

the Isis-Urania Temple on 27 November 1892. By 1895 he was one of the Order's most active members. The extraordinary magical career of Dr Robert William Felkin, who joined the Amen-Ra Temple at Edinburgh on 10 March 1894, is described at some length later in this book.

Apart from W. B. Yeats the Order harboured few writers of any distinction during its early period. Mrs Violet Tweedale joined the Isis-Urania Temple in September 1889, before she began to publish a long series of second-rate novels. J. H. Fitzgerald Molloy, the author of *Court Life Below Stairs*, in four volumes, 1882-3, and many other books of a popular nature including *A Modern Magician: A Romance*, 1887, became a member of Isis-Urania in 1893 and resigned two years later. Neither Arthur Machen ('Avallaunius', I.-U. 21 November 1899) nor Algernon Blackwood ('Umbram Fugate Veritas', I.-U., 30 October 1900) was ever very prominent in the G.D. and both joined when the Order's most interesting period belonged to the past.

Weston-super-Mare, a quiet seaside resort in Somerset, might appear to be an unexpected place for a G.D. Temple in 1888, but it was the home of Benjamin Cox, the Town Accountant or Borough Treasurer, who was an enthusiastic occultist and member of the Bristol College of the Rosicrucian Society. On 25 March 1888 he wrote to his friend F. G. Irwin, yet another local 'Rosicrucian' occultist, and announced Westcott's impending visit on G.D. business:

I hope Br. Westcott may have something interesting to impart other than what you already know, yet I am doubtful of his ability to teach me much occult knowledge, for up to the present time I have not found any one who has taught *real* practical knowledge of the sublime mystery of the Great AIO . . . I have promised Bro. Westcott I will join the G.D. circle as he particularly wishes me to do so, and he has written to say that he will see me at W.S.Mare on Tuesday evg. next.

Cox's next letter to Irwin, dated 20 April 1888, showed rather more interest in Westcott's plans.

I told Westcott that I could get five or six [Masonic] brethren to become members of the G.D. Order. I have received a dispensation to initiate 4: last evening with the assistance of Frater Jones! I conferred the o = o on Bro. Dr Nunn, so as to

¹ Sidney Jones, of Regent Street, Weston-super-Mare, had already been initiated in London. He died in November 1891.

have the assistance of *two* Fratres when Bros. Capell, Blackmore and Millard were initiated. I have the Ritual and Lecture of the History of the Order. I should *very much* like for you to assist in the ceremony of initiation of the three other candidates some day next week if agreeable to yourself. In a letter received from Bro. Westcott (today) he told me that I was the *only one* on whom the Chiefs of the Order have conferred the 1° = 10°, or Hierophant, in England without first having to undergo an examination for proficiency for the same—even Westcott had to undergo an exam. I can tell you more about the Order, should you care to know.

Hence Westcott's 'Historic Lecture for Neophytes', with all its fanciful information, was already being circulated by March 1888. As for the local G.D. recruits: Dr Edward Smith Nunn was the headmaster of a local school called 'The College'; he died before September 1893. James Partridge Capell was probably a solicitor and William Millard was the landlord of the Three Queens Hotel.

Cox's next letter to Irwin (13 September 1888) reveals the writer's great enthusiasm for the G.D. and the fact that he had attained the 3° = 8° grade. He was waiting to learn that his examination papers for the 4° = 7° grade were satisfactory. He passed the test because the printed summons for the G.D.'s Equinox Ceremony, which was to be held at the Three Queens Hotel on 27 September, was issued by 'Cruz Dat Salutem, 4° = 7°, Hierophant for Somerset'.

A name for the Temple at Weston-super-Mare had still not been chosen by the end of November 1888. Cox wrote to Westcott about this on 30 November. He was hoping to be promoted to the 5° = 6° grade and may have learned that T. H. Pattinson at Bradford was already an Adeptus Minor.

You suggest in your letter of 26th inst. that the name of No. 4 Temple should be either Osiris, Hermes, Minerva, Phoenix, Serapis or Thoth. I think the most appropriate would be 'Osiris Temple No. 4' or 'Hermes Temple No. 4', of no great matter which be selected. Do you see any objection to a dispensation being issued at once for naming the Temple and for stated meetings to be held until you could attend next Spring for the formal consecration &c. &c.

Relative to the 5 = 6 I am content to wait until convenient to yourselves.

You say that you could nominate me 5° = 6° provisionally and put off real consecration for a future time. If you think this will give a better standing for our Temple you can do so or let it stand over. Whichever you think best.

It was decided to call the Weston-super-Mare Temple 'Osiris No. 4'. The last surviving letter from Cox to Westcott is dated 17 June 1889. He was still full of fervour for the G.D. and was busy composing a ritual for the 7° = 4° grade. He wrote: 'I think I have found sufficient matter for the 7° = 4° grade, viz. the situation of the Temple and its principle [*sic*] use. Yet it has been a very tough subject.' Since neither Westcott nor Mathers aspired to write a 7° = 4° ritual it is apparent that Cox, who was already identified with other pseudo-Masonic rites, such as the Sat B'hai and the Rite of Swedenborg had been using his imagination.

With only a handful of original members and a couple of later initiations Osiris No. 4 cannot have been a very active Temple. Benjamin Cox died in December 1895 and my assumption is that the G.D. soon came to an end at Weston-super-Mare.

Bradford was a more rewarding recruiting centre than Weston-super-Mare because the Rosicrucian Society's York College included a fair number of local Freemasons who were prepared to interest themselves in Westcott's G.D. project. Thomas Henry Pattinson, who was 8° *honoris causa* in the Soc. Ros. and soon to be Frater Vita Vita Mea in the G.D., was on friendly terms with both Westcott and Mathers. He was one of the first half dozen to be initiated in March 1888. By the end of the year the Horus Temple No. 5 at Bradford had about a dozen members. The Temple was formally consecrated by Mathers at a ceremony held at the Alexandra Hotel on 9 October. Carlo Faro, its landlord, joined the Order but resigned when he was declared a bankrupt in July 1893.

By the summer of 1891 the Horus Temple had about thirty members and was G.D.'s most important provincial outpost until the Amen-Ra Temple at Edinburgh rapidly increased its membership in 1895-6.

Apart from the Rosicrucian Society the Theosophical Society was an important reservoir from which many of the early G.D. members, its women supporters in particular, were drawn. Since the G.D. was always very small by comparison with the T.S. the number of defections would have been so insignificant as to be hardly noticeable. However, it is evident that Madame Blavatsky soon had misgivings

about Westcott's little secret society, which was outside her sphere of influence and likely to remain so. Hence it may not have been altogether coincidental that she founded the so-called Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society, perhaps as a counter attraction, on 9 October 1888. Membership of the E.S. was restricted to a few favoured individuals who were in her Blavatsky Lodge or otherwise close to her.

It happened that the Rev. W. A. Ayton was not only a member of the G.D. but also of the Esoteric Section. Furthermore, he was acquainted with T. H. Pattinson and the latter's friends in the Bradford district. Some years previously he had been the victim of certain swindlers who had been running a bogus Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, which seems to have been indigenous to the Bradford and Leeds area. Pattinson made him a joining (honorary) member of the Horus Temple and this explains why Ayton referred to his 'Yorkshire *chelas*' in the letter printed below.

It was Ayton, then, who put the cat among the occult pigeons by telling Madame Blavatsky about his membership of the G.D. He mentioned the repercussions in a letter to F. L. Gardner (April 1889). Gardner was a keen Theosophist and still not heeding Ayton's suggestion that he should join the G.D. Ayton had a budget of news for his friend.

A short time ago an ukase was issued from the headquarters of the T.S., that members of the Esoteric Section should not belong to any other Occult Order. I at once wrote to say that I belonged to the Rosicrucian Society [i.e. the G.D.], but I was ordered to give it up, and I felt bound to do so at once without hesitation, and wrote to some of my Yorkshire *chelas*, who belonged to it and the T.S., to do the same. They were dismayed, and two of them went, as a deputation, to H.P.B. to remonstrate against this decision. H.P.B. then began to see that she had made a mistake and she wrote to me for advice, which I gave, and the consequence was, she withdrew this ukase as regards this Rosicrucian Society. The result was that Dr Wynn Westcott, the head of this Rosicrucian Society, joined the Esoteric Section of the T.S. and with him some 20 others, and about 14 from Yorkshire. All is well that ends well.¹

¹ Annie Besant and G. R. S. Mead, as joint secretaries of the Esoteric Section, wrote to Westcott on 19 August 1890 to inform him that Madame Blavatsky was willing to admit him to the E.S.'s 'Inner Group' as a probationer. There were conditions: 'that you abstain from meat-eating and preserve absolute chastity . . . that you preserve the strictest secrecy on the instruction given and the fact of your membership in the "Inner Group".'

There is now at Bradford a flourishing Lodge of this Rosicrucian Society and the Lodge is worked very well indeed by men who really know something. Dr Wynn Westcott is well known in Masonry and MacGregor Mathers, the learned Cabbalist, is also in it.

In a letter written to an unidentified member of the G.D. on 17 April 1888 Westcott mentioned what it then cost to join the Order: 'Fee for admission to 0° is 10s. Annual fee 2s. 6d. Sash 2s. 6d. [Copy of $0^{\circ} = 0^{\circ}$] Ritual 5s. Historical address 2s.'

Apart from the Isis-Urania Warrant and the parchment membership roll the earliest documents for the London Temple are a few sketchy balance sheets for various periods between 23 August 1888 and 21 September 1893. It is unnecessary to reprint them here.

Between 23 August 1888 and 17 March 1889 income and expenditure were a little over £8. The income for the year ending c. 21 March 1890 was about £19. 'Total expenses to date including stationery and summonses for Meetings, Wine [for ritual purposes], Roses, Incense, Storage, removals of [Temple] furniture, printing and copying of Temple Rituals and Lectures £12 18s. 3d. Balance in hand £6 3s. 3d.'

Two documents, at first cyclostyled but later printed, were available for the information of candidates for admission. The Order's name was not revealed in either of them. All that was disclosed was that the Order was concerned with 'the study of Occultism and of the Mysteries of Life and Death' and was secret. After a lengthy preamble the prospective candidate for initiation read in the first document:

The Chiefs of the Order do not care to accept as Candidates any persons accustomed to submit themselves as Mediums to the Experiments of Hypnotism, Mesmerism; or who habitually allow themselves to fall into a complete Passive Condition of Will; also they disapprove of the methods made use of as a rule in such experiments.

The second document was the so-called Pledge Form. Upon signing this the candidate undertook to preserve complete secrecy as far as his or her proposed connection with the Order was concerned. The applicant was also asked to suggest, in writing, the motto by which he or she would be known in the G.D. A Latin one was considered preferable for reasons of brevity.

All who were admitted to the $0^{\circ} = 0^{\circ}$ Neophyte grade in the

Isis-Urania Temple were required to read and sign a printed document headed 'Ordinances of the First Order of the G.D. in the Outer, London'. It is probable that the copy from which the following extracts have been taken was printed in c. 1890. No later versions are known. Here only a few paragraphs are reprinted, since the remaining ones could apply to almost any society or association.

1. The Isis-Urania Temple of the 'First Order of the G.D. in the Outer' is constituted and authorised to admit, enrol, and advance members, and pursue the study of the Occult Sciences by a Warrant delivered by the Greatly Honoured Chiefs of the Second Order to 'Three Chiefs', who are Very Honoured Adepts of the $5^{\circ} = 6^{\circ}$ grade. They are jointly and severally responsible for the government of the Temple.

3. Each candidate for admission to the preliminary $0^{\circ} = 0^{\circ}$ grade of Neophyte must be approved of by The Three Chiefs [i.e. Westcott, Mathers and Woodman] and subsequently by the G.H. Chiefs of the Second Order [i.e. the same three persons] and must sign a preliminary pledge of fidelity to five declarations.

7. Members of the First Order cannot know *as such*, the members of any grade higher than that of Junior Adept $5^{\circ} = 6^{\circ}$, which is the lowest of the grades of the Second Order of the G.D.

Thus the fiction was preserved that the Chiefs of the Second Order, who were $7^{\circ} = 4^{\circ}$, were 'secret'. Members of the Outer Order who were subsequently promoted to $5^{\circ} = 6^{\circ}$ then learned that 'S.R.M.D.' was 'D.D.C.F.', that 'S.A.' was 'N.O.M.' etc, but could not disclose the fact to their juniors. It has been supposed that all members had different mottoes in the Outer and Second Orders. This happened very rarely; in fact, I have only found four instances apart from Westcott, Mathers and Woodman.

9. The Three Chiefs shall, every half year at the Equinox, appoint certain members to act as Officers of the Temple [i.e. to work the rituals] during the ensuing six months, their choice being guided by the grade, seniority, merit and assiduity of the candidate. The Three Chiefs shall, by mutual arrangement, fill the three offices of Hierophant, Hiereus and Hegemon, until such time as the Temple shall include other Adepts among its members . . . To constitute a regularly appointed Temple the following gradation is necessary: Hierophant $5^{\circ} = 6^{\circ}$;

Hiereus 4° = 7°; Hegemon 3° = 5°; Kerux 2° = 9°;
Stolistes 1° = 10°; Dadouchos 1° = 10°.

The principal officers, who played leading roles in the working of the rituals, were the Hierophant, the Hiereus and the Hegemon. The Kerux, Stolistes and Dadouchos had far less to say and do.

All these titles were of ancient Greek origin. The *Hierophantes* was head of the Eleusinian cult and was assisted by a *Dadouchos*, i.e. torch-bearer. In the G.D. the latter's function was to attend to the 'Lamps and Fires of the Temple . . . to watch over the Censer and the incense'. The Greek equivalent for *Hiereus* means 'priest'. In the G.D. he was 'the Expounder of the Mysteries'. *Hegemon* means 'leader or general'. In the G.D. he supervised the preparation of the candidate: ' . . . assist in his reception and lead him in the Path that conducts from Darkness to Light'. *Kerux* means a herald; one of his functions in the ceremonies was 'to make reports and announcements'. A *Stolistes* was a priest who had charge of sacred vestments; in the G.D. he was responsible for seeing that the 'Robes and Collars and Insignia of the Officers are ready at the Opening'.

As a member passed from grade to grade, if he or she stayed the course, from Neophyte to Philosophus in five steps in the Outer Order, and after 1892 the Portal as a bridge between the Outer and Second Orders, followed by the 5° = 6° or Second Order admission ceremony, the first experience of any grade was its ritual. The instruction, the 'knowledge', belonging to that grade followed. Up to 1892 there could be the experience of five different rituals, after that year seven; in the first instance as a candidate, next as an onlooker according to a person's eligibility to witness this or that ceremony, and finally in the Outer Order as an active participant in the rituals.

Anyone who is sufficiently curious is advised to read the texts of the rituals in Dr Regardie's *The Golden Dawn*, since no detailed analysis of their contents can be given here. They were not 'Magical Rituals' in the vulgar sense of the word, meaning that there was no element of 'conjunction', no tampering with 'dangerous forces', no 'sex magic'—in fact there was nothing that could not be safely experienced by any respectable middle-class lady who happened to join the G.D. during the non-permissive 1890s.

Dr Regardie describes their central theme as follows:

If one idea more than any other is persistently stressed from the beginning that idea is the word *Light*. From the candidate's

first reception in the Hall of the Neophytes when the Hierophant adjures him with these words: 'Child of Earth, long hast thou dwelt in darkness. Quit the night and seek the day', to the transfiguration in the [Second Order] Vault ceremony, the whole system has as its objective the bringing down of the Light. For it is by that Light that the golden banner of the inner life may be exalted; it is in Light where lies healing and the power of growth.

As far as the Outer Order rituals are concerned there is only one passage which might give cause for surprise; it might be described as at least blood-curdling. It will be found in the Neophyte's oath or undertaking.

All these points I generally and severally upon this sacred and sublime symbol swear to observe without evasion . . . under the awful penalty of voluntarily submitting myself to a deadly and hostile Current of Will set in motion by the Chiefs of the Order by which I should fall slain or paralysed without visible weapon, as if blasted by the Lightning Flash.

Of the five Outer Order rituals the one for the Neophyte grade seems to be the most effective. I have the impression that a candidate who experienced it might actually have a sensation of 'initiation', meaning into a world of hidden mysteries. It could be argued that as prose compositions these texts are often flatulent. However, at any given time there is never more than a handful of men capable of writing rituals of this kind and in his day and age Mathers was one of them. It is obvious that he drew heavily upon his Masonic experiences and memories, but this was perhaps inevitable, for where else would he have found ideas relating to non-liturgical 'ritual structure'.

Possibly the only people who have ever taken the trouble to read these rituals are occultists and those who have a special interest in W. B. Yeats. However, in their strange way these texts belong to the minor literature of the 1890s, in the same way that the G.D. has its own modest place in the social history of the period.

Members of the G.D. in the Outer were required to study the following subjects and to pass examinations in order to advance through the successive grades from Neophyte to Philosophus: elemental occult symbolism (i.e. alchemical and astrological), the Hebrew alphabet, the Cabbalistic Tree of Life with its ten Sephiroth and twenty-two Paths, the Divine Names attributed to the Sephiroth,

the attributions of the twenty-two Tarot Trumps (i.e. their supposed correspondences with the twenty-two Paths), Geomancy and so on. The material is outlined in detail in the first volume of Dr Regardie's *The Golden Dawn*.

The only instruction that could conceivably be called 'magical' was the practice of a simple 'Pentagram Ritual with the Cabbalistic Cross'. This was taught to the Neophyte immediately after initiation so that he might 'form some idea of how to attract and come into communication with spiritual and invisible forces'.

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Some Initiates

Few members of the G.D. left any public record of their experiences in the Order. This is not a matter for surprise. They had pledged themselves to secrecy and in later years when the Golden Dawn of the 1890s was merely a memory, perhaps there did not seem very much to say.¹ Again, most of these people were very obscure persons, whose names are only known because of the chance survival of their letters and references to them in G.D. documents. There were exceptions such as W. B. Yeats and Annie Horniman, but their subsequent fame lay ahead of them.

A few of the more important members of the cast who appeared on the stage of the 'magical theatre' devised for them by the Greatly Honoured Fratres Non Omnis Moriar and Deo Duce Comite Ferro are now introduced.

The Rev. W. A. Ayton, whom Kenneth Mackenzie admired as a 'profound occultist', has already been mentioned. W. B. Yeats described him as 'an old white-haired clergyman, the most panic-stricken person I have ever known'. Mathers had presented him to Yeats with the words: 'He unites us to the great adepts of the past'.² Adept or not, he was both gentle and gullible, to which his involvement with the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor and other eccentric 'Masonic' promotions bear witness.

William Alexander Ayton was born in London on 28 April 1816 and was educated at Charterhouse School and Trinity Hall, Cambridge. After holding a number of rural ecclesiastical appointments he became Vicar of Chacombe, a small village near Banbury, in 1873.

He and his wife joined the G.D. in July 1888. On 3 November 1888 he wrote to Westcott:

¹ George Cecil Jones, who joined the G.D. in July 1895, told Mr John Symonds, Aleister Crowley's biographer, in the late 1940s that the G.D. was 'a club, like any other club, a place to pass the time in and meet one's friends'. Mr Symonds observed: 'If it was a club, it was a very unusual sort of club.'—*The Great Beast*, 1951, p. 22.

² W. B. Yeats, *Autobiographies*, 1926, pp. 227-8, where Yeats recorded what Ayton told him about his alchemical experiments.