

"If thou has tried and failed, O dauntless fighter, yet lose not courage: fight on and to the charge return again, and yet again."

THE NEW CALIFORNIAN.

VOL. I.

JULY, 1891.

No. 2.

A STRANGE EXPERIENCE.

It was in the year 1864 and with General Sherman's army, on its great march to the sea, that the incident I am about to relate took place. A young Staff Officer in robust health, ambitious, active and fully employed, after a day and night in the saddle, seats himself at his desk in a little tent to write out his report of the two preceding days' march, and the incidents that came under his personal observation. This included the general conformation of the country passed through, its timber belts, water courses, direction and general condition of the roads passed over. A meal is prepared, consisting principally of bacon, hot biscuits and coffee, of which he partakes with an appetite and relish incident to his occupation, and a 12 hours' fast, after which the work of preparing the report goes on. There is a certain tenseness of mind, an exaltation of feeling, an expansion of consciousness that is unusual, and arrests and fixes the attention. The lassitude of mind and weariness of body, usually incidental to 36 hours of continuous labor, coupled with much mental anxiety and some thrilling encounters with the fringe of the Confederate army, yield their place to the most pleasurable rhythm of emotions. Gradually this exalted, emotional state lapses into the most delicious languor, in which a delightful sense of harmony with environment rests soul and body as in the "cradle of the deep." One curious phase of this unusual bodily and mental state is the clear and persistent consciousness of two Selves, one of which watches, observes and notes the varying experiences of the other, speculates upon them and with ever-increasing interest follows their progressive development. A sentinel on guard over a dan-

gerous captive could not be more alert than one of these dual Selves, expectant and observant of the other.

The crimson of the morning glides by imperceptible steps into the glories of the uplifting day. The hours lapse into each other until noonday is passed. Unconsciousness holds the sleeping soldier in a dreamless yet restful embrace.

Quick as the flash of lightning in the midnight darkness consciousness returns, yet not that consciousness which commands muscles and body, but one observant, expanded, and not conditioned by its former vestment.

An Orderly enters the tent, salutes and stands for permission to speak. He notes a composed, yet pallid face, apparently fixed in the immobility of death. He is alarmed, and with a surprised exclamation seeks the surgeon and reports to him his discovery. Together they enter the tent only to draw back after the first hasty examination from that unwelcome presence, which hovers over an army in close contact with its foe, death.

The Orderly is hurriedly sent to headquarters to report and bring the corps surgeon, which with much grief and mental perturbation he sets out to do. The army is widely scattered. Its flanks are many miles apart, and fields and forests lie between. It is in repose like a weary man whose continuous labor has temporarily exhausted his strength. It sleeps. In the advance, along the front, there is alertness, watchfulness. The eyes of the army are open and watchful; its body is in repose.

Through the broken forest the Orderly rapidly pursues his way to the corps headquarters in pursuit of the medical Chief of Staff.

Upon a soldier's cot in the little tent, cold and apparently lifeless, lies the body of the Staff Officer. The surgeon declared afterwards that it did not breathe, that the heart had ceased its pulsations, and that all the processes of life were arrested. Yet the consciousness had wonderfully expanded. It had withdrawn itself from the body and a sense of the most complete separateness had arisen. If the body were dead, the consciousness was more alive than ever before. It was now no longer conditioned. The limitations imposed upon a material being were removed. Time was not, nor space, nor material limitations. There were no closed doors. There was an intense sense of personality, with expanding consciousness. Existence was pleasurable. It was raised above strife, anxiety, fear and care. It was immeasurably intensified. It was *being*, without conditions and without limita-

tions to itself. All the senses had become one and had merged into consciousness. All things thought of were present. All places here, and all times now. There was apparently no past, no future, but an intensified present. Thoughts conceived but not expressed were cognized. There was no use for speech, only being, knowing, consciousness. A delightful sense of freedom, of the absence of limitations, of a load cast off, of a burden thrown down. There was release from the solicitations of the senses. A joyous elasticity buoyed up the spirit. A sense of being without perplexing restraints pervaded. Life then as now was purely objective, but not in the sense of externality, for to this Entity there were no dividing walls, no excluding exteriors.

In making his hasty examination, after being summoned by the Orderly, the surgeon picked up the hand of the Staff Officer, and after a vain quest for the evidence of a beating heart dropped it again carelessly upon the blanket, remarking as he did so that the young man was dead. The conscious Entity which had apparently separated itself from the body heard itself, or rather its former material vestment, pronounced dead, but was not in anywise alarmed or disturbed at the death sentence. Nor had it at that moment any further concern about the body which it had formerly occupied, more than one naturally feels about a garment worn and cast aside as unfit for further service.

It was with a sense of intense relief that the conscious Entity contemplated its condition of complete separateness and freedom from the body which it had formerly occupied, and with many pleasurable surprises it began the work of adapting itself to its new condition and environment. Life in the body, with its limitations and restraints, was a closed chapter. A new life under other and apparently better conditions had begun. Memory held all the past in the clearest light. Persons, events, experiences, pleasurable and painful, relations to other people, all life's long and wearisome pathway, presented and unfolded, with marvelous celerity and with the utmost distinctness.

It was in this condition of quickened and expanded conscious life, that the freed Entity took up its work. It kept the Orderly company in his sorrowing ride to corps Headquarters; read his unspoken thoughts, and sympathized with his deep grief at the loss of his friend. It was present at a council held between the commanding General and one of his corps Commanders.

After the Orderly announced at Headquarters the death of

the Staff Officer, he was accompanied back by the Medical Chief, who viewed the remains in professional style, and, after assuring himself that death had taken place, spoke regretfully with the Orderly of the sudden departure from life of one whom he had known so favorably and well. The conscious Entity had less interest in the event than anyone else present, and when the surgeon departed, having assured himself that death had really taken place, it was without misgivings or concern that it witnessed the preparation for the burial of the body. No doubt existed that the separation from its tenement of clay was permanent, and thereafter, with mental powers and capacities enlarged and expanded, the great Universe was to be studied and explored. No one who has not had a like experience can realize in consciousness the great exaltation of being, the almost supreme bliss, the exquisite sense of pleasure, the ineffable delight, the continuous thrill of pleasurable emotion that blessed the hour and consecrated it to the higher and better life.

There was a new and loftier feeling of reverence, a sense of more perfect communion with an all pervading yet not clearly discerned Presence. A clearness of spiritual vision, a persistent consciousness of being on a loftier plane. A joyous feeling that somehow and in some way, not clearly understood or perfectly comprehended, all the mental powers had suddenly been immeasurably strengthened and expanded, without loss of the feeling of individuality. In some of our highest and best moments, when the bonds of the flesh rest lightest, there may be a feeling of exaltation of being akin to the condition which had apparently become permanent to this conscious Ego in its state of separateness from its former tenement. It tried the process of introspection, earnestly interrogating itself, "What am I," but the whither and whence of conscious being were as obscure as ever, and the answer as uncertain, with this difference, perhaps, that there was more hopefulness and more trustfulness. The riddle had not been solved, the question remained unanswered, but it was easier to trust, for a sense of perfect security and unclouded hopefulness pervaded the Ego like an atmosphere.

There was a thought constantly recurring that death had been proven a myth, that that event so universally dreaded was but the transition from one plane of being to another, a step upwards in an ascending scale. Nature seemed infinitely more kind and beneficent than ever before. One seemed in touch with it. There was a conscious sense of oneness with environment,

and perplexing care for the present or anxiety for the future ceased altogether. The period of doubt, of questioning the future as to its possibilities had passed. There was an ineffable sense of security, a companionship with all that encompassed, a reverent uplifting of the heart in continuous thankfulness, a serene contentment that is inexpressible. All things, all experiences, seemed new and in some measure strange, and there was an earnest desire to become acquainted with Self and with the new conditions under which the Ego found itself. It was pleasurable to turn the leaves back and trace the pathway anew, along which the Ego had come to its present condition of blissful existence, to feel that each step forward was a step upward, and that conscious life had a deeper and profounder meaning than had ever been realized. That it had a significance and importance which had not been understood, and that its relations to the Infinite were more intimate, and its place in the scale of being, lofty and grand. In the backward glance at death—for that event was behind, not before, past, not future, an experience already had, not to come—this seemed related to the Ego, by necessary sequence. As the night is to the day, as Winter to Summer, as the hours of sleeping to those of waking, so death seemed related to life. Nature seemed running in circles, her paths always leading back into themselves. As night succeeds the day, as the period of rest and repose succeeds that of activity, so death succeeded life, only to be itself again succeeded by a period of renewed activity.

Life in the body, as it was then conceived, was one of bewildering uncertainty. It was a period of doubt, of questioning, of unrest. Over it the infolding dome of the heavens bent down with excluding horizons. A blank wall fronted every endeavor. Now the period of doubting seemed passed, and in its place came wondering cheer and adoring love, blissful certainty, sweet contentment, repose. The two states of being were in sharp and continuing contrast. The over-bending heavens of doubt, of uncertainty, of unrest during life in the material vestment seemed rolled together like a scroll, and a clearer, deeper blue, radiant with a light brighter than that of the sun, had come in its place.

To the Ego in the body, its earth seemed without form and void, and darkness rested upon the face of its deep. To the Ego free, the creative Word had spoken "Let there be light," and earth and air were radiant with light, and the harmony of the spheres was a continuing melody. The sweetest thought was

one of intimate and continuing communion with the Over Soul, which seemed to be all in all.

In the widely scattered divisions of the army the Staff Officer had numerous acquaintances and many friends, in whom the Ego in its new condition felt the liveliest interest. Visits were paid to them and distances were covered with the celerity of thought. To realize a person or place in consciousness was only to fix the attention for a moment on the person or place. A moment of concentrated attention brought the conscious Ego into the presence of the person thought of. There was no sense of space or distance. The only condition of change of place was a mental state of concentrated attention. It often found itself querying whether its apparent experiences were real or imaginary, and the answer was immediately forthcoming that all was more real than it had ever been before. It paid frequent visits to its former habitation, the body, which appeared to it like a desolate and abandoned place; a deserted ruin. It had no sense of companionship with it, no care for it, only a curiosity to observe its now deserted temple.

This state, or condition, of conscious being apart from material limitations continued several hours, but judged from the ordinary experiences, when dwelling in the body, it would have included months, perhaps years. To the Ego there was no sense of time.

At length a feeling of repose, of restful inactivity, a sense of fading light, of decreasing alertness and tenseness of mind began to pervade it, and like a bird that folds its wings and composes itself for the coming night it felt itself infolded within the strong and friendly arms of nature. It rested. It became unconscious. The great and beautiful world closed all around and hushed it to silence and to sleep. For a brief moment there was a dream of peace which should ever abide, a conscious touch with the infinite and all pervading spirit, and then—consciousness was not.

How long this unconscious state continued cannot be definitely known, but it must have been of short duration, when, like one awaking from a protracted and exhausting sleep, consciousness was recovered again within the body.

The day had faded, and night was at hand. The limbs seemed cold and stiff, and it was with much difficulty that they were put into requisition again. It required an effort to stand erect and move about. The change was disagreeable in the extreme, and it required assistance and persuasion from the Orderly to get at

rights again with the body. The army was about to advance and there was little time for meditation. A horse was immediately saddled, and the Staff Officer joined in the movement of the army forward in that great march which has become a prominent incident in the history of the War of the Rebellion.

It was with much regret that the Ego came to the consciousness that its separation from the body was only temporary and that it must take up its old burdens again and carry them forward as before, that its experience was not *post mortem*, but was that of a living, human being, who for a brief space had been allowed to wander away from confining prison walls into freedom, and to realize an exaltation of conscious being, a quickening and strengthening of mental powers and spiritual vision that "passes all understanding," or at least the power of language to describe or express.

A quarter of a century and more has elapsed since this event occurred. The next succeeding year was crowded with thrilling experiences. It was the last year of the great struggle. It saw Sherman's army carried forward, without base lines, through the heart of the Confederacy, and safely planted on the sea coast in quick and easy communication with the great army under General Grant, at Petersburg and Richmond. It witnessed the march northward of this invincible army clutching in succession Savanna, Charleston, Columbia and Raleigh, and at length receiving the surrender of its able and old time foe; then the march "on to Richmond" from the South; the great Review at Washington; the disintegration of all the armies; peace and home.

But these events of such exceeding brilliance and vast importance, crowding upon each other in such swift succession that they could not be clearly cognized nor fully appreciated, and the many years of peaceful life since they occurred, have not in any manner dimmed the memory of the event above related, and though much that was contemporaneous with it and much that belongs to later years has become dim and faded, and memory often struggles in vain to reproduce them in consciousness, yet this experience remains so clearly accentuated in memory, so luminous, so radiant with a light which seems not to belong to sense life that not one detail is clouded or overlaid with after experiences. Like a diamond in a casket it shines with a brilliant and sustained light which age cannot diminish.

In conclusion, it may be said that the experience above related of a conscious Self, apparently out of and beyond the body

and enjoying perfect freedom from material limitations, was real, for what it saw and heard, the Staff Officer afterwards proved to have actually taken place, as the occurrences were witnessed by the persons who were actors therein.

Some of the events at which it was present, and which it saw and heard, occurred many miles from the place where the body lay in its apparently lifeless condition, with field and forest stretched between. This is absolutely certain, that not only was it witnessing real occurrences as they transpired, but that which was seen and heard could not have been seen nor heard in the normal condition of the body, and with its physical senses.

Mention has before been made of the consciousness of two Selves which observed each other with much attention. This was incidental to the transition from the normal condition of the body and mind in union to one of complete separateness, and disappeared altogether when the separation was complete and did not thereafter return.

One further observation may be made of the separated Ego. While it did not for one moment lose its sense of individuality, there was such an expansion of consciousness that it was not possible for the Ego to think of itself as having personality in so far as this word implies form, size, shape or limitation. There was a manifest center of mental activity and a widely extended field pervaded by consciousness. The Ego thought of itself as "I," "my," "mine." Conditions of being had changed altogether, but being itself was identical with existence in bodily connections. There was perfect self consciousness, intensified and accentuated. Whether in bodily relations or separated therefrom, it was the *same conscious Entity*. There is no possible doubt of the verity of its experiences when enjoying its freedom from its material vestment. They were carefully and abundantly verified at the time, and whether as a matter of fact the conscious Ego had separated itself from the body, thereby enjoying for a brief space enlarged and perfect freedom, or whether some strange and unknown change in bodily conditions had taken place which enabled the highly sublimated brain matter to become receptive to nature's finer forces, during which the ordinary physical senses were annulled, is matter for conjecture. To the Ego itself, it appeared to be free and completely separated from its body, and its activities seemed not in any manner dependent upon or connected with physical organs. Upon this point it pondered and experimented while in its condition of ap-

parent separateness, and in this manner gained the most perfect and satisfactory evidence that the separation was actual and complete. But the fact that this condition was only temporary, and, after continuing for hours, consciousness functioned again within the body, using the senses as before for its means of communication with the exterior world, leaves the matter open to doubt.

Daniel Titus.

HEREDITY.

There is no thing we cannot overcome.

Say not thy evil instinct is inherited,
Or that some trait inborn makes thy whole life forlorn
And calls down punishment that is not merited.

Back of thy parents and grand parents lies
The Great Eternal Will! That, too, is thine
Inheritance, strong, beautiful, divine,
Sure lever of success for one who tries.

Pry up thy faults with this great lever, Will!
However deeply bedded in propensity,
However firmly set, I tell thee, firmer yet
Is that vast power that comes from truth's immensity.

Thou art a part of that strange world, I say!
Its forces lie within thee, stronger far
Than all thy mortal sins and frailties are.
Believe thyself divine, and watch and pray.

There is no noble height thou canst not climb;
All triumphs may be thine in Time's futurity
If whatsoe'er thy fault thou dost not faint or halt,
But lean upon the staff of God's security.

Earth has no claim the soul cannot contest;
Know thyself part of the Eternal Source,
And naught can stand before thy spirit's force;
The soul's divine inheritance is best.

—*Ella Wheeler Wilcox, in New York Press.*

THE NEW CIVILIZATION.

Evolution is the law of the universe, and civilization is no exception. Its march is ever onward, and the Utopian vision of yesterday becomes the hope of to-day and the realization of to-morrow. All the elements of civilization, its social customs, its religious beliefs, its scientific opinions, are being continually modified. Sometimes this evolution is slow, like the growth of a delta; sometimes it is cataclysmic, like the upheaval of a continent. Especially is it explosive when men attempt to impede its progress by barriers erected of their own ignorance or greed. Then the quiet evolution becomes the terrible revolution; the growth, a cataclysm.

The essence, the one vital characteristic of the present civilization, is its individualism. Born of the necessities of barbaric times, it was apparently the only path out of barbaric environments. Its fostering of individual effort was marvelous, and as the units struggled upward the masses were benefited. No prize was too colossal to win, no goal too arduous to attain. It seemed a just and beneficent civilization so long as prizes were within the reach of all who chose to strive; its injustice was exposed when it ceased to reward all contestants. Then the struggles it encouraged began to be sharpened by competition and embittered by defeat, until at length the prizes became so disproportionate that, to-day, it merely assumes the functions of a gigantic lottery, where robbery, trickery and corruption too often preside at the wheel. That all have an equal chance to win is no defense, if it were true, which is very far from being the case. The effect of one immense prize to an hundred starting in a race will be to stimulate each individual runner to the utmost; yet, after all, but one can win, and that anyone might have been the successful one does not make the unrequited efforts of the ninety and nine less unjust.

In all things are the germs of both life and death. If the strength of this civilization lies in its rewarding successful individual effort so royally, its weakness lies in its making such rewards perpetual without requiring a renewal of the original effort.

Because a half savage and wholly brutal Norman had the courage and good fortune to conquer England a thousand years since, his descendants still occupy the throne, though among

them murderers, imbeciles and adulterers have, time after time, forfeited both throne and life.

Because shrewd speculation placed a few millions in the hands of a Rothschild an hundred years ago, his heirs to-day employ kings, queens, armies and principalities as their tax-gatherers and evictors.

These are but instances. Our whole social system is permeated by wrongs which we have not only endured, but believed to be right.

Let us briefly examine some of these things upon which the Old and the New Civilizations so radically differ—that the Old believes to be right and the New wrong—than which there can certainly be no greater disagreement.

We may enumerate :

Private ownership of land ;

Rent ;

Interest ;

Profit ;

The monopoly of the tools of labor ;

Money, possessing intrinsic value ;

Hereditary rights.

Upon all these things, as we have stated, there is the most radical difference, and as the limits of this paper preclude extended argument, it shall suffice to briefly state the principles from which arguments can be drawn.

The only just title to property of any kind is, that it is the product of the owner's personal labor, either proximately or remotely. That is, that we can only acquire title to something we did not earn by exchanging for it its full value of something we did earn.

Land is the product of no man's labor, therefore no man can own it.

Yet we have a natural right to the use of it, because it is essential to our existence. This is our sole title ; its duration is our natural lives ; its limit our actual necessities ; and it is by its nature not transferable. Having no rights, save the natural one of use, our possession of more land than we can use is simple robbery—provided any one else needs it—and our selling or bequeathing it forgery.

The rent system is so interwoven with and dependent upon the land monopoly that it must fall with it. Without land monopoly, which is the basis of all monopolies, it would be impos-

sible to accumulate and keep together the estates, small or great, which now cumber the earth and rob rent-payers. When we reflect that all property justly owned must have been created by or grown out of labor, we see at once how impossible it is for any man or company of men to acquire princely fortunes except by robbing other men, primarily, of their land, and, secondarily, by means of rent, of their labor.

The wealth of a nation consists solely of the labor of its people applied to its natural resources. To the natural resources all have an equal right—therefore in any community where unequal riches obtain, those who have more than others must have labored more, or have acquired in some unjust way the products of the labor of others, or the natural resources are unfairly divided. In this civilization the great natural resource of land is monopolized, and rent, interest and profit complete the robbery of labor, until the fact that those who labor most possess the least is too notorious to cause comment.

Interest is intimately allied to rent, and arises from the monopoly of the medium of exchange, as rent does from that of land. It is often incorrectly defined as payment for deprivation or abstinence. Theoretically this may seem true, but practically it is false. Theoretically A deprives himself of x , in order to lend it to B, who ought therefore to allow him some recompense. But this is not the case. If x were vital to A's existence he could not lend it; if it is not vital the plea of deprivation fails. Money is not only not vital to A, but ceases to be of the slightest benefit the moment the loan is returned. He may keep \$1,000,000 a million years and it will not increase one cent, yet because he lends it to B he is at once entitled to an increase, a sophistry which refutes itself. The truth is, interest is the toll levied at the gates of commerce by a set of Shylocks, without either reason or justice—except the disinclination to labor be reason, and opportunity to rob, justice.

Let us carry interest to its logical conclusion. Had one cent been loaned by Adam at compound interest, his legal heir would to-day own every foot of land and every penny of capital the world possesses. And that some one Adam does not to-day own the entire world, instead of the thousand who practically do, is not the fault of the interest-taking system, but of its frequent and bloody violation. Interest must be abolished and the medium of exchange made as free to those who have created something to exchange as is the air they breathe.

The monopolization by capitalists of the tools of labor is a still more glaring wrong. All true capital is stored-up labor, and as the results of labor belong to the laborer by that most sacred title of having created them, it follows that all capital not in the hands of actual laborers has been unjustly acquired. Judged by this rule—as the New Civilization will so judge—our swarming workshops, foundries and factories would pass at once into the hands of the laborers who have made them what they are, and the world would no longer look on and applaud while men who never did a day's honest labor in their lives appropriate as "profits" the results of the toil of thousands upon thousands of their fellow-men. When we realize that not one thousand-millionth part of capital is in the possession of its producers and rightful owners, the awe-inspiring magnitude of the wrongs done to labor begin to assume proper proportion. Private monopoly of land, rent, profit and interest, are terrible engines of oppression when they accomplish such results.

It may be argued that many of the tools of labor are the result of invention, and therefore belong to their inventors. Not wholly. The inventors owe society for that very brain culture which enables them to invent. When one of them by a machine replaces the labor of one man, or a thousand men, society, as a whole, should take the machine and absolve him from future necessity to labor. Thus his debt to society, and society's indebtedness to him, would be mutually released.

Yet inventors, as a class, are little better off than laborers. The cormorants who have devoured the fruits of labor have also swallowed up the machines of inventors, and made them veritable racks and thumb-screws to extort further profits from their writhing victims. Well may the laborer look with jealousy and fear upon the introduction of labor-saving machinery. Every such machine, under this competitive system, is a grim, heartless, brainless competitor, requiring neither the food, clothing nor housing of which the unfortunate flesh and bone machines who compete with it stand in need.

The money of the New Civilization must represent the crystallization of performed labor. A medium of exchange is absolutely necessary. The fault of that now in use lies in its possessing intrinsic value apart from such mediumship. It is therefore subject to fluctuations, to panics, to overproduction, to monopolization—in short, to a host of evils. The double character it bears confuses the popular mind. They fail to separate

its use in the arts from its use as a medium of exchange, and in confounding the two put a fictitious value upon it which it does not possess. Without a medium of exchange trade and commerce would be reduced to simple barter. Civilization demands one; but except as such a medium, pure and simple, it should be absolutely valueless.

Under the New Civilization for every day's work done there will issue a governmental labor-note. This, like Bank of England notes, may circulate freely, until in the course of exchange it arrives at a government warehouse where its face will be paid in goods, and the note destroyed. But this, it may be protested, involves immense governmental transactions. So it does; for it is the very essence of the New Civilization that every kind of business by its nature a monopoly must be conducted by the government for the benefit of all, and not, as now, by private individuals for their personal aggrandizement. Of this nature are railroads, telegraphs and telephones, manufactories of almost all kinds, and especially the collecting, storing and distributing of the nation's food. The labor-notes issued to pay their hordes of employees will alone set at rest the question of a circulating medium. And if any doubt arises as to the ability of a properly conducted government to accomplish all this, my answer is to point to our postal system, which, under our cumbrous form of *unrepresentative* government, is a marvel of "safety, certainty, celerity" and cheapness, unequaled by any private enterprise. And this, because all private enterprises involve individual profit as a necessary corollary, while the postal and all other governmental institutions require only necessary expenses, and return the profit to the entire community.

Hereditary rights will be limited, under the New Order, to inheritance of the results of personal labor only. Indeed, when land owning, interest, profit and rent are relegated to barbarism there will be little left to inherit, and still less need of inheritance. Man's heritage from nature of unlimited opportunities and boundless natural resources will suffice. The inheritance of the right to govern, of titles, and of riches, have no foundation in justice, and must pass.

There are many other things in which the New Civilization must differ from the Old. Among these are the abolishing of non-productive labor; the extermination or conversion of non-producers into producers; the vast increase in the productiveness of labor by harmony of detail and classification of its branches,

so that no over or under production will be possible; and the immense cheapening of the necessities and commodities of life when their exchange is no longer made a means of extortion and profit. Indeed, the difference between the New and the Old will be only limited by the capacity of the human race for improvement.

James Roann Reed.

DIRGE FOR A SOLDIER.

Close his eyes; his work is done!
What to him is friend or foe-man,
Rise of moon or set of sun,
Hand of man or kiss of woman?
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? He cannot know;
Lay him low.

As man may, he fought his fight,
Proved his truth by his endeavor;
Let him sleep in solemn night,
Sleep forever and forever.
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? He cannot know;
Lay him low.

Fold him in his country's stars,
Roll the drum and fire the volley!
What to him are all our wars—
What, but death, bemocking folly?
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? He cannot know;
Lay him low.

—George H. Boker.

NATIONALISM holds that every one is born into the world a debtor to society for all he needs.—*Bellamy.*

FROM ORIENT TO OCCIDENT.

KARMA.

"Karma is the Ultimate Law of the Universe, the source, origin and fount of all other laws which exist throughout Nature. It is the unerring law which adjusts effect to cause, on the spiritual, mental and physical planes of being.....It adjusts, wisely, intelligently and equitably, each effect to each cause, tracing the latter back to its producer."—*Key to Theosophy*.

Karma, then, is the law of cause and effect, acting upon all planes. It is entirely impersonal in this action, and yet, as stated above, it acts wisely, intelligently and equitably, although the source of this intelligence and wisdom proceeds from the Unknowable. It does not reason, as we understand reasoning, nor is its wisdom accompanied by any mentality conceivable to human minds. Given a cause, and its corresponding effect will follow inevitably. Could this law be violated in but one instance, however trifling, the whole universe would fall into chaos, like a child's castle of cards.

Descartes founded his famous system of philosophy upon the postulate, *Cogito, ergo sum*. How much firmer a basis is afforded for the most profound conceptions of the universe in this law of Karma, that Effect follows Cause. It is a unit of measurement applicable to every conceivable point of space, every atom, every plane of being, every manifestation of consciousness, in all this illimitable cosmos. Taking its source in the Unknowable, yet having its action plainly perceivable upon our planes of life, it is the link which binds the knowable to the unknowable. It is the one supreme testimony of unity and design, of intelligence and justice in nature. Karma is but another name for the great Unknowable, CAUSELESS CAUSE.

Effect follows cause in the emergence of cosmos from chaos ; in the struggle for existence among the newly-formed bodies of a solar system ; in the "process of the suns" as they wing their way around their inconceivably vast orbits ; in the aberrations of an Uranus, revealing the presence of a Neptune ; in the involution and evolution of humanities ; in the birth, life and death of a man, of a molecule, or of a planetary system ; in the racial, national or social environments of the individual ; in the presence of evil and injustice in the world ; in the intellectual capacity, from genius to idiocy of men ; in their appetites, passions and desires ; in their spiritual aspirations ; in their diseases and vices ;—

in short, in every conceivable juxtaposition or combination of thought, act or event, the law, is absolute ; Karma, all-pervading. As far as the most daring generalizations of the human mind can reach, its sway is absolute. No exception can be postulated. Even the CAUSELESS CAUSE, the final goal of all rational philosophies, seems to yield obeisance to this law which proceeds out of its own abysses, for the manifestation of universes would appear to be only links in an infinite cycle of necessity.

Once the universality of the action of Karma is recognized, we have a safe basis for our future explorations. It is an unfailing touch-stone, wherewith we can test the truth of any proposition, whether religious, scientific or philosophical. Its application to the problems of human life—to which, indeed, the term is commonly limited—constitutes the motive of this paper. The importance of this phase of its study cannot be overestimated when we recognize that our whole life is but a succession of Nidanas, a chain of causes and effects, of which each effect becomes a cause in its own turn, and so on, in endless progression. No act, however trivial, no thought, however faint, no emotion, however fleeting, but is a cause, a bit of woof, woven in the warp of our being, and giving it color and texture. An idle word,—how often it changes a whole life ; a thoughtless act, whose effects, or karma, follow us to and even beyond the grave ! For it is a portion of this law that while any act or thought of ours may have its effect either within us, or externally upon others, the reaction, which is this effect become a cause again, must expend itself upon us individually. And it is most difficult to judge of the comparative magnitude of the causes we set in motion. A pebble thrown into the ocean seems a trifling cause, yet every separate drop in all the vast expanse of waters has to readjust its relations, as a direct and purely physical effect. And in addition to this permanent readjustment, the law of reaction, or restored equilibrium, requires every iota of force thrown off by the falling pebble to be returned to its source. In other words, the pebble has to receive a shock equal to that which it set in motion. In this simile, the original cause would be the falling pebble ; its effect, the readjustment of the waters of the entire ocean, the reaction, or its personal karma, the impulse of returning pressure, which, in relation to it, has become a cause again. In like manner, every act or thought of a man affects as a cause all

other men in some degree, and this effect upon them will be returned to him, as a new cause, modifying his being to the extent of the effects it originally produced.

It will thus be seen how impossible it is for any one to separate his Karma from that of his fellow men. The interweaving and correlations are necessarily infinite, and naught but infinite wisdom, as embodied in the divine law of Karma, could mete out exact justice to us for all the multiform deeds of a lifetime. Isolation is a chimera. A Crusoe, on a desert island, will reach out to and affect the whole mass of humanity, for the pictures of his acts and thoughts, reflected in the astral light, will be re-reflected upon the physical plane, and influence to some degree the thought of the world. No man can think a good thought without the whole of humanity being somewhat the better for it; no man can sin against his higher nature without lowering the moral standard of the whole world to some extent.

This inevitable and necessary interblending of all our Karmas forms a true and scientific basis for the theosophic conception of universal brotherhood; a reason, logical and necessary, for the practice of altruism. It also affords an occasion for the separation of karmic adjustments into classes, according as these relate to the individual himself, or to his immediate or remote environment. Thus that aspect which views the Karma of all the units as one great whole, would be termed world Karma; that which relates one to his race, his nation, his community, and his family, would be respectively, race, national, social, and family Karma, while the comparatively minute portion remaining would constitute his own, or his individual Karma. Yet this almost infinitesimal portion, this drop in the sea, is that with which we principally concern ourselves, as the very apotheosis of selfishness. Our hopes, our purification, our progress seems to our blinded eyes of paramount importance, so subtle do vanity and selfesteem become when transmuted to higher planes. Bereft of intelligence, and depending upon brute force alone, of how much avail would be the strength of one man against the united sinews of his race, his nation, or even against his community? In exact proportion is the ratio of his Karma to that of his community, his nation or his race. It is lost in the great whole; it is of account only before that tribunal which "numbers the hairs upon our heads." Let him who would attain personal "salvation," who would separate his Karma from that of a wicked, sinful race by retiring to the jungle, or within the recesses of his

own selfish heart, and there practicing the most austere virtues, go out and push against the side of a mountain, in the hope of retarding the revolution of the earth from West to East, for the one effort will be of as much avail as the other. Are there not thousands of men, whose personal Karma would entitle them to be born under conditions as delightful and just as any ever depicted by a Bellamy, whose moral natures quiver under the outrageous ethics of our social system every hour of their lives, yet who are compelled by the national Karma which overwhelms them to do the very acts they loathe; to live by taking the very interest, profit or rent which they abhor? Are there not tens of thousands, whose sincere efforts in other lives to attain to truth would have entitled them as units to its revelation, who are nevertheless born in Christian or Pagan lands where the racial Karma offers only crude dogmas or childish creeds? But has the justice of Karma failed, then, because of this seeming injustice? Not so; the efforts of these, even in the direction of truth and purity, have been selfish; they have striven egotistically, not altruistically; have worked for their personal salvation, not to save others. They have created good personal Karma, and Karma repays them to the uttermost farthing, but they have done nothing to lighten the race or national Karma, and they are engulfed in its floods. It was no chance thought, no accidental insertion of a "glittering generality," which declared the first Object of the Theosophic Society to be the formation of a nucleus for an universal brotherhood. It evidences a wisdom and knowledge of the working of the law of Karma far transcending our petty conceptions. Altruistic effort is the law of spiritual progress because of the commingling of our Karmas, and even in selfish self-preservation, if from no higher motive, we ought to practice it. We recognize the injustice, the falsity, the hollowness of the social, ethical and religious customs of our time, yet we accept them, and raise no protesting voice because the whole world is against us, or we fancy it is. Can we charge it to the injustice of this divine law, then, if our next incarnation find us the son of a money-changer, with the lust of gold tainting our very mothers' milk? If the world is too hard for us now, will it not be so then? Let us exercise a little common sense in our study of Karma; let us remember that it is simply "cause and effect," and cannot but be just.

There is too much of the Christian idea of the entire separation of earthly from heavenly concerns abroad in the land. If we

find this world in a bad state morally and ethically, we must logically expect to find it in a similar one when we reincarnate, especially if we did nothing towards lightening the world Karma. Cause precedes effect, on all planes. Our first duty, to be sure, is to make ourselves personally pure, because this is always at hand, and always practicable, our next to strive for the elevation of our community, then our state, our nation, our race; each member of which ascending series includes all below it, so that in working for humanity, we are purifying our race, our nation, our community, and ourselves. And the effect of the causes we set up, of the Karma we generate, is the greater as we ascend the series in motive. It is this which gives the thought and the act force. Thought is creative, and that which aims at the elevation of the race will prove incomparably more potent a factor for good than that directed towards petty or selfish aims.

We are but as drops in the great ocean of life. Our very souls are tainted by the saltiness and bitterness of the floods about us. The bitterness of the whole ocean can only be removed, and its waters made pleasant and sweet by the sweetening and purification of each separate drop. No one can do this for another, and yet each can only purify itself by unselfish work for others. How beautifully grand is the LAW! What a magnificent stride above and beyond the brute kingdom, where the Buchners, Tyndalls, Darwins and Huxleys would perforce relegate us! The law of the animal kingdom is egotism; the survival of the fittest; the cruel struggle for existence. The law of Karma on the human plane is altruism and selflessness, and we must recognize it or perish. For cause and effect are at work in higher states of matter; employing subtle and unperceived forces. The childhood of our race has passed. We are fast reaching our majority, where we must take control of our own destinies, for weal or woe. No longer the created, borne helplessly yet safely along the mighty stream of evolution, we have become creators, and are karmically responsible for that which we create. Our mouths have learned to voice the WORD. Every thought and act is potent for good or evil; the finer, "unscientific" forces of nature yield obedience and obeisance whether we are aware of it or not. It is not enough that we recognize the universal presence of cause and effect, the omnipotence and omniscience of Karma; we must realise that we are free to change and direct this divine law, to our preservation or our destruction.

This is a most important aspect of Karma which must not be

lost sight of. As the whole cosmos is the thought of the Absolute, reflected in matter, so we as a part and portion of that Absolute exercise and employ creative potencies every hour of our lives. Shall we continue to do this ignorantly and aimlessly, or shall we take a firm hold upon our destinies and guide our souls into the haven of immortality? Certain it is that we must make the decision soon, for we are pilgrims in the cycle of necessity; we must go forward either to safety or destruction. And this is not predicated upon the emotionalism of some wailing Jeremiah, of ancient, or Buchanan, of modern times; but simply and entirely for the reason that EFFECT follows CAUSE. One is the upper, the other the nether mill-stone of fate, and we are inextricably caught between them. If we emerge at all, it will be with all the gross and material portions of our natures bruised away by their resistless revolutions.

It will be at once evident that, holding as it does to the absolute sway of cause and effect upon every plane of the universe, physical, mental and spiritual, Theosophy stands in irreconcilable antagonism to the Christian dogma of vicarious atonement. And herein is the chief reason why most Theosophists refuse to ally themselves, even under the name of Christian Theosophists, with the churches of to-day. They recognize fully that Christianity is an humane and altruistic effort to improve the condition of mankind morally and spiritually; but this error of the divinity of Christ and his vicarious atonement is too basic in its nature, too far-reaching in its karmic results, to be passed over in a silence which might be construed into acquiescence. Each time that a repenitent sinner is assured that the effects of causes he himself set in operation can be nullified by forgiveness from any source, he is being taught an untruth which can not but peril the future development of his soul. Each time a priest pronounces absolution over some terrified wretch, whom the shadow of the gallows, perhaps, has frightened into "repentance" after a long life of selfishness and crime, he assumes an authority and a power which is absolutely at variance with the law to which he owes his own existence. The marked contrast between the philosophical doctrine of Karma, and the dogma of vicarious atonement has been well set forth by a recent writer in *The Buddhist*. He says:

"There is a wide gulf between the Buddhist doctrine of Karma and the Christian teaching regarding the dispensing of reward and punishment. In proportion to that difference the moral control exercised on human actions must differ in a corresponding degree. Karma, according to Bud-

dhism and other Eastern schools of philosophy, is an inviolable, natural law, which controls the lives of all sentient beings in the Universe, and which in its turn is not governed by any superior force or being. As long as thoughts and actions last so long will their results, or Karma, prevail. The least thing moved in space has a certain effect on the particles floating thereon; the slightest motion in water gives rise to ripple after ripple until the force thereof is expended; the gentlest sound sends forth vibrations producing change somewhere; and the very smallest thought has also its tendency to disturb either the thinker or the object thought of. The further such research is extended, the more will the application of the karmic law to human actions prove to be as true and natural as are the laws of attraction and gravitation. Then when it is known by man that all his thoughts and actions have certain, tangible and perceptible effects, and that these effects have a rebounding tendency, or that they remain registered in his *manas-skanda*, to cleave to him in whatever condition he may be hereafter, a lasting and powerful impression of awe and veneration must be the natural result created in his mind. He who is morally convinced of the inevitable effect and danger of certain thoughts and actions, and of the reward which awaits him through certain others, must be more deeply impressed in mind than another who entertains no such belief. The Christian doctrine of the absolution of sins is a total cancellation of the past—whether there be crimes of the blackest type or not—by an act of momentary repentance, which places the wretched moral leper on a par with the most exalted saint. It is apparent from this fact that the votaries of Christianity must rely more upon supernatural magic to ease themselves of a life burden of ugly sins than upon an unchecked course of pure, moral life. If this extraordinary feat could be scientifically or otherwise demonstrated, there are many in these glowing Eastern climes who would readily embrace Christianity."

The writer, also, shrewdly draws attention to the fact, emphasized in the first portion of this paper in regard to the separation by Christians of earthly from heavenly concerns, that we do not apply the doctrine of the remission of sins in our treatment of criminals to any very demoralizing extent, and that the effect of such an application of the laws of heaven to earthly conditions would be to immeasurably increase lawlessness and crime.

The law of Karma, too, being impersonal in its action solves two of the greatest puzzles over which Christianity has pondered in vain. These are the presence of evil in a world created by an all-wise and all powerful creator, and free will consistent with omniscient fore-knowledge. No Christian theology has ever satisfactorily explained why an omnipotent God did not devise some means whereby he might save from the eternal flames lost souls which his omniscient knowledge informed him would eventually be eternally lost. And if God from all eternity knew a thing would happen then it had to happen, and just how this could be reconciled with human free will, was another of those conundrums whose distinguishing peculiarity is that they have no answer.

The Presbyterian branch, of all the protesting churches, recognizes the logical necessity which follows postulating both omni-

potence and omniscience of a personal deity, and boldly avow their belief in predestination, or fatalism. As quoted from J. H. Connelly, in the *Key to Theosophy*, their Confession of Faith declares :

"By the decree of God and for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death.

"These angels and men thus predestinated and fore-ordained are particularly and unchangeably designed ; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.....As God hath appointed the elect to glory...Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, and sanctified and saved, but the Elect only.

"The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin to the praise of his glorious justice !"

This is not the ravings of some hypochondriacal, half-insane prophet ; it is a part of the PRESBYTERIAN CONFESSION OF FAITH, and is accepted to-day by a very large class of intelligent, educated and refined gentlemen, and loving, lovable women, who would no more do that which they declare their God does, daily and hourly, than they would transform themselves into Jack-the-Rippers. It is the inevitable and logical outcome of a belief whose very foundations are laid in error.

Is Presbyterianism alone in its attributing injustice to God which it would deem barbarous and unfeeling in man ? By no means. No human bar of justice, imperfect as is the attribute in our breasts in its present stage of development, would ever doom anyone to the pangs of ETERNAL perdition and suffering for any act, however dreadful or cruel. But all Christian sects, without exception, send comparatively innocent souls to this eternal damnation for simply being unable to believe in and accept this awful Jehovah they have set up for worship. In his profession as a physician, the writer has, time and again, known little infants, which some unforeseen accident deprived of life before receiving baptism, refused burial in "sanctified" ground by the great Catholic Church and condemned to the woes of eternal torment on account of this omission. A little water sprinkled on an unconscious infant deciding its eternal destiny ! What a conception of the philosophy of existence the believers in such dogmas must have ! African Fetich worship is more reasonable. But how can any system of faith or philosophy arrive at reasonable or logical conclusions whose very base is founded in untruth and error ? Like a mariner whose compass is untrue, and who there-

fore only deviates the more the farther he sails, so Christian creeds, being founded in error, can only hope to increase their separation from truth the farther they pursue any train of explanation or reasoning.

Let it be understood, once for all, that by Christianity, throughout this paper, the writer refers to the modern creeds parading under this falsely assumed title. The teachings of the Essenes, of whom Christ was one, are eminently Theosophic in many particulars, and both Christ and Paul taught, as we have undoubted reason for believing, pure Theosophy to an inner circle of disciples. Only to the multitude "spake he in parables." Christ was continually referring to the god within him, his "Father," which by implication at least he taught his disciples that they also possessed, for "the things that I do, shall ye do also, and greater because I go to my Father." But he nowhere refers to himself as the Creator of heaven and earth, as the purely personal egotism of his latter-day followers has led them to assume.

There is no place, then, in Theosophy for the vicarious atonement, or the setting aside the law of cause and effect, which is the very soul of the Christian creeds, of to-day. Justice is not mocked by an impossible and unphilosophical "forgiveness" whose sole essential is repentance. As well might a dyke repent that it had burst and let the sea in. Repentance itself too often consists of a feeling of fear of the consequence of our act, rather than a real regret for what we have done. As J. H. Connelly further remarks:

"The sinner is told that he must also repent, but nothing is easier than that. It is an amiable weakness of human nature that we are quite prone to regret the evil we have done when our attention is called, and we have either suffered from it ourselves or enjoyed its fruits. Possibly, close analysis of the feeling would show us that which we regret is rather the necessity which seemed to require the evil as a means of attainment of our selfish ends than the evil itself.

"Attractive as this prospect of casting our sins at the foot of the Cross may be to the ordinary mind, it does not commend itself to the theosophic student. He does not apprehend why the student by attaining knowledge of his evil can thereby merit any pardon for or the blotting out of his past wickedness; or why repentance and future right living entitle him to a suspension in his favor of the universal law of relation between cause and effect. The results of his evil deeds continue to exist; the suffering caused to others by his wickedness is not blotted out. The theosophical student takes the result of wickedness upon the innocent into his problem. He considers not only the guilty person, but his victims.

"Karma, also, rewards merit as unerringly as it punishes demerit. It is the outcome of every act, thought, word and deed, and by it men mold themselves, their lives and happenings. Eastern philosophy rejects the idea of a newly-created soul for every baby born. It believes in a limited number of monads, evolving and growing more and more perfect

through their assimilation of many successive personalities. These personalities are the product of Karma, and it is by Karma and reincarnation that the human monad in time returns to its source—absolute deity.”

Karma is inextricably interwoven with reincarnation. Without the latter, it would be impossible to assume, at least in human affairs, that cause is invariably followed by effect. The many murderers who escape detection, the hordes of those who grow rich through robbing the poor, the whole tendency of an age where honesty is NOT the best policy, if one would win in the mad race for wealth, all show but too plainly that one life is too short for exact justice to be meted out to anyone. But, “though the mills of the gods grind slowly, yet they grind exceedingly small,” and there is no more beautiful or more hope-inspiring aspect of Karma than this which shows it capable of bidding its time. Its eternal patience must seem awful to him who is waiting his turn at the mill. There is no escape. A wheat kernel has been known to lie thousands of years in the wrappings of a mummy, and then germinate upon being restored to warmth and moisture. This is the key to and the proof of that which we term delayed karma. Desire is the most potent of all forces, and we may be assured that the attractions for evil things generated by the userer or murderer will prove causes which will find the conditions for becoming effects in some future birth. So the evils which we uncomplainingly suffer now will be recompensed to the utmost in some bright and beautiful, though it may be far-off life. What is time to the heir of eternity? Thus the everlasting patience of Karma assures us that no effort we make can be without its ultimate reward; that no wrong we inflict can escape final punishment.

In closing this brief paper upon a subject that volumes would leave unexhausted, we can do no better than to quote from the Teacher to whom the Western world is indebted for this revival of an almost forgotten truth. In the *Secret Doctrine*, Madame Blavatsky writes:

“Yes; ‘our destiny is written in the stars!’ Only, the closer the union between the mortal reflection, MAN, and his celestial PROTOTYPE, the less dangerous the external conditions and subsequent reincarnations—which neither Buddhas nor Christs can escape. This is not superstition, least of all is it fatalism. The latter implies a blind course of some still blinder power, and man is a free agent during his stay on earth.....Those who believe in Karma have to believe in destiny, which, from birth to death, every man is weaving, thread by thread, around himself, as a spider does his cobweb; and this destiny is guided either by the heavenly voice of the invisible prototype outside of us, or by our more intimate astral, or inner man, who is but too often the evil genius of the embodied entity called man. Both these lead on the outward man, but one of them must prevail;

and from the very beginning of the invisible affray the stern and implacable law of compensation steps in and takes its course, faithfully following the fluctuations. When the last strand is woven and man is seemingly enwrapped in the net work of his own doing, then he finds himself completely under the empire of this self made destiny.....There is no return from the paths Karma cycles over ; yet these paths are of our own making, for it is we, collectively or individually, who prepare them. Karma-Nemesis is the synonym of PROVIDENCE, minus design, goodness and every other *finite* attribute or qualification, so unphilosophically attributed to the latter. An Occultist or a philosopher will not speak of the goodness nor cruelty of providence, but identifying it with Karma-Nemesis, he will teach that nevertheless it guards the good and watches over them in this, as in future lives ; and that it punishes the evil doer—aye, even to his seventh re-birth. So long, in short, as the effect of his having thrown into perturbation even the smallest atom in the infinite world of harmony, has not been finally readjusted. For the only decree of Karma—an eternal and immutable decree—is absolute harmony in the world of matter as it is in the world of spirit. It is not, therefore, Karma which rewards or punishes, but it is we who reward and punish ourselves according to whether we work with, through, and along with nature, abiding by the laws on which that harmony depends, or—break them.

“Nor would the ways of Karma be inscrutable were men to work in union and harmony instead of disunion and strife. For our ignorance of these ways—which one portion of mankind calls the ways of Providence, dark and intricate, while another sees in them the action of blind fatalism, and a third, simple chance, with neither gods nor devils to guide them—would surely disappear, if we would but attribute all these to their correct cause.....With right knowledge.....two-thirds of the world's evil would vanish into thin air. Were no man to hurt his brother, Karma-Nemesis would have neither cause to work, nor weapons to act through. It is the constant presence in our midst of every element of strife and opposition, and the division of races, nations, tribes, societies and individuals into Cains and Abels, wolves and lambs, that is the chief cause of the ways of Providence. We cut these numerous windings in our destinies daily with our own hands, while we imagine that we are pursuing a track on the royal high road of respectability and duty, and then complain of these ways being so intricate and dark. We stand bewildered before the mystery of our own making, and the riddles of life that we *will not* solve, and then we accuse the great Sphinx of devouring us. But, verily, there is not an accident of our lives, not a misshapen day, nor a misfortune that could not be traced back to our own doings in this or another life.

“The law of Karma is inextricably interwoven with that of Reincarnation.....It is only this doctrine that can explain the mysterious problem of good and evil, and reconcile man to the terrible and apparent injustice of life. Nothing but such certainty can quiet our revolted sense of justice. For, when one acquainted with the noble doctrine looks around him and observes the inequalities of birth and fortune, of intellect and capacities ; when one sees honor paid to fools and profligates, on whom fortune has heaped her favors by mere privilege of birth, and their nearest neighbor, with all his intellect and noble virtues—far more deserving in every way—perishing for want, and for lack of sympathy ;—when one sees all this and has to turn away, helpless to relieve the undeserved suffering ; one's ears ringing and one's heart aching with the cries of pain around him, that blessed knowledge of Karma alone prevents him from cursing life and men as well as their supposed creator. This law, whether conscious or unconscious, predestines nothing and no one. It exists from and in eternity truly, for it is eternity itself ; and as such, since no act can be co-equal with eternity, it can not be said to act for it is action itself. It is not the wave which drowns the man, but the personal action of the wretch who goes deliberately and places himself under the impersonal action of the laws that govern the ocean's motion. Karma creates nothing nor does it design. It is man who plants and creates causes, and karmic law adjusts the effects,

which adjustment is not an act but universal harmony tending ever to resume its original position, like a bough, which, bent down too forcibly, rebounds with corresponding vigor. If it happen to dislocate the arm that tried to bend it out of its natural position, shall we say it is the bough which broke our arm or that our own folly has brought us to grief? Karma has never sought to destroy intellectual and individual liberty, like the god invented by the monotheists. It has not involved its decrees in darkness purposely to perplex man, nor shall it punish him who dares to scrutinize its mysteries. On the contrary, he who unveils, through study and meditation, its intricate paths, and throws light on those dark ways, in the windings of which so many men perish owing to their ignorance of the labyrinth of life, is working for the good of his fellow men. Karma is an absolute and eternal law in the world of manifestation; and as there can only be one absolute, one eternal, ever-present cause, believers in Karma cannot be regarded as atheists or materialists, still less as fatalists, for Karma is one with the Unknowable, of which it is an aspect, in its effects in the phenomenal world."

Jerome A. Anderson.

A SAD PICTURE.

Capital and Labor, after severe skirmishes with varying success, are arming for the supreme conflict. How imminent the struggle may be no man can affirm precisely, but signs there are which may well fill us with disquiet. The rich are daily becoming richer; the poor, poorer; luxury, high living, and the pride of life are on the increase. The thirst for wealth becomes daily more unsatiable; the cries of the distressed more sharp and loud and poignant.

The economic conditions in the United States are fast approaching those of England. The homes of the poor are more marked by destitution and squalor; the light of heaven is being closed out from tenement room and attic; flesh and blood are becoming more cheap, and bread more dear; the well-being of the car-horse is more solicitously watched than that of the driver. Small wonder that strong men, maddened by the tears of wife and cries of starving children, band themselves together and sometimes resort to deeds of violence.

—Cardinal Gibbon.

DRINKING plunges masses of men and women into the mire of misery and the ditch of despair, and by its narcotic action on the will-power makes them contented to remain in the ditch when once there; and herein the liquor system is the great obstacle to reform. If men are to better their condition, they must be made discontented with their surroundings before the ambition comes to better them.—*Workers' Cry.*

TESTS OF CHARACTER.

Madame Blavatsky's retirement from this incarnation has incited journalists to columns of description, in which those hostile to her have repeated anew the various charges of humbuggery, deception, imposture, etc.

Now to determine the actual character of any person widely known as an author, there are three tests,—the savor of the writings, the quality of the readers drawn to them, the personal experience of those most closely associated with him in domestic life. Let us apply these tests to Madame Blavatsky.

1st. *The flavor of the writings.* Throughout all, but especially in the one avowedly written as a hand-book for pupils who would practice Theosophic teachings, *The Voice of the Silence*, the duties most explicitly, repeatedly, and unqualifiedly enjoined are Truth, Unselfishness, and Purity. It is declared that no one should attempt the Higher Path till deliberately purged of every falsehood, unbrotherliness, and uncleanness, such being an absolute bar to the spiritual progression which alone can conduct to Beatitude. This is beyond question the reiterated injunction of each book. Now if it mirrored the soul of the writer, Madame Blavatsky was honest, unselfish, and chaste; if the reverse, she was publishing sentiments opposite to her own, opposite to those fitted to secure her the followers she would desire, opposite to the tendency of the age and to the demands of literature, opposite to a motive for fame, ease, emolument, or praise. She was universally admitted to be clever; does a clever writer hypocritically avow doctrines certain to ensure failure in popularity and gain?

2d. *The quality of the readers drawn to them.* Are her works the chosen favorites of the frivolous, the tricky, the dishonest, the sensual? The question is as though one should ask if the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius were the delight of thieves. Apart from the matter of philosophical discussion or esoteric exposition, facts show that the purchasers and students of her writings are men and women of sober mind, intent on spiritual things, dwelling on soul-advance and fraternal help as the aims of life. Does an unscrupulous sensualist devote years of laborious work to provide guidance for that class; does that class feel magnetic sympathy with the self-seeking and the corrupt?

3d. *The personal experience of those most closely associated in*

domestic life. Every man is best known by such as dwell in his household, note his private habits, tastes, affiliations, are familiar with his ways and speech and revelations. Now it is remarkable of Madame Blavatsky that the most unreserved testimony to her sincerity comes from those most competent to test it, members long of her own family, intimately connected with her in daily life. Mrs. Besant, the Countess Wachtmeister, Dr. and Mr. Keightley, speak in no measured tones of her generosity, kindness, forgiveness of injuries, freedom from resentment, her patience with learners, her condemnation of wrong, selfishness, and incontinence, her amazing and ceaseless energy, her self-sacrifice, her indifference to money, her refusal to accept gifts, her cheerful poverty that her work might be sustained, her unreserved renunciation of ease, income, rest, and health for the cause of Theosophy. They, and such of us as have had like, though less, experience, are uniform in testimony as to these points. Strange that all such should be deceived, and that the true interpreters of her character should be journalists who never read a page of her writings, never attended a meeting of the Society she founded, never passed a day in her household, never even looked upon her face!

The friends of Madame Blavatsky, those who knew and loved her, do not ask that the world shall take her at their valuation. They ask merely that the rules of palpable common-sense shall be admitted in any judgment of her, that testimony from those who know much shall be thought weightier than testimony from those who know nothing, that every well-established principle in the interpretation of human character shall not be reversed in her case, that the unsupported assertion of a daily newspaper shall not be conceded the authority of a Court or the infallibility of a Scripture. They do not even ask that the impartial shall read her books, but they *suggest*, not from hearsay but from experience, that if any man wishes his aspirations brightened, his motive invigorated, his endeavor spurred, he should turn to the writings which express the thought and reflect the soul of HELENA P. BLAVATSKY.

Alexander Fullerton, F. T. S

THERE is no foundation in nature or natural law why a set of words upon parchment should convey the dominion of land.

—Blackstone.

EDITORIAL COMMENT.

The *Voice*, of New York, has been collating a symposium of opinions upon the Race problem in the South, which affords both interesting and instructive reading. It includes those of such representative men as Ex-Governor Chamberlain, Professor J. C. Price (colored), Chief Justice Fenner, Ex-Governor St. John, Bishop Turner, the Reverends C. H. Mead, J. B. Cranfill and H. L. Wayland, Hon. Walter B. Hill, and others.

Almost all agree that the negro is unjustly treated because of his being too ignorant to cope with his white opponent in the struggle for existence, and all cry out, Educate him! Educate him!

That is to say, if one finds himself unable to cope with the Jacksons and Sullivans, of modern society, let him go into training until he is able. As Austin Lewis suggested, in the June CALIFORNIAN, let the schoolmaster in the South hasten to turn out young, black brigands, educated sufficiently to cope with their white antagonists, and the injustice may cease, or at least become modified by the amenities of the prize ring.

But the Reverends come to the front with a repudiation of brotherhood or equality which is refreshing in its candor. Says the Reverend Bishop Turner, D.D., "Emigration to Africa.....is, in my opinion, the only solution of the problem, unless the whites will drop all color prejudice, which I am sure they cannot do, nor am I certain that God would have them do it. I would rather believe that the prejudice of the whites is a part of the Divine programme.....It is for the whites who have money to supply the blacks with ships.....and the same ships that bear the negro to Africa will return laden with billions of wealth to this Nation."

A Divine programme which includes prejudice, persecution, injustice and hatred to bring about an exodus of the Negroes from the South, or any event, for the matter of that, may be eminently Christian, but it is hardly ethical.

The Rev. Cranfill is equally emphatic. Hear him. "This feeling of supremacy is basal and comes from God. The white man is no more to blame for it than the lion is to blame for being strong. It is in his blood and bone."

Jesus wept.

Apropos of symposiums, Frank Bailly Millard has gathered an *ex parte* one from some twenty leading ministers, as to why the pews are empty, and how best to fill them. Dr. Talmage declares that the people "cannot stand humdrum.....that a great deal of the religion of to-day is utterly insipid. There is nothing piquant or elevating about it." "Piquant" religion will be new to many, but it "keeps up with the procession." Edward Everett Hale regards most sermons as savoring too much of a preacher's argument to "justify his existence." Heber Newton thinks the pulpit lacks sympathy with the intellectual and social movements of our

age. Dr. John Hall says the people are ignorant of their obligations. S. D. McConnell blames newspapers and good, cheap literature, which has "taken away from the church one of its former attractions, which was that it was a place of exchange of intelligence." Schisms, "revivals," and obsolete language are also included in his category. Robert McKenzie says that people have a distaste for religious service. Dwight L. Moody wants better preachers, and the Sunday papers done away with. Dr. Charles Easton gets very close to the heart of the question when he demands more gospel and less dogma. Alexander Crummell avers that "the artificial sweets and dyspeptic confectionery of the Sunday school" are largely to blame. The Rev. J. S. Black says: "The church is out of touch with the masses. The Socialism of to-day regards the church as the Pullman the car of the classes, and therefore to be shunned by the masses."

Not one of these gentlemen suggests that perhaps Christianity may have drifted away from the teachings of Christ. Why should they?

The seizure of "large quantities" of liquors in the rooms of Harvard students tells its own story. Modern, ethical beliefs, whether religious or social, exert no control over the rising generation. Learned and poorly-paid professors may preach—and practice—pure morals, but the youth of our Universities see too plainly that gold is the power behind the throne of even religious ethics. Gold and gold alone enables them to register themselves as students, and to lead gay and fast lives afterwards. A poor student at Harvard or Yale is like a rich man in the kingdom of heaven—possible, but sadly out of place.

Yet there was one poor student once, the son of a good Minister, who breasted the tide and supported himself for the two last years of his term, as he personally assured me, by betting! And what better field for betting could he have found than these same "clubs" of Harvard men, who keep in stock "large quantities" of intoxicants? And what kind of ethical sense pervades an institution where a Minister's son can pursue such a course, not only unrebuked, but envied and emulated?

Modern, ethical ideas are curious things. They are so wonderfully elastic; there is nothing they cannot be stretched to fit. I was once in conversation with a young man, when his father—a large-hearted Minister—rushed in breathless, exclaiming, "Ophir is falling!" The son cocked his eye curiously at him a moment, and then dryly asked, "Does that make any difference to you? If it does, I'll get out and rustle." The father admitted that it did, and the son proceeded to "rustle," whatever that meant in this case.

Ethical ideas are curious. This Minister would have scouted the idea that he was gambling. "Dealing in stocks" involved no such an atrocity; in thinking which he would have been fortified by the opinion of two-thirds of America's citizens—aye, by two-thirds of America's Reverends, perhaps.

Not to be behind with symposiums, the NEW CALIFORNIAN presents herewith the opinion of the law-makers of various states as to the restrictions necessary to guide the "moral sense of right and wrong" of liquor dealers.

It has been found necessary to legally forbid these liberal gentlemen

to sell as follows: Alabama, to children, insane, common drunkards; Arizona, children, Indians, drunkards; Arkansas, children, Indians, soldiers, drunkards; California, children, drunkards; Connecticut, prisoners, drunkards; Colorado, insane, idiots, children; Delaware, children, drunkards; Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia and Wisconsin, children, drunkards, Indians, etc; Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Utah, Washington, Wyoming prohibit it to children, idiots, etc., but allow it to be sold to drunkards; Iowa, Kansas, Indian Territory, Alaska, Maine, North Dakota, Vermont, South Dakota and New Hampshire prohibit its sale entirely.

Laws all over the United States to punish the sale to children, idiots, the insane, habitual drunkards, and so on, *ad nauseum*. Nice opinion our law makers have of liquor sellers to interpose such restrictions as these. Can it be possible that these gentlemen have been guilty of doing the things forbidden, or have our modern Solons, like their ancient prototype, introduced new and unheard of crimes by enacting penalties against them?

The Salvation Army has moved upon this Western Coast, rank and file. And God speed it in its work. Other associations—notably the Theosophical Society—seek to elevate men by appealing to their intellects—when they have any. The Salvationists appeal solely to the emotional aspect of man's many-sided nature. As most of us live habitually upon the emotional plane, their field of operation is practically unlimited. And that men can be aroused to lead higher and purer lives through their emotions is a fact in nature. The only trouble is, that the play of force here, being molecular, soon expends itself, leaving the "convert" helpless driftwood upon the island of Backsliding. Yet the voices of the "soldiers," cracked, unmusical and untrained as most of them are, is seraphic harmony to that proceeding out from the hells and dives under their feet as they pass along our streets.

LOCAL EDUCATIONAL MEETINGS.

The Theosophical Society holds Open Meetings at which Lectures are given every Sunday evening at 320 Post St., 7.30 P. M. Following is the Programme for July:

July 12. Motive as a Moral Power.....Mrs. Sarah A. Harris.
 July 19. The Scientific Evidence of Reincarnation, Dr. Jerome A. Anderson.
 July 26. Woman from a Theosophical Standpoint....Mrs. Mercie M. Thirds.
 Aug. 2. The Astral Light.....Geo. P. Keeney.

Questions from the audience after each lecture.

The Society has a Free Circulating Library of Theosophical Works at 1504 Market St., Cor. City Hall Ave. It is open from 10 A. M. to 5 P. M., Sundays excepted; and from 7 to 9 P. M., Monday, Tuesday and Friday.

Pacific Nationalist Club meets every Sunday at 8 P. M. at 909½ Market St., San Francisco. Music, First-class Lectures, Good Discussions. Object:—The Complete Emancipation of Labor.