

prelude. The test here is one of superasinine intelligence in that he saves himself by smashing up the dining room and then sheltering in the master's bedroom, where he spends the night. There is another interesting piece of symbolism here in the role of the dog. Anubis, the Egyptian Opener of the Ways, is a dog-headed god, and the ways are opened in this episode first by a dog stealing the haunch of venison (which is the circumstance that leads the cook to kill and serve up the ass), and then he is left unmolested in the bedroom because another dog is found to be rabid and so all fear to go near the ass in case he too has rabies, his actions in smashing up the dining room being thought the symptoms of the disease.

Following this episode the eunuch priests are arrested for having stolen a golden cup from the temple of Juno. This is an apt symbolic statement of their spiritual condition, for their assumed effeminacy is a travesty of the true principle. The ass is sold again, once more coming under the dominion of an evil and adulterous wife at a mill, and the ass's third moral act is to expose her deception of her husband by revealing her lover.

An interesting historical sidelight here is that the woman appears to be a Christian, and in the author's words: "She . . . professed perfect scorn for the immortals and rejected all true religion in favor of a fantastic and blasphemous cult of an 'Only God.' In his honor she practiced various absurd ceremonies which gave her the excuse of getting drunk quite early in the day and playing the whore at all hours; most people, including her husband, were quite deceived by her."

Plainly Apuleius has no great love of Christians and this early example of relations between the new religion and the old is an interesting one. If this travesty of early Christian belief and practice was the common attitude of intelligent pagans then there is small wonder that when Christians came to power they took such unsympathetic views of paganism.

Following the successful completion of these tests of moral initiative, Lucius meets with some better luck when he passes into the hands of a market gardener and earns his keep helping him to take his food to market—another instance of spiritual food symbolism.

This does not last however. It is a phase quickly followed by what is called in the mystical terminology of Saint John of the Cross, "the dark night of the soul," or in terms of alchemy, the *dissolutio*. Everything falls to pieces.

There are, first of all, a series of frightening portents. The ancient world took portents seriously. In the histories of Livy, for instance, along with