

*“Point out the ‘Way’—However dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness.”*



# MERCURY.

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## HOW I JOINED THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

**B**EGINNING in childhood I questioned the Christianity I heard taught from the pulpit. My heart rebelled at the idea of a God who would let his “only begotten Son” suffer the agony of Gethsemane. No earthly father would let an innocent son so suffer, and the thought kept constantly rising in my mind—why should God show less compassion than man whom he had created. When told the blood of Jesus was shed to save me from my sins, again my heart rebelled, and I felt I would rather shed my own blood to have saved Him one moment of that awful agony, than to have salvation in such a way, at such a cost. As a little child I remember pitying Jesus for having such a cruel Father, one who left Him on the cross to suffer, instead of sending His angels to succor Him. Then the idea grew upon me of protest against a conception of God who decreed the terrible human misery everywhere in the world, who would create such monstrosities as idiots, and who would allow even innocent babes to suffer. If a God with infinite power planned such a Universe, just as an expression of His Almighty will, and for his own pleasure, I felt

he must be a cruel and an unjust God. And such attributes I could not reconcile with the ideal of God in my heart.

Only once do I remember having what might be called a real religious fervour. A missionary came into the village and every word he said seemed to drop like fire upon my heart, for he spoke of the life of those he called "heathens" and of their moral and spiritual darkness; then I felt I would willingly give up every thing in life to go and join in the work by teaching them the way of the truth and eternal life, but not through the bloody sacrifice. But this enthusiasm died out, and I turned my thoughts to the duties and pleasures of the world. My position in life forced me to receive and entertain very considerably, so that all my time and attention was taken up in that way. Years passed, I became a widow and the surge of the world-life beat less fiercely around me. I suddenly became interested in Spiritualism. I gave a year and a half entirely to study; visited between forty and fifty mediums, both public and private, and held Seances under test conditions, for my object was to find the truth at the root of Spiritualism. My conclusions finally arrived at, after this careful investigation, were, that physical mediumship is injurious to mind and body; that the higher phases of mediumship, such as clairvoyance or clairaudiance can be obtained without any references to the departed ones, and that spiritual intuitions had really nothing to do with the doctrine of the disembodied entities.

My next step was the reading of Madame Blavatsky's "Isis Unveiled"; this book further elucidated the conclusions I had previously arrived at. Thus, drawn to the Theosophical Society, I joined that body in 1881, simply from curiosity to see if truth was in Theosophy? My answer to this is my work of to-day. Now I have dedicated my life to work for the grand truth and noble aims of the Theosophical Society. Evidence of the truth of the existence of the Mahatmas is mine at first hand, and was mine, before I worked with Madame Blavatsky. One fact, that I have never publicly stated before, I will give you: One day I had what the uninformed might call a "vision" of a glorious Being. Later, when I went to Würzburg and saw the portrait of Madame Blavatsky's Master, I at once recognized the Being I had seen in my "vision."

Master had also spoken with me previously to my going to Würzburg, and I had known of service in the great cause of humanity, under His guidance in lives before the present incarnation. It was on the strength of my own personal experience that I willingly resigned all the world holds dear, to enter again on the service of the great White Lodge. Since the passing out from the body of our illustrious teacher, H. P. Blavatsky, to whom students of the present age owe more than words can readily express, it has been my privilege to associate intimately with that most untiring worker and exalted Soul, Annie Besant. During this year I shall accompany Mrs. Besant on her lecture tour of six months duration in the United States.

CONSTANCE WACHTMEISTER.

### THEOSOPHY AND SOCIALISM.

**S**Ocialism is the practical application of the principles of Theosophy to the relations between man and man—or rather the form of human organization which would inevitably result from the general acceptance and assimilation of those principles. “Unity” is the keynote of both systems. The highest aspiration of the Theosophist is to lose the sense of separateness—to realize the “cosmic consciousness” and to progress until the individual is merged in the universal Soul. This teaching must have an important bearing upon every-day life and social institutions. The idea of the essential Oneness of humanity, wherever received, must tend to subvert current individualistic theories and economic systems, based on the entirely contrary view that the interests of individuals and classes are necessarily antagonistic.

Men’s religious views have invariably influenced in large measure their political and social institutions. As their spiritual conceptions become broader, their institutions become freer. Monarchy, imperialism and aristocracy—all systems which tend to enrich and exalt the few at the expense of the masses of society—are the reflection, on the material side, of sacerdotalism and creeds which teach total depravity and like degrading doctrines. More liberal views of human nature find their counterpart in democratic government, and the abuses and anomalies which exist un-

der the freest institutions are largely due to survivals of theological thought which sustain class domination or inculcate individual selfishness. Theosophy, now so greatly influencing the literature and thought of the day, will naturally tell in favor of harmony and justice in social relations—in other words, of socialism. How otherwise?

Socialism is the full recognition on the material plane of the Oneness of Humanity and the subordination of the diverse and frequently antagonistic interests of individuals to that of the whole. The great truth underlying it, as illustrated by the analogy between the relations of the various parts of the human body to the entire frame—and those of individuals to the commonwealth, was well set forth by Plato in the following passage of the "Republic," Book 5:—

"The city is best conducted in which the largest proportion of citizens apply the words 'mine' and 'not mine' similarly to the same objects, \* \* or, in other words, that city which comes nearest to the condition of an individual man. Thus, when one of our fingers is hurt, the whole fellowship that spreads through the body up to the soul and there forms an organized unity under the governing principle, is sensible of the hurt, and there is a universal and simultaneous feeling of pain in sympathy with the wounded part."

Brotherhood, the end and aim of the Theosophical Society, cannot co-exist with injustice and oppression. Mere charity is not brotherhood. Almsgiving, philanthropic palliatives and the endeavor to cure some of the more virulent symptoms of social disorder, while accomplishing some good, leave the deep-seated causes untouched, and fall far short of the spirit which Theosophy professes to inculcate. The acceptance of the doctrine of Karma should have a far-reaching result in an entire change of attitude as regards legislation, government and the social observances and traditions that are even more potent than law. It should teach men to get at the core of things, to seek to change causes instead of dealing with effects merely, as our legislators and moral reformers nearly always do. Competition and the selfishness of Individualism are meanwhile generating evil Karma which, unless counteracted by the development of



true brotherhood, will increase tenfold the social abuses of to-day. Just as the individualistic struggle for wealth and position is the counterpart on the physical plane of orthodox theology, with its preaching of personal salvation as the one great object; so is the nobler ideal of a socialism, under which "all men's good shall be each man's rule," the corollary of Theosophy in its bearing on mundane affairs.

Laws and institutions will not of themselves affect social regeneration, it is true. They must, to be effective, be the outcome and expression of enlightened public opinion. No Socialist undervalues the educational forces. It is equally true that unjust laws and institutions and the false and wrong ideals set up in such matters by the press, pulpit, university and other moulders of public opinion, perpetuate wrong-headed and reactionary habits of thought. Law and public opinion act and react on each other. To crystallize and embody every advance in popular sentiment into express enactment helps both to retain the vantage ground and secure further triumphs.

Socialism is much more than a mere system of regulations—it is a spirit and a sentiment that must dominate the hearts and minds of men and as a natural consequence find expression in their institutions. It is a living principle, not a cut-and-dried formula. If the Brotherhood of Humanity is anything more than a "barren ideality," it must become embodied in our laws and social relations, and exactly in proportion as it does, so will the present competitive struggle with its results of crime, poverty and degradation give way before organized equity.

*Toronto.*

PHILLIPS THOMPSON.

### The Song.

A Singer wandering o'er the earth,  
Did tarry nowhere long,  
But back to whence he came, he fled,  
And fleeing, left his song.

And now the song in restless quest,  
Is searching, but in vain,  
To find upon the earth once more,  
The Singer's heart again.

ANNIE ELIZABETH CHENEY.

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## A SUBSTANTIAL BASIS FOR THE INVISIBLE REALM.

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SCIENCE informs us that the atom is the basis of physical matter. Atoms conjoined form the molecule: an aggregation of molecules constitutes the cell; from the intelligent construction of the cells there results the various organs of the human body; the harmonious arrangement of the organs gives us the human form divine.

We are also informed that the nervous system is the body of sensation. The nerves are in each organ, cell, molecule and atom. The nerve itself is formed of substance and rests upon the atom as its basis. The atomic nerve substance stands at the back of the nerve. It is the very essence of nerve—the power, force or intelligence in and by which sensation travels along the nerve. So ethereal in its nature is it that it cannot be sensed, and can only be known by its results and yet it is sense itself. It can neither be seen, heard, tasted, touched or smelt. Its existence cannot be demonstrated by the evidence of any of our senses—the most delicate instruments yet invented by human ingenuity cannot detect its presence. To the scientist the atom is only a creature of imagination, arrived at as the basis of substance, because it is a logical necessity. Non-existent to the sense, the fact of its existence lies at the very back of the highest, best and latest theories of science. The atom is the only reasonable explanation of the phenomena of matter and to refuse to believe in its existence is, by scientists, declared to be unreasonable.

Science, it will thus be seen, takes the position that a real thing does exist without our being able to demonstrate its existence save as a matter of pure reasoning.

Those who are so fond of boasting that they will believe in nothing save that which their senses demonstrate to them, are, it is evident, decidedly unscientific.

An experience, unfortunately too common, illustrates the fact that in our bodies the matter is of varying degrees of sensitiveness. Upon the outer surface of the body the air may blow gently and we are not aware of its presence. The same breath of air upon

the nerve of a decayed tooth produces intense agony. There are other nerves so sensitive and responsive to external contact that a touch may cause serious injury. The converse is equally true;—The nerves are in closer contact with the mind than is the surface of the body. The power of the mind is brought to bear upon the body through the nerves. The influence of thought is more active on the nerve than on the surface of the body.

Practically, science defines “atom” as “invisible substance,” and in her accusation of its actuality provides a possible substantial basis for an existence which would be invisible to mortal eyes. Yet real, being composed of the very same substance as that which is visible in our physical bodies, though refined to a much more delicate and sensitive degree, responding far more readily to every influence upon its plane of action.

It is said that that which we speak of as the throwing out of particles of matter from the body during life, whether by the lungs or pores or other methods of excretion, is merely the ejecting of the cell-wall. The nucleus (with its nucleolus) still remains and is carried around in the circulatory system of the body until, in due course, it finds itself clothed with new matter—enclosed within a new cell-wall. Is this not the death and re-incarnation of the cell? Is not the death of the human being akin to the disruption of all the cells of the physical body?

The cell-wall, the gross physical body, disintegrates and goes into the various forms of nature’s activity. The nucleus (the ethereal basis), the very essence of the sensations, the energy of the man, remains intact, more active, more alive than ever. Being less hampered with the heavy, gross matter of the body, its substance responds more quickly to the control of the mind. This remaining entity is the man, freed from physical matter and its incidents. Does it not also, having thrown out from itself or withdrawn itself from the cell-wall (the physical body), pass through the circulatory system of our earth and its various stages of consciousness until it again finds itself clothed with a new wall of matter—re-incarnated in a fresh body? The mind, withdrawing from the body at death, draws with it the very essence, core or heart of the molecule—the atomic life. There we have the man—with mind, thoughts, desires, sensations and a substantial form.

Having proved the existence of our ethereal man, the question arises, can he see, hear, touch and taste? Why not? Take the sense of sight. We are told that this sensation is caused by vibration, the rate of vibration determining the color, the lowest being red, the highest violet. There are rates of vibration below the solar spectrum, that is, there may be colors below the red—we cannot see them. There are rates of vibration above the violet, as has been demonstrated by their présence in the active rays—we cannot sense them. Our bodily wall, or outer physical envelope, is of such a nature that it does not respond to or carry these sub-colors and supra-colors. To our senses they are non-existent. But the moment that we step out of our body—relieve ourselves from this limiting bond of flesh, and have as an outer vehicle, not the gross and slow moving corporeal particles, but the more lively, active and sensitive atomic nerve substance, we may sense those higher rates of vibration and the corresponding colors will come flashing before our renewed sense of vision. Now we see, as in a glass, darkly—then we may see face to face, and the glories of the terrestrial may be as nought compared with the scenes brought before our eyes by the heavenly artists. The same applies to Sound. By reason of the slow working of the particles of matter in our outer organ of hearing, we can detect only those rates of vibration lying between the two extremes of sixteen per second and forty six thousand per second. On either side of that basis of sound there stretches a limitless desert of silence. Into that desert no physical ear may penetrate. From it there can come to the physical sense no word of encouragement or of information. But, when we step out of our physical prison into the freer air of a real heaven, sounds melodious may break upon our wondering, new born sense. Many a dying one, hearing the music of celestial octaves, has, in his ignorance, thought that the heavenly choir had come especially to meet him. He was merely stepping into a new world of sound where that of which he had so mistaken the import was the normal condition of its inhabitants.

So we might take up the other senses and show how it is possible that they may be refined, elevated, raised to a higher degree, so that they will beat in harmony with newer and more intense

conditions. Things that here cannot be tasted, touched or smelt, may be realized there, where the grossly material body has been left behind, and we deal with things of a more ethereal, and yet, at the same time, more substantial nature.

Are not these suppositions reasonable, you who do not believe in an existence beyond the portals of so-called death? Science—the materialistic science of to-day—interpreted by her most eminent exponents, has placed the arguments in our hands. She has provided the basis upon which to build the structure. To persist in your negation is merely saying that you are content in your ignorance, accepting the conclusions neither of science or religion, nor the evidence of those who can pass at will from plane to plane of existence. In other words, darkness is preferred to light. That such forms of life and consciousness may exist all about us, and yet neither we nor they be aware of the presence of the other is a conclusion which appears reasonable to the leaders of scientific thought. Mr. Crookes, the eminent chemist says (*Fortnightly Review*, 1892, P. 176): “It is not improbable that other sentient beings have organs of sense which do not respond to some or any of the rays to which our eyes are sensitive, but are able to appreciate other vibrations to which we are blind. Such beings would practically be living in a different world from our own. Imagine, for instance, what idea we should form of surrounding objects, were we endowed with eyes not sensitive to the ordinary rays of light, but sensitive to the vibrations of electric and magnetic phenomena. Glass and crystal would be among the most opaque of bodies. Metals would be more or less transparent, and a telegraph wire through the air would look like a long narrow hole drilled through an impervious solid body. A dynamo in active work would resemble a conflagration, whilst a permanent magnet would realize the dream of mediæval mystics, and become an everlasting lamp with no expenditure of energy or consumption of fuel.”

To this may be added the words of Dr. Huxley (*Essays upon some controverted questions*, P. 36): “Without stepping beyond the analogy of that which is known, it is easy to people the cosmos with entities, in ascending scale, until we reach something practically



indistinguishable from omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience." And that is the goal which, we say, man, ascending step by step, shall ultimately reach. F. E. TITUS.

### GOOD AND ILL.

Good and ill are not things—not circumstances; they are conditions, the results of preceding conditions and in their turn the cause of those that must follow. Good is positive—absolute—eternal, not the mere temporary absence of ill. All ill is temporal. All good is eternal.

Ill is the ignorance of the mind, the non-evolution of the soul, the illusion of the senses, the animal fear that finds and controls the unevolved soul of man.

Good is that knowledge that reveals to us that there is nothing to be feared, except our own ignorance, which ignorance we usually miscall our wisdom.

Whenever we call our wisdom absolute, we stamp it as false and worthless; for nothing has ever been proven but may be disproven in the same way and by the same means by which it was proven.

But there is that which never has been proven and never will be on the material plane, that is real good—absolute truth—eternal and immutable—which was, is, and certainly will be when all Known senses are absorbed in the Unknown, all illusions dispelled, and all ill rendered impossible by the dissolution of time and space, to which all ill is due. When once we conceive the instability and the unreality of ill, then, have we gained a permanent good and surely "the kingdom of Heaven is at hand," in which kingdom there can be no ill. KARL KNAUE.

Thou canst create this day thy chances for thy morrow.

In the Great Journey, causes sown each hour bear each its harvest of effects, for rigid Justice rules the World.

The pepper plant will not give birth to roses, nor the sweet jessamine's silver star to thorn or thistle turn.

## MY HEART'S GARDEN.

“The blossom vanishes of itself as the fruit grows, so will your lower self vanish as the Divine grows in you.”—*Rama Krishna Parahansa.*

ONE morning I looked into my garden. Alas, it was nothing but a wilderness where weeds grew high in tangled patches, and just a few bright flowers struggled to keep their heads above the weeds. I felt the air currents that played among the trees that hemmed my garden in on every side. In the centre a bright fountain once had poured forth its shimmering drops upon the flowers that had died long ago. But now the fountain played no more. It was covered with the green slime of ages, and rank moss, blackened and stained with age, now grew round its base. Here and there it was green, that vivid green we so often see upon the morass, which draws us down if we try to step upon its treacherous sod. A cloudy vapor veiled the upper part of the fountain, and as it was so very long since I had seen it in its pristine beauty, I had quite forgotten what it looked like. I turned round and watched the insects as they hummed among the weeds; such ugly, shapeless things they seemed.

“There is one with great red eyes,” I said to myself; “his name is ‘Greed,’ he sucks the moisture from the tender buds, so that they wither on their stalks.” At my feet I saw a nest of these creatures just coming into life! Some lived in the green slime, built their homes and laid their eggs quite near the base of the fountain.

What were their names, you ask? That great fellow there, is called “Ambition”; “Pride” is close by, and the one just creeping up that stalk is called “Self-Conceit”. The one with the red and black stripes is called “Anger”; his sting is terrible; he will fly around, humming angrily, then dart suddenly down into the heart of some poor flower and poison it with his ugly tongue. I have tried to get rid of them all, but somehow they are very much attracted to my garden and will not leave it.

Long ago lovely singing birds used to come and build their nests among the trees, and, flying here and there, brought new seed-life to my garden. The seeds that they scattered grew into sweet smelling flowers and luscious fruit; for there were no weeds here in those days. Now I faintly tried to remember their en-

chanting melodies, but I had forgotten them all, it was so very long ago!

One day, a Friend, who was standing by my side, said to me:

“Why not trim your garden and weed it; the soil is rich and will well repay the labor of your hands?”

I answered: “There is nothing left to cultivate; and then, think of the time that it would take! It might be many days before I had cleared one tiny patch of weeds, and they would quickly grow again.”

“But how useless all this garbage is,” my Friend replied. Many weeds bear flowers, 'tis true, fine in appearance, but they are out of place in a garden. I do not see one scented blossom anywhere! Do you not remember that, though you call this land your own, you are but its tenant, and, therefore, you will have to render an account to your Master of the care you have taken in its cultivation.”

“The earth was bare,” I said, “when the Lord gave me this garden to keep. I began working in it but soon grew weary and fell asleep. But the sun shone so brightly that I had to seek the shade beneath the trees, and then I whiled away my time among the shadows.”

“I know how many days you have wasted in sleep, but it is worse than useless to fret over the past. Begin anew and try to keep your pledge to the Master. What could be more beautiful than this garden? Its paths are straight, though overgrown with weeds. Work faithfully and steadily to put your garden in perfect condition, so that when your Master comes, he will see nothing but beauty on every side.”

Now I began to work in earnest, digging all day long, and by night I had cleared a large patch. But when at sunrise the next morning, I went into my garden, alas, the weeds had sprouted up again and all my labor was vain! But my Friend had aroused my ambition, so I felt compelled to try again. I labored all that day alone in silence and then, just at high noon, that same Friend came and showed me how to drag the noisome plants up by the roots. Thus was I encouraged, and as he left me, I heard him say, smiling to himself: “All hearts cannot be gardens of cultivated flowers at once, but the weakest may become strong, if he puts his soul into his work.”

How hard I worked, and how weary I grew, and longed for the refreshing shade of the trees! Then a great brown and yellow insect began to buzz around me, but I knew that his name was "Sloth", so I brushed him away and began to dig again. And when I closed my eyes that night I hoped that the morning's light might show me one tiny patch quite clear and orderly. The next day I shouldered spade and hoe, and, coming to the part where I had been weeding, I found that the weeds had not appeared again. At last there were no more weeds in my garden, but it was also destitute of flowers. In my careless haste I had pulled them all up together. The birds had flown away and no longer brought me seeds, and I had none to plant myself. "Alas," I mourned, "not one flower to cheer me after all this work. True, it now looks clean and tidy but even weeds are better than brown earth." So I thought, but, looking up, I saw my Friend with sundry packages of seeds all ready for the sowing, in his hand.

"Take these," he said, "some very lovely blossoms will grow from them."

"They are so small," I replied, for I almost wished that he had brought some plants whose buds were just about to burst.

"Yes, they are small, they look like grains of sand, but if you sow them carefully they will produce beautiful flowers. Remember that they were gathered from the very plants you grew in the past before you let your garden fall into a wilderness.

Ah; how strange I should have forgotten all about these flowers, even their names, but I was glad that they had been of my own growing, no matter how long ago. I sowed them joyfully while my Friend stood by and gave directions where to plant these precious seeds.

"That one is for the border, its name is 'Charity' and bears sweet pink flowers. Here is a seed that springs up very fast, we call it 'Love's Sacrifice'; it has a rosy bunch of blossoms on every branch and it fills the air with fragrance. Plant this one near the fountain; it is called 'Faith,' you will watch its tall blue flowers shoot out among the tufts of dainty green and wonder how you ever could neglect such a graceful beauty. Plant them all, forgetting none. 'Perseverance' is a flower that springs up every year; once sown, its roots can only die when choked by ranker-growths.

And here are some just for the center: 'Peace' with its odorous white blossoms stands alone, and 'Steadfastness' bears a bright yellow flower; its shape is like a star. Pretty 'Patience' with its mauve purple flowers must also have a place; plant it along the border; you will want it just where you can pluck it every day."

Many other seeds did my Friend bring to me, too numerous to describe.

Thus did my garden grow, and became full of bloom and sweetness. Then the little children came and begged each for a flower and I gladly gave to all that asked, for was not this the richest reward that I could receive? Other blessings now came to me, all unasked. The loveliest song birds built their nests again and filled the air with their melodies, and brought back to my mind long forgotten strains. Thus was the garden of my heart made sweet and pure and when my Friend visited it again, he gathered some of the daintiest buds and with a radiant smile he said: "These flowers were the cradle wherein slept the Spirits of the air last night and they are bathed in the Sunlight of the Gods this morning; may their fragrance be with you till the Sunset Hour! And as he turned away I remembered some lines I once had read:

"Upon the petals came the breeze,  
And the perfume rich and rare,  
Went out as a gift to the forest trees,  
For the birds that gathered there;  
And then as if with sweet intent  
The leaves dropped one by one,  
Its flower-mission sweet was spent,  
Its work on earth was done."

FIO HARA.

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### Waiting.

My heart is weary, waiting for thee;  
My soul is sad, seeking for thee;  
If I were a king, and all the world holds dear were mine;  
If I were a spirit in the air, ruling the destinies of stars and men:  
Yet should I be naught but a vain shadow without thee, my long-lost Self.

A. W.



## THE FORUM DEPARTMENT.

Any person can send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. When necessary, the various communications will be condensed by the editor. Be careful to write only on one side of the paper.

## QUESTION CCCLIV.

*Is it not impossible for anyone to live a purely unselfish and altruistic life according to the ideal of brotherhood while the competitive system prevails, which condemns so many to poverty and compels each one to look out for self?*

TH. BARNES.—This seems to be a question which cannot be answered simply yes, or no. To some it is possible, to others not, and in the process of evolution we may pass out of the former category into the latter.

There exists the real and ideal; the theoretical and the practical; the desirable and the attainable. The painter and the musician have their ideals which they but partially realize. So it is with the student of Theosophy. In most cases he or she cannot attain to the altruistic life as they dimly conceive it. Why? For the same reason that the painter and the musician fall short in various degrees of the highest standard of art—because of their limitations; in other words, because of their Karma.

These limitations are expressed in character and environment—our own creations. Most of us have peopled our miniature world with monsters that enthrall us, and the work we have to perform is, as Mrs. Besant says, with the aid of the St. George of our own Higher Self, to subdue these saurians of our “primeval slime,” and when we have restored harmony to the internal realm, then will external conditions also become harmonious, and we shall find no difficulty in living the perfect life. Then, though living in the world, we shall not be “of it”, and the competitive system will have no power to enslave us. Accordingly, as we approximate internally to the sublime harmony of the “Christ”, the divine and perfected man, shall we find our difficulties disappear, and it will then be no longer our Karma, as with most of us is now the case, to be continually sowing the seed of fresh Karma, to bind us to the lower plane of our being. When that day comes, we shall have

risen altogether above the Karmic stream, just as in previous periods of evolution we were below it.

If the above be correct, the answer is briefly this: To each of us it is possible to live the altruistic life in the measure in which we have brought the lower nature into subjection to the God within, for the difficulty lies primarily with ourselves, and not with the age in which we live.

FIO HARA.—We often forget that poverty is not the result of any competitive system. Karma assigns to all exactly the position merited by actions wrought in previous lives; some are fortunate, others unfortunate, all gaining the experience they most need. Happiness cannot be measured by the ordinary standard of wealth and poverty, because many upon whom the weight of poverty has fallen are often happier than those possessing wealth. Among the poor of our large cities one finds that those most lacking in worldly prosperity are often the most sacrificing, the most willing to share their last morsel of bread with a less fortunate neighbor—the readiest to offer help when they themselves need it quite as truly as those they aid; hardworked mothers with large families, whose husbands are seeking work throughout the city streets—or who, with their companions spend their earnings and time at the public house. These women whose faces bear the stamp of poverty are sometimes the first to render assistance to a sick neighbor without hope of reward. Surely such lives are unselfish and altruistic?

It is difficult to attempt all that brotherhood demands, in a society where every one's motto is self, and self-interest. Social failure frequently awaits the man who, rather than do an unjust or unbrotherly action, fails to further his own interests. But is this real failure? The "Voice of the Silence" calls this success—success as far as the soul's experience is concerned and that is the main object that we, as Theosophists, hope to attain. Competition should have no place in our lives. It sows its evil seed in the heart of the schoolboy and incites him to endeavor to outrank his classmates; but the dull boy in school often becomes the successful man in life, and the boy of gentle and kind disposition attains to a better understanding of the real object of life than the selfish boy.

Many must suffer to-day who made others suffer in past lives, and out of such bitter lessons they may gain the true knowledge of unselfish love and realize the value of altruistic effort.

## QUESTION CCCLV.

*"If the so-called "spirits" which appears at Spiritualistic Seances are really Astral Bodies, controlled for the time by Elementaries, how is it that their manifestations and answers to questions display intelligence and a knowledge of circumstances, etc, sufficient, apparently, to identify the visitants with departed spirits?"*

D. W. DANIEL:—All "spirits" which appear at Seances are not necessarily elementaries or the Souls of depraved men who have lost their divine spirit. These communicating entities are without number; their name is legion and they may be drawn from any of the numerous classes of the inhabitants of the Astral Plane. A communication may be just what it purports to be, but the chances are very remote for its being so, or anything of a genuine nature. Correct answers may be, and frequently are given to questions relating to departed friends, a knowledge of which could only come from the departed.

But there is no assurance even in this of the genuineness of the communication. The explanation in this case would be that the communicating entity is in reality only one of the numberless denizens of the astral plane in control of the shade of the departed friend. The shade has the brain memory complete of all the details of the life of the person and can answer correctly, even giving tones and gestures, so perfectly as almost to deceive the wise. Again, correct answers may be and very frequently are given to questions of which the questioner only could have knowledge. Here the explanation is very simple and a reference to everyday instances and accounts of thought transference should suffice.

The questioner carries the answer in his own atmosphere, aura or astral (etheric) brain and the one in control can readily read the answer.

It is not denied that departed ones do in reality communicate with their friends left behind and this through mediums and at seances, but the cases are very rare and this practice is fraught with evil consequences, unless the communication be by permission

and under the direction of those who have unfolded their powers until the astral region is quite familiar, and to function there has become normal action. Such communications *might* be from any one of several reasons, such as for instance, of an earth-bound spirit, a suicide, one killed by accident or of one who by reason of grossness of mind, or lack of spirituality finds its greatest attraction near the earth plane.

At death or when passing out from the body, in the cases of those who have been absorbed entirely in purely "worldly" pursuits, giving no time to the cultivation of spiritual things, there is frequently a period of greater or less duration when the soul is held on this plane, awaiting the decay of the body just left behind, or until sufficient strength is gained to enable them to liberate themselves, or until liberated by other means. During this period these souls may be communicated with, but it is a dangerous practice both for the medium, the sitter, or sitters, and for the soul so communicating; particularly so for the latter as the soul, at this period being weak, is liable to fall into the power of some of the intensely evil forces whose natural element is this region.

After the soul has passed on to the Devachanic plane, communications of this kind are impossible. But there is another kind of communication, that in which we by reason of elevation of thought and by aspirations for spiritual good are enabled to reach this plane. Each has his Astral plane and his Devachanic plane in his own individual system, and he whose life is in the Devachanic region of his own system may communicate with the inhabitants of the corresponding region in the universal, for there time and distance are nothing.

CONSTANCE WACHTMEISTER.—"Nolan," the control of that extraordinary medium, Mrs. Hollis-Billing, describes a manifestation as follows:

"The electrical particles in a dark room, are in a quiet condition; they are collected by us and laid upon one another until we have made one or several forms (unseen).

"We then take magnetism from the medium and the sitters in the circle, and with it coat these electrical forms, thus giving them objectivity.

"After that, the forms are animated by departed entities who

step in and use them as forms. When many forms appear at a materializing seance, this is the method adopted.

“When only one form is seen at a time, then do we clothe the ethereal body of the medium in the same fashion, this being an easier and quicker process.”

When departed entities speak with intelligence *through* a medium, the astral body of the medium is first driven out, and the brain is paralyzed as in hypnotism, and then the entity from the unseen, suggests to the medium, to speak and act according to its own pleasure, or again the operating entity simply takes possession of the organism of the medium, and tries to dominate the will-power of the medium. Then a fierce contest can ensue, if the medium is not willing to be controlled, and whichever is the strongest will gain the victory.

Phases of mediumship are so varied; it is impossible to set down a hard and fast definition of phenomena, that one has not personally investigated, for it is only by continued and patient investigation that one learns how to discriminate. By this intimate union, established between the medium and entity, the latter is enabled through the inner perception of the medium, to penetrate to the auras of all present. Thus the auric records become as an open book to the operating entity and it can easily draw a definite picture, identifying reminiscences from the mental records of the circle. This can only occur before the departed one has left the Kamaloca, or those planes nearest to the earth's sphere.

Once reaching the heavenly state, no departed loved one can return to communicate through mediums, but our spiritual souls can reach our friends during the period of sleep when liberated from the body, or even at any moment, when the living individuality has progressed to that point that it can through its own will-power leave its prison house, the body.

#### QUESTIONS TO BE DEALT WITH IN THE NEXT AND SUBSEQUENT ISSUES OF THE FORUM.

I. *In various parts of the T. S. literature, the consciousness of the Ego—such as we know it in waking—is spoken of as being active during what we term sleep. Why is it then that the body is refreshed by sleep and wakes up without a sense of nerve exhaustion that would necessarily accompany the output of thought energy on the ordinary mental plane?*

II. *Is 1897 the concluding year of the old cycle?*

Answers should be sent in as soon as possible.



## T. S. ECHOES.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., Dec. 31, 1896.—The Golden Gate Branch held its monthly social Dec. 2nd, with good attendance of strangers, giving opportunity for conversation and informal discussion of Theosophic questions. The study evenings of the month have been devoted to some very interesting papers and remarks on the Serpent, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel. This study was varied by short readings from the "Path of Discipleship", and at the last meeting of the month we had an address from Miss M. A. Walsh of Mission San Jose. On this occasion Miss Walsh explained the fundamental teachings of Theosophy to the strangers and inquirers present; she also gave a short address, the leading thought of which was the utmost development of consciousness. The training-class has had under consideration this month "Elements and Elementaries"; the "Chinese"; the "Religion of Ancient Egypt" and "Psychometry." Public Lectures have been delivered to full houses each Sunday evening as follows; "Buddhism" Count Axel Wachtmeister; "Jewish and Other Sects" Dr. G. A. Danziger; "Reminiscences of a Tramp through Little Thibet" Count Axel Wachtmeister; "Cycles and their Correspondences" Miss M. A. Walsh.

J. C. BRODIE.

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 8, 1897.—Since the removal of the headquarters of Harmony Lodge, T. S., to the present central location of Odd Fellows' Building, S. Main St. there has been a decided increase in attendance at the public lectures. Last Sunday evening Mr. Jas. Lapsley gave a very instructive lecture on "Thought," to about seventy-five people. The questions after the lecture showed how greatly the audience was interested. On the last Tuesday evening of the old year we held our monthly "Book Social," and a very interesting programme, consisting of music and recitations, was provided by the ladies of our Lodge, and they felt themselves amply repaid for their trouble when the proceeds proved sufficient to warrant considerable expenditure in new books for the lending library. Of the annual election of officers the result is as follows: President, Mr. Randolph; Vice-President, Mr. Geo. Valiant; Librarian, Miss Nelsen; Financial Secretary, Mrs. Halseth; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Randolph. Two new members have been admitted and we feel confident that Eighteen Hundred and Ninety-seven will further add to our membership, stock our library and increase our funds. We hope, too, that it may not find us wanting in peace and good will to all.

HATTIE RANDOLPH, Sec'y.

SPOKANE, WASH., Jan. 7.—I am pleased to say that our Olympus Lodge

has done good work during the month of December, and is in a prosperous condition. We have added a new member, Mr. Joseph Cullen, to our number, and there are two or more young men who are contemplating joining. We have 17 members. We have also received one or two enquiries from parties in surrounding towns who are interested in the work of the Lodge, through the reports in the leading morning newspaper, the Spokesman-Review. Our Lodge meets in the Oliver Hall every Sunday afternoon. These meetings are generally well attended by the outside public. We are causing quite an interest in Theosophy in the city, and the Churches are now taking up the subject and preaching sermons against it. Their method of attack is ridicule, but I believe they are doing us more good than harm. I gave a special lecture in December on "The Occult Forces" in connection with J. M'Ivor Tyndall, the telepathist and psychometrist, which resulted in \$15.00 being placed in the Lodge's treasury.

JOHN MACKENZIE, Pres.

SEATTLE, WASH., Jan. 9.—Ananda Lodge is progressing in a quiet, steady way. The three meetings which are held every week are very well attended. The members are studying the books in the library and seem to be making good use of the opportunities thus afforded. There is such an increased demand for Theosophical literature in Seattle, that one of the leading bookstores has ordered a large supply of books. Mr. Leadbeater's books are creating considerable discussion. We were much encouraged by the reports of the good work done by the Countess Wachtmeister, and we feel sure that these bands of devoted workers which she is organizing will form a sure and stable basis for the spiritual instruction of man.

HARRIET C. STEIN, Sec'y.

ST. PAUL, MINN., Jan. 11.—The Countess Wachtmeister has just left us, after three weeks of hard work. This included a series of public lectures, given at the rooms of the Branch, in the Endicott Building, on Sunday and Thursday evenings of each week; several parlor talks at Merriam Park and at the houses of some of the members; also Branch meetings and meetings for inquirers. I ought to add that the time of the Countess was divided between St. Paul and Minneapolis; lecturing in Minneapolis in the morning, and in St. Paul in the evening, or giving a parlor talk at Merriam Park in the afternoon, and a lecture in St. Paul at night. The work has been a success, the meetings were well attended, much interest was shown and several new members were added to the Branch. The St. Paul Branch wishes to express its deep gratitude to, and loving remembrance of the Countess for the good work she has done here.

MARIE F. MILLER, Pres.

MINNEAPOLIS, Jan. 7th.—The Countess Wachtmeister arrived in Minneapolis the evening of the 19th December. She has delivered nine lectures in this city, to crowded audiences. Standing room was at a premium, even ante-rooms and adjoining hallways were filled. Last Sunday morning and evening the Countess lectured, by special request, in two liberal churches. The Woman's Council, an organization composed of the representative women of the city, listened to a lecture from her on "Man and Woman the Masters of Their Own Destinies." Their Hall was so crowded that more than thirty ladies were compelled to stand throughout the entire lecture, over an hour and a half. Another unique invitation extended to the Countess was one to speak before an Agricultural Society, composed of both men and women to which she responded with her usual readiness. A number of parlor talks have also awakened great interest. The result of all this activity on part of our gifted, faithful colleague is an addition of forty or more new members to the T. S. in this locality. A Scandinavian Branch has been formed called the "Yggdrasil." The Yggdrasil" means, according to Norse mythology, the tree of Life. From Minneapolis the Countess goes to Menomonie, Wis., where she lectures two nights, thence returning to Minnesota, going direct to St. Cloud, where she delivers a lecture on "Death and After," before the Unity Club. The actual record of activity does not give an adequate idea of the work really done or express how the Countess has drawn all hearts and minds to the great teachings of Theosophy.

CHICAGO, Jan. 6.—During December Chicago Branch has held regular meetings Sunday and Wednesday evenings. On Sunday evenings Dec. 6th, 20th and 27th, we had the pleasure of hearing Virchand B. Gandhi, B. A. lecture on the following subjects: 1, "Occult Movements in the West;" 2, "Transcendental Magic;" 3, "The True Canon of Scriptural Interpretation." Dec. 13th, Mrs. Sears favored us with a lecture on "Who is John the Baptist?" We have changed our Wednesday evening program and instead of reading a paper, written by one of the members, we have taken up Mr. Sinnett's "Growth of the Soul," and we now study and discuss that book.

T. M. S.

BUTTE, MONTANA, Jan. 15.—Our Lodge is progressing favorably and our weekly meetings are well attended. Mrs. Nichols, our President, has resigned, having left town, and a new President will be elected next Sunday. The lodge has gained two more members since it was formed.

L. HORN-THOMAS.

NEW ZEALAND, December, 1896.—The General Secretary has been lecturing for the past month in the Province of Wellington, with some success.

a Branch having been formed in the town of Wanganui, the first new Branch since New Zealand became a Section. This is encouraging. There is a steady growth; new members being added to various Branches, more especially in Christchurch, but also in places where there are no Branches. The Section is to be congratulated on having as energetic a worker as Miss Edger, she is indefatigable. In Auckland Mrs. Draffin continued her lectures on Sunday, Dec 6th, dealing with the "Future of Humanity," and on Dec. 20th, lecturing on the "Christ Spirit." This concludes the series. The Waitemata (Auckland) Branch held its Annual Meeting on Dec. 2nd, the officers being re-elected. Mr. Draffin is again President, and Mr. J. Dinsdale (Borough Council chambers, Davenport) Secretary. Delegates are now assembling in Wellington for the convention which will be held on the 2nd and 3rd of January 1897 in the rooms of the Wellington Branch. Except for the convention, activity will probably be suspended for a time during the holiday season in most of the Branches.

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TORONTO, Jan. 16th.—Toronto T. S. has done very good work since my last report. The Sunday evening meetings continue and are quite successful. A class for the study of "The Seven Principles of Man" (Manual No. 1), and "The Voice of the Silence," commenced work three weeks since. Non members have been specially invited, and there is a prospect of this proving more attractive to outsiders than the more abstruse "Secret Doctrine" class. Last night's special programme of "An Evening With Plato," was a decided success. The rooms were filled. The three short papers: Plato's Immortality, by W. T. James; The Ideal Republic, by F. A. Bilcher and Atlantis, by F. E. Titus, were favorably received by the audience. The vocal and instrumental music was of a high order, and much interest in Theosophy was aroused.

F. E. TITUS.

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PORTLAND, OREGON, Jan. 23, 1897.—The Willamette Branch, T. S. at its last meeting of the old year elected the following officers for 1897: President, A. R. Read; Vice President, Mrs. Sara M. Read; Secretary, W. H. Galvani; Treasurer, Mrs. Abbie C. French; Librarian, Col. P. R. Skinner. The Branch holds two meetings weekly, one meeting for members only, at which the study of the Secret Doctrine has now been commenced, and the other a public meeting to which every body is welcome. A course of lectures, running through six successive public meetings, has just been given by A. R. Read on the following subjects, respectively: "What is Theosophy?" "Oriental Religions and Theosophic Sources of Information," "World Periods of Rest and Activity;" "Rounds, Races and the Evolution of Man;" "Reincarnation;" "Karma." The Branch has eighteen members.

SANTA CRUZ, Cal. Jan. 19.—The Lorenzo Branch has sustained a severe loss in the death of one of its members, Mrs. Dr. Philea A. Lyons. The deceased was by birth a member of the Society of Friends, and she partook, in a high degree, of the most excellent qualities of that Order, kindheartedness, simplicity and purity. It was also the lofty ethics of Theosophy that had drawn her to our Society. Her one ambition of life was sacrifice to humanity, and she was a great help to many of us, who need a strong soul to guide them. Our weekly Secret Doctrine class was held at her house and we shall miss her clear mind and inspiring presence.

The deceased belonged to the Burial Association, the rules of which do not allow more than \$25 to be expended for a funeral, including the cost of the burial ground, so the ceremony was of the simplest kind. It was conducted on Theosophic principles, according to the wish of Dr. Lyons herself. A large number of people had assembled in the house of the deceased to pay their respects to her remains. There was no hearse; the coffin—a few boards nailed together, covered with black cloth—stood in the center of the room, decorated with white flowers. Mrs. Blackmore, our President, opened the ceremony by saying a few kind words about the deceased; then she read from the second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, emphasizing the words which tell us that the soul “is not born, nor does it die,” and that “as a man, casting off worn garments, taketh new ones, so the dweller in the body, casting off worn-out bodies, entereth into others that are new.” Then Count A. Wachtmeister spoke for about ten minutes, giving an outline of the Theosophical idea of “Death and After.” He said that death does not convey to the Theosophist any idea of retribution and is not a matter of fear, not a grim skeleton with his scythe: it is, like everything in nature, a thing of great beauty and joy, because it is a release from the bonds of earth. Like Aphrodite, rising from the foam of the sea, is the Soul, rising from the ashes of its lower self, throwing it off gradually, first the gross body, then the ethereal or body of desire, till at last every vestige of materiality has left it, and it can enter into the realms of pure spirituality and bliss, until it is drawn towards the earth again. Therefore, in this onward journey of the deceased, we should not try to hinder her by selfishly longing for her to be back with us, but we should instead try to assist her with our thoughts, knowing that if our thoughts were sufficiently pure and strong, they would reach and help her. The Count concluded by asking everyone, Theosophists and others, to join him in a short meditation. These few moments of perfect silence were very inspiring; it seemed as if a ray of spirituality had descended on us, bringing its message of peace and harmony. Then we all went down to the cemetery; an imposing procession of carriages; the remains of the deceased were conveyed in a simple spring wagon. At the cemetery, after



the coffin had been lowered, the Count again made some appropriate remarks, asking those present not to mourn, because what was buried here was merely her bodily remains; the Soul of the deceased, being a singularly spiritual woman, was, by this time, far away. Yet not far from those who loved her, for in death there is no real separation; the bonds of love and loving thoughts are stronger than death, because they belong to the spiritual realm, where all is unity.

With these thoughts in mind our little Lodge feel a presence and a power which unites us all and will prove a great help to us in our studies and make our Branch a living centre for the spread of Theosophic truths.

We meet every week and have lately been studying the Seven Principles of Man.

NELLIE UHLEN, Sec'y.

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### NOTICE.

The managing Editor of MERCURY respectfully requests that until further notice all correspondence and orders relative to the magazine and books be addressed to Count Axel Wachtmeister, 414 Mason Street, San Francisco, Cal.

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### Mrs. Besant's Lecture Tour.

Mrs. Besant will arrive in New York about the middle of March. She will make an American tour extending over six months. The Countess Wachtmeister and Miss Annie Willson of London, will accompany Mrs. Besant on her tour.

Mr. A. R. Read, F. T. S., of Portland, Oregon, will be managing agent. All Branches and also unattached members who are desirous that their locality shall be included in Mrs. Besant's itinerancy should at once write to the Countess Wachtmeister, care Theosophical Headquarters, 26 Van Buren St., Chicago, Ill.

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### BOOK REVIEWS.

LUCIFER for December.—From the Watchtower comes a warning against the pseudo-occultism now rapidly spreading, and news of a recent exploration of the Gobi Desert. An urgent appeal is made for the sufferers in India. "Theosophical Asceticism," by Dr. A. A. Wells, is interesting. In "Christianity by Tolstoi," Hon. Otway Cuffe deals with Tolstoi's interpretation of the text "Resist not evil." The article is admirable for its liberality and depth of discrimination. In "The Unknown Philosopher," Mrs. Cooper Oakley begins a research into the life of Martinez

Pasquales, and the school wherein "St. Martin first studied the occult life." "Power, Knowledge, Love," concluded. "Among the Gnostics," (Mr. Mead), gives a glimpse of the Ancient Mystic Schools and the cult of Mithras. The "Sankhya Philosophy," by Mr. B. Keightley, and "Invisible Helpers" by Mr. Leadbeater, are continued. "Correspondence" on the article "Animal Reincarnation" by Mr. B. Keightley is very interesting and clears up many difficulties. The reviews of Professor Drummond's "Ascent of Man" by A. A. W., is a gem. In speaking of the great changes from rank materialism to pure spirituality now evident in the writings of advanced scientists the writer says: "Shall we not, in presence of these great changes, in which we, our Society, its writers and teachers have had practically no share, abate somewhat of our self-importance. The Masters do not need *our* help; do our best, we are yet amongst the lowest and poorest of the tools whereby They fashion the world as They see needful for its future growth, least of all are we a chosen people "to whom Their manifestations must be limited."

THE THEOSOPHIST for November is a very interesting number. Col. Olcott relates some of his wonderful magnetic cures; how he restored the eyesight to a blind man by continued treatments in a case which the doctors had pronounced incurable. In "Theism and Pantheism" Prof. Dvivedi advances a strong argument for the latter system from the Indian standpoint. Going out from the Adwaita system of universal consciousness, the Professor endeavors to prove that nothing exists outside of this consciousness, whereas Theism is based upon a dualistic system and believes matter to be an independent reality. *Modern Barbarism* treats of the dark sides of our civilization and shows how utterly material it is. Mr. Fullerton writes clearly and sympathetically on the "Consolations of Theosophy." Mr. Wells describes an Egyptian *Hatha Yogi*, who "wept till his eyelashes were gone." We appreciate thoroughly the editor's concluding remarks. The sex-relations are treated by G. R. V. in a thorough and fearless manner, which cannot fail to make people think. "Dakshina murti" is concluded; "Agastya," a reputed Rishi, commenced. Govin. dacharlu writes on "Predestination," and some of Ramakrishna Paramahansa's precepts are reprinted. A detailed account is given of the measures taken at the Convention of the Indian Section in Benares for the relief of the famine stricken, and these measures are so practical and complete, that they are sure to answer their purpose.

NOTES AND QUERIES for February has an able article by A. Marques on Hindu Chronology and on the importance the circle—emblem of infinity—plays in their calculations. It seems that spiritualists will not allow Madame Blavatsky's Kama Rupa to disintegrate in peace; in a book by Mr.

Joseph Wade, reviewed in Notes and Queries, H. P. B. is described as sitting, during a materializing seance, inside the cabinet, with her head outside, talking about the Theosophical Society. Her words are faithfully reproduced by the Yost typewriting machine and a whole book of "post-humous memoirs" thus compiled!

THE THINKER has developed into a weekly journal devoted to Hinduism and should prove of interest to all students of Hindu Philosophy. The "Life and Teachings of Ram Mohun Roy, the Founder of the Brahmo-Samaj," is a specially interesting biography.

THEOSOPHY IN AUSTRALASIA for December has an article on the Book of Genesis from a Theosophical point of view. In the "Outlook" an important discovery is announced of a papyrus MS. in Cairo, containing a coptic translation of several Gnostic writings of the "Second Century," a "Gospel According to Mary, an Acts of Peter," and a "Wisdom of Jesus Christ." These MSS. are now being translated into German by Prof. Harnack, of the Berlin Academy.

LE LOTUS BLEU.—In the November issue is a lucid article on "The Law of Sacrifice and its Relation to the Act of Creation," by M. Decrespe. Guymiot writes on the dangers of an oriental invasion of Europe, and says that H. P. B. came expressly to warn us of this danger. In the December number is an allegory, by J. Brieu, describing the merging of two Souls in one in Nirvana. Luxame compares different religious systems in a sketch entitled "Beneath the Bodhi-tree."

Received:—*Teosofisk Tidskrift, The Vahan, The Brahmavadin, The Arya Bala Bodhini, The Mahabodhi Journal.*

Received:—A translation of the *Yoga-Vasishtha-Laghu*, by K. Narayanswami Aiyer. It is a book of a highly mystical nature, and a considerable knowledge of Hindu literature and thought is necessary for its right comprehension. The method of its teachings is an attractive one. Under the form of stories and legends, priceless pearls of wisdom are given out. The nature of *Raja Yoga* is dwelt on at length and on this account the book will be of special interest to Western readers. The price is three rupees, and it may be ordered through the MERCURY Publishing Co.

A HISTORICAL RETROSPECT, 1885-1896, OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, by Col. H. S. Olcott, has just reached us, and it is a pamphlet that ought to be read by every member of the T. S. It conclusively proves that the Society has existed from its foundation not only *de facto* but also *de jure*. At a meeting of the T. S., held in New York on July 16th, 1877, a document was drawn up, signed by H. S. Olcott and W. Q. Judge, in which it

was resolved that “*the Headquarters of the Society may be transferred by the President to any foreign country, where he may be temporarily established.*” On the 17th of December, 1878, Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott sailed from New York to India via England, and the headquarters of the Society were established at Bombay, later at Adyar, Madras, where they have been ever since. Colonel Olcott bases his account on official documents on file at Adyar, and their correctness is vouched for by three witnesses.

### The Human Aura.

Fearfully, wonderfully made is man. Who can sound the depths of his nature? Old Socrates said truly: Man, know thyself. The quintessence of all knowledge is the knowledge of the self in its various aspects. There is a certain voice in man—it is called instinct, sometimes intuition—which echoes the words, that man contains in himself, potentially, if not actually, everything in nature, perceived and unperceived, great and small. As the macrocosmos, so is the microcosmos, said the mediæval alchemists. Man is a world in himself and partakes in his own constitution of all the varying moods of nature. Have we not all felt in our own selves how the waves beat high, while the tempest lasts and the wind howls, or how the Sirocco blows like a fiery furnace in our hearts; how the storm is laid, perhaps by the smile of a loving friend, and our mind feels as tranquil as a meadow of emerald green.

As the physical world is reflected in man, so is also the moral and mental; the highest thoughts and most sublime spirituality may be found in man; unhappily also the lowest depths of corruption and wickedness. Man is potentially either a God or a devil, according to his thoughts and acts.

In all ages philosophers and seers have tried to determine where the real Ego, the actual Self, is hidden. We know that man is a highly complex organism, the mechanism of which is truly wonderful, but we feel that this is not the real man, who is behind everything visible; “the size of a thumb, the inner self sits ever in the heart of all that’s born”, says the *Kathopanishad*. This Self can never be grasped by the senses, and as long as man is under their bondage he cannot know his innermost, true Self.

Modern science bases its results on observations, gathered by our five imperfect senses, and its philosophy, agnosticism, asserts that we can know nothing beyond that, and its concomitant creed is styled atheism or nihilism. It utterly denies the existence of the Self, because it cannot see it, and its place is taken by the grey matter of the brain—choosing the grey color most fitly as the emblem of inertia and death. Man is no longer

the splendid divine-born Soul; he is naught but a worm, made of earth and returning to earth. Such is the glorious result of modern scientific achievement. What a boon for struggling humanity! Why are suicides so frequent? Why does pessimism, despair—Weltschmerz—go round, knocking at so many doors? Ask our materialists, sitting serenely content, enchained in their self-forged irons of the five senses, having thrust out all religion, all idealism from their abode of analytical research.

*But Theosophy comes to the rescue.* No day-dreaming mysticism, or phantastic vagaries of the mind, but material facts come unexpectedly to the assistance of man, bidding defiance at the materialists. By their own weapons shall we slay them!

A vast storehouse of convincing facts are ready to be dragged to light by those who have power and ability for the task. That giant soul, H. P. Blavatsky, came to show us, how the task was to be attempted. Her advice was: Seek not around you but within yourself and you will find there all that can be learnt.

Following her steps are a band of earnest students of Theosophy, all working with the same object in view; the true development of the latent powers of man for the use of humanity. The result of their work is at present twofold: 1st, it is tested by sufficient investigation, that the perception of man is not limited to the five senses, but a new-born sixth sense, ordinarily described as clairvoyance and clairaudiance, is the property of a few and can become actualized in all, by proper development. 2nd, with this new sense, which is in reality merely a sharpening or intensification of the others, a new world is opened up, a world undreamt of, so full of beauty and enchantment, that it cannot fail to make man feel the desire to live and investigate.

To all who have made a study of these subjects, the works of A. P. Sinnett, Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater are familiar. Their productions are remarkable, both from a literary point of view and from the interesting matter they contain, and all are based upon clairvoyant investigation. A book has now appeared, which goes a step further than any of the former, delving deeper into the mysteries of man. It is the *Human Aura*, by Mr. A. Marques, S. D. Mr. Marques is no visionary dreamer; what he writes is the result of a careful investigation by himself, assisted by M. McElroy, and the result is put down in a terse and condensed style. It is a book which needs careful study, both intellectually and intuitionally, because we can never fully comprehend the mysteries of the Astral Plane, before experiencing them ourselves. It is a world full of exquisite beauty and harmony to which the author introduces us, and in looking at the frontispiece, a fine colored diagram of the auras, one cannot help exclaiming: "Is this man, the despised creature, clothed in all



his garments of glory", and it must fill everyone with wonder, awe and admiration for the divine architect, the "Lord who looks down from on high," silently keeping watch over his handiwork.

The author follows the Pythagorean division of ten principles, the highest principle in reality being the mystic trinity. For practical purposes the usual sevenfold division is adopted, and each principle has its corresponding aura or auras, because on each plane there are subdivisions, making the whole an exceedingly complicated system. For instance, to take the lowest aura, which the author calls the Tatwic Currents, he distinguishes between the chromatic and geometrical auras; the former is permanent, divided in colored strips, the latter consists of "minute figures which seem to run over and through the chromatic portion." What a subject for an artist or even more for a musician! What sublime harmonies the vibrations of these Tatwic Currents should produce, of which our material ears can have no perception. The auras next to the Tatwic are the Caloric and Magnetic; next to them those belonging to the etheric double, then the Pranic aura, the Kama Rupic and so upwards until what is called the Atmic Aura or Auric egg, is reached, which includes them all, is of indescribable, transcendental beauty and so sacred that until recently, mention has only been made of it in a veiled manner.

In spite of the complexity of the subject, it is presented in such a lucid style, that the reader can easily learn how to distinguish between the different kinds of Auras, even to their very breadth and length; the most spiritual protruding furthest out from the body. The appendix treats of the Auras of plants and magnets; a hitherto very obscure subject. Of special value are also the few hints the author gives the reader as to the use of clairvoyant faculties and their misuse. This subject needs a much larger chapter, but as the author says himself, the present book is only a suggestive outline, in need of being amplified, and we can only hope that more will soon follow.

It is no mere accident that such a book appears at the end of this century. The time is ripe, and the old cycle is coming to an end, while the new brings with it the influx of monads of the sixth race humanity with their new born sense, which will be an "Open Sesame" to many gates, that have hitherto been hermetically sealed.

The Human Aura is the first attempt of the Mercury Publishing Company and is on the whole rather creditable. We hope, though, that the most flagrant typographical errors will disappear in the next edition.

A. W.

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We can advance solely by working unceasingly, unselfishly for others. He who forgets charity, kindness, forbearance for others, cannot progress.

## THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

[This Department will be devoted exclusively to children; questions and answers from Lotus Circles on Theosophical Subjects are invited and will receive special attention.]

## NATURE'S PARABLES.

## Duty.

Can a pebble talk?

I went one day with a dear little brown-eyed boy for a long walk. Our path led us up a mountain where a rivulet went dancing down beside us.

"Where does the brook come from, Aunt Lee, and what makes it go so fast?" he asked.

When he asks me a question like that I am apt to wait a little while, for he has a habit of answering his questions himself, and I sometimes like his answer better than I do my own.

"It is hurrying to get somewhere, isn't it?" he said presently.

"Yes, it seems so," I answered.

"Does God want it for something?"

"I think it knows what it is about," I said.

We climbed on and the path grew steeper and more stony as the rivulet became narrower and flowed more rapidly. Finally we came to a deep round pool or spring, and this was the end of the rivulet. We sat down on a large flat stone and I dipped my hand into the little spring and brought up several round, smooth pebbles from the bottom of it.

"Yes, dear," I said to him; "God does want the brook. Shall I tell you the story that the pebble told me about it?"

"Yes, Aunt Lee—please do," he said; and his face was serious and his eyes very bright when he said it.

"Well, this is what the pebble told me:"

"Once, when the trees were ever so much larger than the trees grow now, a great giant was walking out in the misty morning and the air was very warm. We pebbles loved the damp air, for it always reminded us of the great billows that had rolled us and tossed us and played with us for a long time, and then left us in little heaps on the ground. 'I think I will have some of these trees cut down,' said the giant, 'so the air can come in; it is altogether too damp here.' So he set about with other giants like

himself and in a short time a great opening was made in the woods and the wind was rushing in, and when the giant walked out in the morning there was no more mist and the air was cool, and the ground was hard under his feet where before it had been soft and mossy; but there was no brook nor stream anywhere, and we pebbles shuddered because of the dryness.”

“When the pebble told me this it sighed a little and then went on: ‘But though the mist had gone away, it was not lost; away up in the sky it floated in banks of cloud, and we knew that it wanted to come back to its old play-ground and to us; but the wind blew and there was no chance nor place for it to come, and it was away out of sight up there in the sky. Then one day some thing strange happened, the wind grew still and there came down a little splash!—drop!—and then another. We knew it was our old friend—the waterwave—our playfellow—the mist—so as it fell we gathered around it, and whispered: ‘Hide with us so the giant of the forest cannot find you’ (that giant’s name was Fire.)—So drop by drop, like tears, she came back to us and nestled down on a bed of rock below us and made a beautiful clear pool, and the years and years went by, and we waited, keeping her safe and loving her until one day we looked out and saw that the giant was gone and we knew that she was safe. Then she rushed out from her hiding place, but we would not let her go alone.

“Down the hill she rolled us with herself, and we became the bed over which she is always flowing. We do not know where she is going nor for what she runs so fast, but she tells us that it is very important; that the river is always waiting for her and she must go. So we keep close together and make it easy for her to get there. Good-bye; I must go a little further down.’ And the pebble had finished its story and rolled away.”

“Aunt Lee, what was it that made the pebbles make the bed for the brook?” the little boy asked.

“It was duty, dear. The pebbles loved the water-drops and the spring needed them and so they gave themselves to it.”

Then we came back down the path with the rivulet dancing beside us, and the little boy carried a pebble in his hand and when he got home, he put it carefully away in his box of treasures.

LYDIA BELL.