

# THE OCCULT REVIEW

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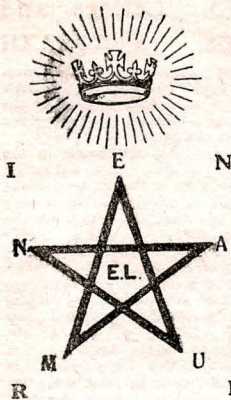
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## NOTES OF THE MONTH

ONE of the many rediscoveries of modern science is the restorative and vitalising action upon the human system of direct sunlight. Always taken by the world at large much as a matter of course, it is only in comparatively recent years that orthodox science has set upon it the seal of its approval; so that to-day we find practical measures being taken, by the manufacture of glass which will permit the free passage of these vital rays, and by the special treatment of textile fabrics, to provide as free access for these finer components of sunlight to the surface of the body of civilised man as is enjoyed by the almost entirely naked savage of the tropics. We have, further, the invention of an electrical system whereby some of the benefits of sunshine may be secured by the use of "artificial sunlight." We do not, however, think that science is yet prepared to consider the mystery of prana, which, according to occult tradition, is so intimately associated with the question of vitality. Nevertheless, science having gone so far as it has, the empirical methods of the Nature Cure and other "faddist" movements are entirely vindicated. Science has begun to recognise the intimate and vital connection between

sunlight and physical vitality. The less direct sunlight we receive from any cause, whether through adverse climatic conditions or through our own artificial habits of life, the greater the strain upon the physical health. Thus far we are surely all prepared to go. There is, however, a parallel to all this, which, while equally true, is by no means so obvious.

It is characteristic of man that he is always building for himself and making himself clothes. Wherever man  
 MAN A  
 BUILDING is he will have some sort of habitation, whether the  
 ANIMAL simple hut or the luxurious palace, whether the vile  
 tenement of the slums or the fashionable hotel embodying every comfort that human ingenuity can devise. So, too, with clothes, from the simple loin-cloth of the savage to the latest fashion in dancing frocks. In the same way that man builds for himself and clothes himself on the physical plane, so does he also in his mental life. On the mental plane man clothes himself and builds mental habitations of infinite variety. Social status counts as nothing in the realm of the soul. Sometimes the man of means may be found to be clad mentally in a coarse and dense and none too clean a garment, while the humble gutter-vendor may be clad in the most delicate gossamer. As on the physical plane the houses or garments cut off the beneficial influence of the sunlight, so in the mental plane the habitations that men build for themselves serve more or less effectively to shut out the light of the sun. Into the gloomy, inartistic structure in which things of the earth alone are worshipped, the light of the Sun practically never penetrates. The grotesque and distorted mental buildings of some of the modern schools of thought in connection with science, art, or philosophy, offer equally impenetrable barriers to the Sun. Compare such edifices with the exquisitely formed temples of translucent alabaster which shelter the great ideals of the world religions, and offer little resistance to the Light. Compare, too, the coarse texture of the mental garment of the man who has no thought beyond the material questions of ways and means of adding to his worldly possessions, or his power, with the fine robes of the truly inspired poet, artist or musician. Not to press the analogy too far, it may be said that the inspiration of the artist and the illumination of the sage or mystic, together with the inspiration of the poet, are each in proportion to the translucence of the mental garment and the house of thought in which dwells the soul. Man is an inveterate weaver of cocoons. He is ever industriously spinning them around himself, trammelling his own consciousness with

unending chains of useless argument and speculation upon every manner of subject, instead of keeping his mind in the condition of crystal clearness which will let the light of the Sun stream in, giving enduring value to his work, and bringing peace where was before only restlessness and lack of satisfaction.

We are all too apt to forget that the mind is only our instrument, not ourselves. We are content for the most part to let it go its own way, simmering and "turning things over" endlessly and needlessly, frequently getting out of control and running to waste. Too often we ourselves become entangled with it, so that it becomes more and more difficult and sometimes even impossible to gain that control which is one of the evidences on the physical plane of the activity of that wider consciousness of which the mind is really a tool. Many Western students, in the practice of occultism, meet with unexpected failure because they try to effect with the mind that which is possible only by the aid of that wider consciousness which lies above and beyond the mind.

Modern psychology is groping after the truth; but the "blessed word 'subconscious,'" while delightfully elastic and convenient as a label with which to cover up our ignorance, really tells us somewhat less than nothing.

It is not the case that individuals whose birth and training have given them the advantages of education and mental culture are necessarily those in whom the higher consciousness is more likely to be developed than is the case with their less fortunate brethren. In the absence of training in the right direction, or specific indications to the contrary, such people are as likely as not to have covered themselves with a thick mental covering, not to say a hide, and to live their mental lives in a temple of thought from which the Sunlight is rigorously excluded. On the contrary, many a simple soul, by means of faith and devotion, has attained, by the path of religion, to that crystal clearness of soul whereby alone Reality can be detected in the midst of the unreality of the lower worlds. Blessed, indeed, are the "little children," for they have found the Kingdom.

This term, like many another phrase attributable to the gentle Galilean, reveals a greater and greater wealth of meaning the more it is pondered. Take the purity of the little child, take the sincerity and openness of the little child, take the inoffensiveness of the child, take all those qualities which we more especially associate with childlikeness rather than childishness, and apply

them to the mind ; and we find we have that qualification of the inner life referred to in the saying, " Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." It is that state of mind which allows no self-esteem, no deceptive intellectual power, no preconceived ideas or mental bias to stand in the way of the inflow of the Sunlight. But even though heavily burdened with hampering mental trappings, the mind that can stand still for a while will soon catch a gleam from the Sun breaking through to his consciousness, provided he is willing to step out into the silence where he is alone with the Real. One might stand for an age in some of the dim temples of thought erected in the course of the ages on the mental plane, and be as far from the spiritual Sun as ever.

Apart, however, from any question of a specifically " religious," not to say " spiritual " life—for the terms ELEMENTARY are not necessarily synonymous—the elementary OCCULT occult attainment of disentangling oneself from the PRACTICES mind is of tremendous practical value in daily life. Long before the use of the term " subconscious " came into popularity, Charles Godfrey Leland described the manner in which it was possible to depute to the wider consciousness during sleep the task of solving problems which were found to be beyond the power of the normal waking mind. The quiet and confident intention held clearly in view before going to sleep, to find the solution on waking, usually produced the desired result. To-day many people use a similar method without any idea that they are practising elementary occultism.

Quite recently a close relative of the present writer, who had mislaid the memorandum of a five-figure combination lock which he had found no occasion to touch for over a score of years, retired for the night with the confident intention of regaining the lost figures during sleep. Sure enough, they appeared before his eyes on waking. He jotted them down, put them to the test, and proved them correct by opening the lock. Whether the tedious hours spent in futile fumbling, on the chance that the correct combination might be hit upon, played any part in the production of the immediate and startling response, it is difficult to say, but it is fair to assume that they did.

Many people gain during sleep knowledge otherwise inaccessible, either through dreams or from impressions which filter through into the waking consciousness later on.

Useful as such little occult " stunts " may prove—and some

people become remarkably proficient by dint of systematic training—useful as they are, and proving as they do the activity of a wider consciousness, they are no proof in themselves that the mind so acting is yet beyond the first stage of disentangling itself from its self-made bonds.

Any practice which ignores the existence of the spiritual Sun, which is to the mental plane what the physical sun is to the earth, is of about as much value as the suggestion that it is better to live in darkness than in light. For while it is true that “the Sun shines on the just and the unjust,” it is equally true that on the mental plane it is far more easy to shut out the Sun than is the case on the physical plane.

It is, in fact, the exception rather than the rule to come across those who are not spiritually blind. This spiritual blindness is as universally prevalent in the domain of “religion” as it is in other spheres, to judge by the volumes of polemics which have been released on both sides in the present Prayer Book controversy. No more effective illustration of the difference between the spiritual and the religious life could possibly be found.

The illumination of the soul by the light of the Spirit is the only way to securing the health of either Church or State. It is the lack of a grip upon that consciousness of the deeper and more vital realities which is responsible for the widespread spirit of dissatisfaction and unrest throughout the entire civilised Western world. The blind vainly strive to lead the blind. All sorts of schemes are propounded and rejected, or tried and found wanting; all sorts of causes are assigned for the world’s prevailing trouble; and seeing that even the Church is powerless to turn the tide of thought into the right direction, it looks as if sheer physical chaos must ultimately supervene upon the present moral chaos, in the absence of some more potent factor intervening to restore the balance. Anything that may be counted upon to help change the current and turn it in the direction of the Real, considered apart from any specific religious dressing, but rather from the purely spiritual point of view, is something tending in the right direction. The public having lost confidence in organised religion, it might help to restore the balance were it realised more intimately by the people generally that the spiritual vitality of any religion is in no way dependent on the form of that religion. It is the crystallisation of the form which is the cause of much of the trouble. Few intelligent people have not at one time or another quoted the well-worn saying that “the

letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life," yet although this is so easily to be understood, it is not, apparently, so easily to be realised. Otherwise the effects would be more discernible in Religion.

Organised religion is after all only the external form, covering the vital spiritual essence, which cannot be  
 RELIGION *v.* confined within the limits of any one system,  
 SPIRITUALITY let alone be cramped within the narrow confines of any set of dogmas. Indications of the existence of such a vital essence are perceptible to all who are sufficiently in earnest to seek them. The science of comparative religion, while it contributes its part, in the end falls short of the promise of its name. For, when all is said, it is more concerned with the comparison of the varying forms than with the life which animates them.

In all religions, however, have been found throughout the ages devotees for whom mere formalism was unsatisfying, who demanded first-hand experience for themselves of that vital fact which their intuition told them must surely lie hidden within any religion that was not entirely dead. These people found what they wanted in full measure and running over, and in the sheer joy of their discovery tried to pass on the glad tidings to others. Although each may have started from a different base, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, as the case may be, the result has been identical. All alike have been successful in their quest; and except for the language and symbolism in which it is enshrined the message has been the same.

And the practical methods of the mystics, as these devotees of the personal and vital type of religion are usually called, have also in the main been identical, whether they have been used in the Hindu, Buddhist, Christian or other faith. In each case the first step has been to learn to control the mind. Here, at the very outset, is a link which binds the most widely separated religions of the world. The practice of meditation is universal, and is the real key to the spiritual life.

It is surely a sign of the times that such a body as the S.P.C.K. should be the publishers of a little book in which the author has deliberately set out to prove the reality of the spiritual life as embodied in the varying forms of the chief world-religions. In her noteworthy and valuable little work, *Spiritual Exercises and Their Results*, Miss Aelfrida Tillyard has essayed a survey and comparison of the methods of meditation and an examination

of some of the results in the case of four of the greatest religious systems—the Christian, Hindu, Buddhist and Mohammedan.

“The Christian reader,” says the publishers’ note, “is asked not merely to note the dangers and aberrations that his own mystical tradition and teaching have successfully avoided, but to be moved to wonder at the high heritage that has been handed down to him by his Church.”

Miss Tillyard, on her own part, sees in spiritual exercises mysticism in its most practical form. In each case SPIRITUAL the methods have been adopted to train the soul for EXERCISES communion with the unseen. Her remarks on the subject of meditation as expressed in the preface to her book are worth bearing constantly in mind during a perusal of its pages.

“Wherever men have revolted against formalism and over-intellectualism in religion,” she says, “they have felt the need for meditation in order to bring their souls into touch with spiritual realities.” Thus the moment for the appearance of this work is most opportune. The revolt referred to is only too patent at the present time. Let us hope that the feeling for the need to get into direct contact with spiritual realities may be stimulated by its publication.

“Meditation,” she continues, “when systematised and deliberately taught, becomes what is known as ‘spiritual exercises.’ Unfortunately these exercises very often in the course of time grow formal in their turn and may assume base and fantastic forms. The pure impulse of spirituality has passed; nothing but the ‘exercise’ remains. It is as if an athlete who had entered a gymnasium in order to train his body for a race, remained there forgetful of the object for which he came and gave himself up to a series of contortions in themselves meaningless and possibly harmful. This downward tendency of spiritual exercises which were intended to exalt and to purify is very widespread in the non-Christian religions. The ‘dancing dervish’ whirling for money before the eyes of the Western tourist, the Hindu beggar immobilised in what should be a prayer posture in order to excite the gaping wonder of ignorant onlookers, have little connection with the Mohammedan mystic who meditated on heavenly harmony, or the Hindu holy man who spent long hours in contemplation. Christianity has been almost entirely free from such extravagances and the practice of meditation has remained spiritual, devoted to spiritual ends. The original

quest, however, was the same. Christian and non-Christian alike have felt the need of direct personal contact with spirit, while both have devised and found useful methods for quieting and uplifting the mind."

As possessing the most elaborately worked-out science of meditation, the Hindu system is first brought by the author under consideration. "A thousand years before the Christian era," Miss Tillyard reminds us, "there were in India 'forest universities,' as the modern Hindu loves to call them, where ascetics who had renounced the world taught their followers how to control their minds, develop their consciousness, and merge their own egos in the great Spirit or Self of the Universe. The tradition has been carried on unbroken to the present day."

Practically the account of the Hindu system resolves itself into an outline of Raja Yoga. The chapter forms an excellent introduction to an intricate subject. As to the results of Yoga practice directed to the highest ends, the author quotes the case of the late Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the spiritual guide of the well known Vivekananda, who would frequently inject his consciousness into the body of his chela. Vivekananda himself, Miss Tillyard says, duly learnt in his turn the secret of this transmission of spiritual virtue. The author herself has met a man who claims to be able to experience the ecstasies and spiritual delights of his guru whenever his teacher wills that he should do so.

An account is given of the psychological phenomena accompanying Vivekananda's deeper meditations, obviously based upon the testimony of the Swami himself.

"Noren's (Vivekananda's) experience was of the nature of light. It appeared between the eyebrows where, according to the Hindu scriptures, the spiritual sight is located. From the point of light which Noren saw, various colours issued forth in splendour. Then his consciousness would expand as if to encompass fields of attention unknown to the normal functioning of the mind."

In concluding this skilfully compiled section on Yoga philosophy, Miss Tillard stresses the fact that "it is this expansion of consciousness, this freedom of the spiritual world which is—let me repeat it—the object of the Hindu's meditations."

Once having acquired the ability to experience this state of high communion at will, the former austerities and discipline are relaxed.

Buddhist meditations are chiefly developments of the Hindu originals according to the authority of Dr. E. J. Thomas, whom Miss Tillard cites in connection with the Buddhist forms of meditation.

An interesting account is given of an experience of a friend of the author's in connection with a Burmese meditation circle.

"In Burma at the present day," writes the author, "there has been a revival of the practice of spiritual exercises, and meditation circles have been formed, to which Europeans are admitted. The aspirants meet together once a week, and, a suitable subject for meditation having been suggested by their leader, proceed to consider it for an hour or more in complete silence. They meditate seated in a circle, and are recommended to breathe deeply and slowly. On one occasion an English friend of mine who attended such a meeting told me a member of the circle appeared to go to sleep, but it was afterwards discovered that he was in a trance. My friend never reached the trance stage. He was, however, sensible of the influence of other minds on his own, and said that he felt much calmed and uplifted by the quiet concentration of his companions."

While this is of decided psychological interest, one cannot but wonder to what extent such circles, unless most skilfully chosen, may become the playground for psychic rather than spiritual forces. Personally we have invariably found the impulse to meditate closely bound up with a keen desire for solitude. The lives of the Christian mystics, at any rate, show an almost universal love of solitude, especially in the stages covered by the process of spiritual unfoldment.

After quoting Professor de la Vallee Poussin on the vexed question of Nirvana, Miss Tillard thus sums up the section devoted to a consideration of this subject :

"Nirvana, then, would seem to mean two things. It may, first of all, refer to the habitual state of mind to which the Buddhist wishes to attain in this life, a state where he is above joy and sorrow, selfless, disinterested, his mind fixed on eternity. Secondly, Nirvana may refer to the mode of consciousness which will be enjoyed by the finally beatified spirits in their ultimate state. Of this little can be said except that Arahat has some inkling of this consciousness when he arises through the four

Jhanas and reaches the Aruppas. He then has not an individual consciousness, but a universal, all-pervasive consciousness, complete and passionless, without subject or object."

So much for the ultimate goal of the Buddhist devotee. How far do his experiences coincide with those of the Christian mystic? In this connection some valuable and suggestive comments may with advantage be quoted.

"It is difficult," our author admits, "for a Christian accustomed to connect rapture or ecstasy with intercourse with God as manifested in Jesus Christ, to understand how these curious intellectual abstractions can produce spiritual delight. Modern Far Eastern Buddhists, in an outline of doctrine prepared by Mr. S. Kuroda . . . explain that in Jhana (Ecstasy) the aspirant is in contact with the 'essence of mind,' which we should call pure spirit. . . . Stress is also laid on the need of realising the Buddha within, by means of Jhana. 'Buddha,' runs a Chinese saying, 'is simply a condition of mind.' . . .

"I find in a note to the Diamond Sutra, which is considered to be the book of the Buddhist initiates, the following: 'The word *Buddha* seems to convey to devout Buddhist minds a meaning consonant with the ethical idea of Love, as understood generally by the followers of Christ. Within it are potential spiritual elements which, according to their judgment, perfectly fulfil the law.'

"Is it possible, then," Miss Tillard asks, "to explain the Buddhist ecstasy otherwise than by assuming that the aspirant by freeing his mind from distractions and evil thoughts, does indeed commune with pure spirit, and by so doing realises his capacity for breathing a higher spiritual atmosphere than that of normal selfish preoccupations?"

With the parallels in Mohammedanism we have not space to deal, and the general outline of Christian systems of meditation will be familiar to most readers. For such details, and for many pages of really interesting and delightful reading, we must refer the reader to the book itself. One could continue to quote and comment for many pages yet. In view of the nature of the subject, one is indisposed to cavil.

THE EDITOR.

# THE COMING OF AZELDA'S GOLDEN BOOK

By PAUL BLACK and OLIVER FOX

"O ye that sit in vain places and watch the reflection of your vanity within the eyes of those around you, the Age of the Physical must pass: for this is the Law. . . .

"Therefore, O Peoples of Terrestria, there shall be a new visitation, and that shall be in the day when the spiritual shall be acclaimed before the physical.

"For the spiritual is for ever enduring; but the physical is limited to a brief span of activity.

"Think, then, while there is yet time; for the mighty waters draw nigh and the clouds begin to lower, and the night promiseth a great darkness!"

AZELDA.

THE higher the grade of the student, the greater his knowledge, the more surely will he realise the truth of our claim: that the Golden Book is being written, not by a deceased relative, not even by an advanced Guide, but by a Master, one who has attained to Liberation and Conscious At-onement with the Love Soul. We are a long way ahead of our little brothers, dogs and cats and bullfinches, dear though they be: yet verily a greater span on the Ladder of Spiritual Evolution separates Azelda, the Master, from her instruments P.B. and O.F. It may be remarked, in passing, that Masters are bi-sexual from the physical standpoint, inasmuch as the earthly limitations of sex have been transcended; yet there is a celestial distinction which results from the spiritual origin of the Group of Souls that were destined to unite and form the Master. Azelda is of the Line of Zanōra (the Mother Principle) and when manifesting on the Form levels, generally takes the shape of a woman. Therefore it is correct to use the feminine pronoun.

Now it is a curious fact that many people, who enthusiastically proclaim the (theoretical) existence of the Masters, prove quite sceptical when it comes to admitting that two ex-service government clerks are actually receiving communications from one.

"I would have you mark that, can he (the Master) be assured that the missive will reach its destination, he considereth not the spiritual qualities of the ambassador.

"Thus do ye sometimes find Good springing from Evil. Thus doth the flower blossom forth from the rubbish-heap."

You see? That helps to explain matters, doesn't it?

From early childhood O.F. was in waking life at times conscious of the presence of some unseen being; and in sleep on rare occasions, a lady—very beautiful, but very grave—would light the dream with a wondrous radiance. But these experiences were not wholly pleasurable; for at first we fear what we cannot understand. So the Master remained only a dream-figure to the conscious part of O.F. until he had turned twenty and had started the experiments that were described in "The Pineal Doorway" and other articles in this magazine. Early in January 1906, O.F. was permitted to enter a celestial temple—the Temple of the Sacred Head; and on returning to earth was unable to break the trance. As he lay in this condition, the Master suddenly manifested. O.F. believed himself to be awake and was frightened by the tremendous force and the physical pain, but he managed to gasp out, "Who are you?" Then for the first time in this life he heard Azelda's voice: "You knew me well—once, long ago!" The form dissolved, and the trance was broken.

And for another ten years the Master remained a dream-figure.

During 1916, O.F. was conducting a series of experiments with a blind medium of remarkable gifts. On September 3, 1916, at 4.30 a.m. (S.T.) this medium became unexpectedly entranced; the divine, unforgettable voice sounded again, and was instantly recognised. Then the name, Azelda, was given for the first time. Between this date and February 23, 1917, Azelda gave only seven manifestations through this medium; but, at her command, much matter was supplied by other celestial beings; and O.F., when out of the body, was permitted many spiritual experiences with the Master and others associated in her work. This period of revelation was personal in nature, and only salient points need be enumerated:

(1) Notes were given to O.F. of the lives of 13 of his predecessors in the Group to which he belongs. To use theosophical language, 13 past incarnations were revealed.

(2) O.F.'s "pineal doorway" was sealed, so that he could no longer induce trance and leave the body at will.

(3) O.F. took a voluntary, but unbreakable, vow of service to Azelda.

(4) It was revealed that a new Divine Revelation was to be given to the world, to prepare people for the coming of the next

## COMING OF AZELDA'S GOLDEN BOOK 13

Great World Teacher. O.F. was to help in the writing of this book when commanded.

(5) That before this came to pass another period of silence and sore trial would ensue.

On March 12, 1917, O.F., being C category, unromantically shouldered a shovel and went to France. Slowly, but surely, the Master's force was withdrawn from him, and the Night of the Soul descended. Just once in 1917, O.F. saw Azelda, who was delivering an address in some vast celestial amphitheatre. At Cologne, in June, 1919, O.F., on the eve of a most serious operation, wondered if that book would indeed be written. In this extremity, the Master returned to him; but no words were spoken. For ten days his life hung in the balance, then came a remarkable recovery. But the Master withdrew, and the Night was very dark.

In the years that followed, O.F. seemed to be completely cut off from the Master; experiments with mediums yielded no results; dream-travelling was no longer possible for him; and in that period of spiritual dryness the events attending the first revelation seemed incredible. It was a period of haunting, bitter-sweet memories, of scepticism and desperate hoping. Then, on October 29, 1922, O.F.'s wife passed, quite unexpectedly, into trance, and Azelda spoke once more, stating that the time of silence was over. It is eloquent of O.F.'s condition that he actually denied the validity of this manifestation, believing it to be only an impersonation. By the beginning of 1923, however, he had encountered the Master in the spiritual regions and had been instructed to search for another medium.

Shortly after this O.F. met P.B. and believed him to be the destined "other half" necessary for the production of the great work. P.B. was thirteen years younger than O.F. He had read little beyond the elementary spiritualistic manuals, but had done much practical work. He possessed a rare type of clairvoyance, being able to see the fairies and the gigantic Nature spirits. In waking life, he was able to see, and converse with, his spiritual guides; and in sleep he often journeyed with them to the celestial Halls of Instruction. In addition to this he had specialised in automatic writing, and trance mediumship was soon to follow. It is interesting to note that P.B.'s father is similarly gifted, though in his case the powers remained latent and unsuspected until fairly late in life. War experiences, however, permanently affected P.B.'s health; so it comes about that both mediums of

the Golden Book are physically damaged, which makes the work of transmission more difficult.

Awaiting a definite inspiration from the Master, O.F. did not attempt to approach P.B. until the August of 1922 ; and then it was decided to experiment in joint automatic writing, O.F.'s left hand resting on P.B.'s right. The first communications were from one, Simon, a lovable soul with a soothing psychic force. His writing was abominably small, and his quaint English reminiscent of the Glastonbury Scripts. But his stay was short.

On October 15, our gentle Simon was unceremoniously swept away by a veritable psychic whirlwind that descended upon us. We shivered in an icy wind ; we were convulsed with cramping pains ; electric needles pierced us, and our brains were reeling. Gone were Simon's slow and laborious methods ; the pencil seemed alive ; it tore over the paper at an unbelievable speed. And so was written the first extract from the *Golden Book*, although we did not know this until later, when it was given again in its proper place.

Yes, Azelda had returned—this time to stay with us until the predestined end.

There followed a few seemingly experimental transmissions ; we were given certain instructions and told to meditate for many hours upon the mental image of a Bell of Gold.

On November 11, 1923, the Master Azelda began writing *The Golden Book of Life*.

We imagine that one of Azelda's most difficult problems, in her work upon the physical plane, is the protection of her mediums, not only from the Opposition forces (with which we will deal later), but from the nerve-shattering effects of her own mighty current. People expect the Dark Powers to be somewhat drastic in their methods, but how few realise that the unveiled glory of an "Angel" would blind and blast and shatter more terribly than any lightning-flash ! After the first two or three experimental transmissions, it became obvious that Azelda's direct force, though enormously diluted in the "downward" passage, would speedily break us. She therefore announced that she would "speak" from a distance and use a chain of celestial interpreters. After this we progressed much more comfortably, though our sittings are always rather painful ; but in the main there are no bad after-effects. We have had over 230

transmissions, and our general health is no worse than when we started, which shows how well we have been protected. Nevertheless, it would seem that a severe economy has to be maintained; for we must last out until the Golden Book is finished, and only Azelda knows how much is yet to come. Therefore it will be understood that there is no time for further personal revelations, and that we can ask questions only on important points in connection with the work in hand.

This explains why we are still ignorant of the exact method of transmission employed by her, though we know that it is unique. O.F. is the Zanōra-Ōmōldon unit, being esoterically female and a child of the First Primary Emanation—which is symbolised by the Blue Ray. P.B. is the Zanōris-Ōvällon unit, being esoterically male and a child of the Fifth Primary Emanation—which is symbolised by the Rose Ray. The combined vibration, utilised in writing the Golden Book, is therefore symbolised by the Amethyst Ray. A clairvoyant of an advanced type, being present during our sitting, gave the following details of his vision: Azelda, the source, seemed an infinite distance away. Between her and us were five intermediate stages, presumably occupied by the interpreters, though no human forms were visible. These stages seemed to be horizontal whirls of flame and were connected by coloured spirals, rotating with enormous velocity. The first spiral rotated in a direction opposite to the second, and so on. From the fifth, and last, spiral a golden shaft bridged the gulf between the spiritual and the physical, streaming down upon our heads.

The first indication of Azelda's approach is a cold wind, sometimes becoming icy in its intensity. This wind seems to stream down from *above*, and it induces spasmodic muscular contractions. The pencil gives a violent jerk and then proceeds to write, generally smoothly and with great rapidity, except when the shafts of opposing force produce a bending of the lines (to speak symbolically) and cause a bottling up of the communicating force. This slows the pencil down, and sometimes stops it altogether for a second or two—after which there comes a furious flow of writing, gradually declining in speed until the normal is regained. It is as though a certain amount of force must be utilised in a fixed time. Hold it up, and painful results will follow. During these psychic battles we experience extraordinary sensations: lights flash before our eyes, and our brains seem to be dissolving; we drown in deep, deep waters and rise with

throbbing hearts and bursting lungs ; sometimes we have been literally gasping. In the most severe struggle we have had, a sort of psychic explosion occurred between us, and we nearly fell off our chairs. The pencil stopped dead and refused to move. That was the only time our lines have been broken. We lit up our pipes and waited. Azelda collected her forces, or so it seemed. Back came the icy wind, and the struggle was resumed. Slowly, word by word, the pencil jerked out those verses which the Lord of the Dark Face had forbidden. We finished—very limp, but joyous ; for the battle was won. Will some future student be able to tell which were the half-dozen verses that the Opposition tried so desperately to prevent being made known ? We shall not tell, unless ordered. Those verses had to be given.

For two years the Opposition have harassed us, seeking to impede our work in a hundred subtle ways. They have been active in the celestial regions when our bodies were asleep ; they have used their fairy emissaries ; they have stolen one book of our records, though a duplicate remains to us ; they have poured streams of depression and discouragement upon us ; and they have attempted to endanger both life and limb. But Azelda is the Master, and her Golden Book will be completed—as surely as to-morrow's sun shall rise.

Here we would stress this point : Azelda is not writing primarily for the *present* generation, but for the generations as yet unborn. It is a book for the teachers of mystic and occult truths ; and the ordinary man of to-day will be unable to grasp more than a few verses here and there if he read in the usual lazy and slipshod fashion. But the *real* student will find the way comparatively, and deceptively, easy. Why “deceptively” ? Well, for this reason : a large number of the verses have many meanings hidden beneath their somewhat curious wording ; so as the student advances, he will find additional interpretations to a verse which had at first seemed quite simple. It is like the Chinese nest of boxes. We may add that a secret celestial code has been employed in the construction of certain words and portions of the Golden Book ; but the key will, of course, not be published, nor is it yet in our possession.

Many prophetic visions are given in the Golden Book, in which the sombre thread of earthly calamities is interwoven with the shining stream of coming spiritual glories. It seems to us that natural visitations (as distinct from men-made wars) such as earthquakes, floods, fires and pestilences, perhaps on

an unprecedented scale, are indicated. But though the Hosts of the Dark Face shall ravage the earth, and the Angel of Death shall reap rich harvest, yet for the spiritually-minded an exceeding great glory shall flood the chaos of a world racked with the birth-throes of a New Age and shall make beautiful the tottering ruins of once-familiar things. In the East there shall arise a Teacher who shall link the West with the East ; from the West there shall come forth another Teacher who shall link the East unto the West. Then from the Blue Ray of Æmoldon there shall come the Great World Teacher.

Considerations of space prevent the inclusion in this article of anything but the most brief allusion to the teachings of Azelda. That must be reserved for a future occasion.

## UNITY

By F. E. LAURENCE

Oh wind, breathe thou with me  
That I may be  
One with thyself, with universal breath ;  
Oh sun, shine through my soul,  
Light up the whole,  
Nor leave one spot for life's close shadow, death.

Let me be part of this bright winter world,  
Upturned, unfurled,  
One with each tiny seed safe sleeping in the sod ;  
One with each cloud and tree,  
A part of all to be ;  
One with the snowflake, one with the eternal God.

# RISKS ATTENDING OCCULT TRAINING

By P'SAKI

STARTING from the subject of the noxious astral entities known to infest butchers' shops, a correspondent recently raised the question of the increasing risk of invasion incurred by those who work at spiritual growth. He concludes by saying that the only safeguard he has heard of consists in repressing the desire to grow spiritually, a counsel of despair with, fortunately, no sort of basis in actual fact.

At the same time it must be admitted that the risk of such invasion is a very real one, and there is actually a section of humanity to which it is nothing less than an absolutely certain contingency of life: but this section does not include those who are making a serious effort towards spiritual growth, or anything like it, and may be roughly divided into two classes, the second of which has its origin in the first, which consists of persons who deliberately invite invasion from the astral world knowing what they are doing. It is not a very difficult matter to open one's doors to such visitors, but to close them is another proposition. In a comparatively short time the protecting sheaths become perished and the personality is at the mercy of any invading entity that cares to visit it.

The second class consists of those whose protective sheaths are ruined by alcoholism, drugs, sex mania and the like. Such persons, as a rule, know nothing at all about what I may call occult anatomy and pathology, and it is useless to try and explain it to them. Their ignorance no more confers immunity on them than ignorance of the ways of the *anopheles* mosquito confers immunity from malaria, which sounds rather unfair, but is not so in reality. The mere fact of being cursed with such lack of self-control is proof of a Karmic inheritance in that direction, and until taken seriously in hand it will continue to plague him, or her. At the same time, it must not be imagined that any case is hopeless: the writer knows personally two men, both at one time seemingly hopeless drunkards, who, comparatively late in their present incarnations, tackled the problem with complete success.

Both these classes are in perpetual danger of invasion, and having deliberately disarmed themselves are normally incapable

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of self defence. But—and this is certainly curious—I have never known a person suffering from the three most ordinary and effective methods of opening the doors, alcoholism (not necessarily to the extent of habitual drunkenness), drugs, and sex mania, who had the slightest psychic perceptions of any kind. The drive of the invading entities is taken by them for their own impulses, which has a most distressing corollary in the fact that a large proportion of sufferers seem to think that the presence of these impulses implies that it is lawful and right to indulge in them.

This, I think, disposes of those who are always in danger, and clears the ground for a consideration of the case of those, the sheaths of whose doors are in sound, healthy condition, and who are thus normally as safe from invading astral entities as an unwounded person is from the attentions of tetanus bacteria.

The first class of this section consists of "normal, healthy people, to whom 'occult' is an unknown or meaningless term." Such folk are certainly immune from invasion, even though they have no conscious knowledge of how to defend themselves, a matter of no importance in their case, as in common with all humanity they have the benefit of the promptings of the Higher, Spiritual Self. Like the drunkards and sex maniacs, they are usually devoid of psychic perceptive powers, and quite naturally they interpret the promptings they receive as their own healthy-minded instincts and as "conscience." But the result is the same as if they knew exactly what was taking place, and they are comfortably safe, even if not making any special advance in spiritual growth.

Now comes the crux of the matter. The risks run by those who do possess knowledge, and who are seriously working to attain spiritual growth—and indeed there are enough and to spare of them—are very real indeed; but the danger of becoming possessed by some low astral entity, always provided that one does not deliberately invite the visitor, is not one of them. Again, certain consequences of a most unpleasant kind which come to aspirants are not so much dangers in this sense, as the inevitable price that has to be paid for spiritual growth, the extreme example being that of the "fully trained yogi" who "cannot live in the world because its coarser vibrations would shatter him."

Certain it is that all who make effective progress become more and more "highly strung," which means that the vibrations are gradually being tuned up to a higher and higher pitch. The natural consequence of this is that contact with lower and

inharmonious vibrations is apt to throw the instrument out of tune, necessitating the recovery of the correct pitch, a process which is never pleasant, and may be extremely difficult and painful. The dislocation of correct vibration may be sufficient even to damage the sensitive instrument beyond power of retuning and mending, involving perhaps the death of the physical body. But this does not mean spiritual downfall.

Under the most ideal conditions the price that has to be paid for genuine spiritual growth is frequent discomfort at the least, and real suffering at the worst. The more serious disasters are usually the consequence of trying to run before one can walk, so to speak, mistakes that have to be paid for in full, maybe at a stiff rate, but nothing worse than that. And it is some consolation to realise that the person who has not made a mistake has most certainly never made anything else, good, bad, or indifferent. Making a mistake is no crime ; it is making it twice, when one should know better, that really pulls one down.

Also, let there be no mistake about it : the new country entered on by the aspirant to the Path is no more fool-proof than is the city of London. Both the one and the other are alive with dangers for the unwary, and if one is to go on living one must learn what the conditions and dangers are, and how to deal with them, an achievement beyond no one's reach. As above, so below : the all-important things are sane common-sense, and rational caution combined with courage. Use the wits Providence has given you and use them all the time in matters occult, as you do, or should do, in everyday physical affairs. For instance : you may know that coffee disagrees with you, and so you do not drink it. In the same way you will very soon find out the things and conditions producing vibrations which throw yours out of tune, and having found them, you will avoid them like the plague, which is what they are, as far as you are concerned. You will also, if you practise meditation and prayer, without which progress is impossible, learn how to shield yourself from evil consequences when circumstances beyond your control bring you in contact with such conditions.

It is inevitable that such unavoidable contacts should occur, possibly frequently, but in such cases one can rely with absolute confidence on receiving adequate help and support to enable one to pass safely, if at the price of some discomfort or suffering, through the ordeal, which, as a general rule, in view of its being beyond one's control, may be taken to be occasioned by Karma.

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Where Karma comes in one need have no fear of being tested beyond one's strength, for Karma is not blind retribution, but reasoned, intelligent Law, administered by Beings in whom injustice is inconceivable.

Thus far, all seems fairly plain sailing for the student whose doors are intact, and who does not go out of his way to invite shipwreck, and so it is, though the weather will not by any means be always fair. An aspirant may have to put up with more or less suffering, though suffering is in no way essential to progress, unless demanded by the individual's spiritual necessities under the law of Karma, which certainly happens pretty often. He may even come to what looks like real disaster from the world's point of view. But real disaster is not as yet involved. In the sight of those who see things as they are, and not as the world sees. The soul has been advancing all the time, even if slowly, and in its next incarnation it will be a few steps further along the trail, with certain lessons learnt and done with for good.

Are we, then, to suppose that there is no danger of real disaster? By no means. There is real and terrible danger enough at every turn, and entities of a type very different from those that haunt butchers' shops are for ever on the watch, beings possessed of powers utterly beyond our conception, and merciless and malignant beyond belief. Those whose doors are perished would be beneath the notice of such entities, being by reason of their low spiritual development quite useless for the purposes for which they would be required. But souls that are beginning to make a real advance are a special mark for the beings in question, and, *up to a point*, the more highly developed the soul, the more varied and subtle the methods its enemies can employ to trap it.

But even so there is no need for being despondent or discouraged. The dangers and trials we are dealing with now have nothing to do with Karma, but are personal attacks from without, and in her freewill to choose the right or left paths, the soul has arms more than sufficient for the purpose. It is the old, old fairy tale, told in every language under the sun, of the youth, prince or wood-cutter's boy—it does not matter—who finds himself forced to meet a dragon or giant, and is given the necessary arms and advice by a fairy or sorceress which make him invincible.

And we are invincible, if we take the trouble to use our will and choose to be so. I do not suggest that the fight may not be

a severe one, especially when the enemy brings to bear such weapons as temptations of pride, or the bait of worldly honour and fame. But if we only make use of our freewill and power to choose right, which is within the scope of every soul in the universe, we must win out in the end, even if by unwariness we may have given the enemy an opening and gone down wounded. In the old days of duelling all fighters knew that a wounded man was immeasurably more dangerous than an unwounded one, and so it is here. The consciousness of temporary failure and the pain of the wound induce in most folk grim, unalterable determination to make good, and the case is then never hopeless. I say nothing of those who give way to despair: their case becomes desperate by their own act. The conclusion of the whole matter, however, amounts to this: unless you, of your own freewill and choice, lay down your arms and accept defeat, defeat cannot be forced upon you. I might add this too, that those who consciously make no attempt to attain spiritual growth, because of the dangers and trials involved, are merely putting off the evil day. This trail has to be ridden, and the enemies haunting it defeated by every soul.

I am aware that I have done no more than skirt the broadest principles of this subject: to do more in the space is out of the question. Thus it is more than possible that I have omitted aspects of the case which may seem of vital importance to some who may read it. In such event my advice is to look around and find authorities in which the difficulties may be properly studied. This search, at all events, will not be a difficult one.

# OBSESSION

By HORACE LEAF, F.R.G.S.

(Concluded)

## PART II

DR. WICKLAND has discovered that obsessing entities are sensible to pain and can often be exorcised by inflicting it on them. For this reason he uses static electric charges which cause no inconvenience to the patient but seem to produce dire effects on the unbidden guest. According to the spirits themselves, it knocks the senses out of them and has an effect like thunder and lightning, makes a terrible noise, and is so awful that they "cannot stand it," they become nervous at the mere threat of another dose.

To this susceptibility to pain must be credited some of the success achieved in the use of hydropathy in institutions for the insane. The strong stream of water or a continuous bath makes the obsessing spirit so uncomfortable that it eventually quits its human habitation.

The point is very interesting, as it is a reversion to an ancient and widely-practised method of curing the insane. In many countries the afflicted person is still subjected to severe physical pain, such as beating with canes, for the purpose of driving away the invading spirit. Something of the same idea lay behind the abominable treatment of the insane which prevailed throughout Europe until modern times. The cause of the trouble was conceived to be the direct action of Satan or some of his emissaries, and it was believed to be possible to drive them away by sheer physical cruelty.

The strength of Dr. Wickland's theory rests on three important factors. (1) The temporary transference of the insanity or aberration from the patient to the psychic sensitive; (2) the assertions of the obsessing influence when operating through the medium; (3) the fact that the patient is often permanently cured after the treatment. The last is all-important; but it hangs with the second upon the first point. What exactly is a psychic sensitive to whom the disorder can so conveniently be transferred? She is nothing less than a medium who is so peculiarly constituted that, with the aid of "higher intelligences" interested in this phase of spiritual healing, she is able to become a kind

of human magnet for attracting the influences out of the patient into herself.

Properly trained, this extraordinary type of person can render wonderful service without suffering personal harm. If we are to judge by Mrs. Wickland, who may be regarded as the chief pioneer in this form of mediumship, the effect of thirty-five years of this work, during which she has experienced thousands of transferences, in no way impairs the mental and physical health.

I spent a considerable time with her and her husband and found her particularly well-preserved, bright, cheerful and intelligent. She struck me as just the sort of person suitable for a task of this kind, as she radiates confidence, kindness and a feeling of physical vitality. Filled with the importance of her services, she shares with her husband his desire to spread the good news, without thought of pecuniary reward. I had the opportunity of meeting other members of the medical mission who were intimately acquainted with Dr. and Mrs. Wickland, and found that they had no doubt as to the reliability of their claims. Mrs. Wickland was evidently regarded with a feeling of deep respect and admiration.

Whatever may be the value of the mediumistic claims, it does appear that people who exercise it in this manner come to no personal harm. In Australia I sat with a medium noted for a similar kind of work, and she, too, was perfectly healthy and normal.

Dr. Wickland's description of his wife's gift is as follows :

"The nature of Mrs. Wickland's psychism is that of unconscious trance ; her eyes are closed and her mentality is held in abeyance in a sleep state for the time being. She herself has no recollection of anything that transpires during the period. Mrs. Wickland is not subject to any negativism between her experiences ; she is at all times her rational self, clear-minded and positive, and after thirty-five years of psychic work has not suffered impairment or detriment of any kind."

This excellent state of affairs he attributes to the care taken by the higher intelligences, whom he believes to be the real superintendents of the mediumship. The reason why these higher intelligences need the help of a human medium is said to be the closeness with which the obsessing influences are bound to the earth. They are more cognisant of earthly environment than of spiritual, and are therefore more easily accessible from the earth side.

I am not sure that the doctor's persistence in the assertion that his wife's subconsciousness cannot be invoked to account for some of the transferences is justified. His argument that she would need a thousand personalities is not convincing. It must be remembered that nearly everyone is endowed with histrionic ability, and the subconscious seems particularly apt at impersonation. All accomplished actors are called upon to play many parts in their lifetime, and they may act so cleverly that one character is not easy to confuse with another. Much of this kind of work is instinctive and springs from deeper aspects of the consciousness than the mere waking phase.

Dr. Wickland is perhaps unaware of the very interesting practice adopted privately by the well-known alienist, the late Dr. Forbes Winslow. He credited many of his most remarkable cures to an extraordinary hypnotic subject whose services he retained expressly to help him in his medical work. This young man, like Mrs. Wickland, was a kind of human magnet. When hypnotised by Forbes Winslow and placed in front of the patient, whose hands he would sometimes hold, there would be transferred to him the physical and mental condition of the patient, and he would imitate his unfortunate habits so perfectly that the astonished patient would see himself as if reflected in a psychological looking-glass. In this way numerous cures were performed, sometimes instantaneously.

Although Forbes Winslow was a convinced Spiritualist he seems never to have ascribed these cures to the withdrawal of obsessing spirits. I believe, however, that he did not deny the possibility of some cases of insanity being due to that cause. That members of his family, personally associated with the care of insane people, believed in obsession I am in the position personally to assert.

For over sixteen years I have taken a keen interest in mental and nervous disorders, particularly in relation to mediumship, and have been successful in helping in their recovery. I have, however, never met a case that I could without doubt attribute to spirit obsession, notwithstanding my prejudice in favour of its possibility. I have often seen cases that seemed remarkably like it, and the afflicted individuals have had no doubt that they were obsessed; but it soon became clear that to confirm the patient in his idea usually tended to strengthen his belief and make his condition worse. Much better results were obtained when the affliction was attributed to mental derangement arising from psychic trauma, or lesion.

Severe mental shock is undoubtedly a most prolific cause of mental derangement and often gives rise to symptoms resembling obsession. Evidence of the shock is generally difficult to obtain, owing to the vigour with which the unpleasant experience is repressed, but not necessarily forgotten. In a large percentage of cases the sick person is fully aware of the shock ; but owing to an irresistible inhibition, unable to talk about it or even admit it. If the inhibition can be sufficiently weakened to enable the person to talk about the shock, a cure is almost certain.

The following is a typical example of this kind of insanity. A very intelligent woman, aged seventy, had for six years suffered from a mental disturbance which gradually grew worse. It took the form of three male voices constantly talking to her and to each other. The nature of their conversation, when not merely a repetition of the lady's own thoughts, was coarse, blasphemous, and in the end dangerous, since they urged the woman to set fire to her house. As soon as the incendiary tendency developed, her case was pronounced by her ordinary medical advisers to be incurable, and that she must be certified for admission into an asylum.

One of the voices was that of her only son who had died six years before the case came under my notice. The coarse and blasphemous nature of the conversations was attributable to the fact that the woman had for many years been very religious, eschewing all such thoughts. Thus she had persistently repressed these lower tendencies, which, becoming liberated during her psychical upheaval, added to her torments. The main clue to the cause of her trouble was the voice of her son, to whom she had been very deeply attached. Her mental breakdown having commenced at his death, indicated that here was the principal source of her trouble. His death must have occasioned her an extraordinary shock.

She would occasionally talk about the young man's death with obvious reluctance, asserting that he died through rapid consumption. This, however, was insufficient to cause so obviously a normally well-balanced woman to lose her reason. Something was being hidden. If she could be persuaded to admit what it was her chances of recovery would be greatly increased. It was wise, however, to leave her to make the admission voluntarily.

The case was treated psycho-therapeutically, including the use of suggestion, gradually leading up to the assertion that the voices were not those of independent intelligences, but creations

of her own mind. One day the woman quietly informed me that she believed the voices originated in herself and from no other source. It was then suggested to her that she was hiding something about the death of her son. "Yes," she said, "that is true. He cut his throat on the landing in my house."

The poor fellow had been badly gassed in the war, and his sufferings became so great that he cut his throat immediately after calling his mother to come to him.

Immediately the woman told the full story her health became normal. This is the kind of case that Dr. Wickland would regard as undoubtedly one of obsession.

A common characteristic of apparent obsession is the form of persecutory mania in which voices are heard repeatedly talking. Dr. Wickland expressly mentions cases of this kind, and regards instances of so-called "clairaudience" as typical of obsession. There ought to be little difficulty in distinguishing the real from the false in such cases. True clairaudience, arising from an external invisible agent, whether obsessing or otherwise, should impart information and ideas of a veridical nature, quite foreign to the recipient's usual mode of thinking and knowledge. The doctor claims to have had examples of this, although the majority of the cases he quotes are of a more general and less satisfactory kind. Where a person merely has his thoughts repeated and hears language that in his normal state he would not use, but is nevertheless familiar with, the best diagnosis would be disintegration of personality, and the patient treated accordingly. It is almost inconceivable that anyone, living or dead, would occupy his time simply repeating the thoughts of another person.

Nor ought insanity arising from physical exhaustion to be regarded as necessarily laying a person open to obsession, except it be the obsession of ideas. There is ample evidence that conditions of this kind frequently lead to obsessing ideas and the disintegration of personality. It seems often to cause the dream-consciousness to break loose from its normal condition and get mixed up with the waking self, giving rise to an inevitable confusion, loss of judgment, will, etc.

In these instances it is not necessary to invoke the aid of psychic sensitives. A better way would be to build up the physical constitution and give the individual the rest and change so long overdue. Coupled with judicious psycho-therapeutic treatment a cure should be wrought,

It is difficult to offer criticism in a subject so uncertain and little understood as psycho-pathology. The obsession theory is as good as many other theories adduced by more orthodox medical men than Dr. Wickland. In all probability it plays a large part in mental disorders of various kinds. It should, however, not be overstrained, exaggerated into conveying the idea that the world is full of spirits waiting to swoop down upon any luckless person who may offer them sufficient inducement, making him their helpless tool, wrecking his life and despoiling his reason. The situation is made worse by the assurance that in many instances nobody is to blame, except the bad arrangement of Nature. We know only too well that Nature offers no pity where her laws are concerned, and the nervous person will be worried unduly if he thinks that this spirit theory is right.

If the feeling that nobody is safe from obsession ever became universal, it would be safe to predict that the fear thus generated would add greatly to the number of mentally defective people ; to be obsessed by fear is as bad as being obsessed by spirits. Dr. Wickland's theory deserves attention because of the cures he has made through it. It may be found that his only fault is that he extends it too far.

# THE HUMILITY OF CHRIST

By IGNOTUS

IN the holy stillness of Eternal Love, we meditate on Divine Truth and Divine Understanding. The æthers of Infinity open, and we behold our Risen Lord.

From the four quarters of the heavens throng the glorious hosts of our brethren, impelled by irresistible yearning and joyful surrender.

For this is He, the Beloved of all ages, the Darling of gods and men. This is He, the Logos of the spheres, the Desire of all nations, the Sun of all worlds, before Whom the starry kings, radiant emanations of the Supreme, cast down their golden crowns, humbly kneeling to kiss the hem of his tear-stained robe.

Mutely, with bent head, He receives their offerings, accounting Himself unworthy of their love. For He Who is higher than the highest is also lower than the lowest. He Who is one with the Father of All, in the form of a worm lies coiled among the roots of the tufted grass, draining the elixir of life from the rain-soaked sod. As a tiny gnat He dances in the sunlight ; as an ant, He toils by day and night in the bowels of the earth. Behold Him in the wild flowers and the weeds that cumber the neglected spaces of the globe, where the virgin earth still trembles in the arms of her Divine Lover, immune from the contagion of man !

Yea, this is He, lower than the lowest, and therefore higher than the highest, the Logos of the spheres, the Word made flesh, that all may eat of His body and be filled, and drink deep of the wine of His blood.

We behold Him, sitting at the right hand of His Father, glorious beyond imagination, beautiful beyond the dreams of the holiest, wiser than the wisest, humbler than the humblest.

And we also, the least of that radiant throng who come to worship Him, in voiceless adoration lay at His feet the lotus of our love.

## A GRUESOME GHOST STORY

By CLIFFORD GREATOREX

I PASS this narrative on to you with my full consent to your making of it whatever use you choose. With one reservation—please do not give my real name and address, should you publish it. I do not desire to be bombarded with letters from critics, either friendly or adverse. I wish to pursue the tenor of my way without embarrassing publicity

During that unforgettable period between 1914-18, I saw many things that, like a little knowledge, would incline a man's mind to atheism, did that man happen to be an orthodox religionist to begin with. Without being irreverent, I sometimes think that not only Man, but God, is in the making! I would like to expound this doctrine at greater length, but lack of space forbids.

So let us put theology and metaphysics and the rest aside, though, beyond doubt, we have to get back to them, sooner or later.

Now for the incident.

Whilst I was stationed at a certain village behind the firing-line, I became acquainted with a very interesting fellow who had made a special study of the occult. His name was Griers. He was a bombing officer, but not a bit like an officer of the old school. I have never been more than a humble sergeant, yet Griers' treatment of me was at all times most genial and pleasant in every way. We were great pals, I can tell you.

Griers belonged to one of the big spiritualistic societies—though exactly which, I can't remember. At any rate, he was certainly very well versed in his subject, and I feel sure he was just the kind of man who would make a good medium. Not that he was nervy or abnormally highly-strung. Not he! But he seemed to "sense" everything that was going in the air. You know what I mean? Some of his premonitions were astonishingly reliable. And, alas! in the end, his presentiment as to his own fate was all too true. He was killed by a sniper just a couple of days before he should have gone home on leave. But that isn't my story.

One glorious summer's evening, when the moon was at the full, and—yes, the nightingales were singing rapturously in such

parts of the woods as had escaped shell-fire, Griers and I went out for a stroll.

We were not feeling exactly in good spirits. In fact, we were both decidedly "fed-up." The end of the dreadful war seemed as far off as ever. We'd been trying to convince ourselves—and each other—that the affair couldn't possibly last much longer, but recent developments had shown that optimism may sometimes be but the measure of despair!

We walked along in gloomy silence, busy with our own unhappy reflections. We wended our way towards a wood.

"Perhaps those warbling blighters will buck us up a bit," said Griers, alluding to the nightingales. "Though I doubt it."

I suppose I was cynical too. "I don't know," I replied. "But I'm inclined to think they'll make us worse. It's the *memories* they bring back, you know."

"Oh, damn you and your memories!" Griers exclaimed, impatiently. "If you start being sentimental, I'm certainly going back. It would be more cheerful in a dug-out." He laughed—a bitter sort of laugh, not good to hear. Frankly, I had never known poor Griers to get so low. Happily, I had the good sense not to refer to the nightingales again, and we went on. Soon we came to a fence, and climbed over it into the wood.

As we entered, the birds stopped singing. Our boots made such a noise amongst the fallen branches, and more than that. Griers, forcing himself to appear less miserable, broke into song, Not exactly a hearty, happy song, but a broken, unmelodious sort of dirge, jerked out in a peculiarly strident falsetto voice.

"If you're going to make queer sounds like that," I said, "I guess it's I who will do the quitting." Whereupon we both laughed.

"Without aspiring to punstership—if there be such a word—we may take it that we're now quits," said Griers. Then he lapsed again into silence.

We went deeper into the wood. It was an uncanny sort of place, full of mysterious light and shadow.

We traversed a long dark aisle of conifers, and came out into a peaceful glade flooded with moonlight. And it was here that we received the surprise of our lives.

*Coming towards us across the open glade was the figure of a girl—or rather, the figure of a girl complete as far as the waist.*

We stood still. Griers uttered an oath. I felt nervous, and clutched his arm. I could feel a tremor running through him. He gasped.

The astounding object came nearer, floating through the air, at about the same height at which it would have been if the rest of the body were present. It was supernaturally bright—brighter even than the moonlight, a pure, shining white. I had never seen anything like it.

"A ghost!" I whispered, my voice seeming to come from a vast distance.

Griers nodded. He was peering at the apparition intently. His arm was no longer trembling. I suppose he must have imparted something of the fearless scientific attitude to me. I, too, gazed with intensest interest upon the amazing figure.

It drew quite close. We could see it now in detail. A finely proportioned feminine form—but cut short at the waist. Clearly visible were the head, face, shoulders and breasts. The breasts were prominent and full. But below the waist was—*nothing*.

"Speak to her," I said to Griers. My companion's lips were framed for speech, and he held out a hand as if in welcome.

But, even as he did so, the phantom vanished.

We searched diligently. It had vanished completely.

But we *did* find *something*, something dreadful in the extreme.

Griers was prying under a bush about twenty yards from where the ghost had been when he stretched out his hand.

As he moved aside a branch he suddenly drew back, uttering a cry of horror. I ran to his side, enquiring what was the matter.

Pale as death, and shaking like an aspen, he led me to the spot and drew aside the leafy boughs so that I could see.

There, lying stretched upon the mossy ground, was a part of a female body—the lower part, from the waist downwards. It showed conspicuously in the moonlight.

"I—I touched it," said Griers, in an unsteady voice. "It was—simply awful."

We examined the mutilated remains more closely. Decomposition had begun. . . . I cannot say more. Only, there were long strings of jagged flesh and skin, and a piece of the backbone projected hideously. Even the memory of the thing is dreadful.

We withdrew, filled with nausea and dominated by emotions

that could find relief only in rapid motion. Until we had left the wood well behind us, neither of us spoke a word.

And the explanation?

All I can say is this: Griers, being an officer, had access to information not then available to those of inferior ranks. He told me, later, that previous to our occupation the enemy had wrought havoc amongst the female population of this particular district. They were known to have ravished girls and women and then slain them in cold blood. Then, it was reported, some of them—the most brutal of them—had actually dismembered their victims, and in at least one instance a girl's body had been cut completely in two.

Griers declared that, as a student of the occult, he was inclined to associate the last-mentioned deed of brutal violence with the apparition we had seen in the glade, and the gruesome relics found beneath the bush certainly seemed to substantiate his theory.

## MESSENGERS OF FATE

By EDITH K. HARPER, Author of *A Suicide Epidemic*, etc.,

Heaven knows its time ; the bullet has its billet  
Arrow and javelin each its destined purpose ;  
The fated beasts of Nature's lower strain  
Have each their separate task.

—SCOTT.

“AND the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening ; and he drank of the brook.”

The old and beautiful story of Elijah, to whom ravens ministered after the word of the Lord had come to him saying, “Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan”—perhaps explains, in some dim, remote way, why to this day ravens are regarded by a great many people with a kind of awe, so that to kill or injure a raven is said to bode ill to the perpetrator of the deed.

The idea has even expanded into a superstition ; so that “the night raven’s dismal voice,” so beloved by the three witches in *Macbeth*, is to other folk as unwelcome as the Banshee’s wail to a Highlander or an Irishman.

This linking of ravens with bogledom will not be lessened by the grim story that came recently from the Tower of London. Doubtless many readers of the OCCULT REVIEW read it in the Press, and possibly some of them, like myself, wondered why the vengeance of the ill-omened bird should have been wreaked upon a human creature who had apparently no connection with the mischance that caused the raven’s death. Here is the outline of the gruesome tale, as recently recorded in the *Daily Express* :

Ravens have made their home at the Tower for hundreds of years, and it is a superstition among the troops that if a raven’s death is encompassed a soldier’s life pays penalty.

A few days ago a Guardsman was leading a dog through the square. He was confronted by a raven, credited with eighty years, which attacked the dog vigorously with his beak, still sharp for all his advanced age. The Guardsman repelled the attack by means of his stick, and unintentionally he killed the bird.

The barracks were filled at once with dread forebodings.

The raven’s body was buried with due ceremony, and a piece of wood, suitably inscribed, was erected to mark the grave.

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# THE SCIENCE OF DEATH

By HERBERT ADAMS

THE Western occult student, after perusing *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, will feel that he has been treated to a very liberal amount of instruction on the science of death. Perhaps Bacon's dictum : " Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested," will appropriately come to mind. Some will certainly only taste, a few will swallow, but only one in thousands will chew and digest and attempt to apply seriously the detailed instruction of this remarkable book. That enthusiast will probably be a Theosophist, who is prone to believe that every occult doctrine from the land of the Buddha has profound significance for him, whether or not it has for anyone else, and who therefore may feel quite equal to the task of truly orientalising himself by memorising, and prevailing upon his relatives to memorise, the storied progress of his consciousness principle from the dying moments to that state of complete liberation, or some lesser condition of felicity, commensurate with his Karmic merit.

The average occult student will regard this book with mixed feelings. Even in the light of a life's study in his chosen field he will find it difficult to give off-hand a clear unbiased opinion. In spite of his reading of Oriental literature and many years of practical application of its esoteric instruction, he yet has a Western mind ; he likes the concise and practical ; and even in dealing with Oriental philosophy and practices he will, in his swift and discriminating manner, put aside a vast amount of the ritualistic and the tortuous and lay hold of the main fact and apply it. This is a national trait, and with all his superimposed Oriental thinking, he will be strongly influenced by it when he comes to put any instruction to the test. Nothing will so much nettles him as a fine-spun philosophy, no matter what its credentials may be, which he cannot reduce to working formulæ that bear every evidence of utility and guarantee adequate results for his pains. It is true that the comprehensive knowledge offered by the textbooks on such subjects, for instance, as the world periods and similar abstruse studies, is accepted on the word of qualified initiates : the student is assured of the immediate and remote value of accustoming the mind to conceptions of this nature ; but for the most part he has to accept this cosmic knowledge on

faith, in the hope that some form of enlightenment will at length be vouchsafed to him, and everyday life become the grander for the vision. So it is concerning the practical work of occultism. The philosophy of yoga and the remarkable powers attributed to the yogi have an immense fascination for the Western student, and many have taken as their ideal the developed yogi and endeavour to follow the severe outline of the yoga practices. It is not sufficiently observed, however, that the yogi is a master mind with a far different objective in life than that of the Western student. Moreover, the long novitiate required of the latter is practically impossible of achievement without the direct assistance of a personal teacher.

These reflections are not irrelevant to our subject. The mental constitution of the Western student, his inborn dislike, even though he be an occultist, of the deeply involved or abstract, and the fact that what is immediately possible to the yogi or master mind is painfully intricate or practically insurmountable for himself, come forcibly to mind when considering a book of the class before us. The book is undoubtedly of great interest to the occultist, the spiritualist, and to psychic researchers generally. Nor is its intrinsic helpfulness to be for a moment doubted to those who may be in a position or who have the inclination to apply its teaching as it is no doubt applied by many in the East. But like other works of a deeply esoteric character requiring exceptional conditions of usage and exceptional advancement for the right use, it will serve in the main to emphasise once again how vast is the difference between simple occult belief in the West regarding the preparation for transition, and the elaborate ritual adopted at that important moment by some of the highly evolved initiates in the East.

The introduction to the translation of "The Bardo Experiences" is a lengthy one and is a necessary commentary on the text. The miscellaneous knowledge of Eastern beliefs and customs contained in it will be chiefly interesting to the historical student.

In the introductory section of Book One, instructions are given for the application of the science to the departing entity under the three headings of: The Transference of the Consciousness Principle; the Reading of the Thodol; and the Practical Application of the Thodol by the Officiant. In the first, the devotee is enjoined to examine the symptoms of death as they gradually appear in his dying body, after which he is to apply

the transference by merely remembering the process—a process not absolutely impossible, perhaps, if the death hour is not troubled by any of the pains and perturbations to which flesh is commonly heir ; but, as is pointed out in the valuable notes accompanying the text, the process being essentially yogic, the transference can be employed only by a person highly proficient in mental concentration. The Western student is therefore confronted with a major difficulty at the very threshold of the Bardo, namely, the making, as a conscious fact, the necessary discrimination between the ego and its vehicles, the realisation of the Self as a centre of spiritual force and activity entirely apart from the transitory bodies. Such a degree of realisation enables one to apply the transference effectually and attain liberation through a simple remembrance of the process. The reading of the Thodol will be unnecessary for such a person

But for the majority who are not able to make the transference as above, the reading of the Thodol is prescribed. Should the corpse be absent, the reader should occupy the seat or bed which the deceased has been accustomed to use ; he is then to summon the spirit of the deceased—in other words, he is to indulge in a little necromancy—imagine it present and listening, and recite the Thodol. If the body is present, at the moment of expiration, the Guru or a trusted friend must place his lips close to the ear of the corpse and recite the Thodol.

Again, we are confronted with a particular difficulty. For the success of this simple and unpretentious piece of instruction the presence of one skilled in necromancy appears to be necessary ; nor presumably can he be assured of the effectiveness of his effort unless he has developed vision of the Bardo Plane. Neither is it an easy matter, in this hemisphere, for a qualified person or even a trusted friend to ensure such congenial conditions at the time of transition, what with the likely presence of relatives and possibly of medical practitioners and others, for the carrying out an elaborate ritual. For the Great Thodol is to be read either seven times or three, according to the occasion : this, with certain other preliminaries, is the practical application of the Thodol by the officiant.

Part One of the First Book concerns “ The Bardo of the Moments of Death,” and deals with two stages of experience : Instructions on the symptoms of death—the primary Clear Light seen at the moment of death ; and instructions on the secondary Clear Light seen immediately after death. These

instructions consist of considerable detail, and the detail ramifies into so many possible conditions of application that the student will begin to realise that he must become an expert in the diagnosis of the symptoms of death before he can hope to make the right application. I will quote one or two of these conditions that the student may judge for himself. "When the expiration hath ceased, the vital force will have sunk into the nerve-centre of Wisdom, and the Knower will be experiencing the Clear Light of the natural condition. Then, the vital force, being thrown backwards and flying downwards through the right and left nerves, the Intermediate State momentarily dawns. The above directions should be applied before the vital force hath rushed into the left nerve after first having traversed the navel nerve centre." Again: "If the expiration is about to cease, turn the dying one over on the right side, which posture is called the 'Lying Posture of a Lion.' The throbbing of the arteries on the right and the left side of the throat is to be pressed. If the person dying be disposed to sleep, or if the sleeping state advances, that should be arrested, and the arteries pressed gently but firmly." A variety of instructions follow for the different applications of the process, the object of which is to set the departing spirit face to face with the Clear Light. All which is profoundly interesting but, as is pointed out in the notes to the text, the departing entity must have attained to unusual proficiency in yoga and much Karmic merit in order to benefit by the process.

In the instructions of the second stage dealing with the secondary Clear Light, provision is made for the person who is unable to attain the primary Clear Light on transition, and further elements of the ritual are given for assisting him to recognise the lesser Light. In the appended note, the precise condition of the entity at this point is very clearly and ably expounded. It is indicated how rarely is the normal mental condition of the dying person equal to retaining the state in which the Clear Light is manifested. His mentality remains momentarily balanced in perfect equilibrium, in a condition of oneness, but owing to unfamiliarity with this exalted state of non-ego, the consciousness principle of the average person lacks the power to function in it; Karmic propensities interfere, and the consciousness principle falls away from the Clear Light.

Part Two deals with "The Bardo of the Experiencing of Reality," and covers a wealth of instruction concerning the third

stage of the Bardo. This is the stage in which the Karmic illusions reveal themselves : there is much to prepare for and much to overcome. A lengthy ritual is given for seven successive days during the Dawning of the Peaceful Deities ; a further ritual for seven successive days during the Dawning of the Wrathful Deities. This phase of the ritual takes up fifty pages of the book ; and when it is said in the conclusion of the section that " the training in this Bardo being of particular importance even while living, hold to it, read it, commit it to memory, bear it in mind properly, read it regularly thrice ; let the words and the meanings be very clear ; it should be so that the words and the meanings will not be forgotten even though a hundred executioners were pursuing thee "—one might readily be pardoned for asking where, in this workaday Western world of ours, may we expect to find even among serious occult students any, except possibly one extraordinary enthusiast, who will feel disposed to put this process to a practical test ?

Book Two also consists of two parts : the first, concerning " The After-Death World," the second, concerning " The Process of Re-birth." In the first a further recital to the spirit resting in the intermediate state takes place, again with many possible conditions of application differing according to the status of the departed one. The various experiences he may expect to encounter in this state are to be voiced to him for his immediate guidance. In part two, " The Process of Re-birth," instruction is given for assisting the spirit to liberation, and thus preventing entry into a womb. In the words of the text : " This is a very profound art ; in virtue of it, a womb is not entered." Thereupon follow five methods of closing the womb door.

All these different aspects of the ritual are known as so many " settings-to-face " ; and if the entity is not liberated at one setting-to-face, at another liberation should be achieved. " Therefore, the perseverance in the reading of the Great Bardo Thodol for forty-nine days is of the utmost importance." It is possible, however, that owing to the great force of Karmic obscurations and previous unspirituality, the entity may not be liberated ; in which case, instruction is given for the selection of a womb door.

There is a short appendix to the text followed by an addenda in which such subjects as Yoga, Mantras, the Guru and chela, and others, are touched upon.

I have given but a few glimpses of what is certainly a re-

markably interesting and thought-provoking book. For reasons above given, its nature is such as not to incite to practical demonstration among ourselves. Rituals of this character, valuable as they may be in themselves and suitable in usage among initiates in the land of their origin, will be regarded but curiously by the many, and searched diligently by the few, chiefly for additions to technical knowledge, in the West. To quote from the introduction: "Although it is remarkably scientific in its essentials, there is no need to consider it as being accurate in all its details; for, undoubtedly, considerable corruption has crept into the text. In its broad outlines, however, it seems to convey a sublime truth." Just so, and it is "the broad outline" that the student will seize and retain; and observing in the notes to the text the reiterated emphasis on the necessity for egoic development to ensure success in the ritual of the Bardo, he will perhaps receive a new incentive to achieve the cosmic state here and now. He need have no anxiety about the future.

## MESSENGERS OF FATE

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Arrow and javelin each its destined purpose ;  
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“AND the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening ; and he drank of the brook.”

The old and beautiful story of Elijah, to whom ravens ministered after the word of the Lord had come to him saying, “Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan”—perhaps explains, in some dim, remote way, why to this day ravens are regarded by a great many people with a kind of awe, so that to kill or injure a raven is said to bode ill to the perpetrator of the deed.

The idea has even expanded into a superstition ; so that “the night raven’s dismal voice,” so beloved by the three witches in *Macbeth*, is to other folk as unwelcome as the Banshee’s wail to a Highlander or an Irishman.

This linking of ravens with bogledom will not be lessened by the grim story that came recently from the Tower of London. Doubtless many readers of the OCCULT REVIEW read it in the Press, and possibly some of them, like myself, wondered why the vengeance of the ill-omened bird should have been wreaked upon a human creature who had apparently no connection with the mischance that caused the raven’s death. Here is the outline of the gruesome tale, as recently recorded in the *Daily Express* :

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The barracks were filled at once with dread forebodings.

The raven’s body was buried with due ceremony, and a piece of wood, suitably inscribed, was erected to mark the grave.

The sequel was not long delayed. The following night Guardsman Arthur Chidgey overstayed his leave. He tried to enter the Tower by climbing the wall, but he fell into the moat, breaking both his legs. He

was, the following morning—although the deepest sympathy was expressed for him—generally voted lucky in escaping the full penalty of the raven's vengeance.

He died later in the day, however, gangrene having developed.

The officer whose duty it was to report the details of the case visited the scene of the accident. He found that the unfortunate Guardsman had fallen directly on the raven's grave, the imprint of his body being clearly visible.

Only this unfortunate young Guardsman himself could tell us, if he chose, whether by some tactless gibe he may not have drawn down upon himself the wrath of the raven tribe, or at any rate such portion of the tribe as had made its home in the precincts of the grey old tower, where the weird aspect of those birds is singularly in keeping with the headsman's axe and the fatal block upon which so many a mournful life-story met its earthly close. . . .

"Coincidence," sneers the all-wise sceptic. But, coincidence or not, one imagines scepticism will find little place among His Majesty's guardians of the Tower of London. . . . "Quoth the raven, 'Nevermore' "

Another story of like import occurs to my mind. This one came within my own personal experience. I was staying in a North-country village on the banks of the Tees a good many years ago, and we had a pet mongoose. This little animal was sent from a friend in India, who told us that in some parts of Hindustan it is regarded by the natives with great veneration. It is a killer of snakes, and they fear to destroy it, for there is a superstition that death or disaster will of a surety overtake the luckless person who has slain "his highness the mongoose." Our pet was an immense favourite with the family. He was very tame, answered to his name, fed from our hands, and was always at the door or window to greet friendly callers, waving his bushy tail and uttering his shrill little cry of pleasure. The villagers, however, looked upon him askance, though we were not aware of this at first, as, with simulated interest, some of them brought him offerings of food; notably a local poulterer whose *pièce de résistance* consisted of the severed heads of fowls. With true Yorkshire caution they "spoke him fair." It seems, however, that they believed him to be some deadly kind of foreign rat, and anything "foreign" was regarded with suspicion and dislike—very deep suspicion and still deeper dislike—by them. An elderly neighbour, a coachman, named Coats, a bosom friend of the poulterer, was more open in his mistrust of the

mongoose, which had once strayed into his garden and given his wife the fright of her life! It was after this that the poulterer thrust a particularly sanguinary-looking object through the kitchen window one morning with the laconic utterance, "Chicken 'ed!" To make a long story short, the chicken-head was poisoned, and the poor little animal died an agonising death. Now follows the tragic trail: Coats's eldest son, a youth in apparently perfect health, went into a sudden decline and died. Soon afterwards Coats himself, possibly under stress of this untimely bereavement, took ill and passed away. Another family named Coxon—whom we later heard had also been implicated in the plot—consisting of father, mother and two sons, all died except the mother. It may be said that, though antagonistic, they had not actually caused our little animal's death; but the real perpetrator, Watkin Shrubbs, the poulterer, suddenly developed acute blood-poisoning and narrowly escaped death after many months' illness.

What could more intensely express the idea of bird-vengeance, as retribution, than Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*?

And I had done a hellish thing,  
And it would work 'em woe:  
For all averred I had killed the bird  
That made the breeze to blow!  
"Ah, wretch!" said they, "the bird to slay,  
That made the breeze to blow."

Even though the sailors changed their minds when the sun rose, they returned to their former disquietude when the breeze dropped and the ship was becalmed, so that—

Day after day, day after day,  
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;  
As idle as a painted ship  
Upon a painted ocean.

Horror succeeded horror, all being attributed to the curse brought about by the shooting of the albatross. For, observes the annotator:

A spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels; concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more."

Of course, the moral of it all is the lesson of loving-kindness to "man and bird and beast"; and the assumption that the "lower creatures" are susceptible to our good will. Sometimes, indeed, the expression of good will is manifested from them to ourselves. Legend has many an example of this, and not the least charming is a tale that comes from Warsaw, which so attracted W. T. Stead that he included it in his volume, *Hymns That Have Helped*, in reference to Gerhard's famous old hymn, "Give to the winds thy fears." I conclude with the story as Stead quoted it, for it ends on the note with which I began, the idea of beneficent ministration on the part of our brothers the birds—especially the ravens.

"In a village near Warsaw there lived a pious German peasant named Dobyr. Without remedy, he had fallen into arrears of rent, and his landlord threatened to evict him. It was winter. Thrice he appealed for a respite, but in vain. It was evening, and the next day his family were to be turned out into the snow. Dobyr knelt down in the midst of his family. After prayer they sang:

Commit thou all thy griefs  
And ways into His hands.

As they came to the last verse (in German) of Part I,

When Thou wouldst all our needs supply,  
Who, who shall stay Thy hands?

there was a knock at the window close by where he knelt, and opening it Dobyr was met by a raven, one which his grandfather had tamed and set at liberty. In its bill was a ring, set with precious stones. This he took to his minister, who said at once that it belonged to the King, Stanislaus, to whom he returned it, and related his story. The King sent for Dobyr, and besides rewarding him on the spot, built for him, next year, a new house, and stocked his cattle stalls from the royal domain. Over the house door, on an iron tablet, there is carved a raven with a ring in its beak, and underneath this address to Divine Providence:

Thou everywhere hast sway,  
And all things serve Thy might:  
Thy every act pure blessing is,  
Thy path unsullied light.

## THE LAW OF POLARITY

By R. E. BRUCE

RIGHTLY understood and applied, the Law of Polarity can raise man above all undesirable conditions—of ill-health, dissatisfaction or failure. He can live and move and have his being in that transcendent region beyond the power of "the Pair of Opposites." It is but the wilful limiting of his capacity to thus rise which keeps man helplessly bound in the chains of an untoward fate and tied to the wheel of apparently inexorable circumstance.

Man is persistently sure that to fight and strive is to achieve, and that peremptory assertion is tantamount to acceptance by fate of his statement, though experience is continually proving to him the contrary.

Yet it is doubtful if even occultists in general realise the extent to which all but the most highly evolved souls are subject to the dominion of the Pair of Opposites.

"Tempting Providence" is more than a mere phrase. An Italian peasant will be terrified if congratulated on the beauty of her child, for she believes this is to "ill-wish" it, and that, by stirring up the resentment of Providence, it brings upon it an opposite fate, that is, ugliness or disease. What is this but a rousing up of the power of the Pair of Opposites? Though rooted in superstition, the mother's fear is grounded on natural law.

The definite, hard-and-fast statement, uttered with a kind of blatant certainty, is, by the Law of Opposites, immediately proved false. The moment we pride ourselves on our certainty of possession of any person, quality or material thing, and feel that we cannot do without it, we become the slave of that personality, quality or thing, and so lose it. The Law works exactly, from such widely differing things as the possession of health, beauty or wealth, down to such apparently insignificant ones as the possession of a pen or pencil. For even the assertion about some such trivial possession as: "I couldn't do without that," rouses this giant from his lair, and the thing, whatever it is, is taken from us. So long as we only cherish the possession or quality and enjoy it, whilst yet not being subject to it, i.e., allowing ourselves to become dependent on it, it remains ours. But once our possessions take possession of us, we are no longer master of them, and therefore lose them.

Good health cannot remain with us without a subconscious obedience to the Law of Polarity. The concentration on health and the exaggerated determination conveyed by gritted teeth, stamped foot and the words: "I *will* not be ill," or the over-confident and bumptious assertion—uttered with conscious superiority to others in the thrall of ill-health: "Illness could never happen to *me*," rouses the Pair of Opposites from quietude and brings about the very thing so strongly denied.

The dynamic certainty of utterance *against* some course of action and events chains the personality to the power of the opposites, whereas calm determination without antagonism is the fruit of that controlled will which enables the personality to rise above it.

The operation of this Law was simply and strikingly demonstrated about a year or so ago when the picture "The Hen-Coop" was stolen from one of our public galleries. One day we read the account of an interview with one of the gallery officials, in which he was reported to have said, in answer to a question about the possibility of works of art being stolen: "Such a thing could *never* happen here, because in our public galleries the pictures are screwed to the wall with eight screws." But the very next day the papers published the news of a theft of two pictures from that very gallery, *each picture being screwed to the wall with eight screws!*

A man I knew well once said to me, "There are two things I will *never* do; I will never live in a terrace, and I will *never* live at the seaside." In spite of—or should we say, "because of"—this explosive statement, he now lives in a terrace at the seaside. He dislikes the sea and the terraces as much as ever, but undoubtedly he is chained by the power of the Opposites.

It is as though some indignant or cocksure vehemence of certainty in our minds and utterance induced the opposite manifestations to occur.

The difference between the will power to accomplish the desire, and the will that destroys the desire, and creates its opposite, is very subtle.

The Law of Opposites runs like a silken thread through every thought, speech and event of our several lives. When sought diligently, it can be traced even in the most apparently insignificant and trivial circumstances. In fact, by working from the apparently trivial—trivial in appearance only, for nothing is ever

actually trivial—it is easier to grasp and master the same Law operating through more imposing events.

All things are dual, and possess opposite poles of being. Heat and cold are not two distinct states, but differ merely in degree. Everything holds opposite aspects. Opposites are therefore only two extremes of the same thing, with an infinite variety of degrees between

We say, "It is light," when a certain degree of lightness has been attained, and "It is dark," when a certain degree of darkness appears; but where exactly do we draw the line? We may even truthfully aver: "It is getting dark, but it is still light." The light is becoming momentarily less, and the darkness greater, but both are there. In the most Stygian blackness light is potentially present, and the most blazing sunshine carries within itself the germ and seed of darkness.

Good and evil are opposite poles of the same thing—"evil" is but "live" spelt backwards!—and it is only by transmuting evil that it can become good. As Jesus of Nazareth taught: "Overcome evil with good," which is merely another way of saying: "Rise above the Pair of Opposites." For to overcome is to rise above—to transcend. By concentrating on evil, even with the intention of conquering it, we do but give it added power.

The dynamic certainty of utterance *against* some course of action or event chains the personality to the power of these opposites; it is as though blatant over-confidence and bumptious conceit and superiority must automatically succumb under their dominion.

In thoughts and feelings of the mind and soul the operation of this Law remains the same.

The violent determination, expressed with vehemence, to write a play, a sonnet or a book, or to paint a picture, is the infallible way to stultify achievement. It is the continuous frictionless will-to-do that brings about fulfilment; for that calm determination and confidence, without antagonism or conceit, which is the fruit of a controlled will, enables the personality to rise above the conditions where the life is ground to powder by the Pair of Opposites.

In material concerns a serene faith and confidence, felt rather than expressed, is the basis of success, whilst in matters of the mind and soul there is a kind of half-way house between thinking and dreaming, a mind state—or should we say rather a soul

condition?—from which all sensation and thought are withdrawn, leaving, as it were, an empty smooth groundwork, undisturbed by surface ripples, a complete and absolute harmony of the spirit which is the only fertile breeding ground for the intense activity of creative genius.

Yet desirelessness, the quiescent state for which the young occult student so ardently yearns, is only—or should be only—an intermediate and transition stage in the long journey of the soul towards union with the Divine. It is like a rich and virgin soil in which no seed has yet been planted. Such soil, if left undisturbed, can, in the end, produce nothing but weeds. Nevertheless, to leave it fallow and uncultivated for a time, is definitely to help future production. But it is so difficult to do just this much and no more, to reach the happy mean between sterility and achievement, so difficult to believe that quiescence must precede achievement. Yet we know that the seed must remain in the ground for a time before it begins to germinate, and that if it be disturbed during those first days, no plant will emerge therefrom, but it will rot away and die.

And the quiescent, harmonious state of mind and spirit may either degenerate into the empty daydream, the sterile negation of all thought, or into its opposite, the smooth, effortless, intense, and rapid functioning of the creative imagination. Moreover this state is so finely balanced, so delicately poised and adjusted, that, like the needle of a compass, the merest infinitesimal breath of movement is enough to switch it one way or the other.

No man truly possesses a thing if he does not feel that he could rise superior to its loss.

The majority of people are possessed by their possessions, and are therefore in subjection to them to a degree often pitiable to witness.

I think it was Emerson who said: "The moment you become interested in a book leave off reading," and an understanding of the Law of Polarity at once explains this injunction. Directly our interest is deeply engaged, we are no longer master of our thoughts and feelings, but are in an attitude of subjection towards the thing in which we are interested. Most of us can remember—at any rate in our young days—being so deeply enthralled in a novel that we were unable to leave off reading it until finished. We may also remember the state of inefficiency, dissatisfaction,

dullness and languor in which we found ourselves afterwards. We had allowed the book to dominate us, and had become in thrall to it.

The moment we reach to sublime indifference about anything we have conquered and become master of it; we have, in fact, achieved a mystical state towards it. For it is not the indifference bred of lack of appreciation or liking for the thing possessed, but that very dissimilar quality of indifference which enables us to become sufficiently great to rise above our appreciation and liking into the sphere of absolute contentment. And is it not the ability to achieve this sublime indifference about all things that proves us mystics?

We have risen above the Pair of Opposites.

But in our first conscious efforts to work in harmony with this Law of Opposites, we must not forget the curious apparent anomaly that opposite statements, under certain conditions of expression, will bring about identical results.

If, for instance, instead of our dynamic over-confident assertions, we say dismally: "I value this pencil, and so I'm sure to lose it," or "I wish I could keep well, but I'm sure to be ill again soon," these two disasters will infallibly occur; and this because, instead of rising above the Pair of Opposites we have sunk below them, so that our negative suggestion has been carried out. The man who stated vehemently that he would never live in a terrace or at the seaside was, on the contrary, so vehement in his assertion, that it overbalanced itself, as it were, and went over the top and fell down on the other side!

"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. x. 12), is full corroboration of the fact that too much certainty swings back the pendulum of the Law of Opposites to the other pole, and the hackneyed saying that "Extremes meet," is a homely expression of the same truth, namely, an acknowledgment of the Law of Polarity.

## CORRESPONDENCE

[The name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication, are required as evidence of bona fides, and must in every case accompany correspondence sent for insertion in the pages of the OCCULT REVIEW.—ED.]

### RECOLLECTIONS OF H. P. BLAVATSKY.

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

SIR,—There are certain facts which throw somewhat out of perspective the picture of the entourage of Madame Blavatsky as drawn in recent articles by Mr. G. R. S. Mead and Mr. James M. Pryse, and, as testimony which both these gentlemen seek to discredit is affected, it is fair to let these undeniable facts speak for themselves.

Mr. Mead, in his article, "Facts About the Secret Doctrine," speaks of Mrs. Cleather as if she were dependent for information upon his recital of "historical" facts and had no first-hand knowledge of her own on the subject; whereas Mrs. Cleather, who joined the Theosophical Society in 1885, was in close and intimate touch with H.P.B. and her assistants from 1887, all through the Lansdowne Road period, when "the Secret Doctrine" was first got out, with the assistance of the two Keightleys and E. D. Fawcett, and before Mr. Mead (who succeeded Bertram Keightley as H.P.B.'s private secretary) or Mr. Pryse or Mrs. Besant had come upon the scene.

Mr. Mead, in the same article, speaks of his "old friend and colleague, James M. Pryse . . . who with me ran the 'H.P.B. Press' for a number of laborious and stormy years"—the inference being that these "stormy years" were during the lifetime of H.P.B.; but such was not the case. *The Theosophist* for November 1890 gives as an item of news: "The community at Avenue Road has just received a recruit in the person of Mr. James M. Pryse—an American F.T.S.—who has come over to join the Headquarter staff, and has taken up his residence there permanently as a worker." This, dated London, September 1890, shows that Mr. Pryse came to work for H.P.B. only some eight or nine months before her death. An avowal on the part of Mr. Pryse quoted in the OCCULT REVIEW for March last, p. 153 (American edition), implies the same misleading deduction. He says: "As I was for four years in the London headquarters, and had charge of the printing office, and printed the revised *Secret Doctrine*, I naturally had every opportunity to know the facts." One hardly realises from this that he could have had no opportunity to know, at first hand, facts relating to the handling of original *Secret Doctrine* MSS. a couple of years before he came to England!

In recent articles Mr. Pryse tries to make it appear that the Keightleys only account for the two volumes published, and a collection of fragments now appearing in Vol. III, *Secret Doctrine*; whereas

their statements quoted in Mrs. Cleather's *H. P. Blavatsky: a Great Betrayal*, assert that they themselves divided the MSS. into four parts, of which two were published, III was ready for the printer, and IV very nearly so; which is what H.P.B. herself says in the *Secret Doctrine* at least four times; but Mr. Pryse now explains that away on the ground of her "impulsive anticipation." The facts about Vols. III and IV, quoted by Mrs. Cleather, were written by the Keightleys specially for Countess Wachtmeister's *Reminiscences of H. P. Blavatsky and the Secret Doctrine*, published in 1893, when memories of events but three or four years old were necessarily fresher than they are to-day.

In the monthly letter which Mrs. Cleather had, for some years, contributed to the *Theosophist* (India), she gave such news of theosophical publications as were given her by those living and working at Headquarters. In the *Canadian Theosophist* for August 1927, Mr. Pryse refers to one of these letters as being incorrect. It is from the *Theosophist* for April 1891, which I have before me as I write. Mrs. Cleather, after announcing the advent of H.P.B.'s *Glossary*, and the second part of *Transactions: Blavatsky Lodge*, goes on to say: "Another edition of the *Secret Doctrine*, too, is in course of preparation. This will be published with a new and exceedingly good Index (so sorely needed), compiled by Dr. Keightley. Moreover, H.P.B. has already started on Vol. III." This clearly reads that the Vol. III referred to was part of a contemplated new edition, which, despite Mr. Pryse's remarkable memory, I venture to think was planned out, and, owing to H.P.B.'s failing health, came to nought. For the rest, this long letter, cited by Mr. Pryse as inaccurate, is made up of book and magazine reviews—but speaking of inaccuracy, I notice that Mr. Pryse gives the date of H.P.B.'s death as April 8th, 1891, instead of May 8th of that year! In Mr. Pryse's comment upon the above he mentions that Mrs. Cleather was not upon the working staff (work here refers to publications) at Avenue Road. In the matter of perspective it is interesting to note that at that moment she *was* a member of H.P.B.'s Inner Group of twelve personal pupils trained for occult work—to which Inner Group Mr. Pryse, up to the day of H.P.B.'s death, never belonged.

In the *Canadian Theosophist* referred to, Mr. Pryse gives an account of H.P.B.'s complete trust in Mr. Mead, of whom he speaks as being "like a blood-brother" to himself, coupling Mr. Mead's name with that of the "Old Lady" who was, he says, "like a mother to me"—but he fails to add that Mr. Mead's attitude towards H.P.B. has entirely changed since those days of mutual trust, and that he does not hesitate to belittle her and to cast doubt upon her honesty. A completely reversed opinion may, after thirty-five years, also change, or colour, recollections. Dr. H. N. Stokes, in your magazine recently, made this clear in regard to Mr. Mead's assertions about

W. Q. Judge. I submit that Mr. Mead's testimony is no more reliable in regard to H. P. Blavatsky and her work than in the case of Mr. Judge—and that Mr. Pryse's affectionate regard, reserved for those old students who depreciate H.P.B. and exalt themselves, is a fair key to his own testimony. That he now writes of Mrs. Besant as his "staunch and dear old friend" suggests the hypothesis that the lady psychologised him during her last visit to U.S.A., the sequel being a reversal of his original and excellent review of her Preface to Vol. III, *Secret Doctrine*.

Yours truly,

H. HENDERSON.

### AN AYRSHIRE GHOST TRIAD.

*To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.*

SIR,—Despite the witches and warlocks seen in Alloway's haunted kirk by the immortal "Tam o' Shanter," Ayrshire is not reputed to be the scene of many supernatural happenings—sceptics declare that the air is too bracing for ghosts!

The little village of Ballantrae on the Ayrshire coast, shrouded in woods and flanked by hills, is, however, an interesting exception to the above dictum, boasting as it does no fewer than three well authenticated instances of supernormal happenings of interest both to the psychical researcher and to the student of folk-lore.

The first concerns the phantom of a "headless Roundhead"—to use the "Irishism" of the villagers—said to have been killed by his enemies, and who is alleged to haunt Ardstinchar Castle (a stronghold in Cromwell's time) which lies just outside the village.

There is also the spectre of the "Dooren" hill, reported to be that of a very ordinary farmer, his approach being usually heralded by a volley of stones—a curious example of a ghost and poltergeist phenomena occurring together.

The third instance concerns the estate of my own country home, "Davaar." It was first built by my grandfather, the late Baillie James McLennan, in the late 'nineties, then passed to the hands of my uncle, the late Mr. Alec B. McLennan, finally coming into my possession a few months ago. In my uncle's time, that part of the estate adjacent to Ardstinchar Castle was said to be the "rendezvous" of a mysterious blue light surrounded by a red "aureola" which appeared only for a few seconds before vanishing. My uncle never spoke about the "ghost." Being a student of natural history, he was too engrossed in studying bird life to bother about the supernatural, but his brother-in-law and his wife declared that they had frequently seen the light, and a visitor, a hard-headed Lieut.-Colonel, was also favoured with its appearance. All those witnesses were of habits and temperament which precluded the possibility of their being deceived, either through the medium of intemperance or self-deception!

The first two psychic manifestations I mentioned have been vouched for by more than a hundred persons—and the Ayrshire villager is not superstitious.

I have tried to trace the origin of the "farmer" ghost and of the "blue light," but without success.

Believe me,

Yours truly,

J. McLENNAN BOYD.

#### AN UNDESIRABLE PSYCHIC STATE.

*To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.*

SIR,—Your REVIEW, which I have read for some years past, has such a wide circulation among experienced occultists that I am hoping one of your readers may be able to explain to me a somewhat distressing experience which seems to be recurring more frequently nowadays. Sometimes at night when lying awake, or during the daytime when taking a short rest, I drop imperceptibly into a kind of coma, in which I am quite conscious of all sounds and other sense stimuli going on all around me and yet I cannot stir a finger or utter a sound; it is like being bound by a spell, and sometimes there is a feeling of horror about it. The attempt to return to one's body and arouse oneself is incredibly difficult and painful, and one "comes to" trembling in every limb, covered with cold sweat and with heart beating suffocatingly. These states vary in length of time and do not appear to be connected with any particular bodily posture. The mind can think and reason quite clearly all the time, and once or twice I have had rather interesting experiences whilst in this state; usually, however, I seem to be hovering in vague space, obsessed with the urgent need to return and yet unable to do so. I have found, after several attempts, that the only way to rouse oneself is to force one's eyes to open, though this is always a herculean labour. Quite often in this state I feel the conviction that if I were to "tug" a little harder at something, I should separate myself entirely from the body and "die," yet I am always compelled to use every effort to arouse myself. I find that my heart is often affected unpleasantly for days after such an experience, although it has been medically pronounced sound. I have been a student of mysticism and the occult for some years past, but only *theoretically*; that is to say, I have never practised various forms of meditation, breathing or any "yogi" exercises. My life is a normal, busy and interesting one, and I am completely at a loss to explain these exhausting and apparently purposeless experiences. Can any of your readers suggest an explanation and any method of stopping them?

Yours very faithfully,

(Mrs.) E. SWALE.

## PERIODICAL LITERATURE

FROM whatever point of view they may approach the subject, and whatever the hypotheses which, in certain cases, they may exist to uphold, the periodicals representative of Psychical Research have enough demand on their space without giving full length reports either of proceedings at meetings or of lectures delivered at these. Otherwise we could have desired that something more than a summary account comprised within a single column might have been granted by LIGHT to an address delivered by Col. R. G. Berry at the London Spiritual Alliance on alleged psychical elements in the Legend of the Holy Grail. The Grail is a recurring subject not only from year to year but almost from month to month, though it happens too seldom that those who offer their views exhibit any tolerable acquaintance with the old romance-literature to which we owe the Legend. Col. Berry, however, assured his hearers that he had pursued investigations on his part, and this is satisfactory, whatever we may think of the course adopted when he said that he went at last to the spirits for light on the problems which seem to have baffled him, or as he called them, the "dead ends" beyond which progress appeared impossible. We are told that communications received from psychic sources enabled him to carry the quest over these obstructions. So far as we can follow the summary, he got light on "obscure paths" relating to the Celtic Church, Gnosticism, the trial of the Knights Templar, etc., and was led in this manner to discover in the Grail story "the legend of a mystery full of psychic happenings" and veiling not only "the idea of communication between heaven and earth" but that of "spirit communication" and human survival. We gather also that the Grail was originally a Mystery-Ritual. We should have liked a verbatim report, had such been possible, not on account of alleged light received from psychic sources but to judge for ourselves how far, if indeed at all and from what source soever, there is anything at once new and evidential on the various subjects cited. The Mystery Religions, the Gnostic Schools, St. Columba and the Celtic Church, even the Knights Templar are old and familiar to all as proposed sources of the myth; and when Col. Berry affirmed his discovery that it goes back "thousands of years," we remember but too well how we have taken on our own part our weariful research through the ages for *le vase sacré et ce qu'il contient*, only to find that we have followed false lights. Those who so far have affirmed such antiquity have shewn only that vase and cup are everywhere in myth and legend, but this offers no light on the chalice of an "arch-natural Eucharist." The makers of such ascriptions are like those other enthusiasts, for the most part now removed, who found Emblematic Freemasonry everywhere, through æons and nations, but that which they did not find was an art of building spiritualised and presented

as "a peculiar system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols." We should like to offer our cordial welcome to Col. Berry if he has gone further and brings back proof with him, not only speculation and hypothesis. For once in a way the fact of going to the spirits, though it reads a little like a counsel of despair, will have proved an act of wisdom. It goes meanwhile without saying that "communication between heaven and earth" is on the surface of the romance versions, and so is "human survival," for Joseph of Arimathæa appeared in *propria persona* to the elect Knight Galahad.

We are glad that the SUFI QUARTERLY has reprinted an article by Sir William Jones on the mystical poetry of the Persians and Hindus, and has prefaced it by a short memorial note, which reminds us that he was learned in many languages, including their literatures, and founded the Asiatic Society. He died in 1794, having been Judge of the Supreme Court of India, and it may be that a few private libraries retain still upon their shelves what is termed by our contemporary "the magnificent memorial edition" of his works, published in six quarto volumes, *anno* 1799. They are unread at this day, as indeed is inevitable, for their content, taken as a whole, bears much the same relation to our existing state of knowledge on the religion and philosophy of India and Persia that books about ancient Egypt prior to the discovery of the Rosetta Stone bear to the expert knowledge of Maspero, Flinders Petrie and Wallis Budge. But this is not to say that the records of the past are negligible altogether at this day, and Sir William Jones in particular is to be distinguished from those fantasiasts of research whose names filled the courts of scholarship in the early eighteenth century. He stands at his period for a high grade of learning married to a sober mentality, and had none of that fever of wild hypothesis which characterised the next generation, as illustrated by Faber, General Vallancey and Godfrey Higgins. The essay before us begins by quoting the English theologian Barrow and Necker on the elevation of the soul to God in the communion of aspiring love, and proceeds to affirm their relation to the *theosophia mystica* of Vedantic and Sufic literature, though it is obvious on his own shewing that "the songs of Hafiz and Jayade'va, the raptures of the Masnavi, and the mysteries of the Bhagavat" speak from a further point of union. As regards the imagery of Sufic poets, and among others of Hafiz, he explains that their sleep is meditation on things divine, their tavern a retired oratory, their embraces the raptures of devotion, their idolaters, infidels and libertines, the faithful of purest religion, and their idol the Creator Himself. The wine which they drank was "the pure wine of unity," and in the words of Ismat, for a drop or a draught thereof they would sell the whole world, while in those of the Bustan, they forgot all things by remembering God.

We are indebted to RAYS FROM THE ROSE CROSS for an extract from THE NATION, described as a magazine published in New York

City, which certifies, under the title "Oklahoma goes Rosicrucian," that the State in question "has in recent months come under the influence of various Rosicrucian forces. They include Gnomes, Sylphs, Salamanders," and other "unknown spirits." It appears that the Governor has become "a student of the occult," and that his private secretary is "reputed to have certain super-physical powers and can obtain information from distant parts of the State," which is duly brought back to the Governor and applied by him in the administration of affairs. The official organ of the Oceanside Rosy Cross disclaims any connection with these matters and any knowledge of the Governor, as he does not belong to its sect. Did he happen to know the history of that which he is said to have embraced, he might in his honesty underscore the statement, to disclaim on his own part all connection with Oceanside, Mt. Ecclesia, its Fellowship and what not, seeing that here, as on every available occasion, it preaches the long exposed mendacity that "Rosicrucian Philosophy" belongs to the thirteenth instead of the seventeenth century. It is repeated again in the OCCULT DIGEST by Mrs. Max Heindel, describing the visions and vapourings of her deceased husband on his astral initiations by Elder Brothers, borrowed from Modern Theosophy.

There is from time to time a certain sense of weariness, when surveying from month to month the large dossier of French periodicals devoted to psychic and occult matters. If we except the REVUE MÉTAPHYSIQUE, it is rare indeed that there is any record of events which can be said to stand forth from the almost daily round of familiar happenings; and if we except on casual occasions LE VOILE D'ISIS, there is very little indeed to enlighten the chronicles of the past. The chief characteristic is expatiation far prolonged and often to be renewed subsequently in the next issue. LA REVUE SPIRITE is frankly unreadable on most occasions, not alone on account of its packed and overlaid setting but because of its equally unrelieved discourse, its argumentation about it and about. It is likely enough that M. Henri Ozam has something to tell us of universal and divine life, and in connection therewith, on the higher evolution of the soul. The attempt is before us, page after page succeeding, but after three instalments the last is still marked *à suivre*. The eye cannot follow the troublous length of grand-in-octavo lines or distinguish which comes next, while the mind shrinks as it contemplates the counsel *élargissons maintenant* and collapses further down at the next paragraph, which opens *élargissons encore*. It is only when a particular name happens to be of personal interest that a sustained effort is made—as that of Raymund Lully in the last issue—in spite of minion type intervening there and here amidst heavy blocks of normal setting. We remember then a little vaguely that Dr. Lucien Graux produced not long since a romance about the illuminated doctor of Majorca, and now he sets out to tell us why he adopted the particular form and how, notwithstanding it, there was a high underlying intent, which

those who will may learn with his help in LA REVUE SPIRITE. He is not acquainted apparently with the vast cycle of literature which passes under the name of Lully, but he has seen or heard enough not only to impress upon him the notion that the author of BLANQUERNA and ARS MAJOR must have written at great speed, but even so that it is not easy to explain the extent of his output. He falls back, therefore, on the visions, auditions and other super-normal phenomena which belong to the legendary side of his subject and concludes that he was of "the race of great mediums," and that his work, or some part at least, was dictated by voices, being those of "astral councilors." . . . Our readers will require no introduction to Edouard Schuré or his GRANDS INITIÉS, and many of them will learn with interest that he is on the point of publishing his memoirs under the title LE RÊVE D'UNE VIE. It is perhaps a little spectacular, but characteristic and also attractive. The announcement is on the authority of LA REVUE MONDIALE, which gives also the first place to a paper from his hand, describing the "conspiracy of silence" which greeted his most popular work at its inception. The account is good reading throughout, whatever we may think when he describes it on two occasions as "my *novum organum*," without presumably realising that his comparison overwhelms his subject. We know that LES GRANDS INITIÉS is romance rather than history, though it would pass well enough as the latter in the egregious occult circles of Paris. All things considered, therefore, we feel a certain surprise that he seems to have hoped for recognition on the University's part. What have universities to do with an undertaking which Schuré tells us was prompted by such conceptions as "the continuity of inspiration in history" and "the plurality of the existences of the soul before and after earthly life"? Or what, again, have they to do with a work which makes at least some claim on history and purports to deal with actualities, yet for the composition of which the author tells us here that he appealed to his intuition and his divinatory sense. Whether "secret and intimate" or otherwise, the history of religion is not so written by those who look for recognition in official quarters or by serious students. May we say that it is written for dreamers, for the unversed and for French occult schools. . . . It would be a mistake to suppose that M. Henri Durville's JOURNAL DU MAGNÉTISME is merely an official organ because it is that of his International Psychical Society. It does more than report proceedings and print addresses, for it keeps us in touch with the hopes and possibilities of the coming Psychic Church, about which we have admitted our curiosity on more than one occasion. Subscriptions to hand for the purpose are now approaching twenty thousand francs. It is not a very large sum for a local habitation or a coming priesthood of the soul, but many great religions will have begun with less, and those who have conceived this scheme are looking to Higher Forces and fixing hopes thereon.

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## REVIEWS

**THE THEOSOPHIST'S ATTITUDE:** Being the Theosophical Society's Convention Lectures delivered at Benares in December 1926. India: Theosophical Publishing House. Pp. 104.

HERE we have the theosophist's attitude to Death and the Unseen explained by Bishop Leadbeater; to Nationalism and Internationalism by Bishop Arundale; to Science and its Message by Mr. Y. Prasad; and to Art and the Arts by Mr. Jinarajadasa. The first lecture contains little that is not already familiar to any who have read a few elementary theosophical books, its subject being, perhaps inevitably, one of the first to be dealt with in these. The second lecture points out that all nations are learning their own particular lessons, but that all tend towards one common end; and that no one need lose interest in, or enthusiasm for, his own nation by becoming capable of understanding others and attaining "world consciousness." The third on the theosophical attitude towards Science strikes a newer note, and is well worth reading. Mr. Prasad shows very convincingly that "the scientist is gradually approaching the occultist, not only in results, but also in methods of investigation." Mr. Jinarajadasa, finally, writes with his usual clearness and charm on the theosophist's attitude towards Art, and vigorously combats the teaching that the manifested world should be distrusted and shunned. "It seems to me," he says, "that the inmost purpose of manifestation, when it proceeds to undertake a process of creation which requires ages, cannot be so trivial as to have as its sole lesson for us men and women that we should escape from manifestation." It is interesting to find a native of the East challenging this idea, which—though it exists in Christianity, where "the world, the flesh and the devil" are invariably classed together—is still more strongly emphasised in all Eastern religions. Mr. Jinarajadasa's message is that, instead of avoiding the world and life, we should make the best out of them, transmuting the transitory into the permanent through the medium of Art. "It is perfectly true that the saint, by renunciation, by a flight from the world, comes to Liberation. But the artist also comes to Liberation, not by flight, but by conquest." This is a lesson that cannot be too much insisted upon to-day, when the true function of Art is in constant danger of being overlooked and forgotten.

EVA MARTIN.

**THE MYSTERY OF OURSELVES.** By Stavely Bulford. London: L. N. Fowler & Co. Pp. 108.

**MAN'S CONFLICT WITH HIMSELF.** By the Rev. George Jack, M.A. London: L. N. Fowler & Co. Pp. 243. Price 7s. 6d.

IN both these books man is dealt with as a sevenfold being, and both are concerned with showing him how to obtain control over his vehicles and his environment.

Mr. Stavely Bulford holds that the "Etheric Body is the Soul—the inner Temple of the Spirit"—and that the "Instinctive Mind," which

controls all subconscious bodily processes and much more besides, "is of Divine Origin—is, in fact, a part of the one Creative Mind of God." He distinguishes this Instinctive Mind from the Spiritual Mind which operates in and through the Waking Conscious Mind, and teaches that all life's experiences are means to be used for the making of our "Souls." His theories concerning planetary influences and their action upon man are a little difficult to follow; but the book carries a helpful message in its insistence upon man as, essentially, a spiritual being, with power to find the Truth and freedom to create his own "Soul."

In *Man's Conflict with Himself*, the same idea is treated rather differently, though there are many similarities of thought between these two writers. Mr. Jack describes his search for Truth in the form of an allegory, beginning with his entry into the Valley of Meditation where he drinks of the waters of the River of Divine Communication. Then, passing through various stages, he meets with the Seven Spirits of God, clothed in the seven colours, each Spirit symbolising a different state of consciousness. Light is thrown upon many problems that have troubled the seeker, and the chief lesson that emerges is that man's conflict with the outer world is invariably the result of a *self-conflict*, which he unconsciously projects into his environment. This teaching is illustrated by various striking examples, though one or two of them do not quite carry conviction. There are, for instance, large numbers of people who cannot afford, in financial matters, to "settle their conflict" either by investing money at a low rate of interest in order to secure the capital, or by adopting an attitude of "absolute indifference as to the fate of the money, by being prepared to lose it all."

But, like the first writer, Mr. Jack has a message, and a beautiful one, to convey. He, too, holds that the subconscious life of the universe is the Soul of God, in which man's soul forms "a focal point," and that the only way for man to find Truth and Happiness is by self-mastery and by the stilling of his inner conflict. Mrs. Maxwell's coloured drawings of the Seven Spirits, as visualised by the seeker, harmonise well with the atmosphere of the book, and are extremely delicate and suggestive.

EVA MARTIN.

THE ANNIE BESANT CALENDAR. Compiled by Theodore Besterman.  
London: The Theosophical Publishing House, Ltd., 38 Great  
Ormond Street, W. Price 5s. net.

THIS Calendar consists of brief passages from the numerous works of Mrs. Besant, one passage being chosen for every day of the year. There are some excellent things in this volume, but there are also a good many passages which hardly merit quotation, since the same ideas have been much better expressed elsewhere. Any great truth, whether poorly or well expressed, will yield priceless treasures if we meditate upon it, for meditation sunders the truth from the form; but unless the truth is well and originally expressed it does not merit quotation in a calendar. As Mrs. Besant herself very aptly says in the heading under May 9: "Writers who garb their readers in second-hand opinions, as a dealer in second-hand clothes dresses his customers, will never turn out a decently costumed set of thinkers: they will be clad in misfits."

MEREDITH STARR.

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FRAGMENTS FROM THE TEACHINGS OF H. P. BLAVATSKY. Compiled and edited by H. Burford Pratt. Pp. 150. London: Rider and Co., Paternoster House, E.C.4. Price 5s. net.

EVEN the most devoted Theosophist must at times be somewhat discouraged by the sheer physical bulk of the massive tomes of *The Secret Doctrine* and *Isis Unveiled*. Both these and the many thousands who are interested in the general principles of Theosophy but lack the time to master H. P. B.'s ponderous tomes will welcome this splendid little volume, which consists almost entirely of well-chosen verbatim quotations. In 150 small pages Mr. Burford Pratt has concentrated an enormous amount of teaching. Among the many subjects dealt with are H. P. B.'s views on Reincarnation, Karma, Ontology, Philosophy, Symbolism, and Mythology, and in each case the compiler has been at pains to select the essential points which are necessary to give the reader a clear and concise idea of the matter in hand.

Mr. Burford Pratt has admirably succeeded in his aim of presenting the reader with the fundamental principles of Madame Blavatsky's philosophy. These *Fragments* supply a heart-felt want.

MEREDITH STARR.

THE WORLD'S PILGRIM. By Eva Gore-Booth. London: Longmans Green & Co., Ltd., 39 Paternoster Row, E.C.4.

THIS fascinating volume consists of conversations between Buddha and Pythagoras, Francis of Assisi and Brother Giacomina, Giordano Bruno and One Unknown, Lorenzo and the Prior of St. Mark's, Michelangelo and Pheidias, and three conversations between various New Testament characters. In each case Miss Gore-Booth has seized upon a dramatic moment in the history of the soul, and, as we read, the treasures of the spirit rise slowly before our gaze like the foam-born Aphrodite from the sea. There are many passages of haunting beauty which could only have been penned by a practical mystic whose eyes perceived the inner light of love's spirit shining through all forms. The incidents and conversations are so real that they give one the impression that the writer was present when they occurred, being more like the products of memory than of imagination. The title seems to confirm this view; for is not the soul of man the world's pilgrim, seeking, through many lives, to return to his heavenly home?

MEREDITH STARR.

MEDICAL PALMISTRY, or THE HAND IN HEALTH AND DISEASE. The Second Volume of the Book of the Hand. By Katharine St. Hill. With 4 plates and numerous line drawings. Pp. 134. London: Rider & Co., Paternoster House, E.C.4. Price 7s. 6d. net.

THIS work is intended for students of the serious and scientific side of Palmistry rather than for the general reader. Mrs. St. Hill brings an experience of thirty years to her subject, and her observations will be found invaluable, especially in regard to debatable issues. It is interesting to note that Mrs. St. Hill thinks that consumptives are to a certain degree insane, since in all bad cases the Head line is usually adversely affected. I have always held this opinion, which Cheirology confirms.

There would be fewer mistakes in diagnosis if doctors consulted the

hands as well as the symptoms of their patients. For example, bad dyspepsia affects the heart, and the general practitioner sometimes finds it difficult to decide between dyspepsia and heart-disease, whereas the lines on the hand would settle the question. As regards insanity, the author shows that Cheirology traces two distinct signs of brain disease: one in which the brain itself is diseased, and the other where the trouble is caused by effects of disease in other parts of the body. It is known that certain symptoms of insanity are caused by kidney disease and disappear when the patient is treated accordingly. Students should note Mrs. St. Hill's sensible remarks anent stars on the Head line and concerning the long sloping line of the Head. It is quite a mistake to suppose that these markings necessarily indicate insanity; indeed, the reverse is usually the case.

The serious student of human nature will find *Medical Palmistry* a book of absorbing interest.

MEREDITH STARR.

LE COMMUNISME SPIRITUALISTE.

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JESUS ET LE COMMUNISME. All by F. Jollivet Castelot.

THE author of these little booklets, a member of the Spiritualistic Communist Party, adheres to the teachings of Karl Marx in regard to Political Economy, but points out that as this system of Communism only deals with the *material interests* and totally ignores the moral, emotional and idealistic needs of mankind, it is inadequate.

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The author's *Principes d'Economie Sociale* is a clearly written statement of the principles of a system based upon the idea of mankind grouped together and forming a vast co-operative working society. It is an extremely interesting and well-thought-out treatise, which commends itself to all those who have the true welfare and progress of mankind at heart.

According to the author, in *Jesus et le Communisme*, true Communism is inseparable from the teachings of Jesus, and in support of his theory he quotes abundantly from the New Testament.

He shows that Jesus was a Communist in the broadest sense of the term, which implies complete brotherhood allied to mutual independence, each individual being the master of his own conscience, and answerable to God alone.

M.V.

OBSERVATION D'UN CAS DE MEDIUMNITE INTELLECTUELLE. By Prof. Rocco Santoliquido, Member of the Italian Privy Council, Councillor of International Health to the League of the Red Cross Societies. President of the International Institute of Metapsychiques. Paris: Ed. Meyer. Fr. 3.60.

IN this short work the author gives a brief, concise, and very matter-of-fact account of a series of psychical experiences with a member of his family as medium. The doctor lays special stress on the point that he merely relates the facts as they occurred, without seeking to *explain*

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them, and states that prior to these experiments he was a confirmed materialist, and absolutely sceptical as to the continuation of life after physical death.

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An account is given of the various messages received during the years 1906 to 1919 on various topics of general interest, including the Great War, and also prophecies regarding the author's own destiny and that of members of his family, all of which were subsequently fulfilled. He also states that the medium herself was sceptical as to the source of the messages, being a materialist by birth and education, and possessed of a high degree of mental power. On many occasions the "control" complained of this scepticism, which hindered him at times in conveying his messages adequately.

The work is completed by an elucidation of these phenomena by Dr. G. Geley, of the International Institute of Metapsychical Research in Paris, in which he analyses and synthesises them, several of the messages having been received when he was himself present. He states that, while these messages could, by analysis, be accounted for as emanating from the subconscious, or through telepathy, closer examination would show that it was hardly possible to attribute them solely to either of these sources. The hypothesis therefore presented itself that they might be due to a supranormal agency.

The book is interesting, inasmuch as it is free from bias, and presents the facts exactly as they occurred without embellishments or attempt at explanation, thus leaving the reader entirely free to form his own opinion.

M. V.

THE RIDDLE OF SPIRITUALISM. By E. Clephan Palmer. London : Rider & Co. Price 4s. 6d. net.

WE have waited an unconscionably long time for an impartial and entirely unbiassed enquiry into the physical and psychical phenomena of Spiritualism, free, on the one hand from the irrational unbelief of the scientific sceptic and on the other from the credulity which sees the work of the spirits in every conjuring trick of a charlatan.

Mr. Palmer's book is like an open window, letting a breath of fresh air into an atmosphere grown hot and stuffy with the endless disputations between the rival camps. He set out on his investigations with the single idea of arriving at the truth, with no bias or even, so far as I can discover, no particular preference for a particular result. He is neither a conjurer nor a scientist, one is thankful to note, but just a plain common-sense journalist, who realised that a subject engaging the attention of such intellectual giants as Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir A. Conan Doyle could not be wholly negligible.

What, in my opinion, makes Mr. Palmer's book specially valuable is this: that he ended his enquiry still in doubt as to the explanation of certain phenomena which were clearly neither the result of fraud or hysteria. These account for perhaps 90 per cent. of the happenings of the séance-room. But what of the remainder? They are either the work of discarnate spirits or caused by the unknown powers of the living.

That, says Mr. Palmer, is the real issue—the problem that remains to

be solved. He rules out of court the extremists on either side. "The real contest," he concludes, "is between those who share acceptance of the reality of certain physical and mental phenomena, but find themselves unable to accept the same explanation." Between the two, Mr. Palmer does not feel competent to decide. Herein the author shows the excellence of his judgment. For surely belief or disbelief in the spiritualistic explanation must remain, in the present state of our knowledge, a matter for each individual's own decision.

P. H.

FRANCIS OF ASSISI: Saint, Mystic, Poet, Democrat. By Richard Whitwell. Publisher: H. T. Hamblin, Bosham, Chichester. Trade Agents: L. N. Fowler & Co., London, E.C.4. Price 6s. 6d.

THE wonderful year celebrating the Septcentenary of Saint Francis of Assisi has drawn to its close, and yet another book makes its appearance to add to the vast collection of Franciscan literature, of which there is an *embarras de richesse*.

The keynote of this volume is sympathy, and the author's task of selecting passages from the adventurous life of "God's Troubadour" gives the reader a mirror-like picture of the Poverello's wonderful strength of will, and of his deep devotion to the Divine Master in whose footsteps he humbly and unflinchingly followed wherever he could see their imprint.

"We are confronted to-day," says the author, "with many apparently insolvable problems. The spirit of Francis speaks to our age as to his own." He has been called the "Patron Saint of Democracy"; but writers of all religious and political creeds are of one voice in their admiration for the transparent simplicity and sincerity of the "Little Poor Man of the Umbrian Galilee," who, despising this world's glare and glamour, climbed the ladder to Paradise, often with bleeding feet, toward "the Light that never was on sea or land."

EDITH K. HARPER.

GLIMPSES INTO SPIRIT-LIFE. By Thomas J. McBride. (Printed by Whitcombe & Tombs, Ltd., Christchurch, N.Z.)

MR. MCBRIDE describes himself on his title-page as "author in part and compiler." His work in the latter capacity must have been no sinecure! As he tells us, one hundred and fifty communications from sixty spirit-authors lie within the neat covers of this well-printed little book, where also we may find a portrait of Mr. McBride himself, portraits of Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Owen, two inspirational mediums who assisted him in his investigations, and some facsimile reproductions of writings between slates, received, it would appear, through the mediumship of a Mr. Keeler of New York in the year 1920. From first to last Mr. McBride has evidently been employed in a labour of devoted love and ardent faith, and his obvious sincerity is worthy of all respect. But we should ourselves be lacking in honesty if we forbore to point out that some of his spirit-friends seem curiously *unspiritual* people, and that few of their recorded utterances bring, in our judgment, even the remotest suggestion of another world.

Enthusiasm in psychic investigations is an excellent quality; but the investigator should also be on his guard against its corresponding defect—an over-ready credulity.

G. M. H.

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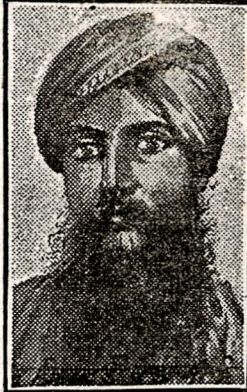
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MISERABLE IN HEAVEN. By Freedom Hill Henry. Freedom Hill Pressery, Roscoe, California. Price \$1.

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JOHN EARLE.

THE DIVINE LAW OF THE SABBATH. By A. M. Curtis. London: L. N. Fowler & Co. Price 2s. 9d. post free.

WE found the title of this book a little alarming. Sabbatarianism was one of the terrors of our childhood, and its very name has, to this day, a certain power to chill us. But Mrs. Curtis, who has compiled the book from notes for a series of lectures given by her in London on Sunday afternoons of 1926, has a high spiritual idea of the significance of a day of divine rest and of the effects of its intelligent observation, and many of her notes are stimulating and suggestive. We are with her when she declares with spirit that it is "difficult to see how any reasonable mind could accept the Calvinistic Sabbath as anything but a caricature of the Divine Rest" (p. 19). Her own view is much nearer the joyous contemplation of George Herbert—who, as we remember, likened the Christian Sabbath to church-bells heard beyond the stars, as well as to a dozen other mystically delightful things.

Mrs. Curtis has made an exhaustive and careful study of the Mosaic laws concerning the Sabbath, on which she founds her argument for the restoration of a true rest-day, and which, apparently, leaves her no room for quoting Christian divines and Sunday-lovers like the parson-poet of Bemerton.

But we feel that she has much in sympathy with him, and her vision of what the observance of "an Easter-Day in every week" might mean to the individual in social life is not without its inspiring qualities.

G. M. H.

PROGRESSIVE MENTALISM. By M. Zumsteg. Cr. 8vo., pp. 56+vi +1 plate. London: The Theosophical Publishing House, Ltd., 38 Great Ormond Street, W.C.

THIS is a very stimulating little book. Miss Zumsteg points out that "over a million potential geniuses walk this earth to-day who may never develop, never do anything great in life, never touch the world's treasures, because they are mental apathists who lack the WILL TO THINK." This is undoubtedly true. We are all too apt to leave our thinking to others. We accept our opinions and beliefs ready-made; and, as Miss Zumsteg

points out in her book, we lack faith in the possibilities of Mind. Yet the truth remains that it is only through the activity of mind, through thought translated into action, that all the practical problems that press so urgently upon us to-day can and will be solved.

The greatest geniuses are those who have questioned the seemingly best established truths, and have demonstrated the actuality of the apparently impossible. "The dreams of to-day," writes the author, "are the realities of to-morrow." We must learn to dream—to dream along the lines of constructive thought.

I hope this little book will be widely read. The author has essayed a hard task in tilting against the vice of mental apathy. Yet it is, of all vices, the one which mankind must overcome if real progress is to be made. I wish her every success in this task.

The book, I may mention, has an index, and is illustrated with a very interesting diagram demonstrating the Relativity of Opinion.

H. S. REDGROVE.

**THE GOLDFISH.** A book of Essays by Robert Lynd. London: Methuen & Co., Ltd. Price 5s.

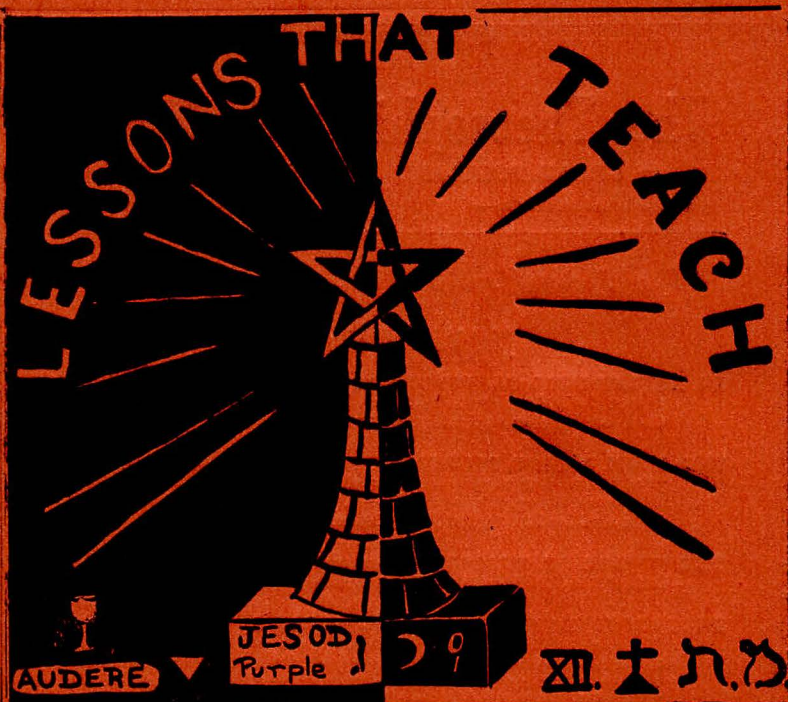
A good fire, a comfortable armchair and—Mr. Lynd's latest book of essays. This is what we would suggest to persons in search of a really enjoyable evening. Not since reading *Vagrous Men and Vagrous Thoughts* by the late Alfred T. Story do we remember to have been so genuinely entertained.

The writer has a style in which are blended the pleasantest qualities of Thackeray, Swift and Mr. Hugh Walpole—he is always delighting us with surprising truths, as for example when he says, "It is probably laziness that enables men to work as they do." This latter remark is from "In Defence of Sleep," an essay with which we are thoroughly in agreement, possibly because we too are among the lazy ones. But in any case the argument is uncommonly well put.

"Spectators" is delightful—the general drift being that whatever you are thinking of the other fellow he is probably thinking the same of you—but, to put it mildly, we prefer to think better of the other fellow's sanity.

"The Mad Martian" is an excellent satire on humanity, and "Cynthia Goes to Church" would serve as a tract for the C.E.S., but the gem of the whole book is the Udes. It might have been written by Swift in his best after-dinner mood. It is probable that udes have always existed; but for ourselves, we first named and discovered them in the little town of Midhurst (where we strongly suspect the author did also) in the month of August last. Midhurst for udes is a veritable magnet. But if the reader would know more about "these interesting and sinister persons of whom it behoves the Englishman to beware, and who are at present the most dangerous enemies to English civilisation," we advise him to get *The Goldfish*—not otherwise may he be initiated.

ETHEL ARCHER.



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