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CONSCIOUSNESS

BY CALVIN LOUIS CURTIS

What is consciousness? This query was recently put by the writer to some scores of persons, many of whom are above the average in intelligence. The majority of the persons thus addressed had no definite opinion, never having given the subject any consideration. The minority were a unit in thinking consciousness a function, factor, attribute or aspect of the mind alone. Since consciousness shapes our acts by day and guides our wandering steps by night it concerns us more nearly than does the location of the North Pole, the density of the ether or the size of the atom, hence it may justly claim our careful study and consideration. The following thoughts are merely tentative, proffered as a possible stimulus to truth seekers rather than as the ultimate truth itself. Let us reason together in amity not to convict others of error but to get nearer the truth ourselves.

Consciousness is a unit; the outward aspect of the one life, manifesting through matter as a multiplicity. Wherever exists an atom of matter there also exists conscious life. The mote dancing in the sunbeam, the lily nodding in the breeze, the sage conning the starry heavens, the worlds circling in space, the mighty force that guides them—all these are but aspects of the one conscious life made manifest.

The term consciousness, awareness, implies duality of knowing, which in man, at least, becomes self-consciousness,—that is, he is aware of the self and the not-self and of relations existing between them. Every adaptation of an entity to its environment or to a purpose is a display of awareness, an act toward a desired end. Therefore physical acts may not be, in fact usually are not the result of psychosis. It must be remembered that every atom of matter, every cell, every organ, every body is a separate medium for the display of cosmic consciousness, limited only by the quality of the matter through which it manifests; dense, coarse matter responding but feebly to the imprisoned life force. Thus it appears in different grades of matter on the same plane and on the various planes of being in entirely different degrees of manifestation, but on all planes in a triplicity of aspects. On the material plane—in which for brevity we include the intermediary plane, the astral as manifested on the physical—it appears as desire, sensation and action; on the mental plane as choice, discrimination and cognition; on the higher planes as will, wisdom and activity.

The material plane is the only one on which we work self-consciously, not one in a million being self-conscious on the higher planes. Consciousness manifesting on the material plane may be classified as physical or sub-consciousness, mental or waking-consciousness, and spiritual or super-physical consciousness. The last distinguishes man from the animal creation. The first, however, is the dominating principle in the lives of the mass of humanity. So true is this that the average man considers mind—

if he ever thinks of it—as a sort of bodily appendage, and phenomena from the higher planes as chimeras—unreal figments of the fancy. He little realizes that the body and the mind are separate, distinct vehicles used by the ego for its development on the different planes of being.

Whilst every cell in the body has its own conscious life, the sympathetic system, the great storehouse of physical experience, is the primary seat of physical consciousness, but the cerebro-spinal system is also utilized by it. Waking consciousness is consciousness working on the astral and the mental planes using the brain as its medium of manifestation on the physical plane. Spiritual consciousness is consciousness working on planes other and higher than the mental plane and not using the brain as its medium of manifestation on the physical plane. In fact it must in some way be detached from the conscious physical organism in order to manifest on this plane.

Sleep is the most common way in which this occurs and dreams the most usual mode of manifestation. Trance conditions, complete concentration and anesthesia are other means employed. This phase of consciousness asserts itself in vision, premonitions, warnings, glimpses of supernormal artistic beauty, flashes of genius, and in many ways that we have been wont to consider unreal and fanciful. In this state of consciousness the intelligence is quickened, the memory awakened and extended and various and varied new phenomena experienced.

Under the direction of the physical consciousness are performed the vital functions of the body. From it spring blind passion, anger, hate, lust, and selfishness. In grosser organisms uncontrolled by the Higher Self it becomes a veritable demon of destruction in the gratification of its desires. The cruelty of a Borgia, the excesses of a Cleopatra, the rapacity of a Rockefeller are but examples of physical consciousness run riot. It knows no law but fear, no restraint but brute force, no limitation but satiety. In moments of extreme bodily excitation or by long continued gratification of its gross appetites it becomes detached from the influences of the higher planes, degenerating into the monsters sometimes seen in human form.

The character of every individual corresponds to the nature of its physical consciousness. This statement at first sight may seem to smack of materialism, but upon closer inspection will be found a truism. The degree of development of the ego determines not only the environment of the new incarnation, but also the quality of the material to be builded into its bodies on the various planes of being. The permanent atoms enmeshed in the golden life-web of the ego, brought over from the previous incarnation, at the dissolution of the bodies on the various planes, become magnets attracting to themselves on their own planes matter of a similar quality for the upbuilding of the bodies for the new incarnation. Thus the previous lives of the ego determine its present state of development as well as the quality of matter composing its bodies in this incarnation. Were this the end of the tale, unhappy indeed would be the condition of man. What we call evil is ever transitory; good is eternal. Inherent in every human being is the potential power to resist and overcome these inherited tendencies to evil, and live a life of sweetness and light. To do this it is necessary to give heed to the still small voice as it whispers in the silence. It will point out the path do we but follow it in faith and singleness of purpose. It will say, "Kill out desire; but if thou killest it take heed lest from the dead it shall again arise."

Thus it will be seen that poor humanity is not left unaided to the wiles of the "flesh and the devil." From above comes a never failing stream of

sweetness and light to illumine our wavering steps and solace our dreary way. Our bodies are the veiled temples, limiting its radiance and obscuring its glory. So we should hold them sacred, for the kingdom of God is within us.

If we would realize this divine radiance more clearly we must fashion our bodies of finer clay. This must be done by right living, by helpful thoughts, by loving words, by deeds of kindness. Some of the molecules of our bodies change at every breath and the quality of those to replace them is determined by our daily lives. Vicious thoughts and habits, anger, passion, hate and lust supply a base material for these renewals so the temples become more opaque and lusterless. Love, sympathy, compassion, tenderness build in finer material which uplifts the veil obscuring the divine light.

THE HUMAN AURA

BY HILDA HODGSON-SMITH

Of all the subjects which the researches of theosophists and occultists have introduced to the modern world none is of greater interest or has more fascinating possibilities than that which deals with the human aura.

From the investigations of such clairvoyants we learn that every one possesses this subtle emanation,—this luminous aura which, though invisible to the ordinary run of men, is yet capable of being seen by sensitives and psychics with varying degrees of clearness. Generally speaking the aura is the expression of those subtler aspects of human consciousness which are no less real than the material body through which they play. The thoughts, feelings, aspirations and desires of each of us find their appropriate expression in this aura which is seen surrounding the dense physical body like a semi-luminous cloud in which definite colors are present.

Although the power to completely and fully study the aura and compare the colors of one aura with those of another and to trace the relation between the colors and the various qualities of character of which they are the expression, is a rare power possessed only by the trained occultist, yet many persons occasionally see flashes of color or cloudy emanations circling around their friends and the testimony as to the real existence of the aura and the fact that its colors have a scientific meaning is growing steadily day by day. Most certainly it would seem, the presence of these auric radiations was believed in by the seers of old, and we still find in the sacred pictures and frescoes of saints and holy men of the Christian, and other faiths, circles of gold depicted around the head, as an indication of the spirituality and wisdom of the man. Possibly it was because there were those living who could see this aura—more plainly visible around the head than elsewhere—that the saints were thus represented.

The aura of most men does not extend more than from six inches to one foot outside the material body, but in the case of one who is spiritually developed and in whom the larger consciousness has unfolded, the aura would be proportionally greater and the physical form occupy a relatively insignificant position in the center. In reality this finer matter of our invisible nature interpenetrates the solid, liquid and gaseous matter of our bodies, as well as extends beyond the limits of the dense body, but it is not so readily visible to the clairvoyant in the former case.

Probably many will have experienced a "sensing" of the nature and quality of the aura of another where direct vision is not yet present. We

sometimes feel a sense of disharmony and uneasiness when we sit near some one or on the other hand we feel at our ease and in a restful condition and this may well be due to the fact that our auras are literally interpenetrating when we are close to other people and, occasionally, where we meet one of antagonistic magnetism, neither party enjoys the proximity; whereas in other cases the auric emanations are harmonious.

There is no doubt that this sensitiveness to psychic influences is increasing; we realize that the subtle atmosphere that each brings with him is the most essential characteristic thing about him, and if we are to wisely walk along the path of future development and rightly unfold the hidden powers within, then it is necessary for us to have some knowledge as to the nature and possibilities of the invisible man.

Theosophical investigators have made many researches in this domain and it is just on this account that a knowledge of theosophy is so valuable. It is a lamp to light our footsteps through a new domain. The first thing that the occultist tells us about the aura is that it has different layers; that just as we find in the physical body a muscular system, a respiratory system, an arterial system, a nervous system, each fulfilling its special function, so in the invisible nature of man there are different layers of the aura, each having its special work to perform.

More nearly allied to the physical body and closely connected with all its vital functions is the health aura, or etheric double, which interpenetrates the denser physical matter and has as its peculiar work the receiving of the life-force from the sun—which occultists teach is a great reservoir of vital energy—and the specialization of the same for the maintenance of the body. This life-force can be seen by the clairvoyant as a rosy glow circulating throughout the nervous system and radiating forth, after its work is done, in a fringe-like manner from the peripheries of the bodies, at the pores of the skin. In health a person will specialize more of the life-force than he needs for his own use and consequently will ray it out from his body and may invigorate others whose vitality at the moment is low. It is when, through some disorganization in the body, anyone is unable to specialize sufficient vital energy, that his health aura presents the feeble appearance that at times has been observed. The life-force no longer rays out from the body and the lines of force have now the appearance of resembling that of the long wet hairs of a shaggy dog. In such a condition a person is very liable to take any disease; for he has no force to repel microbes and disease germs from settling upon him. It is this same etheric double which is used for materialization in seances and a very slight extension of vision will bring it within the observation of man.

The second layer of the aura is that which expresses the desires, feelings and emotions of the man. It is often called by theosophists and others the astral body and, in a later article, will be indicated some of the powers and possibilities locked up within it. The third layer expresses the mental qualities and is spoken of as the mental body; and since mind and feeling are so closely allied, and thought is nearly always accompanied by emotion, it will be more convenient to deal with these two layers together.

The appearance of this inner nature, as seen by the clairvoyant, is of an ovoid form, full of various colors, which are cloudy and muddy in hue or clear and translucent according to the stage of development, morally and mentally, of the one observed. Every color in the aura means the presence of a certain mental or moral characteristic. Thus, yellow always indicates intellect, blue devotion, brown selfishness, rose affection, scarlet anger, black malice, gray depression, etc. A certain pale apple green represents affec-

tion, but there is another green often present in the aura, much more vivid though duller and muddier of hue, which means jealousy. Many of the qualities which have colors to represent them are mixed with the brown of selfishness, showing that many of our characteristics are at present tinged with self-interest.

Each person's aura has a normal state in which it is usually seen but under any sudden emotion or powerful thought the whole aura becomes for the moment transfused with the particular color, or colors, of which the given emotion or thought partakes. Thus, a sudden feeling of love would flush the aura for the time with a lovely rose hue, but as the emotion subsides the color would fade out and leave the aura apparently as before. But the careful investigator has found that there is a slight difference—a slight increase in that color in the aura of which the sudden emotion partook. Thus, in the instance given, the outcome would be a little strengthening of the rose hue in the aura,—an increased capacity for love.

Thus we see that in reality this invisible nature is steadily undergoing change. Every thought we give birth to, every motion that we give rise to, has an effect on this invisible nature, increasing our tendencies in various directions whether we will or not. So thought and feeling are seen to be real factors and to have an actual power in building character, and responsibility for *what* we think is consequently realized. And when, as we pursue this theosophical study and learn something of the condition that awaits us on the other side of death, we learn that the nature of the life that we shall each of us enjoy in that world is dependent on the nature of our thoughts and desires here; then it is seen to be of increasing importance that we should have a fair and clean inner life. The inner nature of thought and feeling and aspiration is more fundamental than the outward act. An old Eastern scripture has said: "What a man thinks on, that does he become," and it is because all action is eventually the outcome of the state of the thought and feeling present in this invisible aura that the theosophist insists so much on the importance of right thought and desire.

PHILOSOPHICAL FRAGMENTS

BY F. MILTON WILLIS

POWER OF DEFINITE THOUGHTS

To name a vice is to give it a greater life; to form definite thoughts of grievances is to perpetuate them; and pessimism, the cataloguing of our woes and short-comings, is the mother of incubi.

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CRIME THE ERROR OF INFANCY

John Bunyan remarked on seeing a criminal being led to jail: "But for the grace of God, there goes John Bunyan." He realized his own defects and probably instinctively recognized in the criminal a soul like himself in-the-making. Such is undoubtedly the case: Every criminal is even a Christ in-the-making.

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WORLD-PATRIOTISM

Let the teachers of the young instill into the minds of their pupils a reverence for the flag, to be sure, and the national patriotism that springs

from the sense of the nation's fostering care, the patriotism that keeps the nation on the line of its peculiar growth and development, but let them beware lest, by the undue rousing of national pride, they inculcate the spirit of separateness, of prejudice, and annul thus the forces working for peace and harmony; let them rather strive, as they so successfully can—by calling attention to the fact that nations develop along different lines and that each has its own proper place in the family of nations—to breed in the minds of the youth a spirit of tolerance and brotherhood, and make of them world-citizens, world-patriots, workers for the good of all.

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PRAYER AND REPENTANCE

Prayer, that intimately personal experience in which the suppliant seems at times to commune with God, is the brightening of his torch at the wondrous light within, the touching to new life of the enfeebled and wavering heart at the fountain of love within; it is the slowing down of the outer energies, the placing of the external self, the personality, into such an attitude of humility and reverence that, for the time, he escapes from its dominating activities into his real or higher self, his soul, in which the partial and the untrue are exceeded and forgotten, and he glimpses the inspiring true and real, the ever-shining ideal.

Repentance, that other intimately personal experience, with its heart-rending prayer and the holy calm of the prayer's fulfillment, is the comprehension of the deed in the light of the divine ideal and the cleansing of the tarnished personality at the well of mercy within.

Prayer and repentance and their effect, are indeed our own activity and its reaction upon us. The abounding, unchanging grace of God is inseparable from Him as the spiritual light, the true and real, the infinite love and mercy, the ideal—our own spirit, for the self of the universe and the self of man are one and the same.

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OBSERVATION

A great teacher has well expressed in the following words some truths that should be generally realized:

“The first requisite for competent thinking is attentive and accurate observation. The second requisite is receptivity and tenacity in the mental body, the power of yielding quickly to impressions and of retaining them when made. In proportion to the attention and accuracy of the Knower's observation and the receptivity and tenacity of his mental body, will be the rapidity of his evolution, the speed at which his latent potencies become active powers.”

In regard to observation, the following story has been going the rounds of the press:

An old Scotch professor of psychology one day remarked to his class: “Gentlemen, the vast majority of men do not observe accurately, and you, my young friends, are no exception to that rule.” Pausing and looking quizzically around the room at the smiles of incredulity, he presently went on: “To illustrate this, I have here, gentlemen, a glassful of a certain liquid. Please to notice: I put my finger into it thus. I put my finger into my mouth thus. I withdraw my finger thus. Now, young gentlemen with the eagle eyes, I pass you the glass, and I wish you to accurately imitate my actions.” And with a bland smile he handed the glass to the nearest man. The latter

held the glass up and went through what he believed to be the exact sequence of actions, which had been somewhat fantastic. On withdrawing his finger from his mouth, however, he involuntarily shivered and made many ludicrous grimaces. During the experiment the professor looked on sardonically. At its conclusion he remarked: "Now what did I tell you? You did not observe. I put this (the first) finger into the nasty liquid, and this (the second) into my mouth, and I withdrew it with a smile, and I am still smiling, my friends."

If we are to reason correctly, we must observe accurately; and the practice of accurate observation leads to a continual increase of responsiveness. In this connection let us remind ourselves that everything that is in the mind of the Ruler of our Solar System is about us at all times, playing upon us in the shape of vibrations from all the planes of nature. How much of this we can receive depends upon the acquired responsiveness of our physical and superphysical bodies—the stage of our evolution. "What we need for growth," it has been well said, "is not a change without us, but a change within us"—a heightening of our receptivity; and this is accomplished in great part by the practice of attentive observation and one-pointed concentration. "Everything is already given us, but we have to develop the capacity to receive."

THE DEEPER MEANING OF SOME POPULAR BELIEFS

By L. W. ROGERS

Thousands of good Christians have been sorely perplexed by the fact that the Bible stories they learned when children, and accepted with perfect confidence as the literal truth, lose their consistency and dignity when the years of reason and discrimination are reached, and that much of what they had accepted without question now appears either entirely meaningless or altogether absurd. There is an intuitive feeling that in some way there must be something important to humanity in these ancient stories and yet the reason rises in rebellion against their apparent conflict not only with modern science but also with our highest conceptions of human morality; for the story of the Garden of Eden, with its Adam and Eve from whom the human family, as it now stands with its various races, is said to have sprung is no less at war with all scientific ideas of evolution than the notion of vicarious atonement, with its horror of a crucifixion to appease an angry God, with its shifting of the sins of a race upon one heroic soul, is abhorrent to the sense of moral justice and the ideal of manly responsibility.

Against the commonly accepted interpretation of these things the reason of many thoughtful people revolts and, seeing no deeper than the letter of the text, they drift into a mild sort of skepticism or decline to think of the matter at all. A different type of mind strenuously opposes all efforts to harmonize the biblical stories with a scientific conception of human evolution, declaring its ability to "believe everything in the Bible just as it is written" and evidently having a sort of contempt for those of weaker "faith." It was this type of mind that drew from a caustic critic the remark that their manner led one to the conclusion that they not only could accept literally the story that the whale swallowed Jonah but that they evidently regretted that the story had not been to the effect that Jonah swallowed the whale, so that they might show their wealth of "faith" by believing that also! With that type of mind we are not concerned. But the person who seeks an explanation that harmonizes what is apparently ancient fable with what is certainly modern truth will find in theosophy the key to the riddle.

To change fable into fact and the ridiculous into the sublime it is only necessary to get away from the foolish notion that a strictly material interpretation of words conveys their spiritual significance, and to search beneath the surface for the esoteric meaning. This esoteric meaning can scarcely escape the earnest student for he finds upon investigation that it is an old, old story, told in the various religions of the world and in many languages,—a great theme running through the literature and symbology of widely separated civilizations. These old stories are but slight variations of one story and this story is, when rightly understood, not an empty tale to amuse children nor the ignorant effort of our barbarian ancestors to account for the origin of the race, but a picture in outline of human evolution as it is, and for ages has been, going forward. It is an explanation in the rough of natural processes, both cosmic and individual, as true to the facts of modern science as it is stimulating to moral progress.

The grand drama that has for its theme the production of a universe is presented in part in many different ways but the one story of the cross and its incidents typifies both the involution of spirit into matter, or the descent of and Logos, and the involution and evolution of the monad,—the evolution of the individual soul. For the Logos to descend into matter, to assume form, is a sacrifice, a limitation. Matter is the cross upon which this crucifixion occurs. The descent into matter is the involution of the cosmic consciousness. But this involution is followed by evolution, the triumphant rising of spirit again through matter; in other words its resurrection. Now, what is true of God Himself is true of the sons of God, the divine sparks, the monads, the egoes. In a smaller cycle they follow the same process. There is the involution of the individualized portion of the cosmic consciousness until it reaches the lowest point in matter, the limit of its "fall." Then begins its evolution, upward through the mineral, the vegetable and the animal kingdoms, up through the human consciousness and finally on into the spiritual consciousness, not completing its journey until it returns to the source from which it sprang, carrying with it the essence of all the experiences through which it has passed. Always there are cycles within cycles, and just as the vast experience of the monad falls within that of the Logos so does the human cycle fall within that traced by the monad, as the experience of a year falls within the experience of a lifetime. And the human evolution of the ego also has its cycles, a most dramatic one being the experience passed through in those incarnations that are included in the life of the initiate. This is the period when the human is changing into the divine; when the crucifixion of the lower nature is completed. Of this climax of the transmutation of the lower into the higher the story of the cross is a true history of the experiences through which the soul is passing. That the vivid description should have been taken literally by modern generations as the exact physical experience of the Saviour of the Christian religion is not strange when we remember that in this particular case the physical body was destroyed by the intolerant and fanatical mob.

The popular belief is that the crucifixion was the sacrifice of the physical life of Jesus in order that the race might escape the consequences of their sins and that through His physical suffering their own wrong doing, by some mysterious spiritual alchemy, was blotted out. The popular belief is that "atonement" for the millions was thus accomplished and that "resurrection" was the process of the triumphant spirit of Jesus walking forth in the erstwhile dead physical body. Such deductions can be reached only by a literal and material rendering of the story that wholly robs it of its moral sublimity and its cosmic grandeur. Interpreted thus literally it

gives us the picture of a great and heroic sacrifice indeed, but at the impossible price of the selfish escape of all other souls from the consequences of their own wrong acts and on the impossible hypothesis of a justice-loving God being pleased and satisfied with a ghastly tribute of blood that might consistently be said to be well calculated to please a barbarian king whose tyranny had been unsuccessfully defied by some conquered tribe. Instinctively we feel that the story as it reads must have some other meaning than the physical tragedy it recites; and when we find this story in all its essential points in the scriptures of much older religions we are on the way to its better understanding.

The tragedy of Calvary, with its betrayal of friendship, its bitterness of desertion, its mockery of triumphant enemies, its darkness of despair and its final triumphant resurrection, is the drama in which every individual soul must play the title role before his human evolution is finished and full spirituality attained. It is no more true of the various Saviours in different periods of the world's recorded history than of every other human being. It is the road all must travel, humble or great; for the humble of one age are the great of the next. In the spiritual progress and evolution of each soul there is always indeed a crucifixion,—the crucifixion of the lower nature. As the man successfully fights this battle and becomes more and more spiritually developed he encounters in some degree, even in the early stages, the pain of deserting friends, the taunts of the thoughtless, the mockery of skeptics and the darkness of uncertainty and doubt. We need only observe the life of some very good man who is unselfishly devoting himself to the service of his country, or to some altruistic movement, to understand that the forward road in evolution is beset with such experiences. As incarnations succeed each other and the ego that has slowly evolved from the savage to the enlightened man reaches the point of spiritual awakening, the Christ-spirit is dawning in him and the life of the initiate lies ahead. The stages that make up the remainder of his evolutionary journey are portrayed in the story of Jesus, a story that is, in its esoteric meaning, the history not only of the Christ and the Buddha, and other Saviours not so familiar to western nations, but also the history of the life journey of each individual who attains the full stature of spiritual manhood.

HINTS TO YOUNG STUDENTS—IV

Another matter which the student who is just entering upon the study of occultism should have well settled in his mind in the beginning is the necessity for hard work. Whoever starts out with the notion that indifferent and desultory study of the subject will carry him through is foredoomed to failure; and he who imagines that, by galloping through the literature of occultism as he would read a collection of novels, he can become an occultist will be nearly as far from his goal when he finishes as when he began. He may give to his occult studies much time or little, as he will. That is not the point. The important thing is that whether the period be several hours a day or but one hour, or even the half of it, it should be characterized by that mental energy that is the natural result of an eager desire and a steady purpose. Half-hearted work is but little better than no work. Without hard work the student's progress will be discouragingly slow. That is true of all our undertakings. Why should it not be true of occultism? The university student who makes rapid progress in law, or medicine, or mathe-

matics, or languages, is he who works hard. Genius is only the essence of hard labor. It may have been performed in a past life but that does not alter the fact. We have no faculties that we have not made and every mental effort now is determining our intellectual accomplishments of the future, as well as accelerating present progress.

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Not only should we work with wide-awake energy but we should work with persistence and regularity if we would get on. Regularity has a magic of its own. A given amount of energy put forth regularly, steadily, produces enormously more than the same amount of energy put forth irregularly, spasmodically. Let the young student set aside each day a certain time for occult studying and thinking, and permit no break in the work, and he will make gratifying progress. The difficulty of quickly getting down to work grows less and less. The art of becoming absorbed in the subject matter becomes easier and easier. Soon he finds that his hour or half-hour, as the case may be, counts in results out of all proportions to the time recorded by the clock. But let him make the mistake of giving occult studies two hours to-day, nothing to-morrow, fifteen minutes the next day, nothing more for a week, then a full day "to make up for lost time," with such future chance periods as convenience may dictate,—make it the sport of circumstance and the dependent of caprice—and a sum total of many more hours will take him a much less distance on his spiritual journey. By the first method he gets into the current of regularity and it carries him along with a sort of cumulative momentum. He is really entering upon a new moral and intellectual life,—acquiring a new viewpoint, a new standard of measures, setting up new habits of consciousness,—and a certain inertia has to be overcome. By regularity he not only gets into the new stride quickly but does not wholly lose it during the intervening hours; while by the second method he not only loses it but loses most of his study time in getting back to it. He has the inertia to overcome again and again and spends most of his time making new starts instead of making progress.

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Regularity in the study of occultism counts heavily for progress in still another way. Such study is usually taken up by the beginner after he has seen or heard something that has aroused his interest in the subject. It may be some occult experience, or a conversation with a friend, or an account of psychic phenomena in a newspaper, or a lecture on theosophy. Something has aroused a temporary interest. Now, if he sets out with plan and purpose and decides in advance that he will follow a fixed program of daily study there is a fair chance that he will acquire a permanent interest in the matter before his enthusiasm wanes. But if he has no prearranged program, and only decides to utilize for such reading and study the idle time that he may chance to have in the coming days, he is extremely likely to permit one thing after another to push aside his occult studies until his interest slowly fades out and his golden opportunity is gone. It is a golden opportunity when any human being is, by any occurrence whatever, brought into contact with occult teaching; and fortunate indeed are those who realize it and promptly act upon it. It may mean to them, at its very least, all the difference there is between many happy, useful lives and many very commonplace ones, although it may appear on the surface to be a trivial matter whether one follows up such an opportunity at once or not. Trifles at the

starting point may represent great differences further along. Two rain-drops may fall nearly together at the top of a mountain range and yet, because one strikes the eastern slope and the other the western, ultimately find their way into different oceans. Those who have a fondness for such analysis have often shown that great events have turned on the pivots of trifles. The difference between adopting a regular program for daily occult study and adopting another that is lawless and erratic is one of those apparent trifles that serves as a pivot on which a destiny may turn.

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Enthusiasm is a thing of priceless value. Somebody has defined it as the power of God made manifest in a human being. Whatever else it may be it is certainly a great motor power, a dynamic force that carries one forward and upward. The difference between a person filled with enthusiasm about occultism and another who is not is the difference between life and death. One is asleep to everything but his material surroundings. The other is awake, aroused, in touch with the life currents of the universe. The chief work of the theosophical lecturer is to arouse such enthusiasm—to so present spiritual facts to the minds that can receive them that the recognition of universal truth kindles the divine fire within. With those who have reached a certain point in evolution this flame of enthusiasm will burn steadily, however feebly, and they may fortunately walk in the light for the remainder of this incarnation. With many others it will slowly subside leaving them, however, more susceptible to future stimuli. Happy indeed is that young truth seeker who resolves upon a program of daily study and, while the flame of his new enthusiasm still burns, gets settled into the fixed habit that will carry him safely to the point where his temporary interest has become permanent.

VEGETARIANISM

The hot season is a most propitious time for talking vegetarianism. To people who dislike a meat diet it becomes particularly obnoxious in warm weather and there is a natural tendency toward the foods with the lowest caloric values. When the thermometer reaches its usual July and August records most people are quite willing to try vegetarianism and those who make a fair experiment with the cooling fruits and vegetables may at least lay the foundation for the future abolition of meat slavery. At any rate it is a good time to try it for a while.

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A thing that naturally disturbs the would-be vegetarian is a lack of knowledge about how to proceed. Suddenly ask almost any housekeeper who is not a vegetarian to cook the next dinner without meat and she feels about as helpless as if she were requested to get up a dinner without using any water and serve it without using dishes. We have been so long accustomed to making meat of some kind the very basis of our diet, and all other foods subsidiary to it, that its sudden elimination leaves the average housekeeper somewhat perplexed. Yet a little thought will show that there is an almost

inexhaustible supply of foods quite free from meat, in any form, or any of its products. With several kinds of fruits and vegetables now constantly in the market and with such substantial things as peas, lentils, beans, nuts, the various grains and dairy products, nobody who has discarded flesh foods need go hungry. As for desserts, those that have no relationship to meat are unnumbered.

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One of the good points about vegetarianism is that it tends toward simplicity in eating and that ought to appeal to all housekeepers who have had experience in working over hot ovens in hot weather and struggling afterward with the array of utensils necessary in the meat eater's kitchen. After the experimenter in vegetarianism has discovered that meat is not in the least necessary to either his health or his comfort he makes a second discovery,—that neither are a great number of things necessary to comprise a wholesome and abundant meal. Simplicity slowly establishes itself with the vegetarian. He soon finds that a couple of dishes at a time are better than many and he gets the variety that is agreeable by changing the menu frequently.

* * *

The amount of time and energy that are given to gratifying the palate in the houses of those who set great store by "good living" really represents an enormous waste of vital energies. Satisfy yourself on that point by talking with the women of the household who do their own housekeeping. After the preparation of one meal and the work that must follow it before things are in order for the next there is but a short interval before the next must be begun. It is a ceaseless round of boiling, baking and washing up for the following meal, with a certain necessary amount of thinking and planning about "what to get" for the next meal. It is a very necessary thing to keep the physical body properly fed and clothed but there is such a thing as spending one's entire time at it. Some fashionable people manage to do just that; or, more exactly speaking, manage to spend most of their own time at it and all of many other people's time. Undue attention to the appetite and the tendency to cultivate it represents the double misfortune of wasting time and energy and also establishing a most undesirable sort of bodily slavery to food. This is bad enough with any food but particularly so with a meat diet, which stimulates the desire nature and makes occult progress more difficult.

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Probably the most desirable way, as a rule, to make any change is to make it gradually. The important thing is *to make a beginning*. After that one almost unconsciously grows into progression if there is a sincere desire for the higher life. With a little care the experimenter in vegetarianism can have such an abundance and variety of food that meat will scarcely be missed. Then, slowly, without any thought or intention on his part the desire for simplicity will assert itself and he will gradually eliminate the unnecessary and find that ultimately the question of what he is to subsist upon will no longer even enter his mind. The mental energy formerly given to that will be utilized in more important directions for his permanent welfare instead of for his temporary physical gratification.

VEGETARIAN RECIPES

BAKED BEANS

1 pint dry white beans; 1 small onion; 1 teaspoon dry mustard; 1½ tablespoons lemon juice; 2 tablespoons butter; 3 tablespoons olive oil; level teaspoon salt.

Wash the beans. Put in saucepan with quart of cold water, the onion, butter and salt and boil gently for 2 hours. Mix olive oil, mustard and lemon juice together thoroughly and add to the beans when cooked. Mix well; pour into baking dish and bake 1 hour. They should be brown and crisp on top when done.

To warm over, put the beans in a frying pan with butter and fry slowly until brown on the bottom. They should be covered while frying and no water added.

TOMATO SAVORY

1 lb. tomatoes; 3 hard boiled eggs; 1 tablespoon cornstarch mixed to a paste with cream; 1 oz. butter; pepper, salt and mace

Skin the tomatoes (immerse them in boiling water and the skins remove easily), pound them up in a bowl with the yolks of the eggs; chop the whites fine and add them with the seasoning to the mixture, lastly add the thickening of cornstarch and cream. Melt the butter in a saucepan, pour in the mixture and stir until it stiffens. Then pour out into small pots or glasses and when cool pour clarified butter over top.

GRAHAM SANDWICHES

Chop olives. Add a little chopped parsley and a little finely chopped celery; mix with mayonnaise dressing to which has been added a few drops of onion juice and a very little French mustard; spread thin slices of graham bread very lightly with butter, then spread over a layer of the mixture; cover with another slice of buttered bread and cut in squares or strips.

NOTES

We are informed that Mr. A. J. Warrington (517 Colonial ave., Norfolk, Va.) and Mr. C. L. Gutmann (3291 Malden street, Chicago,) will undertake the good work of introducing the study of Esperanto to the members of the Theosophical Society. This universal language is making rapid progress in many parts of the world and is so easily learned that nobody should hesitate to attempt its acquirement. Already some conventions in Europe have been conducted in Esperanto and it is doubtless only a question of time when it will be used for the proceedings of all gatherings where more than one language is spoken.

After a most successful season the large public class for the study of theosophy, conducted by Mrs. Mary M. Dunn, as the chief activity of the new Central Lodge of New York City, closed June 8 until the autumn.

The lecture tour of Mr. C. Jinarajadasa, as he has moved westward, has been attended with the most gratifying success. In Rochester the best audiences were three hundred people and at Buffalo, the last point of which we have definite information, the opening lecture drew two hundred. After lecturing in cities previously mentioned in these columns he passed on to Grand Rapids, Muskegon and Sparta, which finished the month of June.

B. Fay Mills, the eloquent Californian, recently made a lecture tour through Duluth, Superior and Minneapolis, speaking on such subjects as "Light On the Path" and "The Opening of the Inner Senses."

Mr. Elliot Holbrook, of Kansas City, has adopted the excellent idea of combining business and theosophical work and delivering lectures at such available points as his affairs may carry him to. He has been delivering theosophical lectures in such widely separated states as Massachusetts, Kentucky and Montana.

Mr. H. H Fuller, of St. Paul, has taken up a novel idea for circulating news that has peculiar interest to members of the Theosophical Society. This consists of the monthly issue of a mimeograph letter which he calls "The Bulletin." One of its most useful features is the reference to new occult publications and occult articles in current literature—a real help to the busy theosophist who cannot find time to search for all that is being published.

IN THE FIELD

Many kinds of experience fall to the lot of a field worker who makes breaking new ground a specialty, and Utica has furnished the new sensation of a city of sixty thousand people so absorbed in material pursuits, so deeply interested in social functions, so complacently settled in various orthodox ruts and so industriously busy discovering the notes in each other's eyes that theosophy is not likely to obtain a permanent footing for some time. It was possible to get an audience of moderate size but not to arouse an interest of an abiding character. Most of those who came were but mildly interested. The book, and lecture, sales are an unfailing thermometer that registers the degree of genuine interest. Sometimes it swings from one to the other, and sometimes it is very unevenly divided between the two; but when the sale is nothing at all the deduction to be made is unmistakable. There have been, it is true, a few intensely interested people and they have worked faithfully to arouse others to interest but without result. Two or three have written articles to the newspapers telling the slumbering public that it was missing something of unique interest and real value, but in vain. Another enthusiastic lady who owned a commodious hall, well located, offered it without price for a continuance of the course and even inserted an advertisement in the newspapers announcing the lectures, but no effort seemed to arouse interest. At the moment of writing the course is not finished but it is hardly probable that the very few who have been deeply interested can form the lodge which they have expressed the hope may be established here. The audiences have been much better than in Newark, where a lodge did grow out of the work, but Newark had the good fortune to have a few who were ripe for theosophy, and who were living theosophical lives without having found a name for it, while one or two others had long ago been in the Society; and all that counts tremendously in the outcome when it comes to final results.

Utica must go down in the list of cities like Kingston and Boston, where no organizing work was attempted, and the effort reckoned as so much seed-sowing for future harvests. Through the lectures, and the fairly good reports of them made by the three daily papers, several hundred people have at least come to know something about theosophy and it may be that the class of a dozen, or more, that has been formed will ultimately grow into a branch.

Utica, June 22.

L. W. ROGERS.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"Please explain the apparent contradiction in two of Mrs. Besant's books. 'Man and His Bodies,' page 22, says: 'And so with other articles of diet, flesh of mammals, birds, reptiles and fish, * * how should bodies made of such materials be refined, sensitive,' etc. And from the 'Seven Principles of Man,' we have on page 5: 'Chemical science may well say that there is no difference between the matter which composes the ox and that which forms the man. But the occult doctrine is far more explicit. It says not only the chemical compounds are the same, but the same infinitesimal lives compose the atoms of the bodies of * * * the man and the ant, of the elephant and the tree,' etc. If this latter statement be so, how does it make any difference what we eat, whether it be flesh or vegetables, since the composition of both are absolutely the same?"

Answer: The first quotation is a statement of the fact that physical bodies differ according to the matter which is built into them and the second quotation is based upon the fact that in its final analysis all matter is one, is resolvable into a single original substance. But that has nothing to do with the truth that it is capable of a vast variety of combinations that will give totally different results. Pianos are all made of two things—wood and metal, but that does not prevent the manufacture of vastly different pianos. Bread is made of flour, water, salt and yeast, yet there are all kinds of bread. Bricks and some kinds of stone are composed of the same material, yet they differ enormously. Water consists of two elements, oxygen and hydrogen and nothing else whatever. So does peroxide of hydrogen. But for all that you would not use it to quench thirst! The difference is merely in the proportion of oxygen to hydrogen, being one to two in the first case and two to two in the second, yet what a difference in the product! Two houses may be built of bricks that are chemically the same yet upon the treatment of those bricks in their making will depend the stability and usefulness of the house. In that house of bricks properly fired there will be stability and permanence. In that house made of bricks improperly fired there will be the weakness that will result in collapse under the pressure of the first storm. The bricks are made of precisely the same material but have passed through a different process before being built into the body of the house. In flesh and in vegetables we find the same chemical atoms and yet a physical body composed of vegetable matter is a totally different thing from another composed largely of animal matter. Is it not easy to see that there is also something more than the question of chemistry involved? Is it not easy to understand that an atom in the body of a pig is in different case from a similar atom in the leaf of a rose? Is it not clear that the wild rage or terror of an animal must have a definite effect upon the matter of which its body is composed? Every emotion that sweeps through the consciousness of any living being adds to the capacity of the atoms in its body to respond to that emotion. Hence the flesh of animals must be bad food for those who desire to express only the loftier emotions.

"Why should a person who is highly developed in morality, and who has strong altruistic tendencies, be so inimical to the idea of reincarnation and the law of karma which give a reasonable and helpful explanation of life?"

Answer: Sound morality and benevolence do not necessarily include an easy comprehension of the scheme of human evolution. There are two distinct types of mind common amongst us and two paths by which they find the way forward to the same goal. One of these is the path of knowledge and the other the path of devotion. While each partakes somewhat of the other the dominant characteristic in the first is progress by knowledge and in the latter progress by the development of the heart qualities. The

