of which I may not speak. Now to do this means using one's life-force; and many of us died a few days after we did this. My asthma, which I had never had since I first went out East, came back badly. We repeated the ritual four times; and the Elders said: 'We feel we have stopped him. We must not kill too many of our people. Keep them until we need them'".

# 14

## MAGICIANS, CHARLATANS, AND GHOSTS

Gerald Gardner was no stranger to magic when he first came into contact with the witches of Britain. He had early memories of some sort of supernatural connection - Grizell Gairdener, burnt as a witch in the seventeenth century, was his ancestress - the talk of Grandfather Gardner and his witch-wife; the Surgensons who believed in the occult; the boyhood books on spiritualism. After what to most people would have been a full lifetime of work and study, he had set himself to tackle the occult seriously. His books show that he has ploughed through many an ancient tome and manuscript whose subject-matter has never even been heard of by the average man. And all his experience of magic and mysticism in the East, plus his painstaking habits of study were channeled into the assessment of magic in the West.

If you read Witchcraft Today, or The Meaning of Witchcraft, you will at once be impressed not by the way in which he plans his work; for neither is the product of a fixed regime, but by the manner in which he has been able to cull correspondences in magical thinking from sources which are familiar and unfamiliar to the student of the occult. He lets the facts speak for themselves, after collecting them and presenting them as far as he is able without bias. This is not to say that he is not, today, biased in favour of witchcraft. His interpretations of witch-practises are, like the conclusions of anyone breaking fresh ground, open to challenge or amendment. But it is he himself who points out, more than once, that such adjustment is possible.

In his search for knowledge, Gardner applied similar empirical techniques to the study of magic as he had used so successfully in his archaeological work. He studied the evidence, the conflicting impressions, confused reports, hysterical outbursts - and formed his own opinions. At the same time he is generally at pains to point out what are his opinions and which views are those of the people about whom he is talking.

He did not, it is true, adopt the scientific approach in presenting his conclusions to the general public. This he has left to future workers in the field. What he has done is to point out the fixed ideas which various writers have started, and the inevitability of some of their arguments. A priest of theCatholic persuasion, for example, believing implicitly in the reality of the devil would say that the tempter can be worshipped. What, as Gardner made clear, is not so generally understood, is that a person having no belief (or even interest) in the devil could not perform a magical rite dedicated to the devil with any expectancy of a result. You cannot worship successfully, he says, what does not exist for you.

Not always so were the magicians whom Gardner met in his search for the truth of magical power. He found that quite a number were mere frauds others seemed to have some magical power as he understood it; others partly charlatans. "Fake magic and what might be called nowadays salesmanship combine to make charlatans; but the magic is not always quite fake", is the way that he puts it.

Who is the successful charlatan? Gardner spent some time in studying this strange type of personality. He concluded that such a man (or woman) often had some sort of power which he describes with the term "mesmeric". The type shares, he found, certain characteristics. They may wear unusual clothes, tend to be easily annoyed - often by small and seemingly unimportant things - and they will often actually hate those whom they fail to impress. Emotion behind the "magnetic" force (or personality) which they exude; restless emotion. so strong that they cannot see their own deficiencies. Gardner met some extraordinary ones. Some worked by sowing discomfort and distraction among others. This results in confusion as to who is one's friend and whom not. Following a familiar psychological pattern, this state, once induced, can make the victims seek a powerful lead: and they generally get it from the magician. There is an unbelievably strong bias against anyone else who has any followers, or who is connected with occultism in any way similar to their own. This tendency, of course, is encountered as "professional jealousy" in many other fields of human life. Some promise anyone who joins, (and pays), their society, promotion to the top of their trade or profession.

"Many of them", Gardner observes, "firmly believe in their own powers". They well know how to exploit the average person's desires for money, power or recognition - or long life. It may be that it is necessary to believe in a

thing oneself if one is to transmit that belief to others.

Genuine magicians (by which Gardner means those who do not seek publicity, followers, or money) are difficult to meet, even more difficult to get on easy terms with: for they really need nothing from others. Their interest absorbs them completely.

The charlatan, on the other hand, must acquire ascendancy himself over the potential disciple. He has to make contacts, either directly or through those whom he has already deceived - and he must impress them with continual advertising. Gardner recalls with glee his contacts with many of these exotic birds.

The initial move generally is that the magician speaks in an apparently guarded way to the new contact; to make him think that there are "deep secrets" to be learned, if he can only establish himself with the Master. As one said to him "All things you want are within your grasp, if you will only believe and follow me". Members of the general public, without the deep and specialised knowledge of occultist character which Gardner has, will generally react in one of only a few ways to this kind of salesmanship. Fearing the loss of their souls or some sort of indefinible trouble, they may shun him. Others, their curiosity stimulated beyond control, may follow, stifling the fears which are always associated with the unknown. Yet others will laugh - but they are in a minority. The magician of this type does not usually allow a scoffer to get as far as this with him. Besides, he is a paranoid, and cannot brook opposition or even lack of interest.

Most of these aberrants establish or revive some occultist society, sometimes taking names which are well known as having been used by mystics and magicians of the past. They charge heavy fees to initiates, and sometimes obtain money from them in other ways. The number of such people, available for the unscrupulous to work upon can be judged by those who write to Gardner to be "enrolled into witchcraft"; or asking him to put a spell upon someone, for which they often offer to pay.

Charlatans and the self-deluded try to advertise themselves, sometimes in the most ludicrous way. Aleister Crowley, as an instance, went climbing in the Himalayas in the early years of the century, returning without his two porters. They may have died or deserted. But Crowley spread the story that he had eaten them His published attack upon Christianity was sent to King Edward VII, the

Pope, and Mrs. Eddy, of Christian Science. This is not to say that he was not quite humorous in his efforts to gain fame or notoriety - either would do, for they stimulated emotion. People can be manipulated only through emotion.

When the police prevented the unveiling of Epstein's monument because it was too masculine, Crowley stole the brass fig-leaf which was made for it, and wore it over his black dress trousers in the Cafe Royal. From 1909 to 1913 he published the biennial periodical Equinox, the official organ of the A. A. (Atlantean Adepts - actually the Astra Argentina, the Silver Star) in opposition to the Golden Dawn society of the self-styled magus MacGregor Mathers, whose rituals he published in order to crush him. This latter move was, however, unsuccessful. The A.A. was a failure, so Crowley started another magical order called the O.T.O. (Order of Templars of the Orient) which still survives.

Gardner watched the antics of Crowley and those who believed in him with immense amusement, and probably understood him as well as anyone could. By Crowley's will, one year after his death, all the heads of the Order were to gather at a dinner in London to pay homage to his memory.

In actual fact the only real head of the Order was the Grand Master, a German, called Germer in America who had visa trouble, it was said. In any case, he did not come.

Gardner has a charter issued by Crowley, authorizing him to perform the Rites of the O.T.O., though he has never done so... "I had neither the money, energy nor time".

Following the flamboyant instinct of the unsuccessful magician, Crowley held a series of celebrations of mystical rituals in London. These were supposed to be a revival of the ecstatic "Rites of Eleusis". The public hall was dark, and Crowley's "Scarlet Woman" played beautifully on the violin. Crowley, Gardner concedes, was a master showman. "There were various cunningly-placed lights, and dim figures could be seen flitting about. Suddenly a great voice would cry: 'There is no God'. Once, it is said, someone kissed the girl sitting next to him, and she screamed". The papers made much of this.

People would pay high prices for seats: at times up to several pounds. Crowley knew what many a conjuror and illusionist knows - that there are always a number of people in any given place who will pay money for atmosphere.

Gardnerts reminiscences of Crowley have the freshness of stark reality and the dry quality of scientific observation:

"Crowley wasted money like water, so he did try to

get money out of people, and he was not too honest. But he always made you feel, 'Well, poor fellow; if only he had a big income he would not feel himself forced to do these things'"

Another mark of the charlatan which Crowley shared was the all-pervading almost overpowering, personal charm which brought him so many dupes.

But had he any real magical power, as the layman understands it? People often ask Gardner about this. His answer is straight enough; "Barring an hypnotic eye, I have never seen any proof that he did. He could wheedle thing out of people. So can many men, and almost all women. But I am sure that he firmly believed in his own powers. This may have been because he had told people about them so many times that he had convinced himself. Perhaps, of course, he believed it first. He was, I am sure, surprised when his magic did not work. This strange form of sincerity, this delusion, enabled him to exploit many people. And, if they got into trouble because of their friendship with him, he would be the first to mock them".

Not all magicians, however, come within the limits set by Gardner for charlatans. There Is "One Magician I know, whom I call the Magician of the North, though I don't say where he is North of". This man is the grandson of a man skilled in magical ways, and steeped in the traditional lore of the occult. "But, as so often happens among witches as well, the power seems to have skipped a generation".

In any case, his father took little or no interest in the Art. But when "North" was eight years old he annexed an old, empty cottage which was in their garden, and made what can only be called a Wizard's den for himself. He had managed to get hold of some magical books, and made instruments of the Art in accordance with their directions, and consecrated them. With these, and by making unguents and burning Incense, he believed that he could influence things by the time he was nine years of age.

In any case, he was sure that he could do so. Child-like, he was not in the least surprised. He realised that money was needed if he was to be able to have certain magical substances. Instead of trying to get the money, he tried to work out what the intention of the items was, and improvised. He "realised that there were many successful magicians in the past who had no chemists to go to, and so made their own compounds - and most of them were herbal. Nobody had herb-gardens nowadays, but he realised that in

the wilds where he lived these things might well grow already. He searched for them".

The life of a dedicated magician, especially one who starts his operations seriously at the age of nine, is difficult. The account continues: "There were difficulties here as well. Various books gave different names to one and the same thing; sometimes the same name was attributed to different plants. So the real object was to discover exactly what an ingredient was wanted for, and then find something which had that effect".

After much experimenting, and nearly killing himself, we are told, he got the desired results.

The Second World War interrupted his activities. Eventually he returned home with a wife of similar tastes whom he had collected. He got a job, for even occultists must eat, made a magician's den for himself. This was quite a difficult undertaking, because it had to have a sanded terrace of the kind described in the Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin. This requires a course of six months' preparation, and he went through with it.

His wife helped him in every way. He had little interference, he told Gardner, because he "had no friends and hated all his neighbours"

North does not take money in the ordinary way. But, at times, he tells Gardner, after the event "has come off" people reward him. His speciality seems to be fighting law cases with his unusual arts. "He told me a few months ago", recalls Gardner "of an American who had won a law suit, who seemed to want to give him the Statue of Liberty, he is so grateful... but it is a little large for the back garden"

Gardner's verdict upon this man is "I think that he really can work magic, at times".

Crowley once described to Gardner the trouble which he had gone to in trying to fulfil the requirements of the discipline of the same Abramelin magical book. "It is perfectly easy to work Abramelin magic if you have forty thousand pounds to throw away". Gardner believes that Crowleywas right: but that it might need a hundred thousand today - fifty years after the Great Beast made his estimate.

Crowley bought a house and grounds at Boleskine, which he thought was the only place in Scotland which would meet the exacting requirements of the Magus Abramelin. He had tried the routine already once, in a London flat, "and had had all the trouble which beginners in the magical art experience, unless they take proper precautions".

Gardner never could get Crowley to talk about what actually happened at Boleskine. He had to sell the place in the end.

He seems to have dodged the main question completely. "He tells so many tales about Boleskine; especially about the beheaded ghost who used to play ball with his own head. Which seems unusual to me - even though I was brought up on Portuguese saints" says Gardner, "who, when they were beheaded, picked up their heads and kissed them. I always demanded a photo of the event".

In 1946, Gardner went down to Hastings to see Crowley. Once handsome, he was now reduced to a little, frail, gentle and archdeaconish figure, very bent. Could this be the Great Beast who had once boasted so many followers; who had thundered his way through life, determined to make his mark and leave a powerful organisation behind him? The fire was not quite all gone, however, even though he took heroin all the time.

At Oxford, Crowley said, he had been on the edge witchcraft. Why had he not followed the way of the witches? Why had he not followed the way of the witches? Because he "refused to be bossed around by any damned woman". He was interested in all occult things, although he said that he was not actually involved in any magical activities at that time. He was still keen to revive the English O.T.O., which had started in the early part of this century, and which fell under a cloud after Crowley was thought to pro-German. When he talked, he still showed some of old hypnotic hypnotic power.

What had been his motives in playing the master occultist? According to Gardner, he was originally interested in chasing women; later it was money. His feeling about witchcraft as Gardner described it to him was "You don't pay to belong - how is that possible?"

On the whole, Gardner liked him, was sorry when he died. He regards him as a failure who might have made his mark, somewhere.

When he went to America, Gardner found that many people seemed to regard him as Crowley's successor: though he was nothing of the sort. In New York he met "Saturnus", the enormous, hearty yet somehow seemingly humourless German who was, if anyone, Crowley's successor. He was interested to start a Crowley museum, and was looking for a house for it which he eventually found. He was heard of later in California, where there was an O.T.O. lodge; and he showed some interest in Gardner's Isle of Man museum.

It was also In America that Gardner realised how

much the cult of Voodoo remained a living thing. In New Orleans where he visited his brother, questions about Voodoo were carefully dodged by all and sundry. Some said that they knew nothing about. Others passed it off as mere negro foolishness, not worth bothering about. He located some writers on the occult, who produced lists of would-be investigators who had died of mysterious fevers.

Then he met a middle-aged, plantation born lady, who told him to go back to one of the men who had been most vehement about Voodoo not existing at all. To him he lent a copy of his book, <u>A Goddess Arrives</u>, and told him some thing about the Craft of the Witches. He had only five days left in New Orleans, and he wanted to get into Voodoo, to find out what it really meant; "It'll take many months", the man said.

However, he learnt that there were many whites in it, that the cult had become much quieter than it had been, and that it was something of a social power, members helping each other with jobs and so on. He noted certain connections between Voodoo and witchcraft, "though the method of raising power differs, they use it in the same way". They can bring together large numbers if necessary - as many as a thousand people, to use the concentrated emotion-power. The graves of Voodoo high-priestesses, he noticed, are still well tended. No day passes without little offerings (fruit, pieces of meat, flowers) being left there. There was a good deal of African magic in Voodoo, he concluded, and any connection with the fertility principle that was worshipped by the witches could have taken place very far back in time.

The African contact prompted Gardner to see more magicians in the dark continent itself. In 1951 and 1952 he went to West Africa, to seek the trail which might lead to the contact between Africa, Egypt and the New World. His conclusions were that Voodoo seemed to have been concocted from African mythology and European witchcraft. He had already, at Pompeii, seen from the frescoes in the Villa of theMysteriesthat there was a close link between witchcraft and the Greek Mysteries. The contact in a mystical sense between ancient Egypt and the Greeks, he thought, might possible account for resemblances between cults. A stream of teaching might have reached out from Egypt to West Africa and Europe as well. He noted the English witch-tradition that the cult came from the East - from the Summer Land. He observed at the same time that there was a possibility that witch-practises might at a very early period have

been taken by witches to West Africa, in order to escape from European persecution. He talks little about his contacts with African magic-makers; but he is warmly remembered there, and people from England are often asked as to his welfare.

There is something so endearing about Gardner that it almost defies analysis. He is deceptively frail in outward appearance, but there are few people who have crossed him unjustly and not found the tables turned upon them. Some times this seems almost to happen as if ordained by some fate or other. Out of innumerable stories which illustrate this, the following is typical:

A scientific colleague tells of how he visited the Gold Coast, and was popular with everyone, almost, from natives to university dons. The exception was a visiting American professor, who somehow did not hit it off with Gardner. "A little time after, we flew to Abidjan, the capital of the Ivory Coast", this companion relates, "for a holiday. Unfortunately we had underestimated the cost of living; so that we could only afford one meal a day, which was lunch. Breakfast - so called - was included with the overnight charge. We had to walk about all day, visiting native markets and so on, because we couldn't afford taxis. Sometimes we were able to buy fruit and a soft drink, but that was all. In the evening we'd drink a lot of water to get a full belly; I'd smoke, and then we'd go to bed.

"One night we were sitting in the foyer supperless, when who should go to the desk but the professor, who had just come from Liberia. When he caught sight of Gerald he rushed over, excitedly, and complainingly bemoaned the high cost of living, and that he could hardly manage to live at all. Didn't Dr. Gardner think that it was dreadful? Gerald dismissed the whole thing with an airy wave of his hand: 'My dear sir, when one is on a holiday one is prepared to spend money. It is a little costly here, I must admit, when compared with the Gold Coast. But what does money matter when one is enjoying oneself?' The Yank almost fawned upon him. He must be a very rich man, how wonderful, he didn't know that! He never learned the true facts".

Witchcraft, as the magicians of West Africa understood it, Gardner found to be firmly believed in and almost as widely practised... It was used a great deal for political objectives. He followed up, too, strange stories of the supernatural in Ghana.

A friend and he were taken to a house in Accra. It

was the usual town dwelling of those parts - several large, wooden huts joined together, with a corrugated iron roof, glass windows, all closed. In the yard at the back there were a number of stones and half-bricks, and some native stools. They were told that the house had been bombarded with stones a number of times: in just the same way as poltergeist phenomena happened in Jamaica and other parts of the New World with a negro population.

The inhabitants would look out of the windows from time to time, and then the stones would come inside. Even if they did not open the windows, stones seemed to penetrate through the plank walls. Sometimes, they swore, stones came through the glass of the windows, without breaking anything.

These stones flew "rather slowly, and never hit anybody". Several people said that one of the stools outside flew up and descended slowly through the iron roof. Gardner satisfied himself that if things were as they were when he saw the place, the stones must have come through the walls. Nothing, in the ordinary way, could possibly have come through the roof. His first reaction was that the whole story was deception; or that someone was merely throwing stones.

The latter contention was denied by the Africans on the grounds the if anyone were throwing them, they would not come through the walls.

What was the cause? The local opinion was that the phenomena had started when a servant girl was scolded. They got rid of her, and the manifestations stopped  "They were not educated people", comments Gardner, "who might have read about poltergeists; but they may have made up the story merely to fool us. Most poltergeist stories insist that things fly slowly and never hurt anyone.

In Malaya, he had heard of a house where things were always going on fire. In Africa, he discovered, poltergeist activity is generally thought to be connected with a young girl of nubile age; though It is also said that a young married couple will also raise this force.

Like many psychic investigators, however, Gardner is always on guard against possible deception. Many of the phenomena which are attributed to haunting are practical jokes, and quite a number of such instances have been proved to be such. But in Java, he recalls, there was a house similarly bombarded with stones, where nobody would live. In spite of a police guard amounting in the end to hundreds, the house was buried in stones. Eventually the

place was declared to be unfit for human habitation.

Conjurors account for quite a number of the magicians who try to practise themselves or persuade people that they have magical powers, Gardner has found out. One at least of these subjects his victims to mere sleight-of-hand tricks, and tells them that this is magic. One charges £30 a week for treatment, which seems to be a form of laying-on of hands. Patients report beneficial results; but whether this is due to suggestion is uncertain and almost incapable of proof.

Some use weak electric currents, which are passed through the wondering disciple when the Master raises his hands to make some other signal. Others probably employ hypnosis.

Some self-styled magicians, enraged beyond measure at the prominence which his books and Witchcraft Museum have brought Gardner, have attacked him. Few of them have bothered to realise that he is not in the same line of business, so to speak. They seem to think that he will steal their thunder. Others - and these are the real lunatic fringe - have tried to set themselves up as witch-kings or the like, sensing in this a possibility of personal prominence. None of them has been able to sustain the part for very long.

One optimist tried to find out the secrets of the witch-cult in an original way from witches initiated by Gardner. The whole rituals were, he said, already known to him. They had actually been published in a book; and it was from this book that Gardner had copied them. Gardner, however, it was claimed, only had a part of the book. The rest (or a complete copy) was with the claimant.

The story became rather too confused when it was being asserted by the same man that (1) the rituals were forged; (2) they were real. Then he demanded to see the witches' rituals for "purposes of comparison".

A self-styled "witch" with, as he claimed, magical knowledge and telepathic powers was put in touch with one of Gardner's witch friends. He spoke to her on the telephone, calling her "my dear little lady". This was as far as he got. Her impression of his magical omniscience was "I am not little (she is over six feet tall): I'm certainly not a dear. And I am not a lady".

That witches have magical powers is something about which Gardner is certain. In his books and in everyday conversation, he speaks a good deal about the religious aspect of the Craft. But, like the followers of almost all religions, the witches believe that supernatural effects

can be caused

by faith. When witches work magic, as he himself carefully notes, it is not always possible to attribute a happening to their intervention; it might have happened in any case.

It is for this reason that one story, well-attested, about one of the most important members of the Craft is of value as illustrating the use of this magical power.

One day this lady was talking to her bank manager. He was a bookcollector, and he knew that she was especially interested in magical works. He did not know that she was a witch.

"I saw something that would have made you cry the other day", he said.

"What?"

"I was valuing for probate some things belonging to an old doctor who recentiy died. He had several books, which I bought from the widow"

"Yes, but what would make me cry?"

"He had a lot of magical manuscripts, which the widow is going to burn".

"But she shouldn't do that".

"I know; but it is no use. I tried to buy them, but she is adamant. She hates them, is afraid of them, and she is going to burn them".

The witch felt that she could not very well ask the name and address, but managed to bring the subject around to the district where the doctor had lived. She got on a bus and went there. People in the neighbourhood told her how to find the house of the local doctor who had died.

"It was a semi-detached house, pebble-dashed. She went up the little path which divided at the house, right or left. She went right. She saw the front door, with a porch over it, at the side of the house. She knocked and rang for some time. There was no answer. She wondered what to do. Then she noticed that a pebble from the wall had fallen onto the grass. She took it to "form the link" and hurried home, for she had work to do.

Gardner continues; "She called in some friends that night, and they did what was necessary, and then she went to sleep".

She woke up after a while, and felt that she was out of her body, naked. Her nose seemed to be pressed against something. She was out in the open air, and it was dark. Against the sky she saw the outline of the porch of the front door of the pebble-dashed house...

"She willed hard and suddenly she was inside the house

She could see a hand pointing to a green satin divan, with a lot of dark-coloured books lying upon it".

A voice seemed to say: "Now are you satisfied?" Then she woke up to find herself in bed.

Next morning the bank manager telephoned. "I have had a most curious phone call from that widow I was telling you about. She is in a strange state. She says that I have a lady friend who will take away those magical manuscripts that I told you about. Now, I have not spoken to anyone about them except yourself. Can you explain this? I forget the name... Yes, here it is,... Mrs. Blank. Do you know her?"

The witch said she did not know her, but would go to see her if she wished it.

That afternoon the witch visited the widow. "You are from the manager of the bank... come in".

She was ushered into a room: there was the content of her dream, a green satin-covered divan with a pile of bound manuscripts on it. "Now are you satisfied?" the widow said, "I tried to burn them, and something made me take them out of the stove. And I am very frightened. Will you please take them away?"

There were twenty-eight magical books, two magical swords, two pentacles, and some other things. The manuscripts were those given to initiates into the Golden Dawn - a society started by the magicians MacGregor Mathers and Wynn-Westcott. They should have been learnt by heart and returned to the organisation. One bore the name of Count MacGregor de Glenstrae, a name used by Mathers. She kept the swords, but gave the MSS. to Gardner, who placed them in his Museum.

This, Gardner feels, is an interesting - and curious way "in which the power sometimes works. She could only put out a wish to get them somehow. The power first stopped the widow putting the papers completely into the fire (some are scorched); and then put into her head that the bank manager had a lady friend who could take away what she was frightened of".

Some magicians whom Gardner has met found it useful to connect any physical disability with their supposed occult powers. This is, of course, in the tradition that a magician may be one-eyed, lame or otherwise physically unusual. Yet this, Gardner feels, is scarcely stranger than some of the ideas of the general public about witches and magicians: and may in fact be mere pandering to the general concepts of the layman. "They ask what is the difference between a magical and a witch. One old doctor

actually thought that witches and ghosts were the same thing. I told him that one difference was that many witches had stood me a fine dinner, with much good red wine. But no ghost had even stood me as much as a glass of spirits".

One has to keep a sense of humour, surrounded with such characters.

One of the most curious in Gardner's collection of practising magicians "has plenty of money, because he has houses in various places. But he appears and disappears for years at a time". This man is a Kabbalist: that is to say, he practises magic based upon a Semitic (probably the Jewish branch) occult theory.

He lives, nonetheless, in a state of squalor: a bed, a table and two chairs alone grace one room; a table and three chairs in another are "all very dirty".

Everyone, says Gardner, advised him to have nothing to do with him. But warnings like this do not deter a man like Gardner.

He worked in a hut, Gardner found, with kabbalistic figures painted on the walls. Gardner could get little indication of what the magician was doing. He was an extremely fine artist; he "could do the most wonderful things, but did not like them. He liked things that would shock people, or the most awful industrial designs, because he got good money for them. Like Crowley, he delighted in shocking people. I think that he had very strong mesmeric power, but it never affected me".

"This magician is supposed to lead a cult of some size in Manchester, but whether it amounts to anything or not, I cannot say".

The striking thing about this man is that his associates or disciples revere him to a very high degree. He is a great talker, likes to be the centre of attention, and fully uses his undoubted intellectual gifts. As to the question of his working magic, and his abilities, Gardner will not give any opinion. He has never known him to do anyone any harm: that is as far as he will go.

Some magicians combine a knowledge (or pretended knowledge) of Yoga or similar techniques with the projection of their personalities. One is a hypnotist, conjuror and self-styled Yogi. Like others of his kind, he has "lived, travelled and studied" in Tibet. He seems to believe implicitly in the reality of magical phenomena. In this man's case, as with so many other magicians, the thrust of his personality seems to overshadow detail. The result of this is that the magician

relies upon his impact upon others much more than upon what he is actually saying; or even than his basic knowledge.

# 15

## THE WITCH-MANIA

As early as 1939, Gardner had established his interest in witchcraft in a scholarly sense. Among the items in his still-growing collection of occult objects was a collection of witchcraft relics of the redoubtable Matthew Hopkins. This he described in a paper which was published in the authoritative journal Folk Lore, that same year. It was to be another seven years, however, before his fellow-witches would allow him to reveal any of their ideas - even their very existence - to the world at large.

He wrote it in the form of fiction - a novel called High Magic's Aid, and only the words used by the witch who is its heroine were claimed to be truly authentic. It appeared three years later - in 1949 - and the following year work was begun on the task of finding a home for his collection. There was a dilapidated mill on the Isle of Man, with witchcraft associations, which seemed to fill the bill. At that time, various bureaucratic restrictions made life and such things as starting museums difficult in England. Donna was not at all well, and she felt that this out-of-the-way spot might be ideal for settling. Thus it was that events seemed to point to the Island as Gardner's future home.

Difficulties were, in fact, only just starting. The Mill buildings would need a good deal of work before they were ready to house the collection. Meanwhile, where was one to live? Leasing a house in the Island was next to impossible. Prisoners of War, people who had come to avoid the bombing on the Mainland, people looking for a place with less irksome restrictions than England, seemed to fill the place. Housing was at a premium - a few small houses here and there, at £6,000 apiece. People had paid these prices during the War, and now they wanted their money back. Some of them found that property in England was so costly that they would not be able to move away unless they made an exceptional bargain with their existing property.

Gardner decided that witchcraft might be able to help him. Witch-law, he recalls, is explicit that nobody must be

harmed, "but witches must have roofs over their heads".

This Law allows those who need houses when none will sell, or where there are difficulties, to incline the seller's mind... "An it harm him not". Now, I know of witches back from the War who had got houses thus. You must pay whatever he asks, you must not beat him down, or argue over the price".

"There was a queer little place at a corner, and I had fallen in love with it. Stone-built, beamed, with lofts and an ideal workshop. I asked about it and was told that it belonged to someone who could have had any price during the war for it, but that he would not sell. 'He has loads of money and never spends any. It is no use asking him'".

Gardner sent someone to ask the owner if he would sell, and got a savage No. He went to England and asked some witches to perform a rite, to enable him to have the house, "more as a joke than anything".

Gardner arrived back one afternoon on the Island at three-thirty. At four o'clock, he relates, a man came around to his lodgings. "The owner says he'll sell to you. Come and see him before he changes his mind". Gardner went over to see the old man. Someone, he said, needed a holiday, which would cost so much. If Gardner was willing to pay that, he could have the house.

This is where Gardner lives now: an old croft farmhouse, about four hundred years old, and a gem. As it had come down to the previous owner through sixteen generations, the lawyers said that there was a perfect title, by Manx law.

The opening of the Museum meant that the first permanent exhibition of this kind in the world had finally been established. Its importance became more and more generally realised, both by the ordinary public, who came to see it in droves; and also by serious workers in many fields of science. Facilities for the study of witchcraft and magic had since the Moors left their Spanish universities been unrepresented in any of the academic disciplines. The archaeologists, folkiorists and anthropologists were interested in the subject; so were the spiritualists, specialists in comparative religion - and the churches - for the purview of each overlapped into the complicated territory. The Museum plus Gardner's unrivalled collection of books, meant that there was a centre for the curious and the student alike.

Gardner began to correspond widely with academicians, doctors, psychiatrists, all over the world. Letters from cranks poured in from every direction: asking for spells,

to become members of covens, to have a few words with him. And the newspapers started to take an interest in the subject.

Gardner handled them all, using his inimitable touch to field the criticisms of sanctimonious poke-noses; looking through his manuscripts to find rare references for students; trying to track down material for researchers into the ways and thoughts of long ago.

The actual practice of witchcraft, of course,continued. The various covens met and carried on their rites as they had done (according to their traditional lore) since prehistoric times.

The interest in witchcraft from the man-in-the-street became considerable. As I write I have several hundred of these letters before me. The outstanding thing about the vast majority of them is that Gardner's claim that witchcraft is a religion, no more and no less, finds an echo of support, approval, attraction from people of almost every social level, every plane of experience.

There were still the cranks, of course, who hoped for "magical power", and who wanted to get into something that was secret. And secret the actual celebrations of the rites remained; for even Gardner could not change that.

Sensational newspapers had decided by 1951 that here was a field for their especial talents. "A revival of witchcraft", said one in that year, firing the first shot, "is sweeping the country". It might have been, but Gardner has no evidence of this. By the end of October in the next year, however, the do-gooders had concluded that witchcraft, superstition and black magic were all the same thing. The fertility-cult that calls itself witchcraft, as outlined by such scholars as Dr. Margaret Murray of London University was not juicy enough for the more excitable sections of the Press.

Black magic, sorcery, ritual magic - these might be good or bad, thought Gardner; but they did not concern him, any more than, say, differential calculus did. When the exposure-merchants started to use the word "witches" in their Black Magic stories, however, he sat up and took notice.

"Witches devil-worship in London" screamed the headlines, whose writers seemed to lick their lips over the "obscene ceremonies, involving priestesses, and blood sacrifices of cats and goats and ritual dances to the rhythm of drums... surrounded by black draperies with the Signs

of the Zodiac, these worshippers of the devil perform their incantations while the herbal incense burns".

Good, red-hot, scary stuff: but nothing to do with witchcraft as he knew it. Time, thought Gardner, would probably sort out the difference between these practises (if they existed) and those of the Cult which he and his fellow witches represented. After all, time had eventually made it possible for people to learn that the earth was not flat...

Interest and correspondence with academic workers continued, and Gardner spent some time at the Congress of Religions at Rome in 1954. But that same year his authoritative Witchcraft Today saw the light of day - and the pressure really started to mount. Here was a man with a lifetime of research and academic contribution behind him. How could this be reconciled with his forthright claim that he was a witch, was a practising member of the few covens remaining in Britain? The logical conclusion - to the frenetic sensation-seekers - could be that something diabolical was going on. Everyone knew that witchcraft was devil-worship. Devil-worship was evil. Therefore Gardner was evil. Not only evil, but he would corrupt others into his form of evil. Not many newspaper contributors had a grounding in anthropological work; besides, it was dull reading, and most of their readers did not read it either. Well-meaning clerics were harnessed to the good of the cause: were they not foursquare against evil?

In vain did Gardner protest to the reporters that he did not worship the devil because he did not believe that there was one.

"This man's whitewash is dangerous", thundered the Pictorial. "Dr. G. B. Gardner is an authority on witchcraft and it is through him that many people get their first mistaken ideas about witchcraft... He puts around, to my mind, the dangerous idea that witchcraft is not evil. He seems to overlook that what may begin as an innocent dabble in search of excitement may lead to devil-worship". This writer did, however, admit that he could find no description in Gardner's Witchcraft Today of "horrible and degrading ceremonies".

I read the attack upon Gardner on that Sunday afternoon with mounting incredulity. If something as unfair as I realised this to be was being projected with such unbelievable force, this man Gardner might be someone worth contacting. I had for several years been reading about fertility religions and the ancient mysteries. Ploughing through book

after book, I realised that people with the academic background of Sir James Frazer and Professor Murray do not spend a lifetime in research for nothing. Their conclusions at the very least, bore as close examination as those of a feature-writer. Gardner would be the man who could give me some sort of guidance on this point. I had no time (unlike the reporters) for the reputed devil-worshippers who were said to lurk on almost every hand. But I had all the time he would give me for a man whose erudition and straightforwardness stood out in almost every word of his books.

Meanwhile, as I was to find, the attacks in the Press had actually brought considerable benefits to the witches. In the first place, contact was made with scattered covens practising similar rites, thus laying the foundations for future co-operation. And, although it surprised the attackers, shoals of approving letters poured into the Witches' Mill on the Isle of Man. Literally hundreds of people wanted more information; hundreds wrote that they were attracted by the idea of a fertility religion: dozens more that they deplored any attack upon a man who wanted to worship in his own way.

I was to find out later that the British public are not always in tune with the sensationalist fringe of their newspapers. Quite a number of the people who wrote to Gardner at this time said how much they admired his stand, and that they hoped that he would give as good as he got.

I mentioned the attack to various people whom I knew, at random. One said: "If this is all as evil as they say it is, it is a matter for the police, who will take it up and stop it. If they do not stop it, it is harmless". Some refused really to believe anything in a Sunday paper on principle. Others, with the typical British sporting spirit, thought that both sides should be allowed to have their say. I could not find much response evoked by the association-loaded phrases about obscenity and devil-worship.

Gardner, through his correspondence and a mounting tide of visitors, found that a comparatively small number believed that there was any devil, irrespective of their religious background. This took a great deal of wind out of the sails of the anti-witch campaign. You can put up a man of hay and knock it down, as a correspondent put it. But if you know that it is a man of hay, there may be very little satisfaction in so doing: unless you are being paid to do it - but that is another matter.

Gardner's recognition as the world authority on witchcraft was growing, and his work at the Museum was achieving notice. At the height of the "persecution" in 1955, the University of Rome published an authoritative account of Magic and Witchcraft and the Museum by Gardner, in Human Studia, issued by the Institute of Medical History. It is interesting to note that in the decade which has passed since he revealed the sociological facts about witchcraft, not a single savant has published one word in refutation of his theories. On the contrary, academically speaking, the discovery of the thread of transmission of the ancient Cult has been established beyond reasonable doubt.

The many-sided facets of Gardner's character and their effects upon the whole question of witchcraft became one of my major subjects of study. He was always kind and helpful to the Press, in spite of the fact that on almost every occasion journalists betrayed their undertakings to give the Wica a chance. This was something that Gardner felt keenly though his trusting faith in human nature made him cooperate with news-hounds in the hope that what he considered the truth and the beauties of witchcraft might be known to the public at large.

As I got to know him better, quite apart from discovering the innocent truth about witch practises for myself, I found it harder and harder to believe that this gentle, kindly man could for a moment be regarded by anyone as connected with devil-worship, or any other unpleasantness.

His strong desire that the wrongs which had been done to generations of witches be righted caused him to erect a memorial on the Isle of Man to the nine million martyrs of the past persecutions. Redress could not be obtained; but he thought that something might be done for their memory by making the public realise that they were the followers of an old religion, which was put down by force, torture, false oaths, duplicity. His inner promptings, his infallible intuition, told him to go on. If, in the process, he were to become a martyr himself, he little cared. This latter fact was one of the reasons that press and other attacks on his own personality left him relatively unmoved.

Then, again, there was his attitude towards the covens which had existed before he became the spokesman for the movement.

Gardner was, and remains, an apologist in the religious sense: an explainer of his beliefs. He was

determined to give out what he understood to be the truth about witchcraft,

and hang the consequences. He was an anthropologist, it is true: but he also had his personal emotion commitment: he was a witch. The "old established" believers were witches pure and simple. They did not always see eye-to-eye with his explanatory methods. But his close personal friendships with them made him believe that, so long as he shielded them from the evils of publicity, they would not try to prevent him from drawing the fire.

Gardner is characterised by two very strIking and compelling attributes: he is a fighter, and a stubborn one. And he has an all-pervading sense of humour which he brought into the battle with the light-heartedness of a schoolboy. The newspapers which spoke of "this evil man"; of "this frail little old man who does not know that he is playing with fire" had no idea of what they were to have to reckon with. And the same held good for the various would be witch leaders who tried to take over the Cult from him. In parentheses, it may be said that these latter made the disastrous mistake of thinking that it was his property, or that he was the leader of it.

Why did Gardner take up the cudgels to fight, in print and in lectures, those writers who were "exposing" black magic in Britain? This was at first a puzzle to me. Witchcraft was not black magic. Journalists might write about it to their heart's content, as far as I was concerned. If it was devil-worship, it was not connected with witchcraft. During the hectic weeks of 1955, the reason became abundantly clear. To the sensational Press, witchcraft was the same as everything else occult which was not too big to attack. Gardner was lumped together with magicians and the alleged practitioners of the diabolical arts whom the newspapers wanted to nail. One way in which he could show that he was less black than he was painted was by revealing the easily-exposed stupidity of some sections of the Press. If he could show that much of what they wrote was nonsense, it would indicate that they were irresponsible. Once they had been discredited, the public could make up its own mind as to whether anything that they wrote was of real value, could be believed at all...

Grinding into terrible motion, sprouting horrific cliches about evil revels, priestesses, Scotland Yard dossiers and the rest, the sensationalists wove a web of hysteria which in less enlightened times would have been used to inspire the mob for a witch-burning debauch. Facts in support of the alleged practises were obviously hard to come by.

one newspaper arranged a ceremony, which it caused to have photographed. Careful readers of the text were able to note that the purpose was not so much to expose anyone as to show that "people still believed in such things". As Gardner observed, rather drily, they need not have bothered. They seemed to have been feeding their readers with evidence that they themselves were prone to gehennomania for some time.

Then there were the books of Montague Summers, a sensationalist Catholic writer who belived in evil and witches to a disturbing extent. The Sunday Pictorial clung to his anathemas: and his pages gave them fresh nutriment. The witch-mania was upon them but Gardner had the last laugh. Writing in the Spectator, he gently pointed out the straw-in-the hair attitude of some writers:

> "The reference in 'A Spectator's Notebook' to the current Sunday Pictorial sensation 'Virgin Births' prompts me to wonder who so egregious a newspaper as the Pictorial can possibly have been so slow on the uptake as not to relate the subject to that of its previous stunt, namely, 'Black Magic in Britain'. Surely the fertile brain of the Pictorial's reporter, Mr. Peter Hawkins, who, you remember, set out with all the gusto of the Fat Boy in Pickwick to terrify the British public with tales of black magic, witchcraft, Satanism, etc., cannot fail to grasp the real significance of these 'virgin births'? Why, Sir, they are obviously the result of activities of Incubi, no less!
>
> Mr. Hawkins' favourite 'authority', the late Montague Summers, wrote in his book Witchcraft and Black Magic, 'The physiological and psychological bearing of these unions are treated of in detail by all demonologists, who are further unamious in believing that children can be generated by Incubi. The Malleus Maleficarum discusses this question at great length and is entirely convincing'.
>
> In view of the fact that a few months

ago the Pictorial was featuring the most solemn

> warnings to the public about the activities of witches, in accordance with the teachings of Mr. Summers, which it quoted, I look forward to its being consistent enough to follow the previous series to its logical conclusion, with Mr. Hawkins as Witch-Finder General and Incu-Bus Conductor".

Gardner regrets that his suggestion was not taken up: but after this letter there were indications that the apotheosis was abating. Some responsible journals, ignoring the Fat Boy type of exposure, started to print references to witchcraft which showed that the work of serious researchers was beginning to bear fruit in more general literature.

The Field, after an interview with Gerald Gardner and a careful checking of available information on the subject, ran an article in December, 1956, which put the whole matter much more into perspective: "Magic still goes on in Britain, but there is nothing very sensational, or sinister, about it".

Dennis Bardens, no witch or sympathiser, but an expert investigator, remarks here that the general public's mental impression of a witch "epitomises all the worst fears, atavisms and wordless desires of an ignorant and uncertain mind". Looked at this way, Gardner's appeal to sanity in studying the actual beliefs and practises of the witches is shown up in clear and refreshing reliefs.

The growth of witchcraft coud be traced, thinks this writer, to a recognition of the mysterious processes of birth and death. "Since birth and death are inseparable ingredients of human destiny, gods representing them are common to many religions and their joint worship was hardly illogical". Nothing much here for the sensational journalist - no "twist" that he could give to the material. He would have to return to the atavistic aspect of the human mind.

Gardner carried on at the Museum, working at his books, seeing rodomontade journalists and answering letters. Recruitment to the covens was continuing - thanks largely to the boomeranging of the enormous free publicity which had been given to the Cult by its avowed enemies. Letters received at this time include, again and again passages such as this: "I have long wanted to find some group practising the Ancient Rites; and I am overjoyed to

be able to communicate with you, through the attack upon you in such-and-such a newspaper"

The frenetic efforts - however well-meaning they

were - of the mass-circulation press were doing more for the revival of the pagan religion than a publicity campaign which would have cost thousands of pounds. And the newspapers knew it: for many of the letters which reached the witches at that time were passed on by the newspapers in care of whom they had been addressed. Gardner asked several journalists whether it would not be better to praise the witches instead, since denouncing only brought greater strength, more and more converts, to the Cult. They did not know the answer to that one...

The repeal of the Witchcraft Act in 1951 had meant that a witch could not now be persecuted for his or her allegiance to the Cult. If the allegation of drug-taking, obscenity, desecration and blackmail (the general favourites with reporters) were to any degree true, the law could intervene. The Church could - and did - denounce the faith of witchcraft as diabolical. But hardly anyone seemed to care. There was in Britain no mechanism whereby a person would be prosecuted for his religious beliefs. And so the flow of recruits and letters from interested people continued. Gardner began to suspect the actual desuetude of the Press, without seeing any logic behind it.

The Press wanted to shock the public, and called for action against witchcraft. There was solid evidence that the public was not shocked. In fact, they wanted to join witchcraft in large numbers. What could the Press do now. They warned against its dangers: but no danger has been proved. The situation began to smack faintly of the ridiculous.

Some reporters tried asking absurd or over-naive questions; but they were paid back in their own coin. "Do you call your members to meetings by telepathy?" Gardner said, "We might be able to, but it is much less trouble to send a telegram". Honours were at least even.

If witchcraft was not casting evil spells and worshipping the devil, what was it? This was the next question which exercised the minds of the popular press. Looked at carefully, this attitude shows that a crack of light is developing in the monolithic thinking of the presshound. Talking to Gardner, who told them that it brings satisfaction, ecstasy, a feeling of nearness to divinity, they were hard put to absorb these facts. To a student of ecstatic religion, of course, the mystical experience was no different from that reported by any other sect practising direct communion with a supernatural power.

"When, for instance, he speaks of the exhilaration the

rites confer", said one writer in an Australian paper, rather sadly, "one feels that witches today see witchcraft as something between a hobby and a mental therapy. All the same it must, I suppose, be classed as a religion, however archaic, and, in the harmless sense, anarchistic it may be".

Gardner feels about that one that it is the fault of the organised religions that a person could grow up in this century with so little knowledge of what religion gives a person as to be bewildered by the possibility of exhilaration in faith and experience. Whether this is a "hobby" is not something that a member of any religion would worry about.

"Magic", Gardner says, "is the art of getting results". For this reason the attributes of clairvoyance, healing, hypnotism and things formerly thought of as supernatural are a part of the witch's armoury. Psychic periodicals began to take notice of witchcraft when they felt that it was impinging upon their field; but by and large their attitude was one of live and let live.

Quite apart from his own commitment to witchcraft as a believer, Gardner the folklorist, during this period tried to carry forward the message that here was a group of people who did something because they believed in it, and who were therefore worthy of study and interest:

"What interests me", he wrote in the English Digest in the spring of 1955, "is the fact that numbers of people meet every year and perform witch rites because they believe in them".

But surely there can be no smoke without fire? Perhaps not, but there can be smoke seen where there is none. Hot air will do just as well for those who want to believe something that affords no real basis in fact. Psychologically, the position of the Malays and Chinese or the Ceylonese panics, was the same mechanism.

Students of human behaviour soon became interested in the typical example of witch-mania based upon precisely nothing which stirred even the responsible Daily Herald and Daily Sketch one December morning in 1956. DEVIL WORSHIP IN SECRET TEMPLE, cried the Herald; POLICE WATCH TEMPLE OF DEVIL WORSHIP, claimed the Sketch. What was this all about?

In a summer house in the grounds of an Essex house a number of natural objects (such as stones, feathers and leaves) were found by a caretaker on a round table. The dailies featured the story; the local vicar talked of exorcism; "a stake had been driven into the ground; near it was a

smaller piece of wood with a hole through the centre which may have been the inverted cross of the devil worshippers". Only the DailyMail hinted that the conclusions of evil might have been arrived at a little too soon. 'Joan (the caretaker's wife) found an explanation only too quickly. "It's black magic' she said".

Two days later, the Mail had the courage to print the real explanation of the finds. The "devil-worshippers" were sixteen schoolboys. They had laid down finds made during a nature ramble to collect specimens on the summer-house table, for identification. "We have never heard of black magic"; they explained, "but as it seemed to scare you so much we thought it would be better to explain". There are echoes of the Sakis' "German invaders" here, for the student of the mind.

"This is the sort of evidence", Gardner points out, upon which people are accused of evil magical activities - including what is alleged to be witchcraft".

The attack-and-defence movements between witches and Press were not, however, the major part of the activities which were going on. In the middle of the publicity period, a fresh figure eased his way into the picture. This was a self-styled witch, who claimed to have inherited certain witch relics, and who wanted to gain control of the Museum. Why and how this idea should have seized him - for he had no knowledge of the kind of witch-rites that were carried on by the Wica - is uncertain. Be this as it may, he approached Gardner and tried to get the Museum transferred to London "where he would find a building for the collection". It was decided that there could be no point in giving the immensley important exhibits to someone who seemed to have no idea as to what the occult was all about, and who, in addition, seemed anxious to build himself up into some kind of leader of the Cult. The final straw came when Gardner, with his knowledge of witch tools and weapons, told the man that the ones which he produced for inspection were of the theatrical kind, and had neither intrinsic value nor witchcraft associations.

This development set off a real "I'll huff and I'll puff" reaction from the frustrated would-be warlock. I had been to see him, and was as littie impressed as Gardner had been by his hectoring ways. Drawn out by my apparent and stimulated) interest in his propositions, he promised to "make it well worth my while" to go over to him. After some weeks of sweet talk interlarded with threats of tele-

pathic hypnotism and magical interference, he drifted out of the immediate picture, contenting himself with trying to stir up trouble for Gardner and the whole Cult. As most of these efforts were based uponthe assumption that there was something obscene going on (he had evidently read his papers faithfully) his nuisance value was far less great than he hoped it would be. His main weapon in the vendetta has been to try to secure adverse publicity for any witch he locates, un1ess he or she will go over to his side.

Meanwhile the newspapers, whom he had tried to interest, started a dossier on him, waiting for the moment to attack...

As might be expected, some at least of the recruits or would-be members of the Cult were planted by this man, by newspapers or other interested parties. Their job was to penetrate into the secret rites of the Craft, in order to make an exposure possible.

They were generally easily recognisable. In the first place, Gardner vetted most of the letters, rejecting those which showed any inclination towards the kind of supernatural interests that the press had claimed was represented by witchcraft. People did. indeed continue to write to him, asking to be admitted into strange rites, to be allowed to cast spells and the rest. Gardner shared the joke with coven members on many an occasion.

Some were more cunning. Was money needed? They were financially sound, could introduce many people who would contribute money to the Craft; could suggest methods of raising money. But it is one of the Laws of the Wica that no money may be made out of the religion...

One woman, trying very hard to appear "well-connected", "superior" and all the rest, gave the witches one of their best jokes for years. She wrote several times, saying how interested she was, as the descendant of a witch, to hear that the falth survived. She wanted to join, had to join. Could she not just be taken in, even on probation? Now, Gardner and most other witches are convinced that they can often tell by intuitive methods whether a candidate is sincere or not, if there is any doubt. In this case, Gardner and I both thought that there were indications that this was some kind of stunt. We had not had a joke for some time. We would invite her and see what we would see....

She came to a hut, which had been carefully prepared to give the impression of disorder, a certain amount of dirt, and no mean affluim of cats. The senior coven-member

slouched in, looking rather less respectable than this obviously dainty person would be expected to welcome. She was all smiles, gushing, a little too guileless. Speaking of the unique experience it was for her, she begged to be allowed to be initiated.

Her preoccupation with her supposed social prominence was more than enough to overcome any qualms that we might have felt as the practical joke which we were about to play upon her. In any case, her pretensions were in bad taste, and probably were connected with an inferiority-feeling. Before long we found through our own sources that she had been sent by someone who wanted a spy in the camp: a would-be witch-leader who wanted the secrets of the Craft in order to set himself up as some sort of witch-king. She certainly knew how to turn on a kind of bourgeois charm, but its insincerity and superficiality were almost painful.

Her story, quite apart from her undercurrent of unease, was, as Gardner said, "rather too slick". She wanted to have what she called a private initiation. If she could have this, she would bring all sorts of important and well-connected people into the Craft. The Malay word LUCHUN means to provoke by insult a person into an unreasoning attack. The lady, Gardner was soon to find, was also trying to "luchun" him into attacking the curious character on whose behalf she was working. This would have led him into an ambush which was being laid... but word had come back from another direction that she had been sent by someone who was anxious to get the secrets of the Craft in order to encompass its downfall in some way. So he had her "initiation", and was able to take all the alleged secrets back to her employer. It was not until much later that he found out that she knew - precisely nothing.

Against this background of intrigue and extraordinary maneouvre, Gardner found time to carry on with his serious work. He read a paper on the Witch Religion in Rome. The only adverse comment upon this was from an Italian wag who waid: "It is quite safe for you to come here. You British charge us so much for coal, we can no longer afford to burn heretics..."

The Middlesex Hospital Medical Society invited him to give a lecture, which was well attended, on witchcraft. This kind of wholesome publicity for the faith of the Wica brought fresh contacts with academic workers all over the world. Witchcraft was being established in the freer atmosphere of the research worker, who cared little for social climbers

and the take-over bids of conjurors, and were little affected by the "popular" press.

Several of the "magicians" who showed an unusual interest in witchcraft were people with some knowledge of conjuring. How their profession could produce a bent towards the occult was always a mystery to Gardner.

It was only a matter of time before the large number of West Indians in Britain and the interest of some of them in magic gave the press an opportunity to run a Voodoo scare, which they naturally called witchcraft - often in huge headlines.

Voodoo drums, free drinks and song and dance raced through the thrilling phrases of the newspapers, giving some sort of an echo of Voodoo, but nothing about witch craft. Gardner was amused, but not very interested. Until a reporter came to see him about the story.

He showed the man his Museum, and he agreed that Gardner's witchcraft was harmless. Then he asked him what he thought about the alleged violent attack upon the part-Egyptian priestess. Police doctors had reported slight bruising and some hair cut off. That did it. Gardner, candid to the last, said that he thought that such wounds could be self-inflicted: a possibility supported by arguments whose only result seemed to be a printed attack upon Gardner.

The connection between witchcraft and the Gardner-Press-Cranks complex now took an interesting turn. Although there is a great deal to be told about the inner workings of the Craft during this period, this is a book about Gerald Gardner, and we must stick to his interaction with people and events.

In the middle of 1956 the St. Albans Coven received word that an illustrated weekly was preparing a series of articles on witchcraft and black magic, and intended to attack Gerald Gardner's reputation. It was decided it would be interesting to carry out a ritual in accordance with inherited lore, to prevent "oppression and injustice".

On 30th June, the magazine had promised its readers these articles. "What is the truth behind the Black Magic cult? Are its evil, mystic powers extending their grasp in Britain? Is Witchcraft a widespread threat? This and many pictures... read next week's...

The following week, under the banner headline WITCH - CRAFT IN BRITAIN. there was a mere three-quarters of a column of print. The "many pictures" had dwindled to one large photograph, showing a wax model, said to be a Black

Mass, occupying nearly three-quarters of the page. No mention of Gardner was made. The magazine's conclusions? "Despite the headlines, solid evidence that black magic is practised in Britain is scant indeed".

Material about witchcraft, about the Witches' Mill on the Isle of Man, about Gerald Gardner and his work, was flooding in from all over the world. Everyone seemed to want to get into the act. Gardner hammered on at his book, The Meaning of Witchcraft; while American papers featured psychological accounts of the witch-mentality. Dr. Leopold Stein, writing in the Journal of Analytical Psychology addressed himself to the problem of the traditional "loathsome woman" who was reputed to be a witch. "Alternately sadistic and seductive", said Time (On September 3rd, 1956) "Dr.Stein's hag patients sometimes invited him to manhandle them, and sometimes circled his chair in 'increasingly narrow circles'. . . witches possess the power to emasculate men, or to cause the death of a person as well as to cause a person to fall in love... the analyst should take heed of this".

Nor was Dr. Stein the only person who thought that there was still extant a form of witchcraft other than that which Gardner and his fellows preached and practised. The exchanges of letters in correspondence columns of some newspapers become interesting at his point. Claiming "parents and ancestors who lived in the Isle of Man for centuries as magicians and witches", a correspondent suggests that the "riding on broomsticks" was a form of levitation. True witches, he states, are always female, some are not harmless; magicians possessed witches who were his property and did his bidding.

Gardner and another witch, in letters published almost immediately afterwards, leapt into the fray. There was an offer still standing, said Gardner, by the Society for Psychical Research, of £250 for a successful levitation. He would personally "give £1,000 to anyone who will fly on a broomstick by occult or supernatural powers here at the Museum of Magic and Witchcraft, Castletown, Isle of Man".

He knew as many fully initiated witches who were men as he did women. The other witch came In on a slightly different tack.

Witchcraft was older and far wiser than the magic practised in the Middle Ages. Flying upon broomsticks was a joke "at the expense of credulous outsiders" With the positive, unequivocal assertiveness which strongly recalls Gardner's own phraseology and treatment of the subject in his books, this witch ends: "Our old rites may be simple,

crude and primitive, but there is nothing black about them, and perhaps because they are simple they work. I sign myself - A WITCH.

It is undoubtedly this kind of categorical statement, heard from the witches who initiated him, which first impressed Gardner with their sincerity. At the same time, it is not difficult to see that the very unequivocal certainty of claims made by these witches have had the effect of making Gardner's works unique. He had to preserve the ex cathedra assurance of his informants with the respect which such research material demanded. Concurrently, his academic attitude compelled him to theorise as to ways and means whereby such statements were arrived at. Both Witchcraft Today and The Meaning of Witchcraft abound with what would be considered sophistries by those who did not realise that he was dealing with unusually emphatic material.

A minor reaction in the same periodical showed the state of feeling expressed by some people on the whole problem. "I do not think", says a lay correspondent, "there ought to be witchcraft in a Christian country, do you?"

The editorial rejoinder sternly underlines the changing attitude towards witchcraft: "one might as well argue whether there should be Moslem belief in a Christian country. There must be freedom of thought".

Although the mass-circulation press had by no means shot its bolt, the age-old interdiction against publicity by witches had been broken - almost entirely through the efforts of Gardner without the harm to the privacy or livelihoods of the witches that had been expected. Not all of this coming out more into the open; persecution could and would still take place. But at least some of them realised that, now the issue had been raised, there was no objection to their finding a platform wherever they might be given a hearing.

Especially noteworthy, then, was an article which "Diana" wrote in protest against being labelled a follower of an evil cult.

"(The witches) worship the old gods of the land of Britain, whose tradition is rooted deep in British soil. The old gods are not dead, as I know by experience.

After touching upon the belief in reincarnation, "Diana" stresses that witchcraft has no need to "dupe" or "snare" anyone into the Cult. This was becoming only too evident with the applicants for membership who were deluging

Gardner and others with letters, telegrams and calls.

"One day", she continues, "I believe, the people of the world will turn back from the road of 'scientific', 'orthodox' civilisation which has proved so stony and return to the life and religion of nature. When that day dawns, the wise old gods will be there - waiting". Gardner, it is true, had created the climate which made it possible for an article containing these sentiments to be printed. But not everyone was completely content. Some witches thought that publicity was unnecessary, and might create a reaction harmful to the interests of the Cult in the long run. Gardner, anxious that knowledge of the Craft should not be lost, afraid that it might die out, believing that the truth must always be known at no matter what cost to those who say it, was the representative of the other side.

The result of this, together with the possibility that vulnerable members might still lose jobs or livelihood, was a degree of dispersal. Fresh covens were set up, which carried on their worship apart from the two main figures who had gained publicity: the head of the St. Albans coven and Gardner on the Isle of Man. The result has been a strengthening of the Craft as a whole.

One of the covens was threatened by a blackmailer during the latter part of 1956. Its headquarters was located on some land owned by Gerald Gardner, and this acreage was coveted by a potential buyer. The coven - and Gardner - did not want to sell. "This is good building land", the blackmailer said, in effect. "I want it. I know that there is Black Magic going on there. Unless you sell it to me, I will cause you trouble".

There was no black magic there; neither, as far as anyone could see, could any trouble be caused that might amount to anything. But the fact that extensive publicity might have harmed some of the members in relation to their jobs meant that here was a chance to use a special witch-process. The blackmailer was given several opportunities to withdraw, which he refused. Then the coven got to work, with the spell mentioned in one of Gardner's books.

A wax image was made, its legs and arms were tied, symbolising inhibition of movement (toward the coven); and it was gagged, to prevent blackmail threats from being carried out.

The coven has never heard from the gentleman again.

It was about the same period,December 9th, 1956,

to be precise, that Gardner joined the select band of people who have received the cachet of a mention in the Observer columnist's Sunday feature Oddly Enough. Headlining the story "Wands Across the Sea", Paul Jennings reviewed in his own unique way the American edition of Witchcraft Today.

Gardner, he said, might be American or he might not. What was of interest was that this book would tell Americans that there were covens still operating in Engiand, run by very British types.

This gave the Director of the Museum of Magic an opportunity to come back, in a letter the following week:

"I am not 'a visiting American witch'... Let me hasten to reassure him however; I cannot (so far as I know) turn anyone into a centipede.

"I am flattered to see that Mr. Jennings conceives of witchcraft as being a very U-type activity, indulged in by persons of title with 'clipped British accents'. This is not quite true, however; witchcraft was, and on a very small scale still is, that remnant of the old pagan religion which survived the coming of Christianity, and although its adherents might be of any class of society, they were mostly drawn from the peasant population of outlying districts. These people lived close to the earth and their livelihood depended on the fertility of animals and crops. Hence they continued to do what they had been doing from time immemorial - namely, to follow a religion of nature and the fertility thereof, and to hold regular festivals at which the concept of cosmic fertility was worshipped, and the attempt was made to induce it by ritual to manifest upon earth.

"The Priests and priestesses who directed these festivals were called the Wica, meaning 'The Wise Ones', and they also fulfilled the function of surgeons, doctors, midwives and psychiatrists. It was these people and their followers who came to be called 'Witches'. The Church found their influence a dangerous rival to its own, and commenced a campaign of extermination against them, the barbarities of which are not pleasant to dwell upon. Its result was to drive the Wica underground where the Cult survived as a secret 'mystery-religion'. In a fragmentary form it survives to this day, and I have been initiated into a British witch coven. Many objects connected with the Cult are preserved in the museum, some of them given by present-day witches.

"An important part of the Church's warfare upon the Cult was that of propaganda. Before public opinion will

accept burnings, hangings, etc. , as being good and righteous, it has to be turned against those who are to be exterminated, and one of the best ways in which to do this is to frighten it. Hence the toads, cauldrons and sinister phantasmagoria which vaguely trouble Mr.Jennings. In fact most witches were (and are) quite ordinary people who happened to prefer another and an older religion to Christianity, and to be obstinate in their choice.

"The early European emigrants took the Cult to the New World and the witch-trials in Massachusetts, though they give plentiful manifestations of mob-hysteria, were not all smoke without fire...

"Such rites have nothing to do with 'Black Magic', 'Devil Worship', 'Black Masses', 'Satanism' or any of the similar matters about which sensations periodically appear (and disappear) in the popular press, causing nervous old women of both sexes needlessly to alarm themselves; matters in respect of which I personally maintain a profound scepticism

There might be inner satisfaction in defending a cherished belief, but being a witch undoubtedly had its discomfort. As Gardner felt compelled to say to Fate magazine, "It is no longer legal to hang or burn witches, but they are evidently still considered fair game for persecution,without the chance to defend themselves."

# 16

## THE SEARCH FOR SPELLS

Once it had been established that witchcraft as known and practised by the organisation called the Wica, was a religion and not a cult carried out by cranks, and was not run for profit, the question of its name naturally arose. Why, said some well-wishers, do you not escape the adverse publicity by changing your name? By Gardner's own reading of the situation, the Wica (wise ones) was an Anglo-Saxon word, probably given to the followers of the Cult by the relatively new Germanic immigrants from across the Channel. But psychological considerations made such a change now unlikely. In the first place, the name was established: one could not change names, any more than horses, in mid-stream.

Then there was the consciousness of identity, the feeling of kinship, with the nine million people who had been killed during the witch-persecutions of the past. These events were of a part of the emotional heritage of the Craft. If the Wica had no theology, little hierarchy, it had a tradition. And the mere fact of opposition, whether from scaremongers of the Press, Church or anything else, could not be considered grounds for a change. So the witches remained witches.

Gardner was the spokesman of the witches. Was he the leader? He disclaimed this title, and so did the other publicly known members. But as the natural focus of attention he remained one of the main targets for the self-styled "investigators" and "experts" who were sure, in their own minds, that there was more to all this than met the eye. And the same went for the hundreds of applicants for witch-help who beat a path to the door of the house in Castletown.

In spite of the melodramatic appeals of newspapers to people who were "in the hands of witches" to "go to your doctor or clergyman" for help, no one ever did so, which would seem to prove new recruits were content. The applications for magical aid continued. Some of them from cranks;

some may be practical jokers; but a large number are undoubtedly genuine. Reading the letters, Gardner often thought that, in a nominally Christian country, people should have been convinced in almost two thousand years by their clergy that the Church could help them with their difficulties. But they still applied for witch-aid. Even those modern magicians, the psychologists, did not seem accessible to the desperate souls who implored his intervention.

Two girls, for instance, came to him asking that a spell of bad luck be broken. One man wrote that he had been "fighting an evil spell for a year". He continues: "It seeks to take my life, and is beginning to unnerve my wife. Can you remove it?"

Quite a lot of people thought that they had been cursed. "My thoughts are", says a Glasgow woman, "that someone has put an evil curse on me. I cannot go to work and there is my feeling of illness. Can you remove this evil spell which is ruining my life?"

Curses can be laid upon people by gypsy methods, it is still believed: "A gypsy has put what she calls a gypsy curse on us. Not only has my business deteriorated, but my wife has become eccentric and is taking up to thirty pep pills a day. I am afraid to ration her, as she says they do her good. Can you remove this dreadful curse?"

Statistics published in 1960 show that only nine percent of people in Britain claim to be non-believers in religion. Just over half the population consider themselves in that survey to belong to the Church of England. Catholics and atheists each command an equal number of followers. Gardner's correspondence shows - he is certain - that there is a considerable amount of disquietude among believers and non-believers alike. Only materlalists, for instance (and this is borne out by the survey published in the Observer on March 13th, 1955) tend totally to spurn superstition. Quite a large number of people with religious affiliations believe also in the power of enchantments. The battle which is being fought deep down in people's minds in Britain today, Gardner believes, is a religious one. With only one person in seven regularly attending any form of religious service, even on Sundays, people who cannot believe the doctrines which are offered them are not necessarily infidels. In this battle, Gardner thinks, the Craft of the Wica will become increasingly engaged.

The Observer survey revealed that half of those who believe in an after -life "believe explicitly in reincarnation" -

which is a fundamental tenet of the Wica, as it happens; the religion which is called the "old faith" by the witches. Is this a folk-memory, or is it of more recent development? The same report continues; "Although reincarnation is an article of faith in Asiatic religions, it has no place either in orthodoxy or heresy of Christianity. And the relative prevalence of this belief was one of the surprises of this research".

"Beliefs in various forms of magic and the occult are wide-spread", it is revealed; many having wider belief then the various Christian dogmas". This eye-opening statistical material is amply reflected in the letters which the Wica receives.

An Irish applicant for witch-help puts her problem in this way, perhaps illustrative of the dilemma which can arise even within a powerfully established religion: "I live in Ireland and believe in a lot of things. I would be glad if you would send me a lucky charm, as a priest has cursed our family over a religious difference and we have had misfortune ever since

Some of the letters illustrate the pathetic loyalty of women, and might almost have been selected from the correspondence page of a women's magazine:

"My husband is a good man, although all he thinks about is drink. I want him back, even though I know he would sell the house over my head if he could get away with It".

And then there is another kind of letter which is found quite often, represented by this one:

"Can you cast a spell over my boy to make him marry me before he goes to Denmark?"

A Lancashire woman wants to find her pet cat, because its disappearance is making her mother ill. An Aberdeen baker needs a spell to make his business prosper. A man from Sussex asks Gardner to influence someone to buy his business concern. A woman's daughter "is being annoyed by an amorous employer, and she fears to lose her job. Can you protect her against his influence?"

Some of the letters from people run to as many as thirty-eight pages. Many seem to show that there is still a folk-knowledge or tradition of witchcraft as a religion; which Gardner considers is handed down from one generation to another, and which has, he thinks, survived almost twenty centuries of Christian preaching.

Apart from these, and those applications which ask for some "simple" charm ("I merely ask for a lucky charm

against financial worry") there are quite a number from America, asking for a spouse to be killed by witchcraft, painlessly...

Quite a number of correspondents had religious worries, which they placed before Gardner because, as one said, "you only get one side from a man who is committed to his own form of preaching. Where else is one to turn for advice?" These attitudes never seem to be taken into consideration by those who consider that the automatic choice of a confidant should be one's religious minister.

But Gardner never bandies words on matters of theology. In fact, he goes so far as to say, and to insist, that a person can be a witch and a follower of another religion at the same time. It is in the dogmatic interpretation of the religion that he differs from doctrinnaire exponents of the various commitments. The mystical nature of the Wica, he maintains, transcends the superficialities of ordinary religious worship. Traces of this belief, and even categorical affirmation of it, are found in almost every form of experimental mysticism, and need not seem so alarming as the ordinary follower may feel.

On the superficial level, he has always been amused by the tussels between the protagonists of various forms of dogma. One of his delights is a recollection of his days in Sarawak. The manager's wife at one of the Borneo oil-fields had had a baby. Preparations were made to have it christened when the Bishop came on his rounds.

"An enormous christening breakfast was prepared, and people came from all around. They had asked their general manager, who was an old friend, to be the godfather. 'No', said the Bishop; 'this man is a Jew'. In vain the father pleaded that he was his oldest friend, and also that he did not want to insult him.

'Even if I am a Jew', said the would-be godfather, 'I can keep my word. If I swear to see that the child is brought up a Christian, I will see that he is brought up a Christian.

"The Bishop refused to continue with the service; and the baby was never baptised.

"'Well, said one old man from the British community, 'if the poor kid dies, he'll burn in Hell; and its a bit 'ard to have to go through that just because a pal of your father's was a Jew'".

When Gardner was in the New Forest, he found that the locals had their own ideas as to what baptism meant. He heard that there was a clergyman who had refused baptism

twice; once because the godmother was a Catholic, and once because the father was a Methodist but never attended chapel, and the mother (though Church) never went to church. Gardner talked to the clergyman. He was, he said, always being bothered by people who asked to have their children "Christened but not Baptised". He told them that it was the same thing. The answer was: "It's not. If you Christen it, you give it a name, respectable like. If you Baptise it, you make it a member of a sect, and we want it to decide for itself when it grows up".

Being a witch means that there is never a dull moment. Gardner found that his correspondence took up so much time that to answer every letter in detail would need a couple of secretaries.

In addition to this activity there was the continued interest of the Press... Some reporters were becoming increasingly restive, and it is conceivable, thinks Gardner, that they had argued themselves into a state of frustration in which they were convinced that something was going on. This is reflected in the wishful thinking aspects of their articles. Perhaps they distorted facts deliberately; perhaps, following well-known psychological processes, their minds were losing objective grip of the situation.

On the first of May, 1956, a daily newspaper reported that a police constable was keeping watch for witches nightly at the Rollright Stones, determined to find them, it seemed. I decided to follow this curious item up, and was able to report to Gardner thus:

I was interested in a report in a Sunday newspaper that witchcraft rites were carried out on hill-tops in Warwickshire, and went with another Coven leader to carry out some local investigations. We remained in contact with the Police Constable in question for some weeks after this. He maintained, in categorical contradiction of the report, that he had never at any time kept watch on the Rollright Stones (a supposed witch meeting place). He said that he had been asked questions by a newspaper reporter, but that his alleged watch on May Eve and any other times was pure invention.

As Gardner himself has made clear so many times, while the religious observances of witchcraft are celebrated regularly, magical processes are not carried out except when they are considered necessary, and then only when they are to be of beneficial effect upon people, without harming anyone.

The anxiety, stress and additional work involved in

the hectic developments surrounding witchcraft now began to tell upon his health. His chronic asthma began to develop more frequently. One day the members of the St. Albans Coven "gained the impression" while he was in the Isle of Man that he was very ill. Although they did not know this, his doctor had given him two days to live. It was decided to perform a healing rite for his benefit. They set to work on the Saturday evening.

That night, Donna said goodnight as usual noting that the congestion was so severe that it could hardly become worse. When she went up to him in the morning, she found him sitting up in bed and breathing easily. Though not a believer, all she could say was "the witches have been at you". The ritual had been carried out without any preknowledge of Gardner or his wife.

Radio and television claimed their share of Gardner's time. Following a sound broadcast, in which one of the voices was considered particularly good, Gardner was invited to appear on the BBC screen, with the girl whose voice went over so well. She was "One of the blood, and initiated when young; came to us by reading my books", Gardner observes. She was quite a well-known witch in her neighbourhood; pointed out in the street as a witch as one of the sights of the locality. Young, charming, unassuming and extremely straightforward, she was ideal to put over the guilelessness and honesty which is almost a distinctive mark of many members of the Cult.

"You must bring that girl over to appear on Panorama", said the BBC. "Have her here on Monday". She was shrouded in a thick silken veil, Gardner brought several witch-tools, for he wanted to show the basic aspects of the Craft. Security precautions seemed to be more than adequate. Here was a chance to show something of the reality of witchcraft, Gardner thought, without the evil connotation which newspapers seemed always to look for.

Gardner and Tanith were ushered into an "inner dining room, where we had a very good buffet supper; then she was shrouded again, and we went into the studio".

Gardner's impression is that Tanith was not given enough of a chance to express her point of view. "The cameras were on me most of the time"; and very little was shown of the witch-tools, although he had come along to talk about them. Was the phrase "free as the air", he wondered, something of a misnomer? Viewers who saw the show also remarked that the handling of it seemed rather "odd",

"bitty", and so on. Whether this was deliberate in any way, or whether there was another explanation, is something that Gardner still wonders about. "It was cut short", he says, "without a reason being given".

But it was when the programme ended that the pressure really came on. "Tanith was swept into an inner room, and I was hauled into the press room, to meet some very heated reporters. 'Why was the girl masked?'; 'Who is she?'; 'Why is she a witch?'; 'What is going on?'; 'Who is she, and where does she live?'"

More and more perspiring, agitated, excited, confused pressmen crowded into the room. Some of them knew no more than that they had been told by news editors to get to the studio and find out "who the witch was". They had not seen or heard the programme. Not unnaturally, they felt a little foolish and some were trying to pick up information from each other in the intervals of asking questions from a rather tired Gardner.

Gardner was not prepared to tell much, especially under these conditions of pressure and bullying. This only made things worse. "If you don't tell us, it will be the worse for everyone.. ." After forty five minutes of this, a deadlock seemed to be forming.

Eventually everyone went downstairs, and crowded around the car which was to take Gardner home. Now, they were sure, they would trap the Maiden of the St.Alban's Coven. It was just as well that the witches had anticipated this. I had a car ready inside the building, and was able to run the gauntlet with the veiled witch while Gardner was causing a diversion.

Gardner shared the amazement of the other witches at the lengths to which the pressmen were prepared to go in order to get a story - particularly so when experience might have told them that there was no real story to get.

The 1959 attack upon the Hertfordshire Coven is an example of no effort being spared to bring the public what the editors seemed to think they wanted.

It was Hallowe'en Eve, and a whisper reached Gardner in the Isle of Man that some interest would be taken by newspapers in one of the covens on that witches' night. It was a Saturday night. If the reporters were to catch the Sunday morning editions, they would have to work very hard and very fast. Nothing was planned in the way of ceremonies, but precautions had been taken to prevent an intrusion upon the private property upon which the Coven's meeting place

was situated.

Gardner immediately sent a telegram to the Coven, warning them that there might be some sortof development.

Just before nine in the evening, three carloads of pressmen appeared. The police opportunely arrived soon after, looking (it seemed) for a stolen bicycle... Then more reporters. Reporters climbed on the bonnets of their cars, trying to see over the fence. A gigantic mobile searchlight was brought into action, illuminating the car park on the property. The police had gone away, satisfied; but were nearly called again by neighbours when roaming reporters tried to enter the ground by trespassing. At 11.30. , the witches called the police. By midnight, however, when the law arrived, the reporters had melted away, as if by magic. They had their bush-telegraph .....

None of the myriad flash pictures taken by the Press, of their own milling around, and of the empty car park, was published in that Sunday's papers...

The decision to have no truck with the Press on this occasion was prompted as much by the clandestine nature of their approach as by the experience of the Coven with a Sunday paper in 1957. Gardner had repeatedly been assured by reporters that his point of view would be clearly put in their articles, and the results had been seen to fall more than just short of this. Nevertheless, when in August of that year a provincial editor of a mass-circulation weekly contacted Gardner, he felt that here was a chance to put the Craft's way of thinking squarely to the public. He referred the matter to one of the Coven leaders, who called a conference, after meeting the journalist in question.

We promised all co-operation in the preparation of this article, and were guaranteed in return a fair hearing. Gardner and the other witches trusted this man, and still feel that he is sincere. We had to learn that no newspaper employee exists in a vacuum. He is part of the octopus, and what the brain expects him to do he must do. Alternatively the "processing" of his material at the pre-publication stage can be enough to give the story a very different "twist". But at that time, nobody in the Craft was familiar with the inner workings of the newspaper world.

And so the familiar charges were paraded out again. Witchcraft was a "repulsive pagan sect"; "Call it idiocy or evil, the pagan cult of Witchcraft is a fact that Christians in Britain have to reckon with".

The only comfort that Gardner and his associates could

cull from all this was that the newspaper in question was satisfied that witchcraft was a cult, and that the Wica did practise it. As Gardner ruefully remarked, quite a lot of people knew that already.

Taking stock, Gardner realised that the extraordinary publicity which the Craft had gained had not been a wholly unmixed blessing. Enquiries about it were flooding in. Contacts were still being made with serious students of religion throughout the world. And, perhaps most important of all, the witches now knew whom they could trust and whom not. Members who were vulnerable to publicity, it was true, would have to be protected. But those who had nothing to lose through having their names in the papers, and yet proved shy of associating with the movement, could be allowed to shed their allegiance.

In the event, those who faded out of the picture were remarkably few. They tended to be those whose commitments were such that sensational publicity would harm them or those dependent upon them. Letters came in, too, from people offering - for instance - a house or houses for the use of the Cult; and several offers of jobs for one of the members who had lost hers when reporters were found in almost every corner of the office where she worked.

# 17

## MYSTICISM

If circumstances have shaped Gardner, the inner spirit which illuminated him has played just as large a part. This is the undoubted conclusion which is shared by most of those few people who know him intimately; who have seen him in good times and bad, in sorrow when his wife died in early 1960; and in happiness when he realised that his museum was finally established.

He believes in intuition, and in reincarnation. Both of these ideas are also witch-beliefs, even though he discerned them in himself years before he knew that there was such a thing as a witch religion. Those two factors have always had an effect on his life, and continue to influence him. The idea of "belonging" to the Craft; to "coming home" - these are the warm, meaningful bases of his certainty that humanity has eternal existence. And it is in giving out that warmth that his most endearing side is cherished by those who have worked with him.

As a scholar, he has never compromised; never taken the easy way out, even although at times this had meant going against well-established experts in the field. Just how bitter such a struggie can be he was to learn and experience again and again, until he won through and established his own individuality, his own right to pronounce on matters of archaeology, folk-lore, spiritualism, magic and witchcraft.

His modesty is perhaps the most striking result of his belief In reincarnation. If you admire the fact that he is an expert on Malay weapons and at the same time has a thorough grasp of the making of model sailing-boats, he will not take this as any special compliment. He knows, with the certainty of a man who has been here before, that these skills may well have been inherited, somewhere along the line, from a forebear who spent a lifetime, perhaps, doing just one of these things.

A man may be a tea-planter and know something about rubber. He might, in addition, have a hobby connected with archaeology. But one who speaks Portuguese, writes books,

knows the ins and outs of specialised subjects like pharmacology or Hebrew and can tell you just how the Saki make their blowpipes and what poisons they use on their arrows, is a fascinating study in anyone's language.

His erudition is as collossal as is his capacity for note-taking. How dedicated a scholar does one have to be in order to pull books from the shelves and make notes from them during a lull in a conversation - without appearing discourteous or losing the thread of the conversation?

And yet there is another side to this complex man. His close studies of experiential religion do not stop short at mere edurition. He has known the ecstasy of the condition of identity with the deity of the witchcraft religion, just as fully as he can read the cyphers attributed to Cornelius Agrippa. This is a case in which it is not flogging a truism to say that such a man is born and not made.

What is Gardner's mission, why does he exist in the shape and form in which we know him today? Those who believe that there is a purpose behind everything, behind even seemingly trivial actions, might say that his preoccupation with the Wica is a sign for those who would see. It cannot be denied that in twenty years of dedicated work he has restored the ancient Craft in many men's minds, at least to the status of a religion. To ask whether this was a miscalculation is begging the question. As far as the academic world is concerned, he has done a great deal towards drawing attention to the existence of believers in the religion.

By early 1955 lectures on the survival of the witch religion were being held in Paris University. Professor Varagnac actually based his Sorbonne course upon Gardner's work, saying that he had "never before found anything so illuminating". The Ethnographical Society also accepted the reality of the witch-faith, under the title of "Contemporary Witchcraft in Britain, and the Survivals of Celtic Cults" in the same year. There is generally a hiatus between academic acceptance of some new discovery and popular realisation of its importance and the world of research was itself only just publishing its first conclusions on the subject of witchcraft.

It would have been inconceivable twenty years ago to find a passage such as this in a serious academic work: and yet it appeared, in 1959, when Dr. Serge Hutin of the Ecole pratique des hautes etudes (Sciences religieuses) wrote:

"The ancient Cult (Witchcraft) remains

> above all alive in the British Isles...
> British witches are grouped in covens,
> of which the origin is very ancient. .
> Witchcraft is hereditary in certain
> families, guardians, in secret, of the
> ancient Cult, It is not connected with
> 'devil-worship', nor is it an
> anti-Christian reaction... The most
> qualified specialist in this field,
> Dr.Gardner of the Isle of Man, relies
> strongly upon these survivals, which
> contain nothing dangerous to public
> order... British witches do not worship
> Satan, for the simple reason that their
> god existed well before Christianity.
> One must not see in every horned idol a
> representation of the devil!" (Witches
> use a horned helmet in their rites).

It is perhaps in recognition of his distinguished work in so many fields of ancient beliefs that Gardner received in the middle of 1960 the cache of an invitation to a Buckingham Palace reception. Although, he reflected, he could not consider that his visit there on May 25th, was in any way connected with his reputation as a witch, it was hardly likely that the Queen's advisors who obviously vetted guest-lists with appropriate care, would feel that his allegiance to the ancient faith precluded him from attending. In a few short years, the man who had been the butt of press attack was now the world's authority on the Cult which he had revealed to be harmless, acknowledged by academic workers - and now considered a fitting guest in the highest social level of the realm. He felt it not only as a personal honour, but as something which showed unmistakably, that a man might be a witch and still be considered respectable. Perhaps the days of witch-hunts were indeed at an end.

As far as his mission to enrol others into the fold of the deities of fertility is concerned, one cannot say that there is one Craft member who does not feel that his or her membership of the Cult is anything but a fulfilment: a "coming home". Speaking for the present generation of witches, at least, this is perhaps enough coming from one who has been through this experience.

His personality, his individuality, so baffling to many, can be explained with some certainty if we borrow the method of oriental mysticism. Generations of superficial

religion,

in which the ecstatic element has been almost wholly lacking, have almost ceased to produce the type which is recognised throughout Asia as the mystical personality. Those who have any acquaintance with this type, however, will unhesitatingly identify Gardner as one of them.

Setting aside all the reiterated teatime nonsense about mystical yogis and marvellous mahatmas, there can be no doubt that the habits of thought and of action of Gardner are indistinguishable from those of men who are called religious leaders in the East. Whether he arrived at this stage through personal application, or inherited it through reincarnation - these questions are rather less important than the fact that it exists. In the Eastalone there are numerous cults devoted to the cultivation of religious experience through a well-organised training system; with their own teachers, curricula and stages of advancement. Attempts have been made to introduce such teachings in the West, with comparatively little lasting success. The reason has been because there have been so few people who understand the mind of the East and West alike.

In witchcraft; however, we find what might be called at least the remnants of such a cult. It is important to note that a leader of a widespread and ancient Oriental mystical Order has unhesitatingly identified Gardner as of the type which is produced by the methods of training and experience which this Order has inherited through the ages.

Gardner's contact with both the Far and Near East not only influenced his mind in relation to mystical religion; it showed his remarkable correspondences between the exercises of the Wica and certain forms of mystic practise. These analogies, strangely enough, exist not only on the plane of symbolism or terminology: but in virtually every layer of the Cult's present form.

Such links would mean that there could be little doubt of a similar derivation. One might even go so far as to say that certain lines of careful study and experiment might produce evidence as to even the period and location at which the two streams coincide. It is both convenient and in accordance with witch tradition to postulate (Gardner, Witchcraft Today, VIII, p.93, 1954) an Oriental origin. Gerald Gardner's thinking in this direction, (and his position as containing within his personality elemeits common with Oriental mystics) mean, taken together, that those who come after him in the Craft may well be able to follow up these lines of enquiry to a fruitful conclusion.

The concept of mystical experience is well known to the West; though very largely in any organised form only through such sources as various more or less specialised, often ancient, authors' accounts of cults which have died out; the mysteries of Egypt and Greece are examples. Such revivals as the attempted recreation of the rites of certain mysteries staged by, say, Crowley, could never have produced a personality akin to one who had undergone a systematised training, as we find in the Oriental schools. If Gardner's recognisably oriental-mystic character is the product of anything, could it be produced by a dedication to the mystogenic processes of witchcraft?

The technique, of say, Suki mysticism, inherited from a high antiquity, and admitting of the possibility of transmigration (though not reincarnation as such) produces by a deliberate method of training a personality which is distinct yet elusively baffling in its actions to the uninitiated.

A hallmark of this type is found in the coincidence of happenings in his life or actions; a multiplicity of fateful occurrences and their association with the developing intuition of the personality in question.

If this concept is applied to Gerald Gardner, in the search for akey to his behaviour, many things fall into place.

This way of thinking may be juxtaposed upon some of the things which we know about the man. A person may go to Cyprus, whether he has reason to do so or not. If, however, he goes there, and finds that he encounters people and places which he has "seen" with an inward eye, the whole position becomes more meaningful. If, further, his going to Cyprus is productive of events affecting other people at a different time and under very different circumstances (Father Ward in this case); the whole phenomenon becomes meaningful in the sense of the pattern of destiny. Coupled with this comes a further inexplicable development. How can a person who knows nothing about it (when there is in fact no surviving human knowledge of the process) immediately and intuitively haft a sword blade in Cyprus? Without labouring the point it may be said here that a complex of experience of this kind, so very alien to the Western mind, is almost a commonplace in belief, legend and recorded experience of the mystic initiate of the East. The Tarika mystics are one expression of this.

The idea of sheer coincidence, the contention that a person who thinks in this way is a prey to delusions, the belief that we all may be suffering from an unusually acute

bout of wishful thinking: or that well-known phenomenon false memory - these are the answers which spring to the glib tongue of the intellectualising rationalist. But he could be called the man who needs to believe that "such things cannot be" even more compulsively than the man whom seeks out in order to accuse him of being a credulous believer.

As a mystic, Gardner's personality may be at times inexplicable to the mechanisticaly-minded. But it may be interpreted more clearly by other methods. He is, I am sure, moving towards a goal. One part of it is the firm founding of the practise of the Craft of the Wica. That has been accomplished to a great extent. Another part has been the academic establishment of the reality of the religion. This aspect is still continuing. The last and perhaps the greatest part seems to be the foundation and maintenance of his collection of magical and witchcraft relics.

The Museum in the Isle of Man is, as everyone knows, unique. Why, though, should it be even more important than the carrying on of the Craft? The Craft is carrying on. But, as far as the public is aware, little of it is visible. The heritage of witchcraft is largely unseen. When Gardner is no more, there will be nobody of his calibre to expound, explain or symbolise the recrudescence of the Wica in Britain. But the Museum stands, in material form, not only as a memorial to the martyrs of the Craft. It is above all something which can be seen and understood, by people at three levels of perception. The general public can obtain an understanding of what magic and witchcraft mean by visiting the Isle of Man. Scholars can send their queries there, can come to study, can exchange ideas and correlate research - because of the Museum. And, to the members of the Wica. this can be a symbol of their beliefs, and a permanent home for some of their regalia.

For these reasons, then, this book opened in the Isle of Man, and brought us via the Museum to the struggle of Gerald Brousseau Gardner. It is fitting that it should end with the Museum, which will always remain a centre of balanced research into the occult. Gardner will probably entrust it in the end to hands without especial bias - even towards witchcraft - but which will see that the scholarly attitude towards the occult which he has pioneered will ever remain alive. Reincarnation or not, this will almost certainly be the institution which will carry the name of Gardner through the pages of magic and witchcraft.

## APPENDIX

## THE GARDNER COLLECTION IN THE ISLE OF MAN

### The Contents of the Museum

The Background:

A lifetime's collection, both of magical relics and weapons of various kinds, forms the nucleus of the contents of the Museum of Magic and Witchcraft. In the form of the Gerald Gardner Collection, it is possible that part of the Museum may eventually contain material of the life of the founder and his work - whether it be in ecstatic religion, Malayan sailing ships or the fabled Johore gold coinage. These are three main subjects whose academic acceptance was ensured by Gardner. There is scope here, too, for the weapons of war which form so important a part of Gerald Gardner's interests.

The witchcraft and magical relics are housed in the buildings of the old windmill at Castietown, Isle of Man. Known as the "Witches' Mill", the building may be of great age. Certain it is that it was there in 1611. The famous Abory witches lived near it, and the legend is that it was used as a dancing-place by local witches after it was burnt down just over a century ago.

The abandoned mill was taken over in 1950, and the barns have been fitted out with showcases, a restaurant and other facilities. The policy of the Museum has been set out thus by Gerald Gardner:

> "To show what people have believed in the past and still do believe about magic and witchcraft: and what they havie done, and still do, as a result of these beliefs".

The Exhibits:

The only recorded execution of a witch on the Isle of Man took place in Castletown near the mill. In 1619, Margaret Ine Quane and her son were burnt alive at the stake, as a result of her being caught performing a crop fertility rite.

The Museum now contains a memorial to her and the nine million witches estimated to have perished in witch perse cutions in Western Europe.

A "Magician's Study" reproduces the atmosphere and the apparatus employed in the middle of the seventeenth century, with all prepared for a ritual of ceremonial magic.

This exhibit is set off in contrast by another reconstruction: the interior of a "Witch's Cottage", with the implements, circle, and so on set out ready for a witch meeting.

The Material in the showcases is of equal interest The stock-in-trade of a witch who died in 1951 forms one complete section. These include instruments and apparatus for the preparation of herbal medicaments.

Magical rings and jewellery forms a further department. They include objects reputed to bring luck or avert evil. The "Evil Eye" and its combating provides exhibits ranging from those employed in ancient Egypt to some which are used in the present day.

A representative collection of objects used by witches in their rites and religious ceremonies has been assembled in another case. These include gazing crystals, riding-poles and anointing oil. Relics of the notorious "Witch finder" Mathew Hopkins, as well as instruments of torture used to extract confessions and pins which were used to probe the reputedly insensitive "Devil's mark" are of considerable interest.

Talismans are represented by a large collection, many of them quite unique. Much information is available here on the theory behind talismanic magic and the method of production of these items.

Esoteric secret societies are represented by a complete and unique collection of the secret manuscripts of the "Order of the Golden Dawn", associated with the name of Aleister Crowley and other contemporary magicians. Material on other fraternities nf this nature is also included.

Divination and fortune-telling - still tenacious survivals - are explained in a range of exhibits which include the mystic Tarot cards.

Necromancy, the belief in the possibility of raising the devil and similar matters are revealed in a further section. There is also an interesting collection of what might be called popular ideas about witches and sorcerers: what people thought about them, how they represented them in art and so on.

The books on magic and witchcraft show the range of interest which these subjects cover. There are rare manuscripts here, and also modern books dealing with the subject. This could form the nucleus for a wider exhibit of great importance.

Deadly magic is illustrated by such diverse items as the "Pointing Bone" of the Australian Aborigines, and an example of the exceedingly rare "Kris majapahit" - both used for the killing of enemies by pointing.

Modern instruments believed to help in the development or use of clairvoyant powers - as well as "dowsing" - are cheek-by-jowl with a baby's caul (to save sailors from drowning), and a charm made in 1954 for a Neopolitan to enable an accused person to gain a court acquittal.

Magical objects from the Far East are represented in the new Upper Gallery of the Museum. There is here, too, a fine collection of personal relics of the magician Crowley ("The Great Beast") who died in 1947. The Charter granted to Gerald Gardner by this "Wickedest Man in the World" is also here.

Further witchcraft relics adorn this and other parts of the Museum. There is a horned helmet of a Witch High Priest. Two carvings of the "Green Man" (the Witch-god introduced into Churches) and elsewhere a collection of objects lent by an anonymous Coven of present-day British witches.

Demonolatry and such things as the reputed "Black Mass" finds a place; and objects which have been lent by a magical fraternity. Considerable interest attached to the magical death-spell or curse, prepared by the magician and occultist Austin Osman Spare, as recently as 1954. He it was who once claimed in a radio broadcast that he could kill anyone by these curses, which he sold in large numbers.

Items used and produced by magicians, astrologers; strange and also familiar things connected with superstitions, a ritualistic apparatus for the visions to be seen with the use of the "Magical Almadel"; A Magician's Magical Mirror - these and many other items are to be seen in the world's only Museum of Magic and Witchcraft.

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## ANCESTRY OF GERALD BROUSSEAU GARDNER

Progenitor:

SIMON LE GARDINOR, 1379

from whom are descended :

| | |
|---|---|
| THOMAS I | d. 1604 |
| HUGO | d. 1659 |
| WILLIAM | d. 1674 |
| RICHARD I | 1646-1700 |
| RICHARD II | b. 1689 |
| EDMUND | 1721-1796 |
| THOMAS II | 1750-1818 |
| THOMAS III | d. 1840 |
| JOSEPH | 1791-1865 |
| WILLIAM ROBERT | 1843-1935 |
| GERALD BROUSSEAU | b. 13 June, 1884 |



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