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THE RESULT OF THEOSOPHICAL STUDY

By C. W. LEADBEATER

Theosophy is not a dogma for which we demand belief, but a system of philosophy which needs to be studied. Consequently any effects which it produces are not of an emotional nature, but are the result of pure reasoning. Our study reveals to us the laws of nature, the laws under which we are living, and when we understand these it is obviously common sense to try to adapt ourselves to them and regulate our conduct intelligently in agreement with them.

When thoroughly comprehended it introduces so many changes into a man's life that it is not easy in a brief memorandum to give an idea of their extent. The best that can be done is to mention a few leading ideas.

First.—It enormously widens our outlook and gives us a broad, impersonal point of view from which to regard everything. The ordinary man looks at everything from a personal point of view; the first thing, and often the only thing, that he thinks about is how a certain occurrence is going to affect him; if he thinks of its effect on the community at large it is only as an afterthought. Theosophy teaches us that the real interests of all are in truth identical, and that no man can ever make a real gain for himself at the cost of loss or suffering to someone else.

This is not taught as a pious belief, but is proved as a scientific fact. Naturally the man who knows that to be so finds his life considerably changed, and acts very differently from those who do not yet know it.

Second.—It gives men a criterion by which they can judge every thought and every action, whether it be their own or that of someone else. We simply ask, is the act for the good of humanity, and does it help forward evolution? If it does, then it is good and to be commended; if it does not, then it is useless or harmful.

Third.—It makes the sorrows of life seem far lighter and easier to bear. When we understand that whatever sorrow or suffering comes to us is exactly what we have deserved, and is furthermore an opportunity offered to us, by the right use of which we can develop good qualities within ourselves, all our difficulties and troubles begin to take on quite a new aspect.

Fourth.—It utterly removes from us the fear of death, because it teaches us exactly what death is. We realize that death is not the "King of Terrors," but rather an angel bearing a golden key; that to die is not to take a leap into the dark unknown, but simply to pass from one state of existence into another and a higher one. We are to remember that this is not a mere matter of belief, but a definite certainty based on knowledge, and capable of being verified by each man for himself if he is willing to take the necessary trouble.

Fifth.—It teaches us the marvelous power of thought, and the serious responsibility which attends upon its use. It shows us that a man's thoughts are constantly reacting upon him, and producing the most far-reaching effects; and in addition to that they are constantly also affecting the other people as well.

Sixth.—It produces the widest tolerance, because it shows us that all religions alike are efforts to state different sides of the same great truth which lies behind them all. They may seem to be different paths, but they all lead to the same goal.

Seventh.—It gives us the deepest sympathy and the most earnest, kindly feeling towards all men, because it shows that humanity is a vast spiritual brotherhood, although as yet men know it not. In all these ways and many more theosophy entirely changes a man's conduct and his outlook on life, and it brings with it a serenity and happiness which no other knowledge can so fully afford. It asks no one to believe blindly, but it does ask men to study the system which has done so much for its followers and to live the life which it teaches.

THE OCCULTISM IN THE SHAKESPEARE PLAYS—II

By L. W. ROGERS

After *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* is apparently the most popular of the tragedies and it presents a most attractive array of occult phenomena. As in the former tragedy there is nothing incidental about this occultism. It runs consistently throughout the play. The curtain rises to it and it holds a most conspicuous position to the very end, for it is only in the last scene of the final act that the exact fulfillment of the witches' prophecy is made clear. These witches and their prophecy play a most vital part in the drama. It is they who arouse Macbeth's ambition, setting him to thinking of the possibility of gaining the crown and appealing to the worst that is in him. All that follows, until the very end, is but the working out in the visible world of events thus forecast.

It will be remembered that it is in the first scene of the first act that Macbeth and Banquo are returning victorious from the battle-field when the witches are encountered and that they hail Macbeth as thane of Cawdor, an honor the king is about to confer upon him and of which he is entirely ignorant. They couple this information with the prophecy that he is to be king of Scotland. Before he leaves the spot he learns that the first part of the prophecy has been swiftly fulfilled and he naturally has faith in the rest of it; and, his mind full of the possibility of attaining the crown, he promptly begins plotting to that end. Thus is the basis for the whole action of the play laid.

The second visit of Macbeth to the weird sisters results in prophecies accompanied with symbolical apparitions, by means of which the culminating tragedy is exactly set forth. An *armored head* appears and these words are uttered: "Macbeth, Macbeth, Macbeth, beware MacDuff!" and in the final scene, having slain his foe, MacDuff appears upon the stage with Macbeth's head upon a pole. The second and third apparition quickly follow, each exactly foreshadowing what is actually to occur. But they are misinterpreted by Macbeth, and instead of serving as a warning only give him greater confidence and confirm him in his villainy. The last one seems to

him a certain prophecy of long life. It is the apparition of a crowned child with a tree in its hand, and Macbeth hears the words:

"Macbeth shall never vanquished be, until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill
Shall come against him."

To this he replies:

"That will never be:
Who can impress the forest; bid the tree
Unfix his earth-bound root?"

His confidence in his future is now complete. He believes a long reign is ahead for him. This confidence is as conspicuous as had been his ambition to become king. Had not the weird sisters told him of his first promotion before it occurred? Had they not then truly prophesied that he would be king? Now he was being given, apparently, such unmistakable pledges of future security that he felt certain he would finally die a natural death,—would "live the lease of nature." And so, lured on by his own misinterpretation of what he had seen and heard, he went straight forward to his doom, which, to the smallest particular, fulfilled the prophecy. When the son of the murdered king, at the head of the invading army, had reached Birnam wood in the march upon the castle each soldier was ordered to cut a bough and hold it before him in order to screen the strength of the attacking party as it advanced. Thus "Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill" literally "came against him." To the very letter each separate prediction is fulfilled, even, be it remembered, to that of the descendants of Banquo occupying the throne—a verification left to history instead of to the play.

It is inconceivable that a great dramatist would construct a play, the entire first part of which is devoted to prophecies regarding the chief personage in the drama and the remainder of which is given over to the minutest fulfillment of those prophecies, unless he had a definite purpose to be accomplished by it. It is clearly impossible to call the occultism in *Macbeth* incidental. It is the foundation and the culmination. Some form of occultism is continually impressing itself upon the spectator, and it is all as true to occult principles as the characters are true to human life. Macbeth is naturally much overwrought just preceding, and after, the murder. He represents that unique condition of nerve tension common to temporary clairvoyance. In this state of mind he sees the bloody dagger in the air before him, so real that he tries to grasp it. He sees a part of the coming tragedy before it has taken place on the physical plane. After he has caused the death of Banquo he sees his victim's wraith. It will be remembered that Banquo was on his way to the feast in Macbeth's castle and was murdered by Macbeth's henchmen just before the guests sat down to the banquet. Banquo was hurrying to the castle, with his mind intent upon reaching it, when death overtook him. His wraith appears at the feast, but only Macbeth, with his overwrought nerves, sees it, and his language is fittingly descriptive of wraiths when he says, "Thou hast no speculation in those eyes."

Every student of occultism is familiar with the fact that when one falls asleep the consciousness leaves the physical body and that the astral body is then its habitation. Hence, the living and the so-called dead may then be together. The terror with which murderers start into waking consciousness and their disposition to automatically go through rehearsals of the murder during sleep are facts that are as commonly known as they are imperfectly understood. In *Macbeth* we are given a most vivid presenta-

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tion of the fact that sleep thus occultly plunges the murderer back into the tragedy he foolishly believes to be a closed chapter. Neither Macbeth nor Lady Macbeth can sleep, and he speaks of "the affliction of these terrible dreams that shake us nightly." Bold and resolute as she is, Lady Macbeth refuses to sleep without a light burning. In the sleep-walking scene she re-enacts her part in the murder of the king, trying to wash the blood from her hands as she walks. "Out, damned spot!" she exclaims, and again "What, will these hands ne'er be clean?" and we learn from the attendant conversation with the doctor that this is but a repetition of similar scene. The miserable woman finally dies under the strain. This terror that comes upon the murderer, when in sleep he loses the protection afforded him by the gross physical matter that shuts out the astral world from his waking consciousness, is presented to us again in *Richard III.* Richard has fallen asleep in his tent, that last night of his life, when he meets, as in the flesh, the long list of his victims, each of whom makes it clear that disaster and death are just ahead. So real is all this to Richard that when he awakes he is not at first able to distinguish the astral from the physical consciousness. The late Richard Mansfield used to bring this out admirably when playing the role of the murderous king. "Who's there?" he demands, as Ratcliff approaches the tent after a short absence, during which the king's terrorizing experience occurs. "My lord, 'tis I," says Ratcliff, but Richard doubts his senses. Slowly and fearfully he approaches Ratcliff, stretching out his arm to the utmost, advancing by inches; making sure by the sense of touch that this is really a being of flesh. Finally assured of this, he exclaims:

"O Ratcliff, I fear, I fear!
 "Methought the souls of all that I had murder'd
 "Came to my tent; and everyone did threat
 "To-morrow's vengeance on the head of Richard."

The officer tries to reassure him and laugh the matter away with a remark on the folly of being afraid of shadows. But they were very real shadows to Richard, and he replies:

"By the apostle Paul, shadows to-night
 "Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard
 "Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers."

(*To be continued.*)

GREAT TEACHERS OFTEN STORM-CENTERS

By F. MILTON WILLIS

Let us recall that strange passage in the New Testament in which the Christ is made to say: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace but a sword. For I am to set a man at variance against his father and a daughter against her mother and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." It is incredible that the Lord of love and compassion should have spoken such words as these; they are probably a priestly interpolation; but even so, they express a fact applicable to each Great Teacher who comes

to infuse into the materialism of his times what it is capable of receiving of the sacred science.

When a Divine Teacher comes forth into the world to give an impetus to the evolution of the people among whom he appears and those connected with them, the knowledge that He brings and imparts, increases the responsibility of His hearers. They learn what is truly right, and when in their lack of control they act not accordingly, they suffer the pain of remorse; some fall into despair and go lower and lower, apparently injured by the very loftiness of the teachings received, and their actions operate perhaps to drag others down or at least to prevent them from rising. Further than this, it is knowledge which causes error to be sin, whose penalty, in the shape of distressing reaction, is heavier than the penalty for error. Any knowledge thus has its serious side, and the teaching of divine truths, it will be perceived, is no pastime of a summer day.

Also some who understandingly receive the new truths run counter to friends and relatives in the matter of courses of action, causing friction and discord; and some run counter to others in the matter of opinions expressed, and thus unwittingly stir up strife. He who knows the truth and is honest and determined enough to act it, is almost inevitably drawn into opposition to numbers of those with whom he is associated in the affairs of life. It is this thought of acting according to one's light—according to the truth one has learned, the wisdom one has attained—that is probably intimated in the words imputed to the Master: "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." In other words, he who feels that the love for even father or mother should be considered higher than the love for and adherence to the manifest truth, is not worthy to become a sharer in that truth; for it is by loving the truth and seeking to attain it, that he is, in time, to assist in leading not only those souls now incarnated as his father and mother, but the whole world, into the way of it.

Another way in which truth brings discord is that in which he who receives and in part understands it, is puffed up in his own esteem and inflicts his opinions upon others in an unbridled and intemperate manner.

Another way is that in which one who has been able to apprehend a limited amount of the truth, proceeds to criticise anything and everything, making his little share of the truth a criterion by which to judge others, thereby though perhaps unintentionally, causing ill-feeling and discord wherever he may go.

Another way is that in which the truth, coming to one devotedly attached to some belief at variance with it, by its very reasonableness destroys at least a portion of that belief. This is like taking the ground from beneath the feet of the devotee. Though he flee elsewhere, nothing can ever seem stable again until he has embraced the truth in its entirety, or until, perhaps, in desperation, he sinks his terrible doubts in degrading excesses.

Still another way is that in which the truth runs counter to vested authorities, such as the dignitaries and lesser lights of churches, whose comfort and material well-being depend upon the continuance of things as they are.

In these several ways, and perhaps there are others, the Divine Teacher brings, as it were, weapons that injure. His very presence seems to provoke the evil natures within reach to oppose Him, and there is likely to be open strife. A full incarnation of God, an incarnation for but part of a life, an overshadowing by the Divine Being, or even a teaching-pupil of a Master of Wisdom, to a greater or less extent disturbs the equilibrium of society. For this reason, perhaps,—that is, that the teaching of spiritual truths might proceed without rousing elements of discord in the unprepared, those

who have not yet awakened the spiritual side of their natures,—have there been mystery schools in all ages of the world, in all of which the participants have been bound by most solemn vows to keep silent as to what has been learned therein. In such a school in the southern Judean desert and later in Egypt did Jesus, we understand, prepare himself for that wonderful “baptism” at which he rendered up his pure and gracious body for its three-year occupation by his Master, the Christ, who at the end of that time was forced to quit it, due to the fatal violence of the mob, yet who for fifty years thereafter is said to have personally—presumably in a materialised body—taught His disciples in such a school or community in a “retired spot on the outskirts of Judea.” In such a school was Plato taught the higher spiritual truths, and knowing as we do the restrictions placed upon divulging such truths in those days, we wonder at the thinness of the veils with which he seeks to hide from the profane the truths he could only have learned in the mysteries.

Despite the discord, “the wisdom” is justified of her children. Each of “those who know” very truly brings peace, charity, good-will, wisdom, love, and power-for-good, to those who are ready to understand. The disharmony is but temporary; the souls that are active agents in it are but learning lessons, and the time will come when they too will know.

WHO IS WHO: SOME SPECULATIONS ON REINCARNATION

Occasionally the newspaper men become interested in occultism and take the trouble to look up and interview a theosophical lecturer. This is what the *Free Press*, of Detroit, did when Mr. C. Jinarajadasa was lecturing in that city, and this is what it has to say on the subject:

Imagine the soul of John D. Rockefeller, one time clad in the flesh of a Roman general, commanding one of Caesar's legions. Imagine the Lord of Skibo castle, our own Andrew Carnegie, before he went to making steel, in the armor of a Brutus. Think of England's Gladstone, in another life, penning our baneful text-book Cicero, then conjure up a new picture of Abraham Lincoln, as one of the early prophets of Israel.

All this and more too is a part of the delightfully speculative musing of C. Jinarajadasa, native of Ceylon, who comes to Detroit fresh from the land of tea and mysticism, to give theosophical lectures.

Mr. Jinarajadasa talks entertainingly of the travels of one soul through several bodies, of transmigrations and reincarnations. He was educated at the University of Cambridge, England, and later at the Royal Academy of Science and Literature, at Milan, Italy. He is a young man and is now on his second lecture tour of America. He speaks several languages and his English is a delight.

He speaks as knowingly of Abe Lincoln, Napoleon and Julius Caesar as though in some yesterday of the ages he sat in the same seat with them at school. But it is all without any ostentation. He sat in his room in the Library Park Hotel, curling his legs under him in his straight-backed chair, and mused upon what other existences molded the personalities which are seen embodied in the trust magnates of to-day.

“The American trust magnates must have been Roman generals because of their inborn ability to marshal men,” he said. “Perhaps some of them were the tax gatherers of ancient Rome. America is a reemodiment of ancient Greece and some day her culture will be greater than that of Greece. To-day America is a lanky boy, full of vigor and push and not knowing what to do with his legs and arms, but some day will be able to use them beautifully, making possible a splendid civilization.

“England is essentially Roman and her statesmen are reincarnations of the great Roman generals and senators. They have the colonizing and the commercial instinct. There seems no doubt that when Gladstone lived before he was Cicero and that Tennyson was Virgil. Napoleon might have been Hannibal. Caesar has not yet been born.

again or there would have been a greater stir than this world has seen in centuries. There is no doubt that when the late Queen Victoria lived before in visible form her soul was in the body of King Alfred.

"Oh, yes, the sex changes. We all see women some times who need nearly a lifetime to become accustomed to skirts. Their instincts are masculine. They lack intuitiveness. They have the viewpoint of a man. It is because in previous existences they were men and are only rounding out their souls by living on earth as women for a few lives. Then there are men who lack the power to reason and are intuitive in mental make-up, who are timid and quiet. They have lived before as women, and the memory habit of the feminine lives still clings to them.

"These thoughts are very interesting, and in such a belief we can find some justice. There is no justice in one life. It is impossible to conceive of a just God who would not permit His beings to live many times to round out their souls. The universe is a graded school in which we progress very slowly through centuries and centuries. Men would not fight so hard against woman suffrage and equal rights and all such things if they accepted these beliefs, because they would think that perhaps next time they would come on earth as women and would want to make things easier for that next existence."

THE BLACK MAGIC OF SCIENCE

Learned occultists have often pointed out the fact that vivisection is closely akin to black magic, the gist of which is obtaining benefits at the expense of others. The likeness does not lie in the method, of course, but in the principle involved, which seeks any possible immediate gain without any effort, or even the slightest desire, to calculate the cost.

Opposition to vivisection is gaining ground in the United States and its advocates are being thereby aroused in its defense, in the hope of preventing legislation for its regulation. A popular weekly has come to the defense of vivisection and some of its most eminent practitioners have given interviews setting forth the alleged evidence in its favor. Now, the majority of people are too much inclined to take any statement made by a medical or scientific man as gospel truth, forgetting a few important things, among which are these facts: that the pro-vivisection doctors, like other men, will make a case for their pet theories if possible; that they are quite as prone to exaggerate results as others; that the advertising they can get by exaggerated claims is of pecuniary value to them; that they are quite as likely to be mistaken in their deductions as anybody else; that the practice of medicine is based upon experimentation, and that a thing that is accepted by practically the whole profession at one time, and becomes the universal practice, later falls into disfavor and is abandoned by common consent. Because vivisection is the thing just now is no indication that it will not be in scientific disgrace with the next generation.

The follies that have been left behind by the medical profession, but which were unquestioningly accepted in their time, are almost too numerous to count. At one period "bleeding" was the great remedy for human ills. It didn't much matter what was wrong with a patient; the doctor looked at him and reached for a lance. In that "good old time" anybody who would have argued that because blood-letting had almost universal commendation did not scientifically establish it as the correct thing, and that, while in some cases it may have been expedient the practice as a whole was bad, would have been treated with the same lofty disdain that is now bestowed by the vivisectionists upon their critics. At one time it was the thing to forbid even cold water to a fever patient. Tens of thousands of people must have died under that treatment. Ice was supposed to be sure

death. Finally somebody probably concluded he would die happy, packed in ice. His defiance of medical authority promptly cured him, and the books on fevers were revised. Vaccination is still in vogue, but it appears to be losing its popularity and will no doubt some day be relegated to the graveyard of exploded theories. Meantime the exaggerated claims being made by the vivisectionists are probably no more extravagant than were made for other now abandoned methods during the heyday of their popularity.

The cheerful certainty of the old-time doctor who bled his patient for everything from gout to toothache seems to be equaled by the attitude of his modern parallel who has a new "viris" ready to inject on the slightest provocation. Inoculation is the shibboleth of the times, and for awhile it is destined to hold the center of the stage and play its part as bleeding once did. But sooner or later somebody will begin to inquire into the evil being done by the continual injection of diseased matter into human bodies, the introduction of one kind of microbes to counteract the work of another, and still another set to destroy another, on and on, *ad infinitum*,—in short, audacity will again challenge authority and from the hideous face of disease tear the mask of beneficence behind which it has been lurking.

Can disease produce health? Can any permanent good come of temporarily controlling one malignity by another. What will be the final result of the continual injection of animal virus into the human body—the result upon the bodies of our children and children's children? Have we any right to leave that factor out of consideration? Yet we look to immediate results with apparently as little thought about the future as the lumber "barons" have had of the future generations while cutting down nearly the whole of the American forests available for building material without replacing a single acre of it. The question of sound and pure physical bodies for future generations is one that even the materialist will admit is of tremendous importance.

A sort of vivisection madness seems to have seized the country and the callous heartlessness with which animals are tortured for the mere sake of satisfying curiosity and settling disputes about unimportant theories can be compared very fitly to the black magic, in the practice of which a man seeks even a trifling personal gain utterly regardless of the awful consequences that may ensue for others. This is the most startling thing about vivisection,—that it violates the simplest principles of compassion and assumes that the inferior life and intelligence have no rights which the superior is morally bound to respect. This is the complete ascendancy of the intellect over the heart,—the most dangerous development that threatens the human race.

Some of the purposes for which vivisection is practiced are almost beyond belief,—would be so, in fact, but for the cool indifference with which most people appear to regard the whole matter. In one case given by an anti-vivisection society a vivisector tells us of experiments in which he beat several large dogs, fastened to the table,—beat them upon their sides with all his strength, using heavy wooden mallets, thirty-two strokes on one side and thirty on the other and then dislocated both shoulders and tied their legs behind their backs, with no other purpose but to determine the amount of pain that could be endured without loss of life. This hideous thing was done without anesthetics. Another "scientist" coolly relates how he destroyed a dog's senses to see how far he could go before the animal's affection for him turned to hatred! To this horrible and senseless end he cut off one foot after another, and then the ears. As the dog now growled when he saw this human fiend approach the animal's eyes were

next destroyed in this leisurely mutilation. The blind and helpless animal now growled when he heard the approach of the vivisector. Then the sense of hearing was destroyed by pouring hot lead into the dog's ears. "It now showed no aversion to me," says the heartless man, and so the experiment was ended. This paragon of intelligence had shown that a tortured dog that was once very fond of him would not resent his presence if he had no eyes with which to see and no ears with which to hear! There was apparently no other subtle and undiscovered sense by which the animal could detect his presence and this surgeon with an inquiring turn of mind was satisfied with his experiment.

It will be seen from such "experiments" by vivisectors that they do not hesitate to inflict any amount of agony upon the helpless animals merely for the bare chance it may offer of some random "discovery" and that in some instances the motive is merely to satisfy the idle curiosity of somebody about a matter that is of no importance, even if it could be thus determined. Now, if the lesser intelligence has no rights which the greater is bound to respect, where shall we draw the line between the two? If the suffering of dogs and apes does not in the least disturb these cruel experimenters, why should the suffering of the lowest strata of human society appeal to them? Is the next step to be experiments upon criminals, the inmates of poor-houses and the mendicant class generally? From the ground that the acquisition of information for the use or amusement of humanity may be rightfully pursued regardless of the suffering inflicted on other living things, it is but a short step to the position that the intelligent and refined classes shall be conserved regardless the suffering to those regarded as of less value to civilization. Precisely that state of affairs did once exist in an ancient civilization in which the lives of the lower classes, whenever it pleased the merest whim of the more intelligent and powerful, were snuffed out as cheerfully as the vivisectors now strap helpless dogs to the table.

A recent book by an occultist who has had some practical experience with a group of black magicians tells how, without the slightest compunction, they occultly utilized for certain purposes the vital forces of a young relative of one of them when they knew it must soon result in her death. When the author made a plea for the life of the victim, he was gravely told that these experiments were in the interests of science and that for such purposes a life could well be sacrificed! And that is the position of the vivisectors to-day. They justify any sacrifice upon the false plea that it is for science, forgetting that when science loses sight of justice and mercy it is a dangerous and worthless thing. When the vivisector pretends to serve humanity by acts that are inhuman he is not a benefactor. He is merely a black magician of science.

OUR YOUNGER BROTHERS, THE ANIMALS

May all the world in fullest measure
From taking life to live refrain,
And scorn to purchase knowledge, pleasure,
By our younger brothers' pain.

May all the world in love unite
To guard and guide these younger brothers:
In them the slow-maturing Light,
In them e'en sacrifice for others.

F. MILTON WILLIS

CREMATION

The custom of cremating dead bodies is growing in popularity, but its friends would gladly see the pace quickened. There are many customs clinging about death and its incidents that can well be improved and the final disposition of the physical body is one of them. Cremation has many things in its favor and they pertain to both the visible and the invisible worlds. There are occult as well as obvious reasons why cremation is very desirable. Are there any really valid objections to it?

One objection that is sometimes urged is that death may not actually have taken place and that for the supposed dead body to be thrust into the glowing retort with the consciousness present in it is a horror from the very possibility of which we instinctively shrink. But is not burial alive a still greater horror, and one from which there is no possibility of escape when it does occur? Another objection that is sometimes heard is that to reduce the body to a handful of ashes is a shock to the imagination,—an act of destruction that is repulsive to surviving friends. This feeling no doubt has its origin in the materiality of the people who experience it. They cannot emancipate themselves from the notion that the body is somehow the man and that by its destruction they are in some way being deprived of something. They appear to overlook the fact that the disintegration of the body is inevitable, that it is only a question of time, and that they merely have the choice between a quick, clean method or a slow and most repulsive one. Sanitary considerations alone are a powerful argument for cremation.

But the rights of the community and the sentiments of the mourner are not the only things to be considered. *The dead have their rights also* and this is by no means the least important thing to be taken into account. While the late tenant of the dead body has withdrawn from it he has not necessarily severed all connection with it, and the hour of his complete freedom may be hastened by the rapid disintegration of its particles. In some cases this may not be of so much importance, but in others it may be a vital matter. An occult investigator describes the hopeless efforts of one who had recently died to get away from his physical body, to which although he could move about somewhat in his astral body, he seemed to be anchored as by a magnetic tie. All efforts to go more than a few yards away from his decaying physical body were in vain for a considerable time. Another case is cited—the case of a suicide—in which the unfortunate victim of his own rash violence awoke to consciousness after physical death to find himself a prisoner within his coffin; and there he was obliged to remain, fully conscious of the decaying physical body, until it had reached an advanced stage of decomposition. The horror of such a situation requires no comment, and if these investigations are accepted as being even approximately correct the sentiments of surviving relatives count as nothing against such horrible possibilities. There are, of course, other occult reasons than the comfort of the departed that weigh heavily in favor of cremation, but that alone should be enough.

BY THE GRAVES

'Tis whispered me that these poor, piteous mounds,
That mark the end of earthly plans and strife,
Are only mile-stones on a royal road,—
The highway leading on from life to life.

LISETTE S. NAEGELE.

HINTS TO YOUNG STUDENTS—VII

In a previous article it was suggested that the time set aside daily for reviewing the events of the preceding hours and pondering over the meaning of life and its varied problems should be a period of tranquil thought and aspiration. Perhaps it may not be amiss to add that the word "tranquil" should not be taken to mean the passivity that characterizes the trance medium who is about to pass "under control." To assume that attitude of mind is to abandon oneself to the psychic circumstances of the moment, without the slightest opportunity of judging whether they may be good or bad. It would be much as though a blind man who could not swim should fling himself upon the tide, not knowing whether it would carry him into water that was safe and comfortable or into a dangerous undertow. The student's will should always be in control. Under no circumstances should it be surrendered to anything or anybody. It is his purpose to know himself and his environment; to obtain first-hand knowledge of the mysteries of life; to purify his vehicles of consciousness and develop his spiritual powers that he may be of the greatest possible assistance in spreading the light and helping others forward. It is not his purpose to evolve the characteristics that will permit others to speak through him—to lend his body to others to be used as an instrument for the communication of information about which he can personally know nothing and the truth or inaccuracy of which he cannot possibly determine. That sort of thing can well be left to those who desire to engage in it. The way of the student of occultism lies in the opposite direction. He is to learn the mastery of matter and acquire intelligent control of occult forces, not to become an unconscious and helpless automaton in the hands of others. Therefore when he withdraws daily into the quietude of the most retired spot to which he has access and there, alone with his thoughts, calmly and serenely gives himself up to reflections upon the higher life, his mental attitude should be one of reception but not of surrender. He should be as one who listens for the faintest whisper from the depths of being, but who uses discrimination in its testing and reason in its interpretation. He should be at all times mentally and morally awake and alert.

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The student of theosophy who has but recently entered upon a study of the occult side of nature should not be misled by the widespread belief that the invisible world is sharply divided into two parts and that those who seek information from the realm hidden to physical senses are surely making connections with that part known as heaven when they succeed in establishing communication. The common misconception that all who have died are good and wise is a dangerous one. The chief difference between those we call dead and the rest of us is that they have no physical bodies through which to function in the visible world. As to moral difference there is practically none; and the astral world certainly presents quite as many grades of moral and intellectual development as the physical life does. The selfishness and depravity that characterize unnumbered thousands here are fully as conspicuous there. Moreover it is the lower and grosser part of the astral world that impinges upon the physical and the facility of communication increases with the coarseness and materiality of the matter forming the normal habitat of the disembodied intelligence. Therefore, if

should the young student of occultism surrender his physical body to such entities as may desire to take possession of it, the probability of getting information of any value is exceedingly small, while the possibility of coming into contact with most unfortunate influences is great. Nor would the good intentions of the student be a guarantee that this would not occur any more than the good intentions of an experimenting chemist will insure him against injury if he brings the wrong ingredients together. The outcome for the student would doubtless depend upon the karma of the past and the natural affinity he might, or might not, have for various classes of entities inhabiting the lower levels of the astral world. But, aside from what might occur in such a case, the passive surrender of his body to become the instrument of another, no matter how well he might be protected by his karma, is a step in the wrong direction and therefore not progress at all. One purpose of human evolution is to achieve the mastery of matter, to come into perfect control of the vehicles of consciousness. To this end the will must be cultivated, not surrendered; strengthened, not enfeebled.

EDITOR'S ADDRESS

The address of the editor of the *AMERICAN THEOSOPHIST* for some months will be as follows:

L. W. Rogers, 1404 Osgood St., Chicago, Ill. All orders for published lectures, books, etc., and all manuscripts and correspondence should be thus addressed, as only the mechanical work is done at the office.

CHICAGO LECTURES

Beginning Sunday afternoon, September 27, and continuing every Sunday afternoon, at three o'clock, for at least two months, L. W. Rogers will deliver free lectures on theosophy and occultism at Handel Hall, 40 Randolph street, near Wabash avenue. Readers of the *AMERICAN THEOSOPHIST* who have acquaintances in Chicago can have a syllabus of the course of lectures to be given mailed to their friends by sending a postal card request.

THE THEOSOPHICAL CONVENTION

The twenty-second annual convention of the American Section of the Theosophical Society was held in Chicago on September 13, and the following three days. The genuine interest that this gathering of theosophists aroused may be judged somewhat from the fact that delegates came from the most distant cities in the nation, representatives being present from such widely separated points as Seattle, Montreal, San Francisco, Boston, New Orleans, etc. Among the many interesting problems discussed were "Education from the Standpoint of Theosophy," the leading participants being Dr. Weller Van Hook, chief surgeon of the medical department of the Northwestern University, and general secretary of the Theosophical Society in America, and Professor George F. James, dean of the School of Education of the University of Minnesota. "Theosophical Work Among Prisoners" was a subject discussed by Mr. Irving S. Cooper, of San Francisco, in a most instructive and entertaining way that aroused the enthusiasm of the convention. Mr. Cooper has agreed to present this

subject to the readers of the AMERICAN THEOSOPHIST in the near future. His experience among prisoners at Oakland and San Francisco and his actual knowledge of the abuses not suspected by the public will be most enlightening.

The keenest interest of the convention centered in the resolution expressing the desire to have Mr. C. W. Leadbeater reconsider his resignation from the Theosophical Society, nearly three years ago, and calling upon the proper officials to urge his return. This is the third convention at which the matter has come up and it is to be hoped that the overwhelming defeat of the opponents of the resolution will be final and that the society will be left to carry out its beneficent work in peace. It is interesting to observe how this widely misinterpreted and much misunderstood matter is being slowly but surely righted. Three years ago almost everybody, even Mrs. Annie Besant, now the president of the world-wide society, had been deceived and misled by statements of sincere but mistaken theosophists. But gradually the exaggerations were seen in their true light and slowly the indignation aroused by the false interpretation of motives has changed to regret for the injustice thus done. The only thing that marred the work of the convention on this subject was the unwavering hostility of the remaining few who persist in their original course regardless of everything. The center of this disaffection is the small official group, the officers and field workers, that was stripped of all authority by the convention of 1907. One of these, when it became clear that the sentiment of the convention was overwhelmingly for the resolution, flung out the threat that he would use the press and other means to discredit the society before the public if the convention dared pass the resolution. Cries of "shame, shame," greeted this from various parts of the hall, and the remarks of the speaker became so offensive to the convention that it refused to listen longer to them. It was not generally believed that such diabolical work as deliberate misrepresentation in the press would be resorted to, but there appeared in the Chicago papers two days later a statement of the trouble in which the letter referred to above, written by Mrs. Besant when she was misled by one-sided statements in the very beginning of the trouble, *was quoted as though written by her recently*, while all who are informed on the subject know that it is nearly two years since she set herself right in the matter. Most of us have stoutly maintained that Mr. Leadbeater's opponents were perfectly sincere, but mistaken. But when they give the newspapers matter that makes the public believe that Mrs. Besant holds that it would be disastrous for the American Section to take the course it has, when they know perfectly well that that is *not* her position, we are reluctantly compelled to abandon the belief in their sincerity. It is a plain case of deliberate falsification,—out-and-out dishonesty of which no true theosophist could be guilty. However, the damage done is small. The great edifice of theosophic truths will stand untroubled. It can no more be really injured than a group of mischievous children can destroy a palatial castle. They may be annoying and even throw stones that shatter the windows, but they cannot move a single pillar a hair's breadth.

Next to the foregoing incident the interest appeared to be keenest in the propaganda work for the coming year, and on this there was no dissenting voice. The editor of the AMERICAN THEOSOPHIST reported the success of work done in new territory and urged the convention to united action through a league of the Theosophical Society Order of Service to the end that every city in America might have a branch of the Theosophical Society. On motion of the general secretary the executive committee was requested to settle upon the plan of forming such a league, and that body

later placed the editor of the AMERICAN THEOSOPHIST in charge of that work.

The post convention closed the evening of the 16th with a question meeting, the previous evenings having been devoted to public lectures by C. Jinarajadasa, A. P. Warrington and L. W. Rogers.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"In reading of Madame Blavatsky's life and work many writers have most positively asserted that she bore the karma of the Theosophical Society. Now what is the difference between that and the orthodox idea of atonement? Theosophical writers and lecturers assert that each one must bear his own karma and not that of another. How can you explain these diametrically opposite statements?"

Answer: The general principle of the law of karma is quite clear. Each sows, and it is he that reaps. Each bears his own karma and not that of another. But we often forget that when individuals gather in groups, as in associations, parties and nations, and do certain acts in a collective capacity, forces are set in motion that may be called collective karma. Not infrequently such collective karma is initiated and moulded by an individual; the ball is set rolling, as it were, by him. And with him many join. Though each bears his own individual karma for his own separate contribution, yet there is also to some extent a sharing by him of the sum total of karmas, too; and a leader has naturally a greater share of that collective karma as his lot than a subordinate.

Furthermore, the Theosophical Society, one might almost say, is a reincarnation of the forces and effects of similar attempts in the past; it had a karma to start with, a heritage from the past. It is often a privilege given to an individual, if he be sufficiently strong to bear the brunt of *collective* karma—to let it work itself out through him; all the while the individuals will be reaping their separate rewards, and not one jot or tittle of that can another take on his shoulders.

Madame Blavatsky may truly be said still to bear the karma of the Theosophical Society; it is she that gave her life's blood to the Society, and inspired its workers. Though each worker would reap his individual reward, and to some extent the collective reward too, yet it would be her special privilege to bear "the karma of the Theosophical Society" to an extent no other can.

The great truth underlying the idea of the atonement is more rational than the crude belief that a savior atones for the sins of individuals and exempts them from the results of their separate karmas. That would be impossible, as contrary to the great law of harmony and adjustment. The harmony each disturbs he alone can adjust. Nevertheless, absolutely in harmony with the law, a Savior does offer himself as the field for the working out of *collective* karma. He, the Perfect One, one with us as he is man, and yet divine as the crowned of God through renunciation and evolution, while trying to "lift a little the heavy karma of the world," allows himself to be one of the "countless other stones which form the Guardian Wall," which "shields mankind, since man is man, protecting it from further and far greater misery and sorrow." And as he suffers and "atones" for this collective karma, he engenders no *new* karma hostile to humanity; he lets the old karma come to an end through him, returning only blessings to humanity. Were it not for this fact, that there are these guardians of humanity "atoning" for men, humanity would progress but slowly, for, "since man is man," at the present stage, where the general average is low, more evil collective karma is being engendered than good.

There are other truths underlying the mystery of the atonement, upon which one need not dwell here. Students will find illuminating hints in Mrs. Besant's "Esoteric Christianity."

C. JINARAJADASA.

Question: "If it is wrong to take life, which I know is true, what are we going to do about the insects that destroy plant life or others that are a nuisance in general? What can I teach my little girl about the cabbage moths?"

Answer: In such matters we can, of course, only use our common sense and such light as we have on the problem of taking life: that is, we can avoid drawing the line with fanatical severity. Should we take the ground that it is wrong to take *any* life, in any form, under any circumstances, we would be in the absurd position of holding to a precept that we could not possibly practice, because the physical senses cannot draw

the line between the animal and vegetable kingdoms. We are constantly destroying thousands of lives by eating, drinking and walking. If we have reference to visible life only, then we have the injurious insects; for example, the mosquitos that carry yellow fever germs. No sensible person would hesitate about the wholesale destruction of such insects in order to prevent the greater loss through their work in spreading a dangerous disease.

Circumstances should always be taken into account, hence the difficulty of laying down rules. A man who would not tread upon an ant would unhesitatingly kill a horse if the circumstances were such that, if he did not, his own life would be lost. When we change from conditions in which insect life is dangerous to those in which it is merely troublesome the right course to follow is not so obvious. One thing we can always do is to remember the general definition that working *with* evolution is right and working against it is wrong, and that there is always more than one side to any question. In the vicinity of every large city some hundreds of gardeners are engaged in producing vegetables to sustain human life. They wage constant warfare on moths and other insects, destroying them by myriads. They have the choice between that or no vegetables, no food for the people. Killing insects is probably not a good thing for a child to engage in but if it cannot be well avoided perhaps the best way is to educate the child in the relative value of the various classes of life. The individual insect life is very short and when its physical form is destroyed it comes back to the physical world again very soon. In cases where protection is a necessity there is usually a choice of methods. For example it is better to use screens than fly-paper, that catches and poisons the insects.

VEGETARIAN RECIPES

STUFFED PEPPERS

3 large green peppers; 1 oz. almonds (blanched); 1 tomato; 4 or 5 stalks celery; 1 shredded wheat biscuit or 1 cup bread crumbs; 3 tablespoons milk; 2 tablespoons melted butter; 1/3 ordinary size onion; salt and red pepper to taste.

Break up the shredded wheat biscuit as fine as possible, place in mixing bowl, add milk to soften. Chop nuts, celery, tomato and onion together or put them through mill, mix with bread crumbs or biscuit, add butter, salt and pepper, mix all thoroughly. Remove the stem end of the peppers with all the seeds, stuff the shell with the mixture, put in baking pan with a little butter or oil and water, bake in moderate oven 3/4 hour. White potatoes are very good peeled, cut in half and baked with the peppers.

GRAHAM BREAD

1 qt. graham flour; 1 pint sour milk; 1 cup New Orleans molasses; 2 rounding teaspoons soda; salt.

Dissolve soda in boiling water and pour into sour milk and molasses; mix in the flour and salt. Put in baking pan and bake slowly 1 hour.

The activities of the Theosophical Order of Service in England include the subjects of national education, social brotherhood, abolition of vivisection, vaccination and inoculation, sociology and the social problem, help for unfortunate children and literary and press work.

OPPORTUNITY

Master of human destinies am I!
 Fame, love and fortune on my footsteps wait.
 Cities and fields I walk; I penetrate
 Deserts and seas remote, and passing by
 Hovel and mart and palace—soon or late
 I knock unbidden once at every gate.

If sleeping, wake—if feasting, rise before
 I turn away. It is the hour of fate,
 And they who follow me reach every state
 Mortals desire, and conquer every foe
 Save death; but those who doubt or hesitate,
 Condemned to failure, penury and woe,
 Seek me in vain and uselessly implore;
 I answer not and I return no more.

—JOHN J. INGALLS.

OPPORTUNITY

They do me wrong who say I come no more,
 When once I knock and fail to find you in;
 For every day I stand outside your door
 And bid you wake, and rise to fight and win.

Wail not for perished chances passed away,
 Weep not for golden ages on the wane!
 Each night I burn the records of the day—
 At sunrise every soul is born again.

When down in mire wring not your hands and weep,
 I lend my arm to all who say "I can."
 No shame-faced outcast ever sank so deep
 But yet might rise and be again a man.

Art thou a mourner? Rise thee from thy spell.
 Art thou a sinner? Sins may be forgiven.
 Each morning gives thee wings to flee from Hell,
 Each night a star to guide thy feet to Heaven.

—WALTER MALONE.