

THE RITE OF MERCURY

OFFICERS

MERCURY. Violet Robe.
FR. and SOR. GEMINI. White Dancing Robe and Black Robe.
VIRGO. Green Robe.
FOUR PROBATIONERS.

Mercury is throned between the Twins. At the west of the Altar is Virgo, and his four attendants.

PART I.

[Full light.]

MERCURY. 22-333-333.

The Speech in the Silence.
The Words against the Son of Night.
The Voice of Mercury in the Universe in the Presence of the Eternal Gods.
The Formulas of Knowledge.
The Wisdom of Breath.
The Radix of Vibration.
The Shaking of the Invisible.
The Rolling Asunder of the Darkness.
The Becoming Visible of Matter.
The Piercing of the Coils of the Stooping Dragon.
The Breaking Forth of the Light.

[All being seated, the FOUR PROBATIONERS rise from among the other PROBATIONERS and march to the altar.]

FIRST PROBATIONER. 333-333-22. Brethren, let us kindle the holy perfumes in honour of the most divine God.

ALL FOUR PROBATIONERS. *[While he does so.]* Hail unto the most divine Lord Mercury!

FIRST PROBATIONER. *[To Fr. GEMINI]* Our Brother, child of the Voice, we ask Thee for thy help. Wilt thou purify the Temple, that we may proceed with the Invocations?

FR. GEMINI. I am one with you, Brethren!

[He rises and performs the Banishing Ritual of the Hexagram. While he does so, the FOUR PROBATIONERS stand facing the assembly.]

**I
adore
Thee by the
Twelve Humiliations
and by the Unity thereof.**

⌘ O Thou Consuming Eye of everlasting light set as a pearl betwixt the lids of Night and Day; I swear to Thee by the formless void of the Abyss, to lap the galaxies of night in darkness, and blow the meteors like bubbles into the frothing jaws of the sun.

♁ O Thou ten-footed soldier of blue ocean, whose castle is built upon the sands of life and death; I swear to Thee by the glittering blades of the waters, to cleave my way within Thine armed hermitage, and brood as an eyeless corpse beneath the coffin-lid of the Mighty Sea.

♁ O Thou incandescent Ocean of molten stars, surging above the arch of the Firmament; I swear to Thee by the mane-pennoned lances of light, to stir the lion of Thy darkness from its lair, and lash the sorceress of noontide into fury with serpents of fire.

♁ O Thou intoxicating Vision of Beauty, fair as ten jewelled virgins dancing about the hermit moon; I swear to Thee by the peridot flagons of spring, to quaff to the dregs Thy chalice of Glory, and beget a royal race before the Dawn flees from awakening Day.

♁ O Thou unalterable measure of all things, in whose lap lie the destinies of unborn worlds; I swear to Thee by the balance of Light and Darkness, to spread out the blue vault as a looking-glass, and flash forth therefrom the intolerable lustre of Thy Countenance.

♁ O Thou who settest forth the limitless expanse, spanned by wings of thunder above the cosmic strife; I swear to Thee by the voiceless dust of the desert, to soar above the echos of shrieking life, and as an eagle to feast for ever upon the silence of the stars.

♁ O Thou flame-tipped arrow of devouring fire that quiverest as a tongue in the dark mouth of Night; I swear to Thee by the thurible of Thy Glory, to breathe the incense of mine understanding, and to cast the ashes of my wisdom into the Valley of Thy breast.

♁ O Thou ruin of the mountains, glistening as an old white wolf above the fleecy mists of Earth; I swear to Thee by the galaxies of Thy domain, to press Thy lamb's breasts with the teeth of my soul, and drink of the milk and blood of Thy subtlety and innocence.

♁ O Thou Eternal river of chaotic law, in whose depths lie locked the secrets of Creation; I swear to Thee by the primal waters of the Deep, to suck up the Firmament of Thy Chaos, and as a volcano to belch forth a Cosmos of coruscating suns.

♁ O Thou Dragon-regent of the blue seas of air, as a chain of emeralds round the neck of Space; I swear to Thee by the hexagram of Night and Day, to be unto Thee as the twin fish of Time, which being set apart never divulge the secret of their unity.

♁ O Thou flame of the horned storm-clouds, that sunderest their desolation, that outroarest the winds; I swear to Thee by the gleaming sandals of the stars, to climb beyond the summits of the mountains, and rend Thy robe of purple thunders with a sword of silvery light.

♁ O Thou fat of an hundred fortresses of iron, crimson as the blades of a million murderous swords; I swear to Thee by the smoke-wreath of the volcano, to open the secret shrine of Thy bull's breast, and tear out as an augur the heart of Thine all-pervading mystery.

♁ O Thou silver axle of the Wheel of Being, thrust through the wings of Time by the still hand of Space; I swear to Thee by the twelve spokes of Thy Unity, to become unto Thee as the rim thereof, so that I may clothe me majestically in the robe that has no seam.

**O Glory be unto Thee through all Time
And through all Space : Glory,
And Glory upon Glory,
Everlastingly. Amen,
And Amen, and
Amen.**

**adore
Thee by the
Twelve Lamentations
and by the Unity thereof.**

♁ O Thou mighty God, make me as a fair virgin that is clad in the blue-bells of the fragrant hillside; I beseech Thee, O Thou great God! That I may ring out the melody of Thy voice, and be clothed in the pure light of Thy loveliness: O Thou God my God!

♂ O Thou mighty God, make me as a Balance of rubies and jet that is cast in the lap of the Sun; I beseech Thee, O Thou great God! That I may flash forth the wonder of Thy brightness, and melt into the perfect poise of Thy Being: O Thou God, my God!

♏ O Thou mighty God, make me as a brown Scorpion that creepeth on through a vast desert of silver; I beseech Thee, O Thou great God! That I may lose myself in the span of Thy light, and become one with the glitter of Thy Shadow: O Thou God, my God!

♈ O Thou mighty God, make me as a green arrow of Lightning that speedeth through the purple clouds of Night; I beseech Thee, O Thou great God! That I may wake fire from the crown of Thy Wisdom, and flash into the depths of Thine Understanding: O Thou God, my God!

♄ O Thou mighty God, make me as a flint-black goat that pranceth in a shining wilderness of steel; I beseech Thee, O Thou great God! That I may paw one flashing spark from Thy Splendour, and be welded into the Glory of Thy might: O Thou God, my God!

♆ O Thou mighty God, make me as the sapphirine waves that cling to the shimmering limbs of the green rocks; I beseech Thee, O Thou great God! That I may chant in foaming music Thy Glory, and roll forth the eternal rapture of Thy Name: O Thou God, my God!

♐ O Thou mighty God, make me as a silver fish darting through the vast depths of the dim-peopled waters; I beseech Thee, O Thou great God! That I may swim through the vastness of Thine abyss, and sink beneath the waveless depths of Thy Glory: O Thou God, my God!

♉ O Thou mighty God, make me as a white ram that is athirst in a sun-scorched desert of bitterness; I beseech Thee, O Thou great God! That I may seek the deep waters of Thy Wisdom, and plunge into the whiteness of Thine effulgence: O Thou God, my God!

♂ O Thou mighty God, make me as a thunder-smitten bull that is drunk upon the vintage of Thy blood; I beseech Thee, O Thou great God! That I may bellow through the universe Thy Power, and trample the nectar-sweet grapes of Thine Essence: O Thou God, my God!

♁ O Thou mighty God, make me as a black eunuch of song that is twin-voiced, yet dumb in either tongue; I beseech Thee, O Thou great God! That I may hush my melody in Thy Silence, and swell into the sweet ecstasy of Thy Song: O Thou God, my God!

♄ O Thou mighty God, make me as an emerald crab that crawleth over the wet sands of the sea-shore; I beseech Thee, O Thou great God! That I may write Thy name across the shores of Time, and sink amongst the white atoms of Thy Being. O Thou God, my God!

♌ O Thou mighty God, make me as a ruby lion that roareth from the summit of a white mountain; I beseech Thee, O Thou great God! That I may echo forth Thy lord-ship through the hills, and dwindle into the nipple of Thy bounty. O Thou God, my God!

♁ O Thou mighty God, make me as an all-consuming Sun ablaze in the centre of the Universe; I beseech Thee, O Thou great God! That I may become as a crown upon Thy brow, and flash forth the exceeding fire of Thy Godhead: O Thou God, my God!

**O Glory be unto Thee through all Time
And through all Space : Glory,
And Glory upon Glory,
Everlastingly. Amen,
And Amen, and**

Amen.

FR. GEMINI. Let the rites of Mercury be celebrated.

[They turn round, facing the altar again.]

[MERCURY reads Gemini and Virgo sections from 963 at altar.]

[The big lights are put out; only a small purple light remains.]

FIRST PROBATIONER. O Thou Lord of Harmony! Master of the Right Will, Thou who hast brought unto us the divine seeds of self-knowledge—we, the humble Servants of the children of Thy voice, we call on Thee to lead us out of our Ignorance!

CHORUS OF THREE OTHER PROBATIONERS. We call Thee, O Thrice Holy!

FIRST PROBATIONER. O Thou, Divine Worker! Master of all that is Divine! Herald of all that is coming! Builder of our House! Holy art Thou, Thou that knowest the Supreme Mysteries!

CHORUS. We call Thee, O Thrice Holy!

FIRST PROBATIONER. O Thou, All Good, we call Thee!

VIRGO. I. *[Rising.]* Not Good alone, Brethren! But all complete in the perfect Equilibrium.

FR. GEMINI. Ay, The Balance must be kept even. Sister, let us invoke the Lord of Knowledge!

VIRGO. He gave unto you, children of His Voice, the Power of the making of fair things. Sing ye unto your Shepherd!

FR. GEMINI. *[Rises and stands before MERCURY.]*

O Spirit, O Divine Messenger, Mighty One, most mighty circling and all comprehending Divine Bearer of the Wand, hail! Coelestial, aetherial, inter-aetherial, water like, air like, fire like, earth like, like unto light, like unto darkness, shining as do the Stars, moist, hot, cold Spirit, hail to Thee, ever laughing Child-God, all-knowing. Through Thee alone can we hope to reach Light and Truth.

[Returns to his seat.]

[SOR. GEMINI plays accordingly. Hungarian Dance No. 2: Brahms.]

[A short pause.]

MERCURY.

At the Ending of the Light,
At the Limits of the Night,
Stood Mercury before the Unborn ones of Time.
Then was formulated the Universe;
Then came forth the Gods thereof,
The aeons of the Bornless Beyond.
Then was the Voice vibrated;
Then was the Name declared.
At the Threshold of Entrance,
Between the Universe and the Infinite,
In the Sign of the Enterer
Stood Mercury, as before him
The aeons were proclaimed.
In Symbols did he record them;
In Breath did he vibrate them;
For between the Light and the Darkness did he stand.

PART II

The Temple in Darkness

MERCURY.

O Light in Light! O flashing wings of fire!
The swiftest of the moments of the sea
Is unto thee
Even as some slow-foot Eternity
With limbs that drag and wheels that tire.
O subtle-minded flame of amber gyre,
It seems a spark of gold
Grown purple, and behold!
A flame of gray!
Then the dark night-wings glow
With iridescent indigo,
Shot with some violet ray;
And all the vision flames across the horizon
The millionth of no time—and when we say:
Hail!—Thou art gone!
The Moon is dark beside thy crown; the Sun
Seems a pale image of thy body bare;
And for thine hair
Flash comets lustrous with the dewfall rare
Of tears of that most memorable One,
The radiant Queen, the veiled Paphian.
The wings of light divine
Beneath thy body shine;
The invisible
Rayed with some tangible flame,
Seeking to formulate a name,
A citadel;
And the winged heels are fiery with enormous speed,
One spurning heaven; the other trampling hell;
And thou—recede!
O Hermes! Messenger of inmost thought!
Descend! Abide! Swift coursing in my veins
Shoot dazzling pains,
The Word of Selfhood integrate of Nought,
The Ineffable Amen! The Wonder wrought.
Bring death if life exceed!
Bid thy pale Hermit bleed,
Yet life exude;
And Wisdom and the Word of Him
Drench the mute mind grown dim
With quietude!
Fix thy sharp lightnings in my night! My spirit free!
Mix with my breath and life and name thy mood
And self of Thee.

[SOR. GEMINI plays accordingly. Sarabande: Bach.

[A short pause.]

FR. GEMINI.

Master, be it thy pleasure to perform the Invocation of Mercury.

[All PROBATIONERS rise and join the four others in front of the altar.]

MERCURY. [Leaves throne.]

Majesty of the Godhead, Wisdom-crowned Thoth, Lord of the Gates of the Universe: Thee, Thee we invoke!

O Thou of the Ibis head: Thee, Thee we invoke!

Thou who wieldest the Wand of Double Power: Thee, Thee we invoke!

Thou who bearest in Thy left hand the Rose and Cross of Light and Life: Thee, Thee we invoke!

O Thou whose head is as an Emerald, and Thy Nemyss as the night sky-blue! Thou whose skin is of flaming orange, as though it burned in a furnace: Thee, Thee we invoke!

Behold, I am yesterday, to-day, and the brother of The Morrow! I am born again and again. Mine is the unseen force from which the Gods are sprung; that giveth life unto the dwellers in the watch-towers of the Universe.

I am the charioteer of the East, Lord of the Past and the Future. I see by mine own inward light; Lord of Resurrection, who cometh forth from the dusk, and whose birth is from the House of Death.

O ye two divine hawks upon your pinnacles, who keep watch over the Universe! Ye who company the bier unto the House of Rest. Ye who pilot the Ship of Ra, ever advancing onwards unto the heights of Heaven!

Lord of the Shrine which standeth in the centre of the Earth!

Behold He is in me and I in Him!

Mine is the radiance in which Ptah floateth over his firmament.

I travel upon high.

I tread upon the firmament of Nu.

I raise a flashing flame with the lightning of mine eye, ever rushing forward in the splendour of the daily glorified Ra, giving my life to the dwellers of Earth.

If I say "come up upon the mountains,"

The Celestial waters shall flow at my word;

For I am Ra incarnate,

Khephra created in the flesh!

I am the image of my Father Tmu, Lord of the City of the Sun!

The God who commands is in my mouth;

The God of Wisdom is in my heart:

My tongue is the sanctuary of Truth:

And a God sitteth upon my lips!

My word is accomplished each day, and the desire of my heart realises itself, like that of Ptah when he creates his works.

I am Eternal; therefore everything acts according to my designs, and everything obeys my words.

Therefore I say unto Thee: come forth unto me from thine abode in the Silence, unutterable Wisdom, All-light, All-power! Thoth, Hermes, Mercury, Odin, by whatever name I call Thee, Thou art still un-named and nameless to Eternity! Come thou forth, I say, and aid and guard me in this Work of Art.

Thou, Star of the East that didst conduct the Magi! Thou art the same, all present in Heaven and in Hell. Thou that vibratest betwixt the Light and the Darkness. Rising, descending; changing ever, yet ever the same!

The Sun in Thy Father!

Thy Mother the Moon!

The Wind hath borne Thee in its bosom!

And Earth hath nourished the changeless Godhead of Thy Youth.

Come Thou forth, I say, come Thou forth

And make all spirits subject unto me!

So that every spirit of the firmament,

And of the Ether,
Of the Earth,
And under the Earth,
On dry land,
And in the Water,
Of whirling Air,
And of rushing Fire,

And every spell and scourge of God, may be obedient unto Me!

[A pause.]

[MERCURY goes to his throne.]

FR. GEMINI. I. Brother Virgo, didst thou hear the Voice?

VIRGO. Ay, Brother.

FR. GEMINI. Tell me, Brother, is not Mercury a great God?

VIRGO. Indeed, Son of Maia, the greatest of all Gods that tread upon the Milky Way.

FR. GEMINI. It is so.

SOR. GEMINI. Yet, Brother, there is the Sun-God!

VIRGO. Is not Mercury the Sun-God, when hidden during the Night, among the souls of the dead? Hail unto Thee, Trismegistus, Hail unto thee!

SOR. GEMINI. Hail, O Sender of Dreams!

FR. GEMINI. Hail, O Supporter of Bacchus Infant!

MERCURY. Hail, Twins!

FIRST PROBATIONER. Thou art indeed the greatest of all Gods, O Mercury!

CHORUS. Hail, Mercury.

MERCURY. Yet, ye will betray me!
Bury me in a nameless grave!
I came from God the world to save,
I brought it wisdom from above,
Worship, and liberty, and love.
So be my grave without a name
That earth may swallow up my shame!

[Sor. GEMINI plays her saddest yet swiftest melody. Scherzo: Tschaikowski.]

[A pause.]

VIRGO. Sister and Brother Gemini, kneel ye before the greatest of all Gods.

FR. GEMINI. Alas, Brother! Is the Speech greater than the Silence?

VIRGO. I. Brethren, kneel ye before the greatest of all Gods! [None obey.]

MERCURY. I. Silence...Thou hast no followers, Brother.

SOR. GEMINI. Behold thine handmaiden! Where thou goest I will go; thy people shall be my people and thy God my God! *[She walks to the throne.]*

MERCURY.

Peace upon thee, beloved!...But the Brethren say sooth. Even Mercury liveth not forever.

The light streams stronger through the lamps of sense.
Intelligence
Grows as we go. Alas: its icy glimmer

Shows dimmer, dimmer
The awful vaults we traverse. Were the sun Himself the one
Glory of space, he would but illustrate
The night of Fate.
Are not the hosts of heaven in vain arrayed?
Their light dismayed
Before the vast blind spaces of the sky?
O galaxy
O thousands upon thousands closely curled,
Your golden world
Incalculably small, its closest cluster
Mere milky lustre
Staining the infinite darkness! Base and blind
Our minion mind
Seeks a great light, a light sufficient, light
Insufferably bright,
Hence hidden for an hour: imagining
This vast vain thing,
We call it God, and Father. Empty hand
And prayer unplanned
Stretch fatuous to the void. Ah! men my friends
What fury sends
This folly to intoxicate your hearts?
Dread air disparts
Your vital ways from these unsavoury follies;
Black melancholies
Sit straddled on your bended backs. The throne
Of the unknown
Is fit for children. We are too well ware
How vain is prayer,
How nought is great, since all is immanent
The vast content
Of all the universe unalterable.
We know too well
How no one thing abides awhile at all,
How all things fall,
Fall from their seat, the lamentable place,
Before their face,
Weary and pass and are no more. So we,
Since hope must be,
Look to the future, to the chance minute
That life may shoot
Some flower at least to blossom in the night,
Since vital light
Is sure to fail us on the hideous way.
What? Must we pray?
Verily, O thou littlest babe, too weak
To stir or speak,
Capable hardly of a thought, yet seed
Of word and deed!
To thine assured fruition we may trust
This weary dust.
We who are old, and palsied (and so wise!)
Lift up our eyes
To little children, as the storm-tossed bark
Hails in the dark
Some hardly visible harbour light; we hold

The hours of gold
To our own breasts, whose hours are iron and brass:—
So swift they pass
And grind us down:—we hold the wondrous light
Our scattering sight
Yet sees, the one star in a night of woe.
We trust, and so
Lift up our voices in the dying day
Indeed to pray:
O little hands that are so soft and strong,
Lead us along!

*[SOR. GEMINI plays accordingly. Berceuse: Cesar Cui.
[A pause.]*

FR. GEMINI. Brother Virgo, wilt thou not join us who love not Speech?

VIRGO. Hail unto Mercury. He killeth Sol at the close of every Twilight, and hangeth up the sky of Night on the Tree of Heaven, fastened up with the Star-headed nails.

MERCURY. Brother Gemini, do Thou perform the dance of thy Virginal Sister.

*[FR. GEMINI dances.
[At the end of his dance, he falls before the altar. SOROR GEMINI and all PROBATIONERS circumambulate round him, then stop, facing MERCURY.]*

MERCURY. Come, Sister, no Divine Being can be reached, save through Me.

*[He descends, and joins the PROBATIONERS, leading SOROR GEMINI by the hand.
VIRGO, left now alone before the empty shrine of MERCURY, walds slowly in front of it.]*

VIRGO. Hail unto the Lord Mercury!

[A pause, during which all PROBATIONERS bend their heads low. MERCURY stands apart with SOR. GEMINI. VIRGO stands still before the shrine, hooded.]

MERCURY. And this word I speak unto ye:

[He is heard whispering.]

StiBeTTChePhMeFShiSS

[A pause.]

MERCURY. (loudly). Konx Om Pax!

[Purple light off, white light on.]

[He seats SOR. GEMINI upon his Throne. She plays her babe-music. Nocturne: G. Boyle

FR. GEMINI. The will of the Gods be accomplished!

[All depart.]