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Alcohol.

ALL modern nations seem to be addicted to one or other of various drugs capable of producing abnormal states of consciousness. In olden times, when men were still in possession of portions of those divine truths, which they have since almost wholly lost, drugs were undoubtedly used to annul the consciousness of the body, and so permit, or compel, the soul to retire to inner, or astral, planes. In Indian literature, particularly, the Soma drink, which was administered to neophytes upon certain occasions, had undoubtedly the effect of opening, temporarily at least, the "Third Eye," or of giving very high clairvoyant powers. With further descent into materiality, the secret preparation and use of such drugs became lost. Yet, to-day, in Oriental countries, opium, hashish, Indian hemp, and such things, are resorted to with the vague and ill-defined idea of transferring the consciousness to astral realms, which is the well known, intoxicating effect such

drugs have. A great fascination attends the exploration of new countries, even, and this becomes much more intense when new states of consciousness are experienced. The rare visions of the opium eater, for example, are of such a nature as to render him indifferent to the dull and commonplace events of every-day existence. Yet, like all other abnormal processes, the ultimate result is destructive to the one who indulges himself in this manner.

Of all the drugs which have been discovered and used to produce these abnormal states of consciousness, alcohol is the most baneful and deadly, and the old tradition that its first distillation was under the direct supervision of the devil is not without good reason for its existence. In order to understand why the effect of alcohol is so pernicious it is necessary to examine the compound, or complex nature of man. For all philosophies, and all religions worthy of the name, agree in declaring that man is a highly complex being, and all of them divide his nature into several Aspects, or Principles. Thus Christianity postulates a body, soul and spirit, each having a different function to perform. Theosophy makes a still closer analysis, and in common with Buddhism and others of the great Eastern religions, divides man into seven distinct Principles or Vehicles of consciousness. The true soul being a unit of con-

sciousness, indivisible and indestructible, has this consciousness limited, or modified and defined, by the material vehicles of Principles through which it functions. These Principles may be enumerated as: the body, the astral body, or Linga Sharira, Prana, or vitality, Kama, or sensuous desire, Manas, or the Thinker within man, Buddhi, or divine, intuitional consciousness, and Atma, the Ray from the Absolute, of which all the others are aspects or differentiations. Each, therefore, of the Seven Principles of man relates his consciousness to a different plane of nature. Certain of these, as Prana, or vitality, and Atma, or the Ray from the Absolute, relate, or rather link, his consciousness to the Universal consciousness. But others of his Principles relate his consciousness specifically to certain definite planes of nature; and, among these, the astral body, and Kama, or his Desire-body, occupy a most important position.

In the ordinary waking condition of our daily lives the sense organs of the body are the principle, and, indeed, almost the only avenues of consciousness. And, the office of the body, which is but a bundle of sense-organs, is to relate the human consciousness to this, the molecular plane of the Universe. Yet, though this be the chief office of the body, there are organs in it which relate the human consciousness directly to each of the seven great planes of consciousness in nature. Thus, Buddhi, or divine intuitional consciousness, has within the brain an organ which if aroused into activity will enable the human soul to con-

tact this divine plane while yet within the body. Likewise Manas or thought has its special organ—the grey matter of the brain and other ganglionic centers—while Kama, the Linga Sharira, etc., have each their special organs. For the “tail of the serpent” is ever within its mouth, and although the body, as a body, seems so far beneath the higher and apparently more divine planes of thought and intuition, yet there are in it purely physical organs capable of relating the soul to all these planes, thus showing the unity, interrelation and interdependence of all consciousness in nature. Because of the presence of these special organs in the body, which are composed of molecules, similar to molecular matter without that body, and because all forms of matter depend upon rates of vibration for their existence and persistence, it becomes possible by the introduction of drugs having a rate of vibration similar to or in harmony with certain of these centers, to over-stimulate them and thus to annul the ordinary normal, waking consciousness. Other drugs, instead of over-stimulation, directly interfere with the functions of the organs themselves, and render them unfit and unable to respond to the soul within. Owing to this law of harmonic vibration, it becomes possible to cut off the higher, divine consciousness at several points, so to speak, within the circle of these Principles. Thus, the action of chloroform and its congeners seems to be to divide the consciousness between the body and the astral body; to drive out, it is said, the latter from the phys-

ical body. That this is true, is proven by well-authenticated cases where patients have stood by and witnessed operations going on upon their own bodies, out of which they had been driven by the administration of these gases. Opium and its congeners appear to divide the consciousness between the various planes or sub-divisions of Lower Manas, or the lowest aspect of the thinking Principle. Thus, under the influence of opium the entity will have astral visions and dreams in which reason plays little or no part, but in which the imagination takes entire control. The state induced by this drug is very similar to that produced in many mediumistic or trance conditions, especially if these be of an inferior order. All these, so far, act by inhibition of the normal consciousness of the body. There are others which stimulate into abnormal activity certain centers of which we now know almost nothing, the divine Soma being of this nature.

The deadly effect of alcohol is due to the fact that it apparently divides the consciousness between Manas and Kama, or between the divine, thinking Principle, whose voice is that of conscience, and the purely animal Principle below. It has this peculiarity, however, that it does not annul the intellectual faculties of the brain except when taken in enormous quantities, when the case becomes one of ordinary poisoning. For we must not lose sight of the fact that man's body, as a body, is that of an animal, and that without the presence of the higher, or incarnating and reasoning ego, he would be but

an animal. The incarnation of this divine, Thinking Principle, or soul, sets up in the brain of the purely animal man an entirely new and evanescent Thinking Principle, in a precisely similar manner to that by which a magnet imparts magnetism to non-magnetic iron. Yet, this Thinking Principle, thus lighted by the blaze of the Higher Ego, is capable of persisting long after the departure of the latter, just as magnetism will still linger in the iron after the vivifying magnet is removed. So that the peculiar and deadly action of alcohol is that, while it cuts off all possible influx from the Higher Ego, or true soul, and drowns entirely the voice of conscience, it yet leaves animal man a certain amount of borrowed reason. It can be at once seen how pernicious its effect is, for under its influence man becomes an intellectual animal, with all his passions raging and blazing, and with all the intellect required to stimulate them and to bring about their gratification, without the slightest restraint or reproach from his higher nature. The true soul becomes, under these circumstances, like the charioteer, whose reins have parted, and whose horses now dash madly forward, while he sits helpless to either guide or control. The action of alcohol is to render man a conscienceless animal. And the voice of his higher nature is entirely lost sight of to the exact extent to which he carries the abuse of this drug. For, like everything else in nature, alcohol has its seven degrees of action, one of the most deadly of which is its annulling the voice of conscience by benumb-

ing the physical avenue through which this reaches the brain mind. It has, also, its effect upon every organ of the body; and as each organ is but a congeries of cells, the primary effect is upon these cells. Each organ of the body is built up of cell-lives, which cells have their normal consciousness upon the physical plane, corresponding to the higher plane in the Cosmos with which they are thus directly related. Let us suppose that the liver is an organ built up of cell-lives whose normal consciousness is upon the Kamic, or desire, subdivision of physical nature. While the liver then would have its purely mechanical office in the functions of the body, by the psychic lives of its cells it would relate the human consciousness to an intensely selfish and desire-dominated plane of nature. The effect of alcohol, then, upon these lives thus functioning in the human liver, would be to stimulate them into an abnormal activity, accompanied with correspondingly selfish psychic effects, and followed later by their destruction and atrophy through this very over-stimulation. That this is the effect of alcohol upon the liver is a well known and demonstrable fact in physiology, and if physiologists would also become psychologists, the rise and dominance of the passionate portion of man's nature could also beplainly demonstrated. Thus, step by step, the baneful influence of alcohol can be traced throughout the entire body. Even upon the very lowest, or mineral plane, it changes that mysterious vital action by means of which purely mineral

matter is raised into its colloid correspondent, or mineral matter upon the plane of the vital activities. It has been shown by actual laboratory experiment that in small percentages it first hinders the growth of and then destroys both vegetable and animal cells. And the most active of all the human cells, the white corpuscle, upon the addition of a very small percentage of alcohol to the fluid upon the microscopic slide, becomes benumbed, ceases to exhibit its normal activities, and soon dies. It is known to inhibit nerve action by coagulating those delicate and highly organized semi-fluids upon whose activity and instability normal nervous action depends.

One of the most common, and at the same time one of the most erroneous, beliefs regarding alcohol is that it is a stimulant. This is entirely untrue. The apparently stimulating effect, which alcohol in moderate amounts seems to have, can be understood by a very little physiological investigation. The functions of the nervous system, formerly thought to be so simple, are now recognized to be quite complex, and are known to represent several distinct modes of activity, which will, undoubtedly, later be classified into the classical Seven. One of the most important of these is inhibition, or the controlling of the undue action of any particular organ or set of organs. It is the function, for instance, of one set of the nerves, supervised by a distinct nerve center, to control the chemical processes going on within the body which maintain its heat. So nicely is this inhibitory action adjusted

that no matter how warm nor how cold the environment of the body is, the heat is accurately maintained at a point which does not vary half a degree for the entire human race. But divide the nerves, which are the agents of this control, and the heat of the body at once begins to rise, and soon becomes destructive to that body. Similarly for the action of the heart; divide a certain nerve and it begins to beat tumultuously and irregularly because the inhibitory action has been removed. Alcohol has the power to benumb or suspend the action of certain of these minor inhibitory centers; and consequently there is poured into the system an extra amount of energy from them for a short time. But this energy is as quickly destructive as are all irregular and uncontrolled exhibitions of force. Besides, it draws directly upon the residual energies of the body, its working capital, so to speak, and depletes the vital forces to the extent this irregular force is liberated. And this act of liberation is very unevenly distributed. Thus, while certain organs may be made temporarily more active, the energy of the body as a whole will be decidedly diminished, and the seeming stimulation is in reality a depression. The forces so liberated are uncorrelated or unsynthesized by the real man, and are necessarily destructive and not constructive in their action.

Man is essentially a thinking being; he is related to the consciousness of the cells of his body in order that he may mentally assimilate this lower consciousness, which is below the plane of men-

tal. But the union between mind and body is so intimate, and the cell consciousness so dominant, that at the best he runs great danger of identifying himself entirely with his body. The effect of alcohol being to suppress all higher functions, and to stimulate an abnormal activity in the Kamic and animal cells in the body, tends to make animal man still more animal. It is thus destructive to all spirituality or higher aspiration.

Probably one reason for the pernicious action of alcohol is that it is upon the "night side" of nature. Fermentation rudely interrupts the normal life cycle of the grain or seed, and sets up instead a destructive decomposition. This vibration introduced into the living organism cannot but induce similar vibrations. Therefore, its effect is always injurious, in every respect. Unprejudiced tests have shown those who partake of it to be less capable of both physical endurance and mental exertion.

Its effect upon life is so destructive that no reputable Insurance Co. will accept a known heavy drinker; and Life Insurance tables prove the fact that the so-called "teetotalers" are the longest lived in all their respective classes.

Why, then, do men drink? For the same reason that opium and hashish are taken—in order to cause abnormal states of consciousness because of the pleasure derived therefrom. And, alcohol, severing as we have seen the divine from the purely animal portion of our nature, leaves man an irresponsible animal, who, descending to purely sensuous, animal planes of existence, finds a tem-

porary bliss in this experience. It is peculiarly appropriate that our Western, intellectual civilization should, of all drugs, have chosen this which entirely destroys all true intellectuality. It is the unconscious application of the law of opposites; and we of the West select alcohol because it affords a transient relief from the intense strain which our Western civilization puts upon us. We do not know how, as the Hindus do, to still the action of our restless brain-mind, and so retire within the recesses of our own spiritual nature and rest. Because of this ignorance, and of the absolute necessity for rest from intellectual labor at times, we thus descend into the animal kingdom instead of rising to spiritual planes. Refusing to ascend, we are compelled to descend. Ignoring the spiritual side of our nature and stimulating the intellectual, alcohol affords a real, but transient and deadly relief, from the pressure of this civilization, whose God is gold.

The evil effects of alcohol are wide-spread and appalling. Upon society it is too well known to require comment. We have living object lessons before us at all times, yet a few actual statistics may not be amiss. More than twelve hundred millions of dollars were spent during the year 1893, alone, in alcoholic beverages; enough to have relieved every case of want and suffering in the land where this great wrong was enacted. In the United States, but two decades ago, and at a time when men were considered more intemperate than now, the average of alcohol consumed yearly by each individual,

was four gallons. In 1893 there were *nineteen* gallons consumed for every man, woman and child within the limits of the United States. That Alcohol is the chief factor in the production of crime, the record of our penal institutions prove conclusively. It also fills our asylums and almshouses, and hundreds of thousands of premature graves, with which it is not officially credited. Its manufacture and sale produces and employs a class of men utterly lost to all spiritual influences. In fact, the continued use of alcohol leads directly to that most dreadful of all phenomena in human existence—the loss of the soul.

What are the remedies for such a gigantic evil? These can only be found in right knowledge. Men must be taught the effect alcohol has upon both soul and body; public opinion must be changed. The mental attitude of the race towards alcohol is wrong. It is useless to enact laws to prohibit its sale when one of the greatest churches in America actually owns and receives rent for property occupied as saloons. Members of the House of Lords, in Great Britain, own more than fifteen hundred dram shops, and among these owners are said to be two Bishops of the Church of England. When the acknowledged leaders of society, the noble of the land, together with those who ought to be leaders of the religious thought of the world, maintain this attitude of acquiescence, toleration and even participation in this evil, it is useless to attempt its sudden eradication. The old, old remedy of changing the thoughts and the

motives of men must be applied here. The people must be educated—must be made to think. And with right thought and right motive this, one of the greatest evils of modern civilization, will disappear.

J. A. Anderson, M. D., F. T. S.

The Mystery of the Chaldeans.

THE Mystery of the Chaldeans was the Mystery of the Ages. With the Egyptians and the Hindus, the Chaldeans formed the Trinity of ancient mystics—the three children of the Divine Wisdom Religion.

Who were the Chaldeans, and whence came they? History gives their ancestors as a tribe of Akkadians, whose home was Akkad, one of the four provinces which were later absorbed into the Chaldean empire. These are said by some to be a race of Turanians, the first civilized inhabitants of the vast plains which occupy the lower part of the basin of the Euphrates and Tigris. Some few historians give them a Semitic origin. Madame Blavatsky describes them as a tribe (later a caste) of learned Kabbalists, who were the Magians of Babylonia, the astrologers and diviners. They were, she states, a tribe of Hindu-Brahmins, as their religious doctrines plainly show. Whether they separated from the Aryans before or after the latter made their conquest of India, is immaterial. The fact is, that they were the Aryan progenitors and instructors of the Chaldeans, and through them the Hebrew Kabbalists obtained all that they knew of the true Secret Doc-

trine. The idea of the Trinity, held by the Chaldeans, was derived by them from the Akkadians, who themselves belonged to a race which was the first to conceive a metaphysical Trinity. According to the historians, the Akkad race inhabited Babylonia from the earliest times, and were the originators of the earliest civilization in Mesopotamia. They instructed the Babylonians in the Mysteries, and taught them the sacerdotal or mystery language. This language was none other than that used by the initiated Brahmins in their magical evocations. It has been, and still is, employed by the Initiates of all countries, and the Tibetan Lamas claim that it is in this tongue that appear the mysterious characters on the leaves and bark of the sacred Koumboum. These magical evocations were pronounced in a particular language, and it was forbidden, under pain of death, to translate them into the vulgar dialects. Long after the Semite race had become predominant in Mesopotamia, the Akkad alphabet continued to be the scientific language in which all the tablets relating to religion, astronomy and science were written. This was esteemed the special magic language, alike among the Chaldeans and the Assyrians, and was regarded as exercising particular power over both good and evil spirits, and all their evocations and incantations were spoken in this tongue. It was the sacred language of prayer, the tongue which commanded the spirits.

Babylonia, being situated on the highway of the great stream of

early emigration from the Himalayas, her people were one of the first nations to reap the benefits arising therefrom. The Khaldi were moon-worshippers, from which fact it is inferred that the Akkadians belonged to the race of the Kings of the Moon, whom tradition avers once reigned in Alahabad.

The Chaldeans, in common with the Hindus and the Egyptians, held that there is a Great First Cause—the One, the primordial Germ, the unrevealed and glorious All, existing through Itself. The name by which they designated this was Ilu. In manifestation it became Eikon, the Double-sexed Deity, the male-female, the Father-Mother, corresponding to Brahma among the Hindus. The male aspect was Anu, the female Anata. From the union of these two emanates the third, the creative principle, or manifested Logos, the Son, called Bel, from which emanated Hea, or Wisdom, who rules the sea and the underworld. Each of these principles has its feminine aspect, corresponding to the Saktis of the Hindus. In addition to the Triad of male principles, there is Mylitta, the Great Mother, which forms the four, and perfects and potentializes all.

How remarkable the similarity of the conceptions of the Hindus, Egyptians and Chaldeans! There is but one explanation for this, and that is, as Theosophy teaches, that all have their origin in a common Source, the ancient Wisdom Religion. It is said that the Veda of the earliest Aryans, even before it was written, went forth into every nation, and sowed the first

seeds of the now-existing old religions. The off-shoots of the never-dying Tree of Wisdom have scattered their dead leaves even upon Judæo-Christianity. As cycle followed cycle, and one nation another, each new people evolved from the traditions of its ancestors a new religion, which became colored and was stamped by its own characteristics. The parent of all was the primitive Wisdom Religion.

The proofs of this fact are to be found in the prevalence throughout all the old root religions of a system of initiation; in the existence of the priestly caste in each, in whom were vested the guardianship of the mystic secrets. Every approach to the Mysteries of all these nations was guarded with the same jealous care, and in all the penalty of death was inflicted upon initiates of any degree who divulged the secrets intrusted to them. Such was the case in the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries, and among the Chaldean Magi and the Egyptian Hierophants. "Every initiate, to whatever degree he may belong, who reveals the great sacred formula, must be put to death." Such was ever the law.

All religious teachings are erected upon identical cosmical myths, symbols and allegories. All systems of religious mysticism are based on numerals: First, the Unity, emanating the duad, the three forming the Trinity, which, with the mystic four, or quaternary, compose the seven. The sacredness of numbers begins with the One, and ends only with the zero, which represents the bound-

less circle, symbol of the universe. All intervening figures represent philosophical ideas, relating to some fact in nature. But the number seven, alike among the Hindus, Chaldeans and Egyptians, was held the most sacred of them all. With the Chaldeans the number seven is dual in its attributes; holy in one aspect, it becomes evil under other conditions. Thus, there are the seven gods of the vast sky; the seven gods of the earth; the seven blazing spheres, the seven celestial beings; the seven demons, etc., indicating a knowledge of the septenary constitution of all nature. Iao, the Creator, is the seven-rayed God, or Heptaktis, through whom all souls are lifted up.

Upon the fragments of Chaldean tablets, collected by George Smith, on which is inscribed the Babylonian legend of the Creation, seven human beings, with faces of ravens (meaning black complexioned), are mentioned. "In the midst of the earth they grew up and became great, and increased in number; seven kings, brothers of the same family." This refers to the seven races. The numbers of the ancestral spirits and their seven groups of human progeny are on the cylinders. The Babylonian accounts are restored from hundreds of thousands of broken fragments, one mound alone having yielded upwards of 20,000 fragments of inscriptions. From these it is shown:

(1) That the first race to fall into generation was a dark race, called the Adamu, while Sarku, the Light Race, remained pure for a long time thereafter.

(2) That the Babylonians recognized two principal races at the time of the Fall, the Race of Gods (the ethereal doubles of the Pitris) having preceded these. (These correspond to the second and third races of the Secret Doctrine.)

(3) That the Seven Gods, each of whom created a man, or rather a group of men, (hierarchy) were "the gods incarnated."

Two creations are mentioned, the first referring to the formation of primordial men by the Pitris, and the second to the human groups after the Fall.

Beneath the outer garb of coarse polytheism in which popular superstition clothed the truths given out by the Chaldean Hierophants, there was really a grand and glorious conception; beginning with the fundamental idea of a Divine Unity, the Supreme, the All, from which Being proceeds. The motion of the stars represented the Deity in manifestation, and each star seemed to the Chaldeans an emanation from the Supreme.

Ilu, the universal and mysterious Source of all things, assumed three aspects: (1) Anu, primordial chaos, uncreated matter; (2) Hea, intelligence, the Word or Logos, which animated matter and rendered it fertile; which penetrated the whole universe and inspired it with life; (3) Bel, the ruler of the organized Universe. Here we have under different names, the Brahma, Vishnu and Siva of the Hindus; the Amen Ra, Thoth and Khouser of the Egyptians.

The symbol of Ilu was the Sun, called Babel, Arach and Akkad—the Light, the Fire and the Flame—the three aspects of that

Sun, which is One. Says a Chaldean oracle: "From this triad in the bosom are all things governed." Here again we have the creator, the mediator, the transformer, corresponding to Power, Wisdom and Justice. These three they conceived to be the one principle of all things—the One and the Good. Says the Book of Numbers: "The One Universal Light, which to man is Darkness, is ever-existent." From it proceeds periodically Energy, which is reflected in Chaos (the Deep,) and at once awakens all its latent forces.

A sole and universal Divine Being manifested in the natural world, which is really himself, emanating from his substance and not created by him; a Divine Nature, working in all the universe, Author of all life, destroyer and regenerator; the cause and prototype of the visible world, uniting in himself two principles—active and passive, or male and female. Therefore, the divine emanations were also dual, and each principle had its feminine aspect, the two constituting a complete unity, a reflection of the primal Unity. If the male or active had a solar character, its aspect or complement had a lunar nature; if one presided over the day, the other presided over the night; if one personified the active elements (fire and air), the other represented the passive (water and earth).

After the first Trinity, which formed the Divine Unity, a series of emanations continued, forming the second Trinity. These manifested or clothed themselves in the heavenly bodies, as follows: Sin, son of Bel, god of the moon; Samas, son of Hea, god of the sun,

and Bin, son of Anu, god of the atmosphere (ether). And each of these was likewise triple in its nature, composed of a father, or first principle, a power and an intelligence.

Further down in the scale of emanations were the gods of the five planets: Adar (Saturn), Marduk (Jupiter), Nergal (Mars), Istar (Venus), and Nebo (Mercury.) Venus and Mercury were treated as dual. These constituted the Chaldean Olympus, or divine hierarchy, the masters or lords of the gods. They were supposed to preside over the twelve months of the year and the twelve signs of the Zodiac. There were many inferior deities as well.

The Chaldeans are credited with star worship, but they really regarded the stars, not as sentient beings, but as animated by or the abode of supernatural beings (Regents,) who, though divine in essence, approached nearer to humanity than the higher gods, and were, therefore, more interested in human progress.

C. B.

[To be continued.]

When thou hast proved a man to be honest, lock him up in thine heart as a treasure; regard him as a jewel of inestimable price.

Envy not the appearance of happiness in any man, for thou knowest not his secret griefs.

Commune with thyself, O Man! and consider wherefore thou wert made.

Happy is the man who hath sown in his heart the seed of benevolence.

Karma.

The law of Karma is a law of Nature. We have no word in our language to express it, and, since it is very awkward to have to use a long phrase or sentence, such as the law of cause and effect, ethical causation, or action and re-action, we have summed them all up in the Sanscrit word, used by our Aryan forefathers, Karma, meaning action; the action and reaction of everything, from atom to man, and from man to ethereal beings. The word Karma comprehends, in its meaning, all making, all doing, all thinking, all acting.

Karma, like a chain, joins all actions and their results. It is at once the law of justice and of progress; the law governing the evolution of Being. Man, like the rest of Nature, is guided by this Law of Karma. His every action and every thought sets up a cause, which must necessarily have its effect; which effect may occur the next moment, the next hour, in the next or a far distant life.

We must not think of Karma as an evil influence, awaiting a fitting opportunity to punish us, but as a just and beneficent law, which enables us to work out our own salvation. We suffer for no sins save our own; and all our misfortunes are the result of our own folly. We cannot cast our burdens on any other; but must suffer the consequences of our own acts. There would be no justice, were it true that after a life-time of sin, we might escape the consequences of our wrong-doing by a death-bed repentance. Theosophy tells us that we must suffer out the effects of every wrong. The Bible says, "As ye sow, so shall ye reap;" and, if we sow in darkness, we shall reap in darkness.

Karma is the great adjuster. It solves the most difficult problems of human life. Both rich and poor experience bodily and mental troubles. But a man who is struggling amid poverty and adversity, perhaps without friends, or human sympathy, may be really rejoicing

in spirit, for he is thus acquiring the strength and self-reliance he needs to round out his character and prepare him for the next step onward.

Were the doctrine of Reincarnation better understood, Karma could be more readily explained. The manner of life we lead in the present incarnation shapes, in a way, the body, as well as the environments, in which we are to reappear in the next incarnation. In other words, the mold of our next form we are shaping hourly, and it will be complete and waiting for us at our next incarnation. For, to-morrow is the Karma of to-day. To-day, through the perception and acceptance of certain spiritual truths, we learn wherein true peace and contentment consist, and, by striving continually, we strengthen ourselves for future effort. In another life, we shall be able to feel the peace and content for which we have striven in this.

The Law of Karma is universal, and, on the physical plane, self-evident. But, on the moral plane, man has ever sought to cast his burdens upon the shoulders of others; though here, too, the law is likewise universal. We are the builders of our own characters; and no one, save the owner of it, can change one's real character.

Karma is ever with us in two aspects: (1st) As the effect of causes which we have already set up; and (2nd) As the causes we are now producing, the effects of which will be realized in the future. From the falling of a leaf to the building of a planet, everything that occurs is a result of Karma. Every cause we set in motion is Karma, and the other end of that cause will be its effect—also Karma.

The Law of Karma goes hand in hand with the Law of Universal Brotherhood. In Nature, all is unity, harmony. No grain of sand or drop of water exists alone—there is not one single atom in the Universe but is dependent on something else. The human body, scientists tell us, is composed of myriads of atoms, which go to form a unity, called the

physical body. This body again, is but an atom—a larger atom in the great ocean of Humanity. Unless we can realize the fact that we are all dependent upon one another, it is hard to understand Karma.

Applied to our daily lives, Karma, next to this doctrine of Universal Brotherhood, is the most important of the teachings of Theosophy, giving us a clear understanding of what we all recognize as natural law—the law governing the success or failure, the health or misery, the happiness or sorrow of every hour. If we recognize that there is no escape from the natural and just consequences of any thought, word or deed, and that they are unchangeable, save by our own efforts, then we shall be careful what thoughts we have, and what acts we do. The result of every act is stored away, and, when the circumstances are favorable, the effect will occur. It is the mind which creates the energy and gives the impulse to action; hence the necessity for right thought. We are responsible for our thoughts, not only to ourselves, but to others; for the influence of our thoughts, whether they be for good or ill, will act upon those whose minds are open to them.

We may illustrate the action of Karma by the camera. All the objects brought before the sensitive plate are stamped there—throw a film over the negative. On a larger scale, this applies to the Soul. Every event or thought of a man's life throws a film, or a mental deposit, upon the substance of the Soul, and there it remains, as the impression upon the sensitive plate remains, until developed. All those mental deposits of the past will come into fructification in any life in which the proper environments are provided—by which is meant the temperament, the character, the mind, the psychic nature, as well as the outward surroundings.

We must not expect our outward surroundings to affect us favorably. We may learn from our surroundings, but we must not dwell too much upon them, but

must turn our attention to the training of the Inner Self. Among the first things to be learned are right thinking, self-reliance and self-knowledge. All life is working out of effects, caused by the action of Spirit in Nature, and we must understand this law, as manifested in us, before we can advance. We are taught that "Spiritual knowledge includes every action." Karma, then, is the means, the way, to spiritual knowledge, for through and by it we act and gain experience. This experience strengthens the character of the True Man, and from this store of gathered strength, if we properly direct our thoughts we can draw.

Karma judges a man by his motive, not by his conduct. We may do a good act with a bad motive, but it will not avail us for good. Nor should we do right in hope of a reward, but rather because it is right—because it is our duty. Then, when it is done, we should forget it. And we should waste no time in regret. Let us live in the present, for in it is contained both past and future. The Hindoo says, "Regret nothing; never be sorry; and cut all doubts with the sword of spiritual knowledge."

Karma acts on nations and races as well as upon man, and it is through the operation of this law that we are attracted to a particular nation or race; for our Karma is the property of all mankind, and nothing good or bad can happen to us that is not shared by many others.

Let us then keep these things in mind: That the law of Nature is harmony—balance, and that all things which disturb that harmony are Karma, producing their effects on all others and on ourselves. We have the power of choice to produce good effects or ill. And then, if we govern our actions accordingly, we shall be able to uplift the Western race, to ennoble our own character, and to build for ourselves a future that will be free and luminous within for us, and a shining glorious light to the rest of Humanity. The "Voice of the Silence" says:

"Thou canst create this 'day' thy

chances for thy 'morrow.' In the 'Great Journey,' causes sown each hour bear each its harvest of effects, for rigid Justice rules the world. With mighty sweep of never-erring action, it brings to mortals lives of weal or woe, the Karmic progeny of all our former thoughts and deeds.

"Take, then, as much as merit hath in store for thee, O thou of patient heart. Be of good cheer and rest content with fate. Such is thy Karma, the Karma of the cycle of thy births, the destiny of those who, in their pain and sorrow, are born along with thee; rejoice and weep from life to life, chained to thy previous actions."

H. P. B. Training Class.

Editorial.

T. S. Training Classes.

Training Classes have become a very valuable adjunct of Branch work, as demonstrated by actual experience of many Pacific Coast Branches. The object of the Training Class is to afford opportunities for individual cultivation of the best methods of imparting a knowledge of Theosophy.

The following Order of Proceedings is in use by most of the Training Classes, and is submitted to T. S. Branches desirous of engaging in this line of work, together with appended notes:

ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS.

1. Calling to order. 2. Minutes.
3. General Business, viz: Unfinished Business, New Business, Committee Reports, etc. 4. Reading short extracts from some devotional work like Bhagavad Gita, The Voice of the Silence, Letters That Have Helped Me, etc. Or, members called upon, may repeat from memory passages from same.
5. Parliamentary Drill and Exercises. 6. Extempore addresses of from three to five minutes duration upon subject previously selected.
7. Reading one or more papers upon subject of some Oriental Philosophy,

Science or Religion, along the line indicated by the second object of the T. S. 8. Critic's Report. 9. President appoints one following for duty at next session: (a)—Critic. (b)—Reader from Devotional work. (c)—Two or more members to make extempore addresses upon subject assigned. (d)—One or more members to prepare papers upon subject of some Oriental Philosophy, Science or Religion, to be presented at next session. 10. Adjournment.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

Term and Duties of President.—The President is elected to serve for one month. The shortness of this period of service permits of all the members of the class filling that position in turn, and thus affords opportunity for training in the duties of the office. This is also true of other offices. The duties of the President are the same as those of the presiding officer of any deliberative body as defined in Cushing's or Hill's Manual of Parliamentary Proceedings.

The Secretary. The Secretary's duties being more complicated, a longer term of service is indicated, and that officer is elected to serve for two months. The duties of the Secretary are the same as defined in Cushing's or other manuals relating to deliberative bodies.

The Critic. This office is of the most importance and significance. The Critic is appointed at the close of each session to serve during the next following. His duties are complicated and he has the meeting as a whole, and each individual member, under his surveillance. He should use paper and pencil and note all that takes place which is inappropriate, violates sense of good taste, or is discourteous in word or demeanor, from the time doors are opened until after the meeting is over and members disperse. He should occupy a place at the table on the left of the Presiding Officer, when the class is called to order, and carefully observe all that transpires. If any officer or member, by word or act, offends, the offense and offender should be prop-

erly noted by the critic. He should observe how a speaker or reader takes his position, and that he properly addresses the chair and members, the position of speaker while delivering his address, his pronunciation, enunciation and grammar, and the manner of resuming his seat. The Critic should have his eye open to *all* that takes place, and note in his Report all that occurs which is subject for criticism, and when called upon by the President rise, address the chair and the members, and deliver his report without fear or favor and in an impersonal manner. If delivered in that spirit, no member criticized can reasonably take offence, but will regard the criticism in the light of a benefit conferred, since one prime object of the Training Class is to discover errors of manner, speech and demeanor and to correct them. It should be a rule of the class that no member be permitted to retort or take exception to the Critic's report. The strict observance of this rule will prevent complications otherwise sure to arise.

Parliamentary Proceedings. This is an important feature of Training Class work. There is a right and a wrong way to do everything. Certain systems of book-keeping are better than others; certain methods of teaching are superior to others. The same is true as to the conduct of all meetings of deliberative bodies. Centuries of experience have demonstrated Parliamentary Rules to be the best wherewith to conduct meetings of a deliberative character. In fact, no organizations of any note now exist whose meetings and proceedings are not conducted according to Parliamentary Rules. For instance, England's House of Parliament, the German Reichstag the American Congress and all political and fraternal bodies. The same should also hold in the conduct of all T. S. Branches that have outgrown the parlor stage, and reached the point of holding public or semi-public meetings with the object of presenting Theosophy to the people. Parliamentary Rules accord exact justice

to the officers and members of any meeting conducted under those proceedings, vastly facilitate transaction of business, and reduce red tape measures to the minimum.

Parliamentary Drill.—The questions of Motions, Committees, Rulings, etc., are studied and practiced. To illustrate: After the study of motions as to when, how and where to make them, the Chairman raises some point before the meeting, whereon a member makes a motion that certain action be taken; another member seconds the motion. But before acted upon, a third member moves to amend the motion, which is seconded. But, again, before the original motion and amendment are acted upon, a fourth member moves to amend the amendment, after which the Chairman properly brings before the meeting the various issues raised which are settled according to parliamentary law. Without knowledge and practice, difficulties arise, otherwise, meetings run smoothly.

Extempore Addresses.—Illustration: At the last session one or more members have been assigned the subject of Reincarnation, and required to prepare for presentation at the next, a three or five minute exposition, such as would be suitable to present to an inquirer who knew little or nothing about that subject. Under the right head of procedure those members would be called upon. They would take a position on the rostrum, address the chair and meeting, and present the result of their study as above. A little practice of this kind fits the members to do a constant good work, in properly presenting correct conceptions of Theosophy which, without such training, they would remain unqualified to perform. Many of the older T. S. members have by study acquired a comprehensive knowledge of Theosophy, but not having cultivated best methods for imparting the same are largely unable to actively and potently further the objects of the T. S. This exercise is intended to remedy that defect, and recent experi-

ments have clearly demonstrated its success. Whenever practicable, shorthand reports should be made of extempore addresses. This enables members to learn of their defects and correct them.

Papers on Oriental Religions, Sciences or Philosophies:—The second object of the T. S. is to promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literatures, religions and sciences, and demonstrate the importance of that study. The statement is often made that all religions rest upon a common basis, that all are identical as to origin and spirit, when their true meanings are understood. But how few F. T. S. possess the knowledge and ability to demonstrate the fact. The object of studying and preparing papers upon these subjects, is to fit members to do that.

The above are only a few of the principal features of importance coming within the province of T. S. Training Classes. Others will become apparent in course of time and further experience. The Order of Proceedings is not arbitrary, but submitted for experiment, and may be altered to suit local requirements.

Allen Griffiths, F. T. S.

Some members of Aurora Branch, Oakland, have been holding meetings in the Blind Men's Home, Oakland.

If any one has a copy of Oriental Department Paper, No. 7, which they can spare, please send to the Secretary, P. C. T. C.

If thy soul thirsteth for honor, if thy ear hath any pleasure in the voice of praise, raise thyself from the dust whereof thou art made—and exalt thy aim to something that is praise-worthy.

Endeavor to be first in thy calling, whatever it be; neither let any one go before you in well doing; nevertheless, do not envy the merits of another, but improve thine own talents.

Of much speaking cometh repentance, but in silence is safety.

Among the Coast Branches.

Harmony Branch, Los Angeles.

W. C. B. Randolph, Sec., writes:—The adjournment of the Harmony Lodge meetings on account of the hot weather was of short duration. Such was the demand for their resumption that but a small break was made in the regular routine. The "Gleanings" engage our study yet and probably will for some time to come. We have adopted the plan of open or beginners' meetings. Once each month a paper is read by some member on a subject of general interest and questions and discussions follow. Last Monday evening, Mrs. Eleanor B. Shell lectured on "Vibration." The lecture was a thought provoker. These open meetings will be continued throughout the winter.

Pt. Loma Branch, San Diego.

Dr. T. Docking writes:—There are many earnest workers here, and I believe all, without exception, seize every occasion to sow Theosophical seed, in one of the many highways, more especially, I know of many instances during the late vacation, having been utilized in the above manner, very often at considerable sacrifice to the individual. I have engagements to speak in connection with the Hon. S. Calhoun, F. T. S., at Ballena, on the 30th inst., and at Ramona on the 4th of Oct. next.

Excelsior Branch, San Jose.

Mrs. P. M. Gassett, Sec., writes:—Through May and June much interest was manifested by those out of the Branch as well as in, so, contrary to our usual custom, we continued the meetings through July and August. In July Miss Walsh gave us two lectures and was of great help in the Branch meetings.

Mr. E. B. Rambo lectured Aug. 15, Subject, "Doctrine of the Heart," which was listened to attentively by those present.

Our Branch has gained a few members

since our last report. We have resumed our old plan of two open and two closed meetings during the month. In the open meetings we are to read Modern Theosophy; in the closed, we continue with the "Secret Doctrine."

Redding Branch.

W. P. England, Sec., writes:—At the regular annual meeting of Redding Branch, T. S., held on the 27th ult., the following officers were elected for the ensuing year: W. P. England, President; Mrs. L. M. Bostwick, Vice-President; Mrs. M. J. Deming, Secretary; Ruggles Bostwick, Treasurer.

Our meetings both "Branch" and "Open" are regularly held, the members attending faithfully, but the attendance of visitors at "open" meetings is small. The inhabitants of this town do not take any particular interest in Theosophic teachings. Perhaps, we have not the faculty of presenting them in a suitable form; however we do our best; so far as we know.

Pacific Coast Lecturer's Movements

[Lecturer's address: 418 Market St., San Francisco. Correspondence invited.]

Solar Branch, T. S., located at Shelton, was visited by Dr. Griffiths, Sept. 18th, and an informal reception given him on arrival.

Branch Proceedings and Study were discussed and an order adopted. Solar Branch is young but earnest, and promises well to become an active T. S. Centre. On Sept. 16th, Dr. Griffiths addressed a good audience upon Theosophy in Kneeland Hall. A number remained after the lecture when questions and answers were engaged in. A few of the members who disliked to send their children to orthodox Sunday schools, had organized a class, and this will probably become a Lotus Circle and presided over by the Branch Secretary.

Four days were spent in Olympia, during which two lectures, one quiz, a

Branch and informal meetings took place. Lectures were fairly attended. A full Branch meeting was held and new lines of study and work adopted. The persistent work of loyal members of Olympia Branch is exhausting some bad Karma, and prospects are brightening. "The path that leadeth on is lighted by one fire the light of daring burning in the heart."

At Centralia, Sept. 24, a lecture upon "The Principal Features of Theosophy" was given before an attentive audience, followed by questions and answers.

Two public lectures were given in Portland, viz.: Sept. 26th, "Brotherhood" was the subject, and upon Sept. 30th, in Arion Hall before a large audience the subject was "Theosophy and Heredity;" other T. S. work and meetings filled up the week.

The following is a summary of work done by Dr. Griffiths, covering a period of six weeks in Oregon and Washington: Cities visited, ten; Public lectures, seventeen; Branch and other meetings, nineteen.

A. G.

True wisdom is less presuming than folly. The wise man doubteth often, and changeth his mind; the fool is obstinate, and doubteth not; he knoweth all things but his own ignorance.

On the heels of folly treadeth shame; at the back of anger standeth remorse.

Obituary.

Robert Lee Scannell of Salt Lake T. S. died at London on October 13, 1894. He was one of the charter members of the Salt Lake Branch, and its first Secretary, and later was President of the Branch. It may be said of him that he was a true Theosophist and lived the ethics that he professed, and to his work was due much of the success of his local Branch. He was 44 years old, and was prominent in business and mining circles. At the time of his death he was Deputy Grand Master of the Masons of Utah.

A. J. J.