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BOOMERANG IN THE "SUPPRESSION" OF CLAIRVOYANCE.

The fact that spiritual truths cannot be suppressed by law and that all persecution in that direction reacts in the enlightenment of the people has recently been illustrated in Albany. This capitol city of the Empire State has an ordinance against "fortune telling." The wise city fathers, feeling cocksure that all forecasting of the future is pure nonsense, generously resolved to give the unwary public the protection due it, and decreed certain fines and penalties for any person who should, by any prognostications that could be termed "fortune telling," induce the aforesaid unwary to part with their shekels. Having spread the net for offenders against "the public welfare" they awaited results with the satisfied conscience of the righteous.

But nothing came of it. The "fortune telling" went on. People who, for reasons best known to themselves, went to consult clairvoyants continued to go as of yore. This sorely troubled the wise men who make laws to regulate the lives of the foolish, and it was resolved that the best way to show the public that clairvoyance is a fraud would be to arrest one of the offenders and wring out the truth in open court where all might hear and comprehend. Accordingly an officer donned the habiliments of a common mortal, called upon a clairvoyant, got a "reading," paid a modest fee and went his way rejoicing, for he had done a clever thing and they had the "fortune teller" as good as convicted. She was arrested and haled into court.

The offender was a clairvoyant who for nine years has resided here. The wise protectors of the foolish people did not overlook anything calculated to prove the fraud and foolishness of clairvoyance. Assurance was made doubly sure by bringing into court a number of the people who were known to have visited her. And just here the fun began! These witnesses, brought to expose the trickster, went upon the witness stand, one after another, and swore that the clairvoyant had really forecast the future for them and that time had proven the accuracy of her statements. The officer who had gone to her in disguise was obliged to admit that what she had told him of his past was true. Then the defense came forward with a brief, citing over fifty texts from the Bible that sustained clairvoyance and left the orthodox wise men looking very foolish and saying nothing. During the trial the judge got so interested that he took matters into his own hands and questioned the lady for an hour and a quarter. He got such convincing demonstrations that he urged her to enlighten him as to "how it was done" and at the conclusion of the examination she was found not guilty. At this interesting point the daily papers woke up to the fact that something unusual was happening and gave the whole story to the public. And now the clairvoyant is so overworked with new patrons that she is threatening to go away on a visit to get a little rest!

And that's the way the wise men of Albany suppressed "fortune telling" and proved that clairvoyance is a humbug.

OUR BROTHER, THE CRIMINAL

Behind the prison walls throughout the country are many thousands of people known as criminals, and the attitude of the general public toward them furnishes a most interesting sociological problem. Most people look upon them as a thing apart from ordinary humanity and find it difficult to intellectually grasp the fact that they are in nowise different from other human beings; that the offenses for which they have been temporarily deprived of their liberty are, in some form, the common heritage of the race at its present level of evolution and that for every man or woman the prisons contain there are scores outside who are mentally and morally precisely like them. We have all known of cases of perfectly innocent people being imprisoned through the miscarriage of justice and somebody has estimated that one prisoner in four is probably innocent of the particular offense of which he was convicted. Whatever the actual ratio of the innocent inside the prisons may be there can be little doubt in any mind that there are countless thousands of the guilty outside,—tens of thousands who have escaped the dragnet of the law, who are guilty of bribery, forgery, embezzlement, and a thousand forms of swindling, and are yet the free and respected citizens of the Republic. They move among us everywhere, participate in important public movements, reside in most respectable houses, and sit beside us in the theaters and churches. Nobody thinks of them as being a different sort of humanity.

It is astonishing to what degree we permit visual effects to control our mental processes. If these thousands of offenders against good morals who are now at large were put inside a stockade and clothed in striped garments the public would instantly recognize them as a different sort of humanity and proceed to find in them many phases of depravity which they do not really possess at all. People see in others what they expect to see,—what the environment influences them to look for; a fact that was amusingly illustrated in the case of a visitor to a prison who was being shown about by an official. They were approaching the women's department and passed without pausing through a room where a young woman and an elderly one were sewing. "Dear me," said the visitor, who was prepared to be properly horrified over the human depravity he looked upon, "dear me, what vicious faces!" Whereupon the official flushed with indignation and retorted: "I'll have you know, sir, that they're my wife and daughter!"

Is anybody silly enough to think that, if we could sweep away all deceptive appearances, all disguises of fine raiment and high position, all masks woven of subtle lies and clever acting, and see people as they actually are, those inside the prisons would not be the moral equals of those outside? The naked truth is that the great mass of humanity is a moral compound about which one who is careful of his statements will not do too much boasting. The human being at our stage of evolution is a combination of good and ill, of strength and weakness, of spiritual aspiration struggling against material desires, and you will look in vain for either the wholly good or the entirely bad, anywhere. The moral difference between people is altogether one of degree. Some are better than others, that is all. And even that is only saying that some are stronger than others. And even that, again, is only saying that they are stronger *in some directions*. Many a judge has sentenced to prison better men than himself, morally stronger than himself; but his weakness was of a different kind and the penal code of his day did not take notice of it. A man who swindles another in business and, by misrepresentation, takes from him his money would detest a pickpocket,—that is to say one who takes it without misrepresentation. Another man

who takes only the goods or money of another regards with horror one who takes life, while the murderer who destroyed life for revenge, only, would look with contempt upon a sneak-thief. And so it is with all of us. Human weaknesses run in many directions and the beam in our own eye doesn't in the least prevent us finding the mote in our brother's; in fact, the keenness of our vision for another's faults appears to bear a marked relationship to the size of the beam!

In the final analysis all offenses come down to one thing and all crimes can be summed up in one word,—selfishness. It is the only crime. It is the only sin. Selfishness prompts every act that is a punishable offense and if there is any difference, or can be any difference, between our brother, the criminal, and ourselves it is in the degree of selfishness that characterizes each. And how is it with the great mass of humanity as to selfishness? Do we need any discriminating prison walls to instruct us on that point? Can it possibly be more intense inside them than out? Who among us will claim that he is without selfishness? Let him who is without it hurl the next epithet at our brother, the criminal.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR THOUGHTS

That we are responsible for our acts nobody has any doubt. All penal law is shaped by a recognition of that fact. But the law goes further than that and recognizes our influence as well as our acts. A man may take no part in a crime but if he has influenced another to commit it he is held to be equally guilty with him. He may be guilty of murder in the first degree without having touched a murderous weapon, without having raised his hand against anybody and even without ever having seen the victim. He may be far away in a foreign country and do nothing more than think out a plan of assassination, stimulate the thoughts and desires of others toward murder and thus put into motion the forces that, later on, will snuff out a human life; but the law does not distinguish between the thinker and the actor in determining who is responsible for the result. Whoever, in any way, either set going the forces that caused the murder, or intentionally helped them along afterward, is in law an accomplice or an accessory and is held to be as guilty as the one who struck the life-destroying blow.

Now, what we call the common law is only the principles that long experience has enabled us to deduce and use for our guidance in doing justice; and the deduction that has stood the test of time is that whoever has caused, or helped to cause, a certain thing is responsible for that thing whether he has had any visible part in it or not. How is it, then, about responsibility for our thoughts? How far may we be influencing others toward an evil course by the thoughts we never express? When we think, we are really performing an act: we are setting matter in motion as certainly as the wind moves the waves. This motion we have given to matter will affect other people according to the degree of their susceptibility and in proportion to the intensity of the thought-force we have generated; for its tendency is to reproduce itself in another mind that is susceptible to such impulses, that is in the habit of harboring that kind of thought, somewhat as motion set up in one stringed instrument will reproduce itself in any others near it that are keyed up to its tension. If our neighbor's mind is running along the line of extremely selfish thoughts and he is close to the point of appropriating another's goods may

not our thoughts of greed and avarice, although quite within the law, give him the final impulse that makes him a thief? If another is meditating suicide and our thoughts of gloom and feelings of depression throw his mental environment into still greater activity along that line, may we not have added the "last straw" that broke down his power of resistance? If still another is nursing hatred of his enemy, and his mind is full of thoughts of revenge, may not our pettier bickerings and our lesser hatreds, give to his agitated mind the final touch of selfish intensification that will nerve his arm for murder?

Of course there is a great difference between the responsibility of one who intentionally causes a result and one who does it unwittingly. But in either case there is responsibility and one who has begun to comprehend the power of thought should endeavor to keep his mind away from all kinds of gloomy and evil thinking as he would keep his body away from pitfalls and pestilence.

THEOSOPHY IN PRISONS

BY A PRISONER.

Probably no other "civilized" beings are more prone to reject orthodox religion than are prisoners. The reasons for this are obvious, for in Christian lands prisoners are treated as a different order of beings and in many communities the lockstep, the shaved head, the striped suit and other grievous methods are used to unnecessarily degrade and humiliate those who violate the law.

Naturally this retaliative treatment tends to hatch whatever latent viciousness there may be in the prisoner, and it follows that lip Christianity meets a frigid temperature and does little good behind the prison walls for which it is negatively responsible and which it tolerates as a "necessary evil."

In essence Christianity is a good and sufficient guide for the conduct of human affairs at the present stage of evolution, but the manhandling of twenty centuries has emasculated its spirit, and perverted its grandeur to selfish ends. The general run of Christians shudder at the thought of convicts. Of course there are exceptions, for there are still a few real Christians among the many deluded humans who imagine they are such, but as a rule a violent sense of repulsion arises in the breast of the orthodox, plush-pewed Christian at the thought of contacting men in prison; and this repulsion, this exclusiveness, is just as intense after the prisoner has expiated his offense (according to the boomerang system or retributive punishment now in use), as it is while he is in actual confinement wearing stripes.

Nearly all our large prisons have paid chaplains to expound Christ's teachings in the approved orthodox way, but, having talked and suffered with thousands of prisoners, having waded through the moral gutters of life for many years, the writer knows of his own knowledge, dispassionately, that the money contributed by taxpayers for the salaries of prison chaplains is practically wasted.

Occasionally a prisoner embraces Christianity and becomes a feverish fanatic through the exhortations of the prison chaplain, but it is generally a sky-rocket sort of regeneration, and the creed seldom suffices to hold him permanently; his "faith" is not strong enough to overcome the influence of his enervating environment.

The man in prison needs something more in vibration with his condition, something imbued with eternal reason, something through which a genuine heart-love manifests. Most prisoners scorn the fallacy which has enslaved so many millions, that a good man who lived two thousand years ago atoned for their sins when he was brutally crucified; it savors too much of the modern bunco game—a getting of something for nothing; it is neither just nor logical. They are paying the mundane penalty for crime and if there are supramundane penalties they expect to pay them also.

Of course the majority of prisoners do not think much for themselves, and in this respect they are on a par with humanity at large, but for the ones who do observe and think the perpetual manifestations of the workings of that inexorable law of cause and effect becomes their staff of thought—their bed-rock of reason, and when the elucidations of Theosophy are brought to bear on the more abstruse matters the result is magical.

Theosophy has gained a foothold in the largest penitentiary west of the Rocky mountains, a penitentiary with a population of nearly 1,700, and the indications are that it will become an important factor in the moral solution of the western prison problem. A concrete instance may serve to illustrate its subtle potency more effectively than pages of generalities.

Within the walls of the prison referred to there is a rectangular plot of ground enclosed by sombre, stone buildings. Through the industry of prisoners this plot has been converted into a garden, containing among the more esthetic plants, two rugged Isle of Norfolk pines, the only trees on the entire prison reservation, for trees obstruct the view and interfere with the effective service of the ever-frowning machine guns that mar the crests of the surrounding hills.

In the spring of the year these two trees become the mecca of mating birds, which swarm to build their nests and hatch their yearly contribution to the great cosmic scheme of things.

On warm days an old "lifer," who has passed the allotted three score years and ten, and who is the possessor of a pathetic looking cat, striped like himself, vegetates under one of these pines.

When the young birds are hatched many of them fall from the nests, and in times past the old man used to catch them for his feline companion, shooing the frantic parents away when they swooped to the rescue. He called these little creatures "cat turkey" and to all appearances enjoyed seeing them torn to pieces.

He had been in prison a quarter of a century and met all attempts at bringing him to a consideration of a possible state after death with the acrid asseveration that death ended all and anyone who thought differently was a fool. His one contradictory characteristic was a passionate love and wonder for plant life.

For more than a decade he had not received a letter from beyond the prison walls where the great world had been throbbing on during all his weary imprisonment. All the people he had known when free were either dead or had long since forgotten him.

One night a letter was dropped though the aperture in his cell door as the spook-like form of the mail clerk flitted past. It was a letter from one of God's noblewomen who had learned of the old man's long friend-famine, calling him brother. It staggered him.

From that day a change was noticeable in the old man. That letter had found the vulnerable place in his materialistic armor, and a prisoner

whom he asked to write an answer for him was encouraged to attempt his further enlightenment. There were little conversations about birds, and flowers, and animals, and fellow prisoners whenever the opportunity offered. The word Theosophy was never used, but by kindly acts and friendly discussions the end has been accomplished to some extent, for to-day, while still far from the concept of life which Theosophy affords in proportion to the earnestness and determination of the seeker, he is much further advanced than he was a year ago and sees life from an entirely different view-point.

This was evidenced the other day when a linnet, intent on collecting material for its nest, carelessly alighted within reach of his cat and was caught.

The catch was a fair one, and the old man saw that it was, but instead of sitting by to watch the bird's torture and death he quietly approached, pryed open the cruel jaws and released the feathered captive, saying:

"You old scamp. Don't you know that bird is building its nest? Don't you know it sings the pretty songs in the morning? Don't I take good care of you and feed you?"

The tenets of Theosophy, without conscious acceptance on his part, had in less than one year made him an active agent for the acceleration of evolution instead of an obstacle in its path.

If Theosophy is properly introduced into prisons it cannot fail to bring gratifying results. Care must be taken, however, to scrupulously avoid condemnation of any other religious or philosophical beliefs, and emphasis must be placed on the fact that the aim of Theosophy is to synthesize religious beliefs not to antagonize them. If lectures or informal talks are given the "Objects of the Theosophical Society" should not only be read as a prelude but should be borne in mind all through.

Bigotry, exclusiveness, pedantry or the teaching of one thing and the acting of another are not representative of Theosophy and are not calculated to benefit prisoners.

It is unfortunate that the great body of eternal truths which are included in the teaching have to be designated by a single word, for all words are limitations. It should be borne in mind, however, that this word Theosophy, rightly understood, has a greater elasticity than any other word in the human language.

The chase after the ephemeral sensations of exclusiveness and rapture attendant upon occultism should be discouraged, and it should be emphasized that the first requisite to the higher understanding of nature is a well-ordered, highly moral self-control.

For those contemplating the introduction of Theosophy into prison, it is advisable to first have a few copies of some simple leaflet distributed. This should be followed by an informal talk, at which some of the more lucid brochures, such as the series of printed lectures by Mr. Rogers, should be given to those who evince interest.

The prisoners should be encouraged to ask questions, and in answering an effort should be made to meet them on neutral ground, for one of the quickest and surest ways for gaining the attention and respect of a prisoner is to get into his concept of life as nearly as possible.

"He who stoops above the fallen stands erect." Space does not permit of further discussion of this very interesting line of work. The earnest propagandist will not need very much advice, and local conditions have a great deal to do with shaping one's methods.

HINTS TO YOUNG STUDENTS—II

Perhaps it would be impossible to exaggerate the importance of the thing we call "attention." It should be assiduously cultivated in every possible way. Whatever is being done should be done with an undivided mind, whether it is important or trivial. Attention to the work in hand is not only the first step toward success with that particular bit of work but is also a step in actual occult development. To study a subject for a half hour with unwavering attention accomplishes more than to follow it a half day with a wandering mind; and while we are thus gaining knowledge rapidly by determinedly sustained attention we are doing something more. We are bringing the mind into the particular condition it must reach before any marked progress in occultism is possible. The mental habit of most people reminds one of a kitten at play. It strikes at a swinging string, catches up a bit of paper, leaps into the air after a fly, then darts into another room to dash from object to object in a new field, all for no other purpose than because it has nothing more serious in life to attend to. So it is with the wandering mind. It fills up the time with a multitude of trifling thoughts that, all summed up in the end, amount to simply nothing. It occupies itself with dreamy speculations about nothing in particular, darts backward to uselessly run over a recent conversation, leaps off to review a journey made a week ago, dallies over a remembered remark by a friend, suddenly recalls a duty not discharged, forgets it the next instant because a carriage passes the window, and then dashes off on some entirely new round of equally frivolous mental activities that are as devoid of connection with the first set as they are of method or purpose. Such a state of mind belongs to that period of our existence when we had no knowledge of the purpose of life. It is not becoming to the student of Theosophy and he should, without any loss of time begin an earnest effort to free himself from so pernicious a mental habit. A good way to accomplish this is to endeavor to keep the mind steadily upon the work in hand, whether it is reading, writing, talking, listening, or discharging some simple duty. When it is some pastime or recreation, to which attention is turned for rest, the mind should be fully given up to it and kept entirely away from the work that has been temporarily dropped.

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Attention is the very gist of occult progress. It is impossible to imagine anybody getting on without acquiring it; and the way to acquire it to the degree that makes it effective is to keep constantly at it in all the little things we do until it becomes an ingrained and deep-seated habit. Is not attention the very basis upon which occult development rests? Take as an example telepathy, with which most people have had more or less experience. You are about to say something when your friend says it for you. You have decided to move a chair or open a window, but before you can rise your companion requests you to do that particular thing. You have not thought for a week about purchasing a certain needed article when it comes into your mind suddenly, but before your thought can frame itself into words your companion brings up the subject. Very often you both speak the same words at the same instant about the same thing. Very often, too, you know precisely what another is going to say just before he utters it. Now, this occurs when the mind is at attention and is not disturbed by other thoughts and things. We cannot imagine a person getting the thought of another when his own mind is galloping about among other subjects. How can he get what another is thinking when he does not even get what he is saying? But we can imagine telepathy being cultivated by close and sympathetic attention. We can imagine a person listening so intently to

another's conversation and getting so completely into his line of thought that he gets his ideas before they become words. Such centered and sustained attention necessarily cultivates sensitiveness.

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A very good time for cultivating the attention is while listening to a discourse. An especial effort can be made to get every idea expressed by the speaker; and if, as sometimes happens, the ideas are not numerous to give the closest attention to all that is said, keeping mental account of the points as they are developed without losing anything that is being stated. Whether one agrees with the speaker or not should not be permitted to impair the attention. In either case the mind should be held unwaveringly upon the discourse, so firmly and persistently that there is no opportunity for other things to intrude. If the ideas come from the speaker too slowly to occupy the mind it can be kept busy reviewing the points thus far made, or even in speculating upon what are likely to come, but in any case it should be kept to the speaker and his subject with the greatest care. The attention should not be permitted to fail from the moment he rises until he has finished. This attention should be absolute. If somebody enters or leaves the room disregard it. Try to see nothing but the speaker and hear nothing but his discourse, until it is finished. If this practice should, at first, prove trying it need not be continued throughout an entire sermon or lecture. But for such length of time as may be decided upon the attention should be rigorously sustained. If the discourse is a good one much more will thus be learned from it. If it is of the order that bores one it will be robbed of much, if not all, of its oppressiveness; for when the mind is concentrated upon it, and busy speculating about it, time does not hang heavily, but passes without notice. An unailing method of shortening the apparent time of any discourse is to concentrate the attention upon it.

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Another thing which the young student should take up is the matter of original thinking. Naturally he will read much of occultism in the books written by older students, and he will have a tendency to fall into their style of expression. When he prepares a paper on a theosophical subject he will usually find, upon critically examining his work, that he has set forth much the same points, in much the same way, with the same degree of emphasis and with the same kind of illustrations that his authors have used. Often he unconsciously falls into almost precisely the same expressions. All this is work in an imitative rut, from which he should make a determined effort to extricate himself. No matter how admirable the work of the teacher is the student does not desire to become either a copyist or a parrot. He does not want his mind to get the habit of running only along the grooves fashioned by others and then not running at all when it reaches the end of the groove. To avoid this disaster he should read only for a short time and then stop and ponder well the ideas presented. Let him try to find various points of view and see if he cannot think of something more to be said on the matter. He can call up in his mind some of his experiences that are in line with the statement of principles given and ponder over the corroboration thus furnished. When he discusses with others what he has read let him try to avoid the exact language used by the author and put the thought into original expressions of his own. He should endeavor to think out original illustrations to illuminate the subject, and new sets of circumstances to which the principles stated will apply; and the way to do it is to think, and think, and think, about it. Original thinking is an invaluable accomplishment and the only reason why there is not more of it is because there are so few who are willing to give it the necessary time and effort.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"Shall we have to suffer for the mistakes we have made previous to the time of realizing what we were doing in hating and injuring other persons?"

Answer: Ignorance of a law does not exempt one from the consequences of violating it. Whatever we have done in the past that injured others we must meet in the future unless it has already been disposed of, as some of it of course is. But blundering while in ignorance of the law entails a much less serious responsibility than going wrong with a knowledge of occult law. When one comes into a knowledge of Theosophy and looks back with regret upon his past mistakes he should not lose any time lamenting the situation, but set to work at once to balance the account as far as possible. If there are persons he has in any way injured and he can still reach them he can doubtless do something toward righting the old mistakes. If he cannot reach those particular persons he can help those he can reach as much as may be. Of course every sincere effort, every beneficent impulse is just that much toward discharging his old karmic debt.

"Is there such a thing as sudden salvation? A great controversy has been started by the statement of the Rev. Henry McIlravy that while the confessed murderer of Grace Brown went directly to heaven his victim is surely in hell unless she repented and was forgiven. I am curious to know to what extent Theosophy agrees with the idea of instantaneous salvation as confidently expressed by the young murderer in the printed statements I have enclosed."

Answer: The theosophical view is that a mere belief, no matter how firmly held, will not save anybody from the consequences of previous wrong doing. The teaching that all we have to do to set right a life of great selfishness and wickedness is to "realize that our sins are forgiven" is one of the most pernicious with which men have ever deceived themselves. The after-death state of these two young people depends upon the degree of unselfishness with which they lived and not upon the fact that one of them declared that he had "accepted Christ" and that the other died too suddenly to make a similar statement. In the case of the young man we have an example of remarkable selfishness. In order to save himself some inconvenience and unpleasantness he planned and carried out the murder of the girl who loved and trusted him. In the case of the victim we have an example of almost equally remarkable generosity. The published letters, even in the moment of her hopeless despair were full of expressions of love for the man who was refusing to save her from approaching disgrace. To say that the former, by the repetition of a formula, went straight to "heaven" while the latter is in "hell" because during her life she did not fall into the belief that her "sins" had been "forgiven" is so absurd that Mr. McIlravy could hardly have found a stronger argument against salvation by confession than the simple statement he makes. Not by our death-bed declarations, but by every thought and impulse of our lives we are determining our after-death condition. If a man has lived sordidly and selfishly for years he has built into his astral body a corresponding amount of the gross astral matter and regardless his belief that he can be instantly "saved" that gross astral matter will hold him in the purgatory of the lower astral level until it is completely dissipated. To the degree that the young woman mentioned lived unselfishly she was building into her astral body the grade of matter that will enable her to contact loftier levels of the astral world, regardless of the fact that her life was snuffed out so suddenly that she had no opportunity to think of her future state. What that degree of selfishness or unselfishness was in either of these two people cannot be

judged with any accuracy, but only very generally, by the circumstances and we should make as great an error as Mr. McIlravy does were we to assume that the reverse of his statement is certain to represent the present condition of the two.

"Is Theosophy altogether right in opposing capital punishment in such a case as that of Chester Gillette, who took the life of Grace Brown so heartlessly?"

Answer: Theosophy does not oppose the death penalty in some kinds of cases, as against others, but opposes destruction of physical life in general. The difference in degree of guilt, or of heartlessness, has nothing to do with the principle. The moment we begin to compare the culpability of one offender with another and mete out what we think should be just punishment we place ourselves upon untenable ground. If the ordinary murderer deserves death, does the fiendish murderer deserve both torture and death? Perhaps nobody would like to return to the age of horrors when, by various kinds of torture, it was sought to inflict punishment commensurate with the offense. Where shall we draw the line when we undertake to play the role of avenger? Is it not a saner view to say that society has the right to protect itself, but to go no further; to say that any person who, by taking a life, has shown himself to be dangerous to the community shall be deprived of his liberty? But this restraint of liberty should not be looked upon as a punishment, as vengeance. Nature will take care of that part of it. No man can possibly escape the consequences of his wrong-doing, from trifles to tragedies. In opposing the death penalty and advocating a more humane method of protecting society from those dangerous to it, theosophists are advocating an ideal which they know cannot be quickly realized. They understand clearly enough that as long as people have the desire for vengeance the death penalty will remain. It is just because the public has too little regard for the sacredness of life that capital punishment cannot be abolished. If, two or three years ago, Gillette's opinion had been sought on the subject he would doubtless have been in favor of executing murderers. It is people of that state of mind who want the death penalty, little thinking that *what they desire for others must, in the long run, come to themselves.*

"If we continue to advance in the astral and mental planes why do we commence in the next physical life where we leave off in this?"

Answer: We do not. We bring to the next physical life the powers we have gained since leaving the last one. The mental plane life is a period of assimilation and the soul returns from it with new powers not previously possessed. These new powers are the physical and astral plane experiences transmuted into faculty somewhat as a given quantity of food is, in time, assimilated and becomes new power for use in the visible world.

"I would like to see an answer to the enclosed clipping in the AMERICAN THEOSOPHIST. I had the impression that all New Thought people accepted reincarnation."

Answer: Your impression is wrong, but it is to be hoped that most of them who do reject it have better reasons than those expressed in the clipping. Mr. W. says that he spent three weeks with an alleged occultist and became convinced that nobody knows anything about reincarnation! It is simply not worth while arguing with such people. It would be equally sensible for Mr. W. to spend three weeks with somebody who pretended to be an electrician, but was not, and then to proclaim that electricity is a delusion and that because that alleged electrician was a fraud, there is none genuine in the world. But it would prove nothing

against the hypothesis of reincarnation if Mr. W.'s host had been a genuine occultist and still Mr. W. came away unconvinced. Mr. W. might visit Marconi three weeks, or three years, and then not understand wireless telegraphy. But that would not disturb any of us who do . . .

PROPAGANDA NOTES

On March 28 James I. Wedgwood delivered a lecture at St. Mary's Hall, Welwyn, England, on "Man Visible and Invisible," illustrating his discourse with colored drawings.

The Boston Theosophical Book Concern is the latest addition to the agencies for distributing occult literature to the public, and we cannot have too many such centers. The address is 102 Huntington Avenue. Placing books with dealers who retail to the public is to be made a specialty.

Since leaving New York Mr. C. Jinarajadasa has filled engagements in Washington, Philadelphia, Norfolk and Baltimore. His itinerary for the immediate future is as follows: Syracuse, N. Y., April 28 to May 4; Rochester, N. Y., May 5 to 24; Buffalo, N. Y., May 25 to 31; Cleveland, O., June 1 to 8; Detroit, Mich., June 8 to 15.

J. H. Talbot has succeeded in raising a fund in Boston, amounting to date to nearly \$80 for the purpose of placing theosophical books in the public libraries and has secured donations of thirty or forty books besides. Such books once put into the libraries may do good work there even long after the donors have passed from physical life.

As a result of the lectures given in four English towns under direction of the Harrogate Propaganda Committee, as noted in the April number of this magazine, four study groups have been established in the Midlands. One of the lecturers writes that the public showed keen interest and a real hunger for Theosophy, while the classes formed have the spirit of enthusiasm so necessary to real progress.

At the New Thought convention recently held in Boston the chairman, Rev. Martin Kellogg Schermerhorn, paid a tribute to the unselfishness of theosophical workers. He said that while in the New Thought movement many of the leaders were doing good volunteer work the theosophists were setting the world a most remarkable example of devotion in the enormous amount of work being carried on throughout the world.

What are you doing in your vicinity in the way of propaganda work? There are so many ways in which something can be done to give others the light that whoever really has the desire to do it can find the way even though he must work entirely alone. There is no Theosophist who cannot at least talk to a broad-minded acquaintance on the subject and keep a couple of elementary books in circulation. "An Outline of Theosophy" is admirable for such work.

Mrs. Mary L. Dunn, who has been doing most successful class work with the groups brought together by the lectures at New York and Newark, recently obtained a charter for a new Branch in the latter city. It begins with nine charter members and has the spirit that indicates a successful career, like the new Central Lodge of the former city. That Lodge is now several months old, has just admitted three new members, and it is said that its average attendance is above two-thirds of its membership. That speaks most eloquently of its quality. We too often find the Lodge attendance a minority of the membership.

WORK IN THE FIELD

I have been wondering if one reason why Boston is "the Hub" is because every cult on earth has its spoke here. At least so it seems to a stranger who runs a casual eye over the list of attractions at Huntington Chambers, offered to the heedless public that troops past its inviting doors. Boston is the great think center. There is everything from the very brannewest New Thought to any old thought you ever heard of. I have met every shade and texture of thought from that of the man who can tell you how to absorb electric life from the atmosphere (at five dollars per lesson, nothing less than five lessons, and he gets pupils by the score!) to that of the good old orthodox interpretation of the scriptures preached by the Salvation captains; for during the tea that followed my lecture to the Metaphysical Club, on reincarnation, a dear old lady took me to task for my heresies, and I learned that a purely materialistic interpretation of the fall of man, the cross and the resurrection, is still championed as ardently in Boston as on the plantations in Arkansas. But it must be said that the valiant old lady constituted a hopeless minority and I left her with a dozen of her own sex making it most interesting for her on the subject of Jonah and the whale.

Intellect is said to be the separative principle but in this, also, Boston appears to be a law unto itself; for among the theosophical students the social side is unusually well developed. The thought forms of the Boston theosophists must resemble a huge, "glad" hand, and their doors swing open upon the wanderer's approach. There is an air of cheerful, whole-hearted hospitality that perhaps belongs to New England exclusively, for it has a subtle quality that is different from the more formal kind of the Southern States and also from the less formal variety of the West. Not a home thus far visited is without its open fireplace of blazing logs—that time-honored center of good cheer which, like the wild birds, is slowly disappearing before the advance of our unromantic civilization. Two receptions and some other social kindnesses here have broken the monotony of the usual round in the field where no theosophists live.

Two courses of lectures were arranged for Boston. The first, of five lectures, was given in Metaphysical Hall to audiences averaging probably from 150 to 200 people. I do not believe that because one speaks in the hall of a certain club he will therefore have most of the members of that club in the audience. Some of them do come but it was noticeable that on the regular weekly club day there was a considerably different audience and, notwithstanding the club rule of twenty-five cents admission on that particular day, to all who are not members, there was a crowded house. To what extent they have been interested in Theosophy it is impossible to guess but evidently sufficient interest was aroused to make them want more for they bought the printed lectures more readily than most audiences. But they did not take to the books.

The second course of six lectures was arranged for Huntington Chambers Hall in the same building. This is an elegant little hall with 340 seats on the main floor, and a small balcony besides. In location and appointments it is the nearest approach, yet encountered, to the San Francisco Academy of Sciences where I filled some pleasant engagements two years ago. At the moment of writing the lectures in this hall have begun, opening to an audience of about 350 people. There is one peculiarity about the Boston audience that has not been found in any other place; they *will not* buy books. They buy the published lectures quite as heavily as any other audiences, but no sort of an enticing announcement of "An

Outline of Theosophy" or "Man and His Bodies," our two favorites for the public, will induce them to look at them. At first I thought it must be because of some unknown idiosyncrasy of the Metaphysical Club environment, but it is just the same with the larger audience in the second course. Where we would ordinarily have put a hundred books into circulation we have here put out nine!

To-day an invitation came from the New Thought Alliance of Cambridge to deliver a lecture in the university town. If an engagement can be arranged that will not cause too much loss of time it will be filled early in May and then Utica, N. Y., will be the next point. It is said to have no theosophical activities of any kind and it is large enough to know better and deserves a kindlier fate. Those of our readers who have friends there who would possibly be interested in the lectures are requested to write them. If the names and addresses of such persons are sent to the office of the AMERICAN THEOSOPHIST a copy of the syllabus giving the dates of the lectures there will be mailed to them.

L. W. ROGERS.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

In the June number of the AMERICAN THEOSOPHIST will appear a contribution by Irving S. Cooper on "The Necessity for Death." Mr. Cooper is one of the able young men now coming to the front in public work on the Pacific Coast. We shall hear more from him in the future through this magazine.

Miss Hilda Hodgson-Smith, of Harrogate, England, who has done some excellent work as a lecturer in that country, and who has enjoyed unusual opportunities for the study of occultism, is preparing for this magazine a series of articles which we venture to predict will be of unusual interest. Among the subjects are "The Human Aura," "Clairvoyance and Clairaudience," "Telepathy" and "Methods of Psychic Development." The first contribution from her pen will appear at an early date.

The difficulties of editing a magazine while constantly traveling are not a few and it is perhaps not strange that, until we get settled down to established working order, programs as outlined are liable to disarrangement. It has been found necessary to hold over until the June number some matter announced to appear in May.

UNTIL the AMERICAN THEOSOPHIST has secured a number of subscribers equal to one-half the number of copies of each issue printed it cannot be admitted to the mails as second-class matter and must pay postage on each copy mailed. There are other reasons why it is desirable to secure quickly the first few hundred subscribers. Therefore, if you know of people who would undoubtedly be interested in such a magazine please send in their names and a free sample copy will be mailed to them. But do not send the name of anybody unless you have reason to believe he will be really interested. Only a limited number of free copies can be sent out each month.

VEGETARIAN RECIPES

CURRIED RICE.

1 cup rice; 1 small onion; half a green pepper, or 2 stalks celery; 2 teaspoons curry powder; 4 tablespoons olive oil; piece of butter the size of walnut; 1 pint milk; salt.

Wash the rice and put it into 1 pint of cold water in a sauce pan. Add the onion sliced, the pepper sliced or celery and the olive oil and salt (about a level teaspoon), place over fire and cook until rice absorbs the water. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking, then add the pint of milk, the curry and butter. Mix well, cook slowly until tender and milk is absorbed. It should cook three-quarters of an hour.

(a) PROTOSE.

Protose is a meat substitute, made by the Battle Creek Sanitarium people. It is very good cooked in almost any way that meat may be cooked. Comes in cans.

(b) PROTOSE STEW.

2 slices protose $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick; 2 onions, 1 tomatoe; 2 or 3 potatoes; 1 small green pepper or turnips and carrots.

Cut each slice of protose into six or eight pieces, place in sauce pan together with all the vegetables, also sliced or cut in chunks as for stew. Add from a pint to a quart of water, according to quantity of vegetables. Cook slowly 1 hour. Boil it down until liquor is dark and somewhat thick.

ALMOND SNOW.

1 quart milk; $\frac{3}{4}$ cup blanched almonds; 1 cup sugar; 4 tablespoons cornstarch; whites of 2 eggs; lemon or vanilla flavoring.

Put milk and sugar into double boiler; when it reaches boiling point stir in the cornstarch (previously made into smooth thin paste with cold water). Stir thoroughly and constantly until the whole is evenly thick. It should be very stiff; if necessary add more cornstarch. Cook 10 or 15 minutes. Chop almonds (coarse) and stir in. Add flavoring. Beat whites of eggs stiff and add slowly, stirring vigorously until equally mixed throughout. Pour into mould to cool. Serve cold with cream.

This pudding contains approximately 12% albumen.

FROM BEHIND THE WALLS

The article "Theosophy in Prisons," which appears in this number of this magazine, is written by a young man who came into a knowledge of theosophic teaching through the work of a member of the Society who, a few years ago, made it her mission to visit various prisons and talk to the prisoners. Later she was presented, by some benevolent people, with a number of the printed lectures of the editor of this magazine, who was at the time lecturing in that vicinity. These were put into circulation among the prisoners and led to a correspondence between the author of the article mentioned above and the editor, with the result that the article was secured for publication. It is published exactly as written, without the alteration of a word or letter, and may serve to give some of our readers a new conception about prisoners. In the "Extracts from Cheering Letters" the one declining a free copy and sending a two year's subscription is from the same young man.

WHEN sending in subscriptions to the AMERICAN THEOSOPHIST please write names and addresses with care. Many people are in the habit of writing their names so rapidly that it is next to impossible to decipher them. One can usually determine by the context what a badly written word is but names, streets and numbers when carelessly written are hopeless puzzles, and unless they are correctly entered on the books there can be no certainty of prompt and accurate delivery.

EXTRACTS FROM CHEERING LETTERS

The spirit in which the AMERICAN THEOSOPHIST is being received may best be judged by a few extracts from letters received. As some of the writers may be too modest to enjoy seeing their names in print, a well-known theosophical prejudice, initials only are used.

"The AMERICAN THEOSOPHIST is a splendid magazine to recommend to beginners, which I shall take care to do."—A. K.

"Success to you and the magazine. Enclosed find draft for ten dollars to help along. I shall send you some subscribers later."—W. M. P.

"The copy of your new publication was received with enthusiasm, and I predict success for it in every particular, though of course, the greatest success will be in the amount of good it will do. Before your letter advising me that it was a free copy arrived I had determined to enter my subscription for a couple of years, and do not see any reason why I should not cleave to my determination. The venture is one deserving of the support of every theosophist, and each "dead-head" carried by a publication, unless there is reciprocity, is a drag, especially when the periodical is in its swaddling clothes. So I am enclosing \$2, for which please enter my name for two years' subscription."—*

"If you could only know how opportune was the arrival of the AMERICAN THEOSOPHIST I am sure you would feel well repaid for sending it. I had just learned that two of my neighbors had lied about me, oh, so wickedly! I was completely upset to think that anybody really thought such things and were telling them to others. * * * In an endeavor to forget the matter I picked up your magazine and the first thing my eye fell upon was: 'It is of far less importance what people think us to be than what we really are. The good opinion that every man should most eagerly desire is his own.' Your timely aphorism was just what I needed. I then read the magazine through and am delighted to know it can be had every month."—M. E. K.

"Your magazine is good, indeed, and should meet the needs of the people. * * * Our heartiest congratulations on the good work you are doing."—M. P.

"* * * and I wish you the greatest success with the magazine. I believe it will be of much assistance to my husband who is just becoming a student of Theosophy through your lectures here."—L. S. S.

"I am very glad you have started such a magazine. Perhaps it will interest you to know that as a result of hearing two or three of your lectures at Newark (it was difficult for me to come), I have bought and read, besides what I purchased at the lectures, the seven manuals, Ancient Wisdom, The Invisible Helpers, Elements of Theosophy, Thought Power, and a number of pamphlets. I am now going over them again with a friend."—L. M. H.

"The AMERICAN THEOSOPHIST cannot fail to reach a great many people who would otherwise not be brought into the scope of theosophical thought. Every one of your fellow members should regard it as a duty and pleasure to lend you active service, for in the publication we see a means of powerful propaganda."—H. T. F.

"It is immense! I can see that in time you will be talking through the magazine to thousands of people who would not otherwise be reached."—J. H. T.

THOSE of our readers who desire a magazine that is a veritable mine of occult information should have *The Theosophist*, edited by Mrs. Annie Besant and published at Adyar, India. The price is \$3 a year and we will gladly forward orders for our readers. While it is essentially a student's magazine those just coming into a knowledge of Theosophy need not fear that it will be incomprehensible to them. It has much of great value to all classes of readers.

THE "AMERICAN THEOSOPHIST"

From various parts of the country are coming expressions of good will for the infant AMERICAN THEOSOPHIST, and warm letters of congratulation for the editor. A common expression is, "I have been hoping somebody would attempt such an enterprise. We greatly need just such a magazine." These writers have invariably sent in subscriptions for themselves and sometimes for others, and have pledged their assistance in bringing the magazine to the attention of still others and thus extending its circulation.

We are keenly alive to the value of such active good will, and finding it quite impossible amidst the pressing daily duties to write more than the briefest acknowledgment of such letters, we take this method of expressing our gratitude. To establish a magazine to teach elementary Theosophy, with no Society to back it, and with only a very few thousand people in the nation who are even acquainted with the subject, is not a thing to be lightly undertaken. Having had many years of experience in editing and managing class publications we know something of the difficulties to be overcome in getting such a periodical firmly established and fully appreciate the fact that there are years of hard work ahead. Some kinds of publications can readily command from the beginning an advertising patronage that sustains them, but of course a magazine of this kind cannot. It must depend for some time entirely upon its subscription receipts to meet its expenses. And so it is understandable enough that every friend who induces another to subscribe is rendering a really valuable service. It is now, in its infancy, that such kindly assistance is most effective.

While the AMERICAN THEOSOPHIST is designed to teach elementary Theosophy and to thus fill a field that has never been touched, at least in this country, it must not be supposed that it will be of interest only to those who are just coming into a knowledge of occultism. Aside from its specialty as a propaganda worker the magazine will always contain matter that will be of more or less value to the older students, and contributions will appear from time to time that no student of Theosophy can afford to miss.

For a time the magazine will remain at its present size. As there is no intention or desire to make it pay a profit, as soon as the receipts exceed the expenses space will be increased and improvements made.

SUBSCRIBERS are requested to give prompt notice of any change of address so that the magazine may reach them without the delays and uncertainties involved in forwarding printed matter.

THE editor of the AMERICAN THEOSOPHIST will be grateful to any of the readers who will, from time to time, send in clippings of matter on occultism, whether it is something that may be in the nature of news, or suitable for reprint, or only useful as a suggestion.