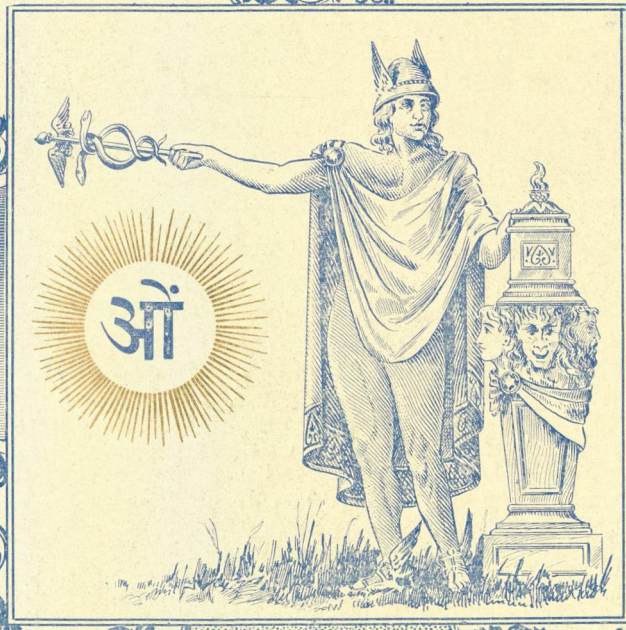


Mercury



DEVOTED TO
 THE STUDY OF THEOSOPHY, ORIENTAL PHILOSOPHY,
 THE OCCULT SCIENCES
 AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.

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MISS MARIE A. WALSH.

"Point out the 'Way'—however dimly, and lost among the hos.—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness."



MERCURY.

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE AMERICAN SECTION, T. S.

VOL. V.

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THE SCIENCE OF THE SOUL.

[Lecture by J. C. Chatterji, the Brahmacharin Bodhabikshu, delivered at Odd Fellows' Hall, San Francisco, Sunday evening, October 9th, 1898].

PERHAPS the subject of my discourse this evening will sound startling to a few of you—"The Science of the Soul." The problem of the soul, treated as an experimental science, is rather new to many, but it need not startle you, for you know, in name at least, of this science called psychology, which, interpreted, means the science of the soul. It is admitted that the question of the soul can be treated as a science by everyone who will take up this study of psychology; though, unfortunately, that word implies very little to the ordinary mind. Few, unfortunately, go into the study of the science of psychology; and so, in the Western world, it conveys no more idea than a few vague and indistinct speculations and inferences from a few facts and phenomena observed on the surface. What I have to tell you this evening, however, under that name psychology, is of an experimental nature. This I want to put before you, if I can, in such a way as to show you that it is possible to study this problem of all problems—the problem of your own being and existence—as a positive and definite science, experimental and precise, like all the other sciences of which you know—physics, chemistry, and the like.

Already some of you know something of this experimental science of the soul. Already you are aware of the fact that there is such a

thing as telepathy; that there is such a thing as thought reading and thought transference. You are already familiar with many of the phenomena which are seen now and then in spiritualistic seances and through other mediums. You already know of the results obtained by the members of the organization known as the Society for Psychical Research. If you read carefully their reports of material they have collected, and their periodical publications, you will know that there are certain facts and phenomena connected with the consciousness of man which are beyond any question, which are as clear as anything can be, though their explanations are wanting. So more or less, anyone who is interested in the problems of the mind knows something of the experimental nature of this science of the soul. But these facts and the phenomena collected by the students of psychology in the Western world, observed by seekers after truth here, are more or less vague and indefinite; and at best, they are but indirect methods of experimentation. For, when you see a phenomenon manifested, when you see something produced on the physical plane, made visible to your eye by some agency you do not know, you have no logical right, no sure ground, from such phenomenon, upon which to build your theory of the soul. I can give you an illustration to make the point clear. Say you go to a spiritualistic seance. There you see certain things done—say writings of different kinds produced. You see that by some means or another, this writing is produced; that much you know. But from that phenomenon, to jump to the conclusion all at once that this writing is produced by a disembodied soul, is rather hasty; is something which strict logic will hardly permit you to do. All you can infer from this phenomenon is that there is and must be, at the back of the manifestation, something which is its cause; but what that something is, or what its nature, you do not know. So you will notice that by observing phenomena produced by these means, you do not know directly, at first hand, the problems of the soul or the facts connected with your own real being. Therefore, I say that the observation of these facts does not really give you a direct and first-hand knowledge of the science of the soul.

There is, however, another and a very sure method of knowing this—a method very definite and precise, as definite as any science can be. And it is of this method and of this science of the soul that I am to speak to you to-night.

But, before I can show you the possibility of knowing the facts connected with your consciousness on planes other than the physical; before I can make it clear to you how it is possible to verify truths regarding your own subtle and super-physical nature, I must tell you something regarding the nature of consciousness, and something regarding the nature of objects you see. If you analyze carefully any object that comes within the field of your vision, you will find that this object is really within yourself. A startling statement, perhaps you will say, but nevertheless as true as anything can be. The popular conception places the object outside; the popular, unthinking mind conceives that the object is something apart from one's own consciousness; but the scientific, trained mind knows that the cause of the object is outside, but not the object. And by outside, I mean outside of your own body. If you analyze the matter carefully, let me repeat, you will find that it is but the effect of certain kinds of motion on your own self. Take, for instance, a flower, a rose. Now, what is a rose? A rose is only a sensation of color, appearing in a certain form in space, fragrance, softness—and all these combined under name, you call a rose. That is your object. Analyze carefully these sensations which go to make up what you call your rose, and you will find they are all due to some kinds of motion; they are the effects of motion upon yourself. What you call, for instance, the color of the rose, is nothing but the effect of vibratory movement, first on the retina of your eye; then this motion is carried on by means of the nerves to the brain, and from there onwards to your subtle inner nature, and there the picture is formed, the sensation of color objectified, and you see the form of your rose. The cause of that sensation is outside—the light rays, the vibratory or the undulatory motion of the ether, as some say. So outside you have only the motion. These motions affect the retina of your eye, and then your nervous system and then your brain, and so memory produces an effect on your inner consciousness. This you call color. Then softness or hardness, fragrance, all these things, are but effects of motion on you. What you call weight is nothing but the effect of your interfering with the cosmic tendency of everything to come together—which you call gravitation. The rose is tending to come to the center of the earth. You place your hand between the earth and the rose, and the effect of that interference you call weight. You come in the way of this great cosmic tendency to come together,

and that interference is the cause of the sensation of weight. And so on with everything. If you analyze an object, you will find it is composed of nothing but effects, of motions of three kinds, vibratory motion or vortices, as known to every scientist. An atom is nothing but a vortex of motion. The scientist will tell you that every particle of an object is continually moving; and, if you go further, you will know that these atoms are nothing but continual whirlpools of motion—of vibration, if you please. Now, these vortices come together (attraction), or go apart one from the other (repulsion). So in nature—in this vast panorama of the Kosmos which reaches beyond, above and on all sides—all is nothing but a gigantic system of motion. Everything in the universe is moving, and it is motion which gives you the sensation of the diversified objects, the collectivity of which you call the universe, everything thus existing in your own consciousness. Your universe is in your own consciousness. My universe is different from yours; yours is different from mine. What I can see you do not see; what you see I do not see. If my eyes are trained, if I have developed the powers latent in every man, I see more shades of color, hear more tones of music than you. If you are trained more than I, you see and hear more. Going to a concert, the trained ear hears more than the untrained. Going to a picture gallery, the trained eye sees more than the untrained. So your universe is not the same as the universe of anyone else. That, then, is the first idea regarding your consciousness—that all objects are but effects on your consciousness of vibratory motion; or rather, of three kinds of motion—vibratory, attractive and repulsive.

In passing, let me tell you that this idea of motion, of course, is rather mechanical. In speaking of the universe from this mechanical and material standpoint, we can make use of the term motion. But really, from a psychological standpoint, these motions are nothing but tendencies of the mind—the vast cosmic tendency to be, to exist, which creates vibration. The tendency which, in the human kingdom, appears as love, manifests itself as cosmic gravitation. It is this same tendency to come together. The other tendency, the repulsive, appears in the human kingdom as activity, restlessness. So, ultimately, these three modes of motion are nothing but three great tendencies of the great Cosmic Mind. They are, in other words, but reflections of the great Trinity, of which you hear in your

Christian creed. You will thus understand the deep meaning which lies in your doctrine of the Trinity. Everything, when analyzed, is found to consist of this great Trinity of nature, the foundation of all. That then, is the first conception, the first law regarding your consciousness—that all objects are but the effects of the three different tendencies of mind, or the three different modes of motion within your own self.

Then the next law is, that in proportion as you can respond to these motions, you see more objects. I have already given the illustration. I have said that the trained ear, at a concert, hears more. What does that mean? It means that there are vibrations to which the untrained ear cannot respond, whereas the trained ear can. In proportion as it can respond to these vibrations is its ability to hear. In the same way, going to a picture gallery, the untrained eye does not see so many shades of color as does the eye of the trained student. Why? Do the vibrations cease to exist? No; they are all there. Go with a trained eye, and you will see more objects, more shades of color, in the same picture in which but a few colors are seen by the untrained eye. So the second law is, that to be conscious of any object, it is only necessary to be able to respond to these motions which appeal to you, which come to you from all sides. If you can respond to these motions, you are conscious of objects; if you cannot respond, if you are not affected by these motions, you do not see the objects.

That is the whole philosophy of consciousness. First, all objects are but effects of motion on you. Secondly, in proportion as you can respond to these motions, in proportion as you are affected by these motions, in proportion as you catch these subtle vibrations of nature, you become conscious of more and more objects. Grasp these two ideas, and you will know how it is possible to verify the existence of subtle things, and then the existence of the soul and of the facts and phenomena connected with it will become clear to you.

Really, everything exists here. You have heard of the ether. The existence of the ether is recognized, at least as a theory, by scientists in the Western world, as a hypothesis to explain certain facts and phenomena otherwise inexplicable. This ether was known to the ancient sages of India, of Greece, of Alexandria. Well, ether exists right here; everywhere; it penetrates everything. Why do you fail to see it? Because you cannot respond to these subtle

vibrations. Develop the power to respond to these vibrations, and you will see the etheric currents all around you; you will see many new shades of color. A little development of this power is called, in the Western world, clairvoyance. And the same power, developed in another direction, or in another way, is called clairaudience. Both are nothing more than the expansion of powers which you all have now.

You have no right to suppose that the vibrations do not exist because you cannot respond to them. You know of the solar spectrum; you know it can be analyzed into certain shades of color. Have you any reason to suppose that there are no colors or vibrations beyond the red, on the one side, and beyond the violet on the other? If you do so believe, you simply do not know the laws of nature. The vibrations exist; they are there, but you cannot perceive them. Your scientists will tell you that there are other vibrations below and above those which are visible to you. These vibrations you cannot respond to; therefore you do not see any colors beyond those generally recorded. If you learn to respond to the vibrations below the red and beyond the violet, you will see other forms and shades of color.

You also know, by a common experiment, that because you cannot respond to vibrations, that is no proof of the non-existence of these. Take, for instance, a musical instrument—some pipe instrument. Blow into it, and you will hear a sound. Then raise the pitch of the instrument, and continue to raise it higher and higher, until you come to a point where you no longer hear the sound. But are you to suppose that the vibrations have ceased to exist because you hear no sound? If so, you are mistaken. That the vibrations do exist you can make sure. Have a candle burning near, and then press the instrument and the candle will respond to the vibrations by flickering; showing that the vibrations are there, although *you* cannot respond to them.

And so, by extending this same law, you can imagine that there is no reason to suppose that these subtle vibrations of nature cease to exist beyond the physical plane, simply because you cannot perceive them. That is a great mistake. They are here—vibrations subtler and subtler—until you reach the point where all is rest and peace. You will have to respond to them. And herein lies the secret of the possibility of experimental psychology. All things of nature,

everything, all vibrations, all modes of motion, are here. Only sharpen your consciousness and respond to them, and you will see and hear many things which are invisible and inaudible to you now.

If you do that, you will see, for instance, what you call your departed friends, dead men and women. Nothing is more erroneous than that word "dead." There is nothing dead in nature; everything is alive. Your friends are not dead; they exist. They have merely cast off the physical body. You can be conscious of them, for they still exist in a subtle form, right here. Respond to these subtle vibrations and you will see them. This, then, is the secret of experimental psychology; the extending of your powers, the expanding of your consciousness—in other words, increasing the ability to respond to these vibrations which exist right here.

To do this, to apply this principle, two things are necessary: first, intensity of consciousness; and secondly, calmness of mind. Without these you will never be able to cognize these subtle vibrations of nature. Intensity of consciousness—in other words, attention increased to the highest point—and then absolute calmness. When the consciousness is wrapped up in ordinary trivial things, as with most people, they pass along the streets and they do not hear many things, they do not see many things, simply because they are not attentive. When you are attentive, you see and hear many more things than you would otherwise. Attention is absolutely necessary in order to recognize subtle things. Unless you pay close attention to any subject of study, you cannot recognize the subtle points; without close attention you cannot be a scientist or a student of the marvellous universe of minute. The more you pay attention to a thing, the more you see its details, its beauty, its subtlety. So increase of the power of attention is absolutely necessary; and the second requisite is absolute calmness, which, of course, comes with this increase of attention. A man not calm and quiet in mind cannot very well be attentive; it is almost an impossibility. When you are closely attentive to a thing, your breath is almost suspended. You are so calm and quiet in mind that not a single passion and emotion stirs within your heart. So that really these two things go together—increase of attention and absolute calmness.

Suppose you wish to detect a dying note on the horizon. Can a man restless in mind hear it? No; you must pour your whole being into your ear, shut your eyes, be all attention, put all your soul into

your ear, and with concentrated attention, with calmness of mind, you can hear the note which is fading out at a distance on the horizon. So you will notice the need of concentration. Without this, it is impossible to recognize subtle things. In other words, to recognize truth, to verify facts and phenomena connected with the soul and with the psychological realms and realms beyond the physical, it is necessary that you gain that calmness of mind which is possible only for the religious man. And by the religious man I mean the truly pious. So long as the passions are raging within your heart; so long as hate, lust, greed, malice, and the like, reign supreme within yourself; so long, in other words, as a man belongs to the realm of the animal, this calmness of mind is an impossibility. Therefore, the need of concentration for the recognition of the higher truth. Purify your heart, hush your passions, control yourself perfectly, and your mind is quiet, your concentration is something beyond the normal. Then alone can you recognize truth, can you know the verities of the superphysical realms. I say superphysical—not supernatural—for all are within the realms of nature, within law.

This is absolutely necessary, and that is why Christ said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." People think this is a sentiment; many do not understand that a profounder scientific truth cannot be. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"—in other words, they shall see the truth which is beyond. And what is purity of heart? It means absolute unselfishness; it means total annihilation of all notion of separation of caste, creed, color, sex. It means absolute unity with all, oneness with all in spirit. That is the meaning of unselfishness. That gained, all passions vanish. For, when you have realized that you are one with all, how can you quarrel with others, how can you have pride, vanity, hate, malice, anger, lust, greed? All these vanish into thin air; they no longer exist. Thus all the impurities of the heart, all that poisons and corrupts the human soul, have sprung from selfishness; from the notion "I am separate from the rest; I have my own personal interest." It is from this error that all evil springs in the human heart. Remove this, eradicate it, realize this unity of all in the spirit, and you are pure.

And when you are thus pure, your mind is calm, all passions gone. It is the calm mind in which truth is reflected. Then you see the

truth, for the truth is here. All the eternal verities of the super-physical realms are here, only you need to quiet your mind, to fix your attention in that direction. If you can do it, you will see everything. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"—a profoundly scientific and philosophical truth!

To be really calm and to concentrate, it is necessary that a man should be religious. And by religious, I do not mean simply to go to church. There are many men and women who never go to church who are far more religious than those who go to church simply because it is a fashion, a fad. By being religious, I mean being unselfish, pious, devotional. You may not accept any dogma of any religion; you may even call yourself an atheist; yet you are a far better Christian than many of those who call themselves such, if you have unselfishness and purity of heart. If you have these, you have calmness of mind and concentration.

And how is this accomplished? By doing everything that comes in your way, but doing it in the right spirit. To verify the truths of psychology, it is necessary, I have said, that you shall increase your consciousness, and this you cannot do if you leave off activity. If you leave off activity—not merely physical activity, but activity of the mind, of the spirit, of the highest nature of the soul—if you leave off all activity and retire prematurely into a jungle, you only fall into deep sleep, slumber, idleness. So it is quite unwise to think you can gain higher wisdom by leaving off what you have to do. That is a great mistake. The laws of nature, which we call Karma, have placed you in circumstances which best suit you. All you have to change is the attitude of your mind, and not your surroundings. Do everything, not for the personal self, but for the Self of all, for humanity, for God if you please, for Christ to make it more complete. Do everything for the Christ as a Christian; do everything for the Master as a Theosophist; do everything for the Buddha as a Buddhist; and if you are a Brahmin do all for Krishna. Do everything for your Lord, whoever He be—which means for mankind, for God. Do it in that spirit, and your selfishness will be eliminated.

So, to verify the truths of experimental psychology, it is necessary that you should be active. It is not necessary to run away, to break loose from your surroundings. Many people tell me, in regard to leading the Theosophic life, that they cannot do it; their circumstan-

ces are such that they cannot study, and so on. A greater mistake cannot be made. Such a man will never attain to self-knowledge; such a man will never be able to verify the truths of superphysical nature.

Every circumstance, however antagonistic, however adverse it may be, can be utilized as a help, as a stepping-stone to higher wisdom. This is truth. You are not to change your surroundings and circumstances, for these suit you best. You have been placed there by the laws of nature—by the will of God, if you please. There you must remain. You have only to change your own self. You are to look upon the universe from the standpoint of the universal, and not from the standpoint of your limited, personal, narrow self. Do it, and you will be in a position where you may be able to verify the truths of the experimental science of the soul. For, as you do your duties from this standpoint, you are never ruffled, you are never disturbed in mind. No matter what happens, your business is to do your part; that done, you are quiet. It does not matter what follows—whether you succeed or fail. That is not your point. Your point is to do your part. Work is your object, and not its fruit or result.

That is the teaching of all the great Teachers; that was the teaching of the Christ, of the Buddha. The same was taught by Krishna in the ancient land of India, where it has been my privilege to be born this time. So the teaching has always been the same. The Teachers do not give any explanations as to *why* they taught it; but they taught it. You are to work, not from the standpoint of the self, but from the standpoint of the universal, for God, for the Master, for your Lord. As you do this, you eliminate self, and as you eliminate self, you are sure to gain calmness of mind. For, if you try to find the cause of your disturbance, of the petty upsets of the mind—if you analyze these carefully, you will find, at bottom, it is your personal, limited, narrow self which is the cause. All disturbances are due to this.

Analyze yourself carefully when you are afraid. When you fear something will happen, you are upset at once. Perhaps you fear you are going to die. That means you conceive yourself something narrow, limited, separate. But if you knew yourself as one with the Deity, as one with All, what fear should you have if the body goes to pieces? *You* do not die. So every time you are afraid, rest assured you are far from the truth. When you know the truth you are not fearful of anything.

The same rule applies to loss of your property. Does it disturb you? If so, rest assured you are working for personal, limited things. What is your property? Everything belongs to nature; you are a part of nature; and what matters it to you whether your property remains or goes to pieces? It is your duty to do your part, to do your work, and let the rest remain as it may be. If you can act in that way, you are sure to have peace of mind, calm and quiet. Then change your attitude and not your surroundings. From service in devotion you gain calmness of mind.

And then your consciousness increases, gains in intensity; for while you are active you are exercising your faculties and you grow in consciousness. The growth of your nature is dependent upon exercise. Exercise your muscles and they grow; exercise your mind and the faculties will grow; exercise your spiritual nature, and you are growing in it. As you are active, you are creating in your consciousness different faculties. On the other hand, being unselfish in your action, doing everything for your Lord, for humanity, for the universe, you gain calmness of mind. So you combine these two by one and the same action—*increase of your powers and calmness of mind.*

If you do not believe in God, in the Masters like Buddha and Christ, it is for you to act for all. Who are you but a bubble in the vast ocean of life? What is your existence as a separate being? You are but part and parcel of the great Kosmos. Be you Christian, materialist, atheist, what you like, you cannot make yourself something separate from the rest of the universe. You are part of this great nature, and your activity is but a part of the great cosmic activity. If you do not identify yourself with this great cosmic activity, you only fight against nature, you only stand against the great cosmic force which keeps the circling stars in their orbits, which makes the great planetary systems run in the vast and limitless space.

Can you resist this divine power, the power of nature? If you stand against it, if you try to isolate yourself from the great cosmic chain, from this mighty and intricate system, you only bring death upon you. Who can fight these mighty powers, who can stand against the great Force which dwells in space in bodies so vast as the planets and stars? Fight against that Power! What can it bring but death and destruction!

Whatever you be, whether agnostic, materialist, atheist, you cannot get away from the great cosmic system. Your action is but an infinitesimal drop, an insignificant part, in the vast cosmic action. If, then, you are to fare well in life, you must identify yourself with all, you must harmonize yourself with the rest. So I say this mode of action, of identifying oneself with the All, is advisable even from the standpoint of common prudence, even if you do not believe in the existence of God.

So from every standpoint, it is for us to work for all—in other words, unselfishly. And as you work in this way, you gain intensity of consciousness, increase of your powers, and calmness. These gained, you are in a position to respond to these subtle vibrations continually playing through you. You must practice this duty of service, this unselfish work for all, on the one hand; and then you may contemplate on the vastness of nature, on the vast grandeur and glory of the Kosmos, on the beauty of the Deity, and you may try to commune with those mysterious Beings which guide and govern nature. In this communion, new truths unfold themselves within your heart. These you verify by work for all—work for everyone and not for yourself.

As you do this, you recognize the facts and verities of superphysical nature. You then become conscious, gradually, of many a being around you. You know not only your own soul apart from your body, but the souls of others. You see many an entity that has left its body on earth. You are conscious, thus, from your own knowledge; you thus know that facts regarding the soul are true. Thus psychology becomes an experimental science to you; thus the soul becomes something capable of scientific study; you *know* then; your soul communes with soul; you are not the body. You are conscious of subtle verities no longer dependent on any faith, belief or speculation. But you know; you speak with authority; you can say: "I have known and seen and bear witness of things." "We speak of things we have seen, and bear witness of what we have seen." You can speak as Christ did, with authority. You can thus make the question of soul scientific and verifiable. You can then commune with other beings.

How is this communion possible?—for it is possible, not only with beings known on earth, but with those much higher and greater. How it is possible to come into communion with the Masters, such

as the Christ was—this I shall try to explain to you in my lecture next Sunday evening.

Let me conclude by adding that it is the experimental science of the soul which we study in the Theosophical Society. This movement is not of modern growth. For, though the modern organization called the Theosophical Society may be of only a few years' growth, though it may have existed for only twenty-three years, yet the movement is as old as religion itself. The science of the soul is as old as the Deity. It was known, and is known, to all of the sages of all countries and climes. It is not the special property of any special nation; it is not the special property of India alone, as many suppose, but was known by scholars and sages in Egypt and Greece. It was the science of the soul, positive and defined, taught by the Christ himself; it was known to the early Christian Fathers; was taught in the early Christian Church. Only when the Church wedded itself to the State—and woe unto that day when the Roman power got hold of the Church, when the Emperor became the leader of the Church, for it is from that day that the true teachings of Christianity have vanished—these truths were lost to it.

So you need not think that what I am saying is anything new. It is not peculiar to Christianity. St. Paul taught it; you can read it in his writings if you have the eyes to read. Christ taught the same. Did he not say it was possible to bring on earth a new truth which should make men free? Does that mean to take things on faith, to speculate? "*The Truth* shall make you free." Such is the announcement of the Master, Christ. And that is possible only when you know, at first hand, by following these steps which I have tried to show you this evening.

So what I have said is not peculiar. It is as much a part and parcel of your own Christianity as it is of Buddhism, of Brahmanism, or of any of the great religious systems of the world. Do not, therefore, run away from what I have said, thinking it is Theosophy. It is your own Christianity as well. Understand these ideas clearly and your Christianity will appear in a new light. Understand these ideas better, and you will be better prepared to stand against the arguments of the materialist or the atheist. Your Christ will be more real, more living, to you. The souls that have gone on, that have passed from this earth, that have left the body, all these will appear as living realities to you. Your own soul you will know from first-hand knowledge.

These are the teachings which we receive in the Theosophical Society, some of which have been verified by the teachers themselves. If you try to understand them with your reason, and try to practice them by leading the holy life which I have tried to picture, it shall be for you to verify the truth, for you as a Christian to know it. It is for you to show this to the world—that what you have learned of the soul in your Christian religion is not merely a matter of blind faith and belief, not a matter of conjecture, but a matter of science, of positive knowledge. It is for this purpose that we spread Theosophy—not to make new converts, not to increase the number of members in the Society, not to make propaganda for the sake of propaganda, but to help everyone in his own creed—to make the Christian a better Christian, the Hindu a better Hindu, the Buddhist a better Buddhist. That is the mission of the Theosophical Society; that is the object of Theosophy; and if you will study Theosophy, you will find you will be a better Christian and not less one. You will not run away from the Church; but you will be a bulwark in the Church; for Theosophy will give you an understanding of things which you now take on faith alone. Then the soul will be a verity to you, and not a matter of belief and conjecture.

If I have succeeded in rousing in you that spirit of inquiry, of scientific research, I think I have done enough. If a few of you are willing to study and to show to the materialistic world that your Christianity and the teaching regarding the soul given in it are facts, I have done enough. Thus, in serving Theosophy, I believe I have contributed something to the service of Christianity as well.

Let us come together, whether we be Christians or Brahmins, under this name of Theosophy, and you will find that you have here a religion which is at once rational and spiritual, at once satisfying to the heart and to the head, at once appealing to the mind and to the soul.

FRIENDS OF OUR MOVEMENT.

MARIE AGNES WALSH was born in England, of Celtic parents, Irish, Scotch and Welsh blood flowing in her veins. She was reared in the Catholic faith. Part of her early life was spent in France, from whence she came to America in the sixties. For some time subsequent, she taught in New York, travelling from there to California, where she has since resided. The greater part of her life has been spent as a private tutor and parlor lecturer.

Miss Walsh, like many others of our devoted and earnest workers, came into Theosophy by way of Spiritualism. In 1888, she joined Golden Gate Lodge T. S., then holding meetings in Oakland. She was one of the "twelve apostles"—that band of Theosophic pioneers who, in those early days, strove fearlessly and untiringly against prejudice, bigotry and superstition, and who, by their devotion, made possible much that has since been accomplished in Theosophic work upon the Pacific Coast.

Miss Walsh is and has been one of our ablest and most devoted workers. Wherever her duties have taken her, she has been identified with the Theosophical Society, and has given willing aid and encouragement as opportunity offered. In 1891, under her guidance, the first Lotus Circle was formed in San Francisco, and from the idea there planted has grown up all the Lotus Circle work the world over.

At present, Miss Walsh is devoting all her time and energy to the spread of Theosophy—writing, teaching, lecturing, organizing new branches, revivifying older ones, and encouraging and assisting the members. Accomplished, thoughtful, with a mind ever open to truth, a heart which takes into its sympathies all creatures, a spirit which breathes patience, sweetness and strength, she carries an atmosphere of "peace and good-will" wherever she goes.

THE CHRISTIAN MYSTERIES.

I.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE SECRET.

PHILOLOGISTS tell us that the forms of words indicate the steps in the growth of the language of which they are composed; ethnologists trace the history of a people in its habits, manners and customs; students of social economics trace in the composite institutions of the day, the effects of the influences which the various schools of economic thought have had upon the commercial life of the community; and in the dogmas, rites and ceremonies of a church, we find the crystallization of the mighty truths, to the living force of which that church owes its origin. We turn, then, to the sacraments or mysteries of the Christian Church in expectation of a rich reward.

A sacrament, we are informed by the Roman Catholic Church, is "a visible or sensible sign, permanently instituted by God, and conveying real interior grace to the recipient." The catechism of the Church of England varies the method of expression, and adds an object. It says: "A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inner spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ as a means whereby we receive the same, and as a pledge to assure us thereof." The every-day citizen of our Western lands, even though he may in words admit the accuracy of one or the other of the above definitions, would find it very difficult to give a clear explanation of the interior or spiritual grace which has been conferred upon him by the sacrament, and the majority of our people may fairly be described as holding the views held by the larger number of members of Reformed Churches, who consider the sacraments to be merely ceremonial observances, partly designed as an act of admission to membership, partly to stimulate faith and excite fervor and pious disposition.

Although the above are the accepted meanings of the word in the Christian Churches at the present time, we find that originally the words "sacraments" and "mysteries" were synonymous. "Mystery" is derived from "mystes," one initiated, and is properly used to designate something intentionally kept hidden—a secret. This was the meaning attached to the word in the early Christian

Church. During the first five hundred years of its history, the sacraments were kept secret. It is said that there were in the Church two classes of members. In the first, or preparatory class, the "catechumens" were included. The "mystes," or initiated, were in the higher grade. The first-named were those who, having allied themselves to the Church, were candidates for initiation and further instruction. From them, all knowledge of the mysteries or sacraments was withheld until within a few days of their admission as members by the rite of baptism. They were put under a course of instruction, lasting, usually, from two to three years. At the end of this time, if found worthy, there was imparted to them what were regarded as the most sacred treasures of the Christian faith, those treasures being the following mysteries or sacraments :

(1) Baptism ; (2) Confirmation ; (3) The ordination of the priests ; (4) The eucharist ; (5) The liturgy or divine service of the Church ; (6) The mysteries of the Trinity, the creed, and the Lord's Prayer.

These things, in reference to which so much caution was exercised, were known as the "Disciplina Arcani" (the doctrine of the secret). Not only were the catechumens, with strangers, excluded from participation in them, but they were *never once even spoken about* openly and unreservedly in the presence of the uninitiated ; and, when finally they were imparted, it was only by word of mouth and as a secret to be kept. (Moeller, History of the Christian Church, A. D. 1—600, p. 269.)

Shelstrate a Roman Catholic writer, claimed that the "Disciplina Arcani" included both the sacraments above enumerated and also the major part of the ceremonies of the Church, and states that they were kept secret and only handed down by tradition—not committed to writing, lest they should come to the knowledge of the uninitiated Jews and Gentiles and the catechumens of the Church. Bingham, in his work on Christian Antiquities, Book X, chap. 5, combats the view that the mysteries included anything more than the sacraments.

That portion of the service having been reached in which the sacrament of the eucharist was to be administered, we are informed that the catechumens of all ranks were dismissed, and the doors of the church were locked and guarded by proper officers (deacons), to the intent that no uninitiated person should rush in upon them (Bingham, page 385). "We shut the doors," says Chrysoston (Bishop of

Constantinople, A. D. 347-407, "when we celebrate the holy mysteries, and drive away all uninitiated persons."

That this secrecy was deemed important, and was not a mere temporary expedient devised to meet some local conditions, is clear from the following quotations, which, with many others of a like nature, may be found in Bingham's work.

St. Cyril (Bishop of Jerusalem, A. D. 315-386) says: "We do not speak openly of sacraments before the catechumens, but deliver many things covertly, that the faithful, who know them, may understand us; and they who know them not may receive no harm."

And again: "You were once a catechumen, and then we did not discourse of mysteries before you; and now that you have attained by experience to the height of those things which we teach, you will easily perceive that catechumens are not worthy to be hearers of such things."

Pope Innocent the First (A. D. 402-417), referring to holy unction or confirmation, writing to another bishop, says: "He could not repeat the words, lest he should seem to disclose the mystery rather than answer the question proposed."

Theodotus (Bishop of Cyrus, A. D. 393-458): "We discourse of mysteries obscurely, because of the unbaptized; but when they are gone, we speak plainly before the initiated."

Nazianzen (Bishop of Constantinople, A. D. 325-392): "You have heard so much of the mystery (baptism) as we are allowed to speak publicly in the ears of all, and the rest you shall hear privately, which you must retain secretly within yourself, and keep under the seal of baptism."

So careful were they to keep the knowledge of the existence, even, of the mystery from the uninitiated, that Epiphanius (Bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, A. D. 320-404), speaking of the words of institution before the catechumens, would not say: "This bread is my body; this wine is my blood;" but "This is my that and that," to let the initiated know his meaning and not the catechumens.

II.

THE ESOTERIC TEACHINGS OF JESUS AND PAUL.

The early Church could find a justification for the existence of these mysteries in the practices of Jesus and Paul. The latter continually referred to various mysteries. (See I Cor. XV., 51; I Tim.

III., 16 ; Eph. V., 32 ; Eph. VI, 19.) In fact, Paul deemed one of his highest titles to be that of "Steward of the Mysteries of God" (I Cor. IV., 1). He declares that these mysteries were made known unto him through God's good pleasure (Eph. I, 9), that he had a knowledge thereof (Eph. III., 3, 4 and 5), and that not only was *he* in possession thereof, but that there was a fellowship or society in these mysteries (Eph. III, 9).

Paul, apparently, had as a part of his duty the instruction of others in these mysteries (Eph. VI, 19), interpreting the spiritual things to spiritual men (I Cor. II. 13). These mysteries were, in those days, as in the early post-apostolic Church, not communicated to members until they were thoroughly grounded in the more elementary teachings. We find Paul, in the first part of the second chapter of First Corinthians, declaring that he had come unto them, *not* proclaiming the mystery of God, but evidently demonstrating the power given unto him by the spirit. In the early part of the third chapter, he explains to them that he could not speak unto them as spiritual (explaining the mysteries to them), but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. He informs them, however, in the sixth verse of the second chapter, that he did speak that wisdom among the perfect (initiated).

Thus we find at least two classes into which Paul's pupils were divided. (First), those babes in Christ who were yet carnal-minded, and to whom the mysteries were not explained. (Second), the perfect, or initiated, who were considered worthy to have the mysteries revealed to them. That Jesus also made this distinction is evident from the oft-repeated passages (Matt. XIII, 11, and Mark IV, 11).

They were to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; not merely to know that there were such mysteries. A mystery, in orthodox minds to-day, means something which it is impossible for a human being to understand; something, humanly speaking, incomprehensible. It is evident that Jesus and Paul did not use the word in that sense. If they had, since they spoke openly of the existence of these things, there could have been no distinction such as they made between those who knew and those who did not know. "Mysteries," to them, clearly meant "secret teachings."

Moeller (History of the Christian Church, A. D. 1--600, p. 129), in effect endorses the position that there was, in the early Christian Church, a distinction between the simple or popular faith, and a

deeper knowledge of the secrets of the religious teachings. His words are as follows:

“The New Testament proclamation * * * entered upon a theological (notional) conception of itself, so as to distinguish from the simple, popular or undeveloped standpoint of mere Christian faith, that of a higher or deeper insight into religious truth and its secrets. So it was with Paul.” He then points out that the *gnosis* (wisdom) of I Cor. XII, 8, was distinguished from the *sophia* (knowledge) of I Cor. VIII, 1, the *gnosis* being a knowledge of the secrets of God (Cor. II, 8). He then continues: “So also the doctrine of John, in the speculative doctrine of the Divine Logos become flesh, had developed the ground lines of a higher *gnosis* out of the immediate religious impression of the revelation of God in Jesus. * * * Hence, we find * * * that the name *gnosis* is used with special preference for this investigation of the deeper sense of the positive religious commands and the development of the deeper meaning of scripture.”

III.

A RATIONAL SYSTEM.

Reasoning from probabilities, we would come to the conclusion that the great teachers who founded the Christian religion came presenting to the intellectual world of that day an explanation of the earth and its origin, of man and his destiny, that would stand the keenest criticism of the active and acute minds of that time, who were versed in the philosophy of Greece and Rome, of Egypt and of the East. Nothing less than this could endure. Their power to control or direct the laws of nature (referred to in I Cor. II, as the power of the spirit), at once aroused the attention of the people. Followers came. But only after they had proved their worthiness was this deeper knowledge imparted to them.

The mystery of baptism taught how the soul might be regenerated and immortality secured. Justin Martyr (See Bingham, Ch. Antiq., p. 392) informs us that baptism was called “illumination,” because the minds of those who learned the mystery were enlightened; and again, it was so called because it was the entrance to an enlightened state and the introduction to divine knowledge, which grew, by degrees, to greater perfection.

So the bread and wine—spirit and substance—which, conjoined,

constituted the Logos or Christos; the Trinity of Father, Holy Ghost and Son—or spirit, substance and manifested universe—and the other teachings contained in the true understanding of the Lord's Prayer, and the creed, formed, when taken together, a complete and rational scheme of the universe and man. Knowing this was possible, Paul could fairly expect his pupils to know the reason for their faith.

What was the object of all this concealment of the higher teachings? The reasons assigned by Bingham are (1) that the plainness and simplicity of them might not be contemned; (2) to promote a reverence for them; (3) to make the catechumens more desirous to know them, by exciting their curiosity and inflaming their zeal.

Bingham writes as an orthodox ultra-Protestant historian, and it may be assumed that he expresses the opinion held by the leading theological writers. The reasons he assigns seem inadequate. Can we imagine a church, strong in the faith of the invincibility of its religion, which it was announced should fill the whole earth, believing itself the custodian of the truth in the highest form ever revealed to man, surrounding those teachings and ceremonies with a shroud of mystery, so that their plainness and simplicity might not bring contempt, and requiring ignorance of their existence as a safe-guard for reverence for them? What can be more degrading to the early Church than to say that it kept secret those things which are now known to us as the sacraments, so that the attendants at their services might be led gradually along, becoming more desirous to know the mysteries as they were artfully kept from them—becoming Christians through curiosity, and having their zeal inflamed by ignorance?

Nor is a satisfactory explanation to be found in the oft-given reason that secrecy was required because to be known as a Christian was dangerous. The public was admitted to their sermons, their propaganda; therefore, the Christians were well known. Nor could this fear be assigned as a reason why candidates for admission—those who were under instruction in the teachings of the Church—should be excluded from participation in the mysteries.

Is not the true reason given in the words, "Knowledge is power"—power over the forces of nature? It is unsafe to trust the intellect controlled by selfishness with such knowledge. Upon one occasion, there was given the injunction, "Seek ye first the kingdom

of heaven"—or that condition of mind where both desire and intellect seek the welfare of humanity and the harmony of all things—and when that has been obtained, all things shall be added unto it. Wisdom shall come; Nature will recognize her master; the mind shall reign supreme, both within and without.

F. E. TITUS.

JOINING THE E. S. T.

ACCOMPANYING every diploma issued by the American Section is a circular by Mrs. Annie Besant, stating the existence of the Eastern School of Theosophy, the mode of its foundation, its object, the conditions of admission, and the official to whom to apply. In the actual operations of the School there has been some failure of understanding as to two important matters—the double nature of the condition added to the time limit, and the degree of responsibility resting upon an endorser—and it seems well to expound these matters more fully, for the information both of intending applicants and of existing members.

After stating that an F. T. S. must have been such for at least one year, Mrs. Besant defines his further qualification as a "desiring to quicken his own evolution with the unselfish purpose of becoming a helper of man." In this sentence there are clearly two distinct points,—the desire for personal advance, and the motive thereto, *i. e.*, help to humanity. This desire might in any case be a legitimate ambition, especially if arising from a conviction that we do well to conform to every ascertained law in the world of things and men, but it would not of itself excite any deep interest in Those already advanced, and it certainly would not call for membership in a School established by Teachers expressly that the pupils may become Teachers in their turn. There has never been any obscuration of the fact that the great spiritual forces put in motion of late years by Masters have not been merely that good men might become more learned and wise and developed and potent, but that their goodness and learning and wisdom and development and potency might all be consciously utilized for the uplifting of inferiors who had few or none of these qualities. In other words, the Masters established the E. S. T., in order that the members thereof should the better acquire that rounded evolution which would enable them more fully to help the Masters in Their special work of purifying and raising humanity.

Now the desire for personal advance, except so far as it expresses itself in palpable practices like reading and study, is a thing whereof assurance can be given only by its possessor. But the "helping of men" is an external matter, shown in visible and tangible ways, subject to attestation by witnesses. Moreover, if the desire for such "helping" exists, it will certainly manifest in the "helping" itself, for the cause must have its effect; and the manifestation will be patent in the daily life and aims and work, discernible by those around. Furthermore, as the specific "helping" had in view by Theosophy is a promulgation of Theosophical truth as the means to the regeneration of human thought and life, that "helping" by a Theosophist must obviously take the form of distinctively Theosophical work—it may be of radiating sound doctrine, of assisting a Branch, of circulating literature, of supplying items to the press, of any and all ways of usefulness which opportunity opens. Certainly that could not be called "helping" which went no farther than the protestation of a wish to help, and if it did go farther and showed itself in actual help, the fact would be capable of verification by observers. He who has "the unselfish purpose of becoming a helper of men" can prove it in only one way—the doing all his possible to help them now. The School is not to *create* that purpose, it is to *foster* it. If the purpose exists, it will already have shown itself; if it has shown itself, the showing may be established by testimony.

All this explains why the performance of distinctively Theosophical work is exacted as a condition to entrance into the E. S. T., and why the Corresponding Secretaries, in their function of admitting new members, have been instructed to satisfy themselves that the applicant is really a worker. His "desire" is a matter as to which only he can give the assurance, his "purpose" needs evidence from such as have seen it in operation. And entrance is not a right accruing to all who have been in the Theosophical Society one year, but a privilege granted to those of them who have demonstrated Theosophic interest by Theosophic service.

And now we come to the second of the two points—the evidence of the purpose as given in the endorsement of an applicant by a member. Every Society requires from a person asking to enter it some assurance of his fitness, and this assurance is obviously given by an existing member. Still more must such be true of a Society in any degree esoteric, for here the qualification is more pronounced,

and the need to verify it greater. In requiring a sponsor from among its members for a candidate, the E. S. T. does only what is done by every other organization, secular or religious. There follow two consequences: *first*, that no applicant has a right to feel aggrieved because he cannot produce a sponsor or because his proposed sponsor cannot give the necessary evidence; *second*, that no member has the right to act as sponsor unless he believes the applicant sincere in his claim to the "desire," and unless he has had evidence as to the reality of the "purpose."

It is strange that there should have arisen any resentment as to the former, and yet stranger that there should have been felt uncertainty as to the latter. The twofold question virtually put by every applicant to his desired endorser is this: "Do you, from your knowledge of me, believe that I am true in my desire to quicken my evolution through the training of our spiritual philosophy; are you, from your knowledge of my work for Theosophy and the Theosophical Society, able to affirm that it is an earnest work, up to the level of my ability, and inspired by a genuine wish to serve my fellow-men?" This is not a difficult query. It does not imply that the sponsor has exhaustive information, or that he may not mistake, or that he gives a life-long guarantee; it merely pre-supposes reasonable knowledge, fair judgment, and conscientious expression—exactly the qualities expected in secular affairs of anyone who gives a recommendation.

But, just as in secular affairs, no one has the right to give recommendation unless it truly expresses his convictions. If he is not sure of the desire and does not know of the work, he is certifying to his belief when he has no such belief; hence is uttering falsehood. Nor is this a light matter. It would not be if the question was only of a household situation or a business post; much less when it concerns sacred things and is invested with all the solemnity of spiritual interests. He who would not certify falsely to the character of a servant or the competency of a clerk, can hardly do so in the graver case of a spiritual discipleship.

For there is responsibility. He understands little of the seriousness of the E. S. T. or of its aims, who either asks or gives an endorsement as matter of course, as a ceremony attendant at the close of a preliminary year which by its passage confers the right to entrance, as a mere good-natured compliance with a customary formality. Very much more is involved. Herein is solemn assurance of a

conviction that the applicant is duly and truly prepared, worthy and well qualified, and it is because this assurance empowers an official to open the door to an inner adytum of sacred things that he who gives it has the responsibility of an act so grave. When, then, it is said, as it sometimes is, that the applicant alone takes the Karma of his application, or that no more is meant than that he has been a year in the T. S., or that the endorser infers fitness from the wish to join, there is evidence that the speaker has not read Mrs. Besant's circular or thought out the significance of a recommendatory certificate.

It is well that these truths should be brought afresh to view. The E. S. T. is steadily growing. Its existence is more generally known than formerly and its value better understood. Each member has his contribution to make to its efficiency in his own perception of its spirit and his own conformity to its aim, and these he will manifest, not only in the conscious evolution of the "purpose" which it furthers, but in the use of his privilege of endorsement solely towards those who have like perception and like conformity, and whose "purpose" is no less real and strong.

ALEXANDER FULLERTON,
Corresponding Secretary.

It is the custom of people to go to unfrequented places and country places and the seashore and mountains for retirement, and this you often earnestly desired. But, after all, this is but an idle fancy, for it is in your power to draw into yourself whenever you desire. Now one's own mind is the place most free from crowd and noise, if a man's thoughts are such as to insure him perfect tranquility within, and this tranquility consists in the ordering of the mind. Your way is, therefore, to make frequent use of this retirement to refresh your virtue in it. To this end be always provided with a few short uncontested sayings to keep the understanding true and send you back contented with the business to which you return.

MARCUS AURELIUS.

ANCIENT RELIGIONS OF AMERICA.

III.—The Mayas and Quiches.

(Continued from p. 67.)

ABOUT 1521, Bishop Landa, a religious fanatic, assisted by Spanish invaders, attempted to christianize (as they called it) the peninsula of Yucatan. Their *modus operandi* was first to destroy all the heathen idols and temples, and burn the sacred books of the aborigines. Fortunately, a few valuable manuscripts escaped their vandal hands, among them the Troano MS, which is a very ancient treatise on geology. The derivation of the word "Maya," according to this *codex*, is from "Mayex," meaning "the primitive land," *terra firma*.


The Maya empire, besides the peninsula of Yucatan, comprised Central America. Uxmal was the seat of government, but Chicken-Itza was the Athens of this country. Here flourished the arts and sciences, and here dwelt the learned priests, officiating in those wonderful temples where pilgrims from the four quarters of the empire came to worship and offer sacrifice to the Almighty Spirit by throwing themselves into the sacred well from which the city took its name.

The word "Maya" is encountered in many countries of the Eastern hemisphere, and is generally significant of wisdom and power. The similarity between the ancient Egyptian, Chaldean, Etrurian and Maya religions and mystic rites is so striking, that archaeologists like Dr. LePlongeon (who is devoting his life to this study) affirm that communication existed 11,500 years ago between the two continents. Plato is authority for the statement that when Solon visited Egypt (600 B. C.), he was informed by the Egyptians that for nine thousand years all communication between his country and the "Lands of the West," had been severed, by the submergence under the waves of the ocean, in one night, of the Island of Atlantis.

In the religious ceremonies of the Brahmins, many words are used which are not Sanscrit, but which, in sound and meaning, correspond to Maya words. For instance, "Con-ex Omon Panex!"—"Go, stranger, scatter!"—were used by the priests of the Maya tem-

ples to dismiss the members of their mystic societies. "Cansha Om Pansha" is a mantram pronounced daily by the Brahmins to announce to the devotees that the religious ceremonies are over. The meaning, literally translated, is "Retire! O, retire, profane!"

The Quiches were a branch of the Maya nation, and seem to have been light-bearers to other nations south of them. Their Popul-Vuh—sacred book—escaped destruction, and furnishes much valuable information of the religious rites, ceremonies and trials of initiation—rivalling those of the Eleusinian mysteries—of the ancient inhabitants of Yucatan. The Popul Vuh told of the Supreme Being, Creator of all things. It says, "All that exists is the work of Tzakol, the Creator, who, by his will, caused the universe to spring into existence, and whose names are Bitol (the maker), Alom (the engenderer), and Qaholom (He who gives being)."

The ancient temples of Yucatan and Egypt were usually built in the form of a rectangle.  This figure, in Mayex, as in Egypt, is one of the symbols for land, and signified the earth, or universe. This oblong shape of the temple corresponded to the letter M in both the Maya and Egyptian alphabets, and was called "Ma," which means country. Ma is the radical of Mayax, and means, as we have observed, the earth. The temples and palaces of Chaldea and of Greece, and the Etruscan tombs, were constructed on the rectangular plan.

The Mayas and Quiches worshiped a triune God, whose symbols were the triangle and the pentagon. 3, 5 and 7 were their sacred numbers. The Greek word *penta* meant the mystic number 5, and in Greek conveyed the idea of the universe. *Ho*, in Maya, likewise meant 5, and was the radical of *Hool*, the head—hence the Deity. The ancient priesthood of Maya taught that the figure 7 was endowed with great potentiality. Like Pythagoras, they considered it the "vehicle of life, containing soul and body." The number seven was used extensively in the constructions of mounds and temples.

Dr. LePlongeon discovered at Uxmal, the ancient metropolis of Yucatan, an artificial mound, about ninety-five feet in height, two hundred and fifteen feet in length, and one hundred and seven feet in width. The ground plan is in the shape of a cross with a double set of arms. The upper division of the mound was dedicated to the sanctuary, or holy of holies. The middle chamber is seven meters

long, and, according to Dr. LePlongeon, its situation and construction leave little doubt in his mind that here "in former times, were practiced rites and ceremonies pertaining to the third degree of initiation." From this central chamber, facing the west, a small stairway leads to a terrace on the top of the mound. This was the astronomical observatory, occupied exclusively by the priests and astronomers. The ceilings of the rooms at the extreme ends of the mound are carved in peculiar and regular order, in deep intaglio semispheres, ten centimeters in diameter, representing the stars. It is worthy of comment that the ceilings, not alone of this mound but of all the monuments and temples of Yucatan and Central America, were built in the form of a triangular arch, in accordance with certain esoteric teachings relating to the mystic numbers 3, 5 and 7.

At the beginning of the Christian era, when the religious customs of Egypt began to fall into decadence, when the temples of Isis and Osiris, with their magnificent sculptures and marvellous hieroglyphs, were destroyed or converted into Christian temples, a strange book or manuscript came into existence. Its author, fearing that the priestly learning and knowledge he had acquired by his initiation into the mysteries "would be entirely lost to the world," resolved to give an authentic account of the secrets of the ancient temples. He wrote the Book of Henock, which contains some wonderful "visions." One of these is relevant to our subject. "I saw a spacious habitation built with stones of crystal. The roof had the appearance of agitating stars and flashes of lightning. Flames burnt around its walls; its portals blazed with fire. This dwelling was hot as fire—cold as ice."

This "vision" corresponds, in some particulars, with the description of the temples and rites of initiation practiced by the Quiches. The sacred books of the Mayas were destroyed by Landa and the Spanish monks, but it is probable they were similar to the Popul Vuh, the only book of the Quiches extant.

The sacred spot for the performance of these holy rites was at a place called Xibalba, situated in the heart of the mountains of Guatemala. We learn from the Popul Vuh that before the applicants for admission could come into the presence of the priests who awaited them, they must cross two dangerous rivers—one of mud, and the other of blood. They then encountered four roads—the white, the red, the green and the black—along each of which they must jour-

ney. These roads led them to the council, composed of twelve veiled priests, and a wooden statue dressed and wearing ornaments like the priests. The applicants were ordered to salute the king, and at the same time the wooden statue was pointed out to them. This was to test their intuition and discernment. Then they must unhesitatingly salute each of the veiled priests, promptly giving his name and title without being told. Then they were requested to occupy a certain seat; but unfortunate was he who, forgetting the proper respect due to the august assembly, accepted the proffered seat. This was merely a test of good breeding and discernment, for the seat, made of stone, was burning hot.

If they fortunately declined the invitation to be seated, they were then conducted to the "dark house," where they spent the night in the second trial. To cut off all communication with the world, guards were stationed around the house. Each applicant was presented with a lighted torch of pine wood and a cigar, with orders not to allow either to become extinguished, and at sunrise, to return them to the officers in the same condition as when received. Fearful chastisement and even death awaited him who failed in this trust.

The third trial was the "house of spears." Here, as if by magic, they had to produce four pots of certain rare flowers, from the ether or Akasha. Nor was this the worst ordeal. They must further defend themselves against the attacks of the best spearmen. If victorious, at dawn they were judged worthy of the fourth trial, which was imprisonment in the "ice house," where it was a furious struggle to avoid being frozen to death. The fifth ordeal consisted in passing a night in a den of ferocious tigers called the "tiger house." If, Daniel-like, they escaped safely, they must submit to the sixth trial, in the "fiery house." In this burning furnace, they must remain from sunset to sunrise. If this test were survived, one more, but not the least severe, must be endured. This was the "house of the bats," described in the sacred book as being incomprehensibly terrible. The "God of the bats" appeared to the candidates, and if for an instant they lost self-poise or became frightened, immediate death was the result.

A. H. T.

[To be Concluded]

T. S. ECHOES.

REPORTS OF BRANCHES.

Activities in Scandinavia.

The Scandinavian Section of T. S. held its Third Annual Convention in Stockholm on the 30th of May. The reports from the various lodges indicated great activity during the last year. A new lodge, "Bafrast," has been formed at Lulea, the organization being effected October 16th, 1897. In Finland, where lodges are not allowed to exist, the Theosophists have founded a library, with adjoining reading-room, where they meet for study and discussion. A new association of forty-four members was formed last December. Several pamphlets and essays have been published during the year, and a number of translations made, the most important being the following works of Mrs. Annie Besant: "The Ancient Wisdom," "In the Outer Court," "The Four Great Religions," "Esoteric Christianity." Public lectures have been held in various towns of Sweden and Norway. At the Convention of 1897, the Section counted 321 members; this year, 471.

The arrival in Sweden of the Countess Constance Wachtmeister and her son is the only event of importance that has occurred in our Section during the summer months, when Branch work is suspended. The Countess arrived in Gothenburg on the 17th of July, staying until the 20th. Two meetings were held at the lodge rooms, which were crowded with listeners. The Countess spoke of Theosophy in general, and later, gave a detailed account of her travels in America and her visit to the London Convention.

During the time spent by the Countess and her son in Dalecarlia (one of the Swedish provinces), they spoke on several occasions to large gatherings of people. This was also the case when they travelled through Norrland.

At Lulea, they met the lodge members on the very day of their arrival. On the following day, a large meeting was held, and important matters discussed. In the evening of the same day, the Countess gave a public lecture to an audience of one hundred and fifty people. Great interest was manifested by all present, and the private receptions given by the Countess on the following days were well attended.

On August 30th, the Countess and her son, accompanied by four Lulea Theosophists, went to another town in Norrland, called Boden, where the Countess lectured on the possibilities of human evolution. So much interest was shown that Count Axel Wachtmeister resolved to give a lecture on the following day, on Theosophy in general. This was done, and as a result a center was organized at Boden. Several other Northern towns were visited, lectures given, and groups of students formed. Before leaving Scandinavia, the Countess intends to visit Stockholm and Copenhagen, where public lectures will also be given.

M. WESTERLUND.

CHICAGO, Chicago Branch T. S.—The syllabus for our winter's work has been completed, and if we take up all that is outlined in it, or even one-quarter of it—and that is a large percentage—we shall be wiseacres. The general heading is "A Study of the Secret of Evolution." Just think what that implies! Everything, doesn't it? But the Committee (Dr. Mary Weeks Burnett, Mrs. Helen I. Dennis and Miss Adams) have taken care to subdivide this general head, and to show us how to study this marvellous question. It is arranged in twenty-one topics, each with one or more sub-topics. For instance: Nebular Hypothesis—Seven Eternities, Time and Space; Vibrations—The Three Life Waves, Thought Forms; Akasha—Astral Light, Secrets of Sound, Form, and Color. And so on and on. We are to begin the twenty-sixth of this month (October), with Darwinian Theory—Spencer's Philosophy, Object of Evolution. There is to be a ten-minute paper or talk on the head topic, by one or two, and then each sub-topic is to be presented in a similar way, and finally the question is to be opened for general discussion. Mrs. Charlotte Robertson has come back to us after a year's absence, and we hope to keep her all winter. We are sorry to lose Mr. Parker, who will go East the last of this month for the winter. He has helped us in many ways during the summer. This week we are to omit a meeting on account of the Peace Jubilee which is about to overwhelm Chicago, and it is not quite practicable to have a meeting in the midst of it, as it were. One is tempted, at times, to criticize ways and means and times and places, but perhaps, after all, it is a good thing to cry Peace! Peace! Peace! from the housetops. The vibrations will be of a more soothing nature than if we shout for war, and they may help people to see that the glory of peace outshines that of conflict. It may come to us as a dream at first, rosy and surrounded with mists of shining clouds; but " * * * If it be a vision, let us wake and make it true," and know finally and fully that we are "own brother and own sister everywhere." P. G. K.

SAN DIEGO, CAL. (H. P. B. Branch, T. S.)—H. P. writes: In spite of the unusually warm weather here, Miss Walsh continued to draw out large audiences until September 25th, when, after a sojourn of just a month, she left for Los Angeles, her next field of labor. Much interest was manifested in her lectures and informal talks on the practical teachings of Theosophy. Among her public lectures were: "Man, the Thinker;" "Theosophic Conceptions of God, Life and Religion;" "The Esoteric Christ;" and "The Rhythmic Law." In addition to these, the regular evening lectures were all well attended. Miss Walsh has a method of her own in explaining and answering questions, which, with her charming personality, attracted many new people. She started and put into running order, before leaving us, a good-sized inquirers' class. We have a hope that she may be able to return to us in about a month, to stay a short time before finally going North. Last Saturday evening, Miss Walsh was invited to speak before the San Diego Club, a literary organization of women, and was greeted by a large audience. Many expressed regret that they had not availed themselves of the opportunity to hear her before. The next day (Sunday), the hall was crowded to its utmost capacity on the occa-

sion of her farewell lecture, upon the subject, "What can be Learned from Astrology?" The members of the Branch were especially benefited by Miss Walsh's instructions, as many of them were ready for something more than they already possessed. In leaving us, she carries with her the combined gratitude and good-will of the Branch.

LYNN, MASS.—Helen A. Smith, President, writes: The Lynn Branch still lives. It holds weekly meetings at 36 Market Street every Wednesday evening, for study. There is an occasional paper by a member, or the reading of some lecture of Mrs. Besant's pertinent to the subject under consideration. At present we number fourteen, including one new member. Circumstances do not permit as much activity, perhaps, as exists in some places, yet our Branch possesses the flame of unwavering steadfastness—a "light in the window."

TOLEDO, OHIO.—Toledo T. S. will soon begin its work on the new syllabus for the winter. The attendance at the summer meetings has been fair, but will no doubt increase from this time on. At these meetings, some article has been read, general discussion following. Our President, Mrs. Maguire, who has been out of the city for three weeks, has been greatly missed. She is expected home soon, when the work will begin in earnest. So much depends upon her presence among us. Toledo T. S. hopes to do its share in assisting to re-establish the "Forum", it being considered a valuable adjunct to MERCURY, and of great benefit in keeping members in touch with the movement and its leaders. Many have expressed themselves pleased with MERCURY'S new dress.

K.

MINNEAPOLIS (Ishwara Branch T. S.)—H. C. Dodge, Sec., writes: MERCURY arrived this month (September), larger, handsomer, with an air of prosperity in every leaf, and a kindly soul-greeting to the fraternity, opposite the beautiful face of our beloved teacher, Mrs. Davis. Long may you wave! I have to chronicle this month the great interest evinced by members and others in the teachings, and the harmony felt by all. Our past year's work shows the fruit of concentrated thought, and its far-reaching effect. We have had articles printed in a number of papers free of charge, and we hope the next year will show some better work. Our Branch has arranged the following program of work, subject to change: Beginning in October, on Sunday mornings, from half past ten to twelve, Mrs. Davis will guide a class through the intricacies of the sacred books of the East. On Tuesday night, there will be an "Ancient Wisdom" class for beginners and others, conducted by different members; and on Wednesday night the regular Branch meeting, with varied program, not yet defined. On Fridays, Mrs. Davis will conduct a "Secret Doctrine" class. Last Sunday afternoon, all members were invited to the lovely home of Mrs. Cassaday, where three pleasant hours were enjoyed in reading from the "Review" and Edwin Arnold's "Song Celestial," followed by conversation and visiting.

LOS ANGELES, CAL.—The past month has been one of unusual activity for Harmony Lodge. Miss Walsh arrived here on September 28th, and was given a reception on the 29th. During her stay in Los Angeles she was the guest of Mrs. Pierson, Mrs. Valiant and Miss Spencer. All those who know Miss Walsh can readily realize how quickly she won our affections and the good will of the public. She gave thirteen most interesting lectures; those delivered on Sunday evenings were crowded, and large audiences attended the afternoon meetings. Miss Walsh also formed a Lotus Circle, of which the little ones insisted she should become an honorary member. At the first meeting there were seven members; at the second, fifteen. The officers are: Mrs. V. A. Moon, Superintendent; Verna Haskell, Secretary; Twain Michelson, Treasurer. On October 20th, the Society gave a farewell social to Miss Walsh. Besides the great assistance Miss Walsh rendered Harmony Lodge, she also gave several lectures and parlor talks in Santa Monica and Pasadena, and before going to San Diego she will deliver several more lectures for our Branch. The appearance of our hall has been greatly improved. Mr. Sexton papered the wall, and made other improvements; Mrs. Cleveland presented the Society with a beautiful reading desk upon which she had carved the symbols of the T. S.; and Mrs. Mayo gave a beautiful picture of lotus blossoms, painted by herself. Four new members have joined the Branch. We feel very hopeful for the future, as all are so harmonious and earnest.

S. M.

CHICAGO, ILL., Oct. 22nd.—Theosophical activities have taken on a revival of unprecedented degree since the fall season has begun. Englewood and Woodlawn are the hot-beds in Cook County of occult thought and endeavor. On Saturday, the 8th, the Englewood White Lodge inaugurated its winter course by a *fete* at Mrs. Charles Howard's home. The attendance was large, congenial and sociable. Regular Sunday afternoon lectures, until further notice, at 6558 Stewart Avenue, under the auspices of the E. D. L. T. S. will be given. In honor of Miss Donnelly, Mrs. Howard issued invitations for a reception on the 22nd, to which a large and fashionably dressed concourse of Theosophical ladies and gentlemen responded.

Mrs. Howes, 6115 Woodlawn Avenue, President of the Eastern Psychology Branch, throws her doors wide open every Thursday evening to interested students, among whom are numbered some of the most brilliant minds in this great metropolis. She is an indefatigable worker, and the results of her efforts are manifold. Mrs. Darling and her sister, Mrs. Tisdale, have opened their doors to a Secret Doctrine class, which holds forth every Sunday from 11 A. M. to 12 M., at 5427 Washington Avenue, Hyde Park. An opportunity for advanced students is here presented that should be taken advantage of, inasmuch as the class embraces the most learned exponents of Theosophical tenets.

H. A. H.

CHICAGO. Shila Branch reassembled at usual place of meeting, Friday, October 7th. The subject of study for the day was "Reincarnation in Ancient Wisdom." The President, Mrs. Darling, is our teacher, and her intuitive and intellectual grasp of the subject leads us step by step on the path. Our former teach.

er, Mrs. M. L. Brainard, is in town doing good work. The Secret Doctrine class, which was a prominent feature, has enlarged, and now meets at the same place on Sunday morning. Mrs. J. Bell Bombaugh was elected Treasurer of the Branch in place of Mrs. Marguerite Durand, who resigned. MERCURY is indeed a messenger to all seekers of Truth, and in its new dress is "a thing of beauty," and certainly a joy to the readers of the valuable contributions it presents in its columns.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., October 31.—Golden Gate Lodge has been favored by the presence in our midst of our earnest and gifted brother, Mr. J. C. Chatterji. Meetings were held both in the afternoon and evening during his stay. Ten new names were added to our list of members. His Sunday evening lectures were given to audiences of from 1,500 to 2,000 people. Since our last report our public Sunday evening lectures have been as follows: Mr. Walters, "Links in the Theosophic Movement"; Mr. W. L. Ducey from Michigan, "The Cosmos and Man"; Mr. J. C. Chatterji, "The Science of the Soul" and "The Communion of Saints"; Mr. Will C. Bailey, "The Next Step," and "Waves, Spirals and Vibrations."

BOOK REVIEWS.

MAGAZINES.

The Theosophist, Madras, (September).—The "Old Diary Leaves" of Colonel Olcott continue to be as fresh and entertaining as ever. Very interesting is his account of a palm-leaf copy of the wonderful old book of prophecies, which contained, among many other strange things, the prediction that Colonel Olcott was to live from the afternoon of the 3rd of April, 1885, twenty-eight years, five months, six days and fourteen hours, which is certainly very definite. These ancient books were held in great reverence by the early Fathers, as it is said they prophesied the advent, the life and the sufferings of Jesus Christ. We quote the following account of the secret of the power of the idols of the "heathen," which are not mere things of wood and stone: "The image goes through a process which extends over forty days, and includes the withdrawing from the image of all innate impurities, and the subsequent imbuing or saturating of it with a purified human magnetism, *i. e.* aura. Then to fix this supply, as it were, it is customary for the officiating adept, or chief Brahmin, to prepare or have engraved on a sheet of copper a geometrical symbol, called *chakram*, into which a magic power is imparted by the concentration of the trained will. This copper plate is placed under the image, when fixed in its place, and there left so long as the temple stands. Now, the wiser and purer the adept-consecrator, the more real, effective and permanent the infusion of *prana* into the image; and the more carefully the *chakram* is prepared and placed the more lasting its efficacy as a storage-battery of divine power." Next follows the fifth of Miss Edgar's Indian Tour lectures, on

"The Finding of God." Dr. Hubbe-Schleiden contributes a deep study on "Cycles and Indian Chronology." He says that Indian cycles, yugas and kalpas are derived from natural facts, and being thus founded on nature they cannot be measured by our arbitrary multiplications by 100 or 1000. In reference to the Kali-yuga, it is rather discouraging to learn that "For the last six hundred and eighty years, we are on the descending arc, towards materiality, and have to run deeper into it for fourteen hundred and eighty more years; then a change for a comparatively better, more spiritual period may be expected." In an article called "Fiends and Demons," Mr. W. G. John considers these beings the "world's dark Karma," and makes them responsible for much of the evil by which we are degraded. "Further Thoughts on Contemporary National Evolution" is, as the title suggests, the continuation of a previous article. Mr. W. A. Mayers traces the history of Russia and Great Britain. He takes the most optimistic view of the final outcome of the intense activity, the conquests and the power of these two great forces.

The Theosophical Review, London, (September).—The "Watch Tower" still hopes that the hidden recesses of some crypt or tomb in Ethiopian Abyssinia may yet reveal treasures in the form of ancient MSS. It also quotes from an article published in the *Daily Telegraph* of September 8th, on the speech of Sir William Crookes, as President of the British Association at Bristol, who sees, and is brave enough to acknowledge that he sees, "the light breaking over some theory which may reconcile the 'occult' facts with science." "The Secret of the Holy Grail" is a well written article on that fascinating subject. "The sacred chalice of the Grail was made of a single oriental emerald, which is said to have existed in the days of Solomon, and to have had such wonderful virtues that those who had once seen it had no more sorrow, and obtained every desire of their hearts"—the real meaning of which is only realized by those who are its "intimates." Alchemy and the Great Work," by Dr. Wilder, and "Fratres Lucis," by Mrs. Cooper-Oakley, are continued. "The Education of the Human Race" is concluded. "The Yellow Man" is a true ghost story of the early days of the colony in Australia, charmingly told by Mrs. Greene. In an article called "Of Killing out Desires," Dr. A. A. Wells gives some new suggestions on this subject, which are of interest to every Theosophist. It may be a surprise to many to be asked the question, "Are we, you and I, at such a point of our spiritual development, that killing out desire is the right step to take next?" It all depends, as the writer says, "with what sort of person are we dealing?" There is but one practical way, and just what it is each one of us must find out for himself, and this we can only learn by experience. "The Making of Religion" is a review by Mrs. Besant of Mr. Andrew Lang's book bearing the above title. Mr. Mead contributes a paper on "The Sybillists and the Sybillines." Mr. Chatterji has an article on "The Eight-stepped Path," which is a study on the Buddhistic method of attaining righteousness.

The Vahan, London, (October).—In continuing the question of Buddha's justification in the desertion of his wife and child, we will not be surprised if

A. A. W. stirs up a little dust, and he will be fortunate if he escapes a "horns' nest," as he puts his justification of the Lord Buddha in a light which is not altogether agreeable, and the subject has another aspect which is just as true as the one he presents. Of course, we do not read the real history of Buddha in this matter, but the solution of all such questions is found in the fact which A. A. W. states, viz.: "The sacrifice of the higher for the lower is *always* a misfortune, for the world as for the individual." In this particular case, it is reasonable to suppose that if the Lord Buddha *had* wife and child, they must have been united to him by more than physical bonds—by nothing less than the relation of discipleship. If this were the case, separation for a time there may have been, but desertion would have been an impossibility.

The Awakened India, Almora, India, (August).—It is with pleasure we again welcome this monthly magazine, after a brief suspension of its activity, caused by the death of its gifted editor. The present issue is the first number of the third volume, and it comes much improved by a new cover and other changes. The present conductors have at their head the Swami Vivekananda. They have our best wishes for future success.

The Prasnotara, Benares, (August).—This issue gives the important notice that the next convention of the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society will be held at Benares on the 26th, 27th and 28th of October. Mrs. Besant, the Countess Wachtmeister, Miss Edgar, Dr. Pascal and Mr. Keightley are all expected to be present, and Colonel Olcott will preside. We also learn from it that our new Central Hindu College has been affiliated with the Allahabad University.

Revue Theosophique Francaise, Paris, (September).—The articles in this number are by Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater—"Man and His Bodies" by the former, and "The Akasahic Records," "Occult Varieties" (which is in the form of a story,) and "Questions and Answers" by the latter. The translation of the "Secret Doctrine" is continued.

Sophia, Madrid, (September,) continues the translations of Madame Blavatsky's essays on the "Esoteric Character of the Gospels," and Mr. Keightley's "Sankhya Philosophy." Senor Soria still continues his interesting and unique problems under the title of "Genesis."

Philadelphia, Buenos Ayres, (August).—The members of the Luz Branch are to be congratulated on the energy they show in publishing this excellent magazine. This is the second number, and contains translations from the works of Mrs. Besant, Madame Blavatsky, Sir Bulwer-Lytton, Mabel Collins and others.

Teosofia, Rome, (September), contains a long sketch of the Theosophical Society, by Decio Calvari, and continues the translations of "The Scientific Corroborations of Theosophy," by Dr. Marques, and "Reincarnation," by Dr. Pascal.

Teosofisk Tidskrift, Stockholm, (June and September).—The June number is mostly taken up with the different reports of the Third Annual Convention of the Scandinavian Section, which was held in Stockholm in May. The only article it contains is "Some Ethical Problems," by Mrs. Besant. The September issue contains "The Religious Value of Theosophy," by A. K.; also "Problems of the Theosophical Society," by Mrs. Besant. An anonymous writer contributes a short article on the "Occult Meaning of the Communion and Other Sacraments." "The Astral Body," by Mr. Leadbeater, book notes and reports of the activities of the Swedish lodges complete this number.

Mind, New York, (October,) gives a long table of contents, including an article called "The Eleventh Great Religion," which is a plea for a new religion. The writer says: "Theosophy bade fair to come nearest to this new demand; but alas! the same old human errors had to creep in." If the grand old principles of Theosophy answer to the present demand for a new religion, we fail to see why the mistakes of a few individuals professing its name should prevent its being accepted.

The Metaphysical Magazine, New York, (September).—This issue presents to its readers the usual interesting variety of articles. In "The World of Thought" we find a communication from one who sees the names of people in color, and would like to have the "peculiarity" explained.

Suggestions, Chicago, (September), is another new monthly devoted to the new thought, and comes from the Chicago School of Psychology, and will no doubt fulfill its mission as an educator.

The Dawn, Calcutta, (July).—"Is Spiritual Progress Inconsistent with Material Progress?" is the conclusion of a lecture in which Mrs. Besant shows that spirituality does not mean poverty; that the greatest works of art have been produced under the inspiration of religious ideals. Mrs. Besant attributes the present poverty of India to its acceptance of Western ideals. She makes a plea for the "revival of the old style of manufacture and art." The subject is continued in an article called "Aspects of Economic Life in England and in India," in which the writer aims to "inductively discover from actual phenomena" the elements of a nation's prosperity.

Theosophic Clippings, Auckland, (August).—This modest little sheet shows the energy of our co-workers in the New Zealand Section, and contains many bright and useful hints for Theosophic workers.

We have also to acknowledge the receipt of *The Theosophic Gleaner*, *The Hindu Boys' Journal*, *Chicago Vegetarian*, *Self Knowledge*, *The Temple*, *The Coming Light*, *Immortality*, *Journal of the Maha-Bodi Society*, *The Humanitarian*, *The World's Advance Thought*, *The Exodus*, *The Flaming Sword*, *Success*, *Voice of Labor*, *Fred Burry's Journal*, *The Realm*, *Our Dumb Animals*, *The Light of Truth*, *The Brahmavadin*, *Rays of Light*, etc.

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

AMERICAN SECTION DIRECTORY.

General Secretary, ALEXANDER FULLERTON,

5 University Place, New York City, N. Y.

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San Francisco, Cal. Golden Gate Lodge. William J. Walters, Secretary, Palace Hotel. Lotus Circle for children Sundays at 2:30 P. M. Public lectures Sundays at 8 P. M. Study Class, Thursdays at 2:30 P. M. Lodge meeting, Wednesdays 8 P. M. Odd Fellows' Building, Market and 7th Sts.

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