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THERE IS NO RELIGION HIGHER THAN TRUTH.

NOTICE.

PREMIUMS.

Special attention is called to the offer of premiums for new subscriptions to "Theosophist" in September and October issues, and also to prizes offered for best original essays for publication in the "Theosophist."

"For every three new subscriptions, one copy of 'Old Diary Leaves.' Paper Cover Rs. 4 will be sent free.

Vide in the Supplement to "Theosophist" a paragraph with heading "Secret Doctrine as a Premium," i.e., offering Secret Doctrine Vol. III as a discount to one who gets largest number of subscriptions to the current Vol. of the "Theosophist" before first of February 1898.

tion. Theosophical writings have set forth some of the conditions to it, Madame Blavatsky was long a patent illustration of it, some names of recent and of living Initiates are familiar to students of Theosophy. Thus it acquires actuality in the present, has interest and significance, excites inquiry as to its nature and terms. When we are informed that a well-known Chela received Initiation and thus passed palpably into the ranks of the Brotherhood, we regard him as having undergone a distinct experience which translated him to a certainly higher plane of knowledge and power. He becomes almost a different person, so real a thing as Initiation having taken place.

Of course our conception of an Initiation is necessarily framed upon those Initiations which exist in our own day and are maintained by the two great Brotherhoods—the Freemasons and the Odd Fellows. Whether we have passed through any of these or not, there are certain

elements which are obviously necessitated by the conditions of the case. There must be, on the part of the Lodge, a conferring upon the candidate of information not previously possessed by him, and, on the part of the candidate, the giving a pledge that such information shall be treated as sacredly confidential. Here we have inevitably a bestowal of secret knowledge and a promise to preserve its secrecy. But there has never been any concealment of the fact that this interchange occurs at a definite time, at a certain place, and through a formal ceremony; so that there is further the certainty that Initiations are not casual, fragmentary, or without conscious participation by both sides, but are prepared for, precisely executed, and through an explicit ritual. Moreover, as entrance into an Order means that a person becomes thereby a member of that Order, the effect of Initiation is evidently to change the candidate's whole relation to the Order: from having been an outsider knocking at the gate, he becomes through that function an insider and an integral part of the body. His position to the outer world is also reversed, for he has been removed from it and now faces it from within the enclosure. Further, the existence of a ceremony necessitates officers to perform it, and the conferring of information necessitates that the information conferred shall be precisely the same to all Initiates of that degree, as otherwise the Initiation would vary in its effects.

Thus Initiation into any organized body such as the Masonic or Odd Fellows implies that at a certain date and locality, through an established ceremonial administered by authorized officials, a candidate pledges himself to specific obligations, notably secrecy, and the Lodge in its turn imparts to him specific information, he then becoming an integral portion of the body, vested with privileges and responsible in duties as such.

When we think of Initiation into the Occult Brotherhood, we naturally infer an analogous transaction. The familiar word suggests all this in its new application. Then, too, such was certainly the fact in the Mysteries of antiquity. They are well known to have been held at fixed dates and spots, admission was through a formal rite which was carefully maintained, the knowledge imparted was considered as of peculiar value and the obligation to preserve it secret as of transcendent sacredness, and the changed status of the Initiate was amply recognised. All these particulars recur to us when Initiation is spoken of in connection with the Adept Hierarchy. And to some extent the facts are probably parallel. In the marginal memoranda precipitated by a Master on a letter received by Col. Olcott through the mail, Damodar's Initiation in Tibet is spoken of as having been the more exhausting to him because of his weak state of health and certain Karmic elements, which must of course mean that he underwent some process of formal entry not merely mental but external,—in other words, a ceremony. And there are some other facts known to Theosophists which involve the idea of a definite act of Initiation at a set time.

But we should probably mistake if we pushed this conception very far, if we supposed it invariable, accompanied with much ceremonial, a matter to any great extent of physical act. It is most unlikely that a Brotherhood of which the essence is spiritual development should signalize the reception of new members by much use of bodily forms. The tests of fitness have doubtless been already applied, presumably through the trials of principle arising in life, so that what is left is only a formal recognition that these have been successfully undergone, a distinct avowal that the candidate is duly and truly prepared, worthy and well qualified, coupled with a distinct reception of him into the Degree. In high Degrees, at stages where the progressing man, already a Master, has passed beyond the inhabitation of a carnal body such as ours and dwells in more ethereal vesture, any marked ritual would seem inappropriate if not impossible; but in the earliest of all it may very well be that some physical preparation, some significant rites, may have place as illustrating lessons or impressing solemnity. As there are understood to be many grades of Mastership, this might seem fitting in the preliminary ones. The transition from the without to the within must be more momentous than can be any subsequent promotion on the same line.

And yet I think that the word "Initiation" may have a much wider, certainly a much more practical, meaning than as applied merely to the admission to the rank of Master. The word is from the Latin "initium", a beginning, and is therefore the beginning to any new course, the distinct change to another state. A man comes to a fork of the road. He may continue on or he may shift to the diverging way. If he continues on there is no change. The direction, route, quality of path remain the same. But he selects the other path which turns from that he has followed. It runs to a different point of the compass, conducts through other scenery, gives the traveller a changed air and environment. Perhaps from the valley it has led to the mountain, from the miasmatic plain to the breezy heights. All of that difference follows upon the initial step when the man crossed the opening of the new path. It was an Initiation, a beginning. And so, later on, there comes a fork in *that* path. Again the choice is made, and again the former way is left for the new. Fresh scenes are in time reached, a still different plateau attained. There has been a second "initium", beginning. Every decision, in fact, by which a course is altered, another route undertaken, is an Initiation, for it begins a deviation, "initiates" a change, is the first step on a way which deserts the preceding and conducts to other regions of surrounding and experience.

This is true of every act in life which opens up a new state or occupation. The boy enters school, the youth is admitted to College, the graduate begins his career in business or a profession, marries, establishes a home. Each act shifts him on a different line; and because the line is different, and because it has a distinct be-

ginning, occurring at a recognizable time and place, is a fresh Initiation. Sometimes it is marked by a ceremony, sometimes not. No matter; the essential thing is the change, not the formal indication of it. It may even be that the change itself, momentous as are its outcomes, is not at the time much impressed on the consciousness. In those delightful *Essays by a Country Parson*, once so famous, now so rarely mentioned, "A. K. H. B." uses an illustration of this point. Speaking of a railway junction in England, he describes how the road runs along through the valley and the plain and continues thus to its end. But at the junction certain trains are switched to a diverging route. A very slight movement of a lever substitutes a different set of rails, the change to them is so slight as to be imperceptible to the traveller, for some time the tracks hardly change their course, there is no curve or sudden turn, but by and by the old track is perceived slanting gently to one side, it disappears in the distance, the plain sinks away, the train mounts the hills, and gradually the whole scenery becomes mountainous. The alteration of an inch or two in the mechanism of the road bed, unnoticed at the time and for some while indistinguishable in its effects, has ultimately transferred the tourist to another altitude and another climate. And so, he says, very slight events often change the course of a life, shift it from lower to higher levels, make it a different thing in its quality and results. At the moment of their occurrence they may make little impression, possibly have required no balancing of impulses or motives, hardly stir the will to any resolve. Conscious action has so little part in them that a later attempt to recall it in memory fails. And yet beneath, hidden below the surface of things, a small divergence has been effected, and the future course swerves to another quarter and the whole biography becomes different in its contents. The Initiation of the new direction to the career has been almost imperceptible to consciousness.

But in attempting to comprehend the philosophy of human action, we must remember that each particular act has behind it a vast background of antecedent history and character. No deed is a spontaneous, disconnected impulse, springing suddenly into being without any roots in previous time. A man does a thing because his disposition prompts him thereto, but this disposition is the product of innumerable thoughts and meditations and acts, all slowly forming a habit which instinctively manifests when any occasion calls it into play. Every man is born with a temperament that he unconsciously moulded for himself in prior incarnations, and this gives the primary direction for his life-course. Sometimes he pleasantly complies with it as easiest and most congenial, and then it gains strength with use, compliance becoming ever more natural and the life-quality being constantly more fixed. Sometimes the complications and counter-influences we all encounter tend to check or modify it, and new motives enter as moulding elements. Sometimes a wish for self-improvement causes search into the constituents of character and deliberate detection of weakness or evil, and then,

aided by consciously-invoked help from quarters above, impels to direct effort for correction. Of course the rectification of character is the real work which is the duty and the true purpose of every man in every incarnation, but, equally of course, the perception of this and the glad attempt for it are only in the few, only in those who have either brought over from past lives that evidence of progress or have in this incarnation reached the time when preparatory discipline comes to the point of flowering into conviction. For clear percipience of the aim of existence, united with resolution to fulfil it, is not a sudden, unheralded, causeless exhibition of spirit-force; it is not a phenomenon destitute of any explanation and any previous factors; it is just as much an effect as is intellectual culture or artistic skill. It means a long and slow evolution, through much and varied experience, of spiritual faculty, and the more pronounced its manifestation the more of time and work during which such strength was gathered.

This doctrine of prior acts and character as causative of present ones is our only clue to the interpretation of human conduct. Of course it is the one continually used by all men both in explanation of present deeds and in prophecy of those future. Nobody pretends that the doings of his neighbour are matters purely of chance, mere casual happenings expressive of nothing but momentary accident. They are universally recognized as specimen fruits of the then-bearing crop, which crop presupposes many seasons of sun and rain and gradual growth. They indicate what the interior being is, what it has undergone, to what it has developed. Some measure of consistency pervades them all, for all spring from a common source and exhibit a common nature. When we hear that Smith has committed some impetuous act, or that Jones has relieved another case of distress, or that Brown has undertaken a fresh business investment, we at once regard the fact as illustrating that Smith is hasty, Jones charitable, and Brown enterprising. But each therein manifests a character already formed and which gives him his reputation. The incident would be meaningless except as connected with, setting forth, an internal condition produced through a habit forming during years of like action. And so as to prediction. What men are likely to do in any particular conditions is inferable from their natures; in other words, from the tendency created by action in similar conditions heretofore. Their conduct may be anticipated from their history.

But of course no human life is on absolutely straight lines, running forward from cradle to grave without crisis or alterations. In each there are changes which are not referable solely to surface explanations of age or experience or circumstances. Sometimes a character alters slowly, and quite new phases displace those which were before habitual; sometimes some sudden incident sharply turns to another route, as a sail-boat in a moment shifts its course and takes a different tack. A great grief or a momentous occurrence or a moral upheaval seems instantaneously to transform the being, and his new career so contrasts

with the old that it appears not as an evolution but as a transmutation. The frivolous becomes sober, the selfish considerate, the unsympathetic pitiful, the irreligious godly. We attribute it to a shock which has shattered certain sections of character and exposed to view certain others; or we say that the nature has been so shaken to its depths that forces unsuspected have been set free. True; but unless the previously unseen sections, the previously unsuspected forces, had been in real existence, they could not have manifested, no matter what the cataclysm; and if in existence, it could only have been because in earlier years they had silently formed and steadily matured till the hour for disclosure came.

In all cases of slowly-changing character, and yet even more in cases of sudden transformation, Theosophy supplies an element without which any explanation must be inadequate. For it insists on the doctrine of Reincarnation, the fact that the current life is not the first or the hundredth which the Ego has led on earth, that the materials of character are to be sought far back of the only birth we can perceive. No doubt in every instance of gradual remoulding, the causes, the possibilities, the germs of such must have existed within, as non-Theosophists admit. But where could they have come from if this was the first and only life? A direct Divine creation is the sole solution, and this is open to many other criticisms than its partiality in the bestowment upon but a part of mankind. Yet it is in the instances of sudden change of character that the need of prior lives as furnishing its possibilities is most apparent. A man's soul turns white, as does his hair, from some sudden fright or calamity. Weinzapfi leaped over the parapet of Berne a dissipated youth, and rose from his mangling, a servant of God. What can explain such cases but that there had previously evolved a perception of spiritual things, an affinity for the Divine and true, a real strength of moral principle, which, temporarily overborne by still-remaining carnality, was only in abeyance, only dormant while the surface evil was coming to a head? Then a sharp experience broke to pieces the encasing wrong, and the true interior nature was free to act. No other explanation is possible. For a sudden reversal of moral course means either a creation of new character or a disclosure of old. But character is not a thing to be created, any more than is intelligence or learning: no such phenomenon is known or conceivable. On the other hand, the disclosure of old character means that it was existent and that it came into existence through gradual formation. But as it had not thus come into existence during the earlier part of the present career, it must have done so in prior careers. A series of earth-lives preceding this is the only rational, the only possible, interpretation of a revolution in habits, aims, tastes, thoughts, whatever the occasion which has precipitated the change. And this is what Theosophy asserts.

If any slight divergence into a path other than the habitual is really an Initiation, much more must be a sharp and sudden turn. The

forces have been gathering, the mental and moral conditions have been preparing, everything has been secretly, perhaps unconsciously, making ready for the crisis. Some apparent casualty, some violent incident, possibly only some necessary choice of action, reveals the forking of the ways. There may be a struggle; probably there is; for the outer habit is brought abruptly face to face with the evolved impulsion, and one or the other must overcome. A great rush of motives surges up in the soul, its resolution is taken, the feet stride past the entrance to the new path, and the unclouded eyes see stretching far that course which fades away into the Delectable Mountains. Different desires and hopes and emotions displace those so long reigning, old habitudes shrivel because not congruous with changed conditions, all relations alter with the new bearings, memories lose value as have their contents. The fresh life will continue because it is the flowering of a protracted preparation,—not without vicissitudes, not always smoothly or free from lapse, but never to revert permanently to the former pattern before that great change which was an Initiation ended one era and began its successor.

ALEXANDER FULLERTON.

(*To be continued.*)

REALITY.

WHAT are the real things of life? Are they not the lasting, the immortal? The soul, the immortal spiritual man is the lasting and the real. This body, this life, this turmoil and strife is evanescent. No one can deny this. On every hand we see men taking up life, following out some threads and dying; laying down a half-completed or merely half-begun work and passing on. Whither? There is no proof. Whence he came and whither he goes each must discover for himself. But this life here, the material life, is certainly proved futile; there is nothing permanent in it even if one has lived a long and active life. What remains then of all your deeds and actions. Only the memory of them, only the experience of them, and the knowledge that that experience brought. That is all that is really yours; no man can take that from you in this life. Can any one honestly say he knows that you do not take them on with you? They build your character, your individuality; they are part of you. A boy changes gradually, almost imperceptably, into a man. But a moment of intense thought, imminent danger or intense suffering can change his character and make a difference that all can notice. From that moment he is a changed man, another character, that is all. It is by the character that we measure and compare men, for that only is the man. The real part of life is that which conduces to growth of character, as it is the chief fact of life and there is no proof of its limitation or extinction. All the grandest characters that have lived assert its unending endurance and immortality. Character is the soul, or rather the manifes-

tation of the soul. By the balance of the individual character is the growth of the soul measured. What leads to broader and wider experience is then the real object to be sought in life, it is the only object worthy of the name. Not what leads to bodily or material pleasure, but what leads to the highest development of mental and spiritual powers. All else is vain, evanescent. Choose for yourself; seek that which makes for strength and balance of character. To build the strongest character that you can is the only reason for your being here on earth. To waste your chances, to fritter away time in frivolous repetition of the same experiences, to seek the lower and debasing, the animal and material experiences is folly. Men have lived this life, become famous and revered by others for the wonderful balance of their minds, and they have taught that all men have the same equipment and have shown how to develop the latent attributes. Yet how few take the trouble to investigate, far less follow, the simplest directions. Instead, you see men straining every energy to acquire wealth, through forty or even sixty years of their lives, knowing for a certainty, the only real certainty in their whole experience, that in the end all is lost, dropped, left as useless. And still in feverish haste they hurry on and drop fatigued into the grave while grasping eagerly for another farthing to add to their hoard. And on their deathbed, do they not realize their mistake, their wasted fatuous existence? Have they amassed experience and knowledge that has added to their character, moulding, rounding and perfecting it? Sometimes a man does, but rarely; he has a keen eye for business, a fine grasp of a business opportunity and ability to use it for his own purpose, but seldom is he admired for his better qualities. Seldom is his generosity, magnanimity, honesty and good will towards his fellow man, developed beyond what it was in his youth. He has no insight into nature, no grasp of the meaning of life, no wider development of his finer innate qualities, no spirituality. Only his intellect is sharpened by use, and the other, the brighter, the nobler, the most delicate and subtle senses, are stifled out of existence. Is his life real? He has developed but one small side of his outfit. Has he not made his one object a monomania? He has not rounded out and filled up the irregularities in his mental and spiritual nature, he is not perfect, and there are many such. In the chief aim of life he has failed. Can the click of the ticker, the shout of the stock-broker and the fluctuations of the market, supply the harmony of music, the beauty of art and poetry, and give a keen appreciation of nature's beauties. Can the reading of the newspaper supply the mental food required to develop the mind to its highest perfection? Certainly not! Why then persevere in a material and narrowing life. Why spend every moment on earning a living and never spend a moment on improving and broadening and strengthening the mind on which that earning depends. Life is short; seek the real, the lasting, and the unreal will never fail to materialize. At any rate do not become so engrossed in the unreal that the real is lost sight of. One does not need

much diversity of life to prepare the experiences, they are happening all around. The experiences that you need come to you, but you must see them, use them, assimilate them or they are useless. If you want to find them, watch for them.

ALOHA AINA.

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“THE ANCIENT MYSTERIES.”

THE following report is extended from rough notes of a lecture delivered by Mr. C. W. Leadbeater to the Blavatsky Lodge of the T. S., in June last. Much interest was expressed in the lecture by those who heard it and it was suggested that a somewhat full report would probably be of interest to readers of the *Theosophist*; the writer therefore obtained Mr. Leadbeater's permission to forward an account to the Editor.—E. W.

The lecturer stated that the information he was about to lay before his audience, in so far as any of it might be new to the world, was chiefly derived from the result of investigations made by several members of the T. S., into the past incarnations of some of their number. In the course of these investigations it had been found that they had, in other lives, been connected with the ancient Mysteries, or Schools of Initiation. It might be premised that any student who had been initiated into such schools would be bound by the promise of secrecy then made, as much in this as in the former life, but at the same time it was true that much of the teaching then given under pledges of initiation was now being openly taught in the Theosophical Society, and to all such information the promise of secrecy would not apply. A very considerable part of the theosophical teaching was included in the ‘Mysteries’ it was then regarded as sacred and secret, and although no longer secret is no less sacred to-day. There has always been the esoteric side of all religions, not because those Great Ones who taught them reserved anything in a spirit of grudging, but in Their greater wisdom they foresaw the dangers of placing certain truths before the minds of those who were not ready to grasp them,—dangers which had been exemplified in such results as had been sometimes seen in India where the higher Vedantic teaching had been occasionally misunderstood and misapplied, with sadly unfortunate results in moral conduct.

The ancient Mysteries about to be considered were chiefly the Grecian—Bacchic and Eleusinian—though a little might be said about Egyptian and Chaldean if time allowed. Very little information could be derived from books upon this subject. Thomas Taylor's account was perhaps the best, but a good deal of inaccuracy was also contained in it although it was wonderfully intuitive, so much so that it was difficult not to imagine that he had been associated with the schools in some past incarnation. From Iamblichus there was even less information to be got than from Taylor, although he wrote so much nearer the times in which the Mysteries flourished. Possibly this may be because he was

himself an Initiate and so bound by a promise of secrecy. In Mr. Mead's "Orpheus" there is a chapter which epitomizes all that has been generally known to scholars and it should be read by those interested in the subject.

It should be clearly understood that much which has been stated as to indecency connected with the original Mysteries is not true. Our information on this head has so largely come through the writings of the Christian Fathers that their enmity may be considered largely to explain these charges. Possibly in later times the Mysteries may have shared in the degradation which was general as, indeed, did the Christian agapæ themselves. With regard to the phenomena which were brought about in connection with the Mysteries, Hippolytus, who might be described as the Maskelyne and Cook of the period, had furnished a number of absurd suggestions as to their possible production by material (i.e., false) means, and his accounts of probable apparatus for producing lights, and suggestions as to the use of invisible ink, etc., are amusing reading. Here again it is well to remember that the *later* times may really have witnessed some such trickery, but in their early purity the phenomena were genuinely produced by occult knowledge and power.

As is generally known, there were the Greater and the Lesser Mysteries, but what is not generally known is that there was *always*, behind and above these, the *true* mystery of the "Path." Occult teaching has always been the same, always the entering on the Path has been possible for those who were ready, and the qualifications have never varied; but whereas, in ancient days, the very existence of this possibility was unknown even to those who were initiated into the Greater Mysteries until they were actually fit to receive the mystic summons from *within*, at the present time the Path and its qualifications, and something of its stages, are openly spoken of and taught in books and lectures.

Primarily the Mysteries were to teach the states after death, and while the Lesser Mysteries dealt with Kama-loka and familiarised the student with the conditions and phenomena of the Astral Plane, the Greater Mysteries taught of Devachan. Those who wished to enter the Mysteries were taught a number of aphorisms, such as:—"Death is Life, and Life is Death," and others which imply re-incarnation, a belief which was not commonly accepted in ancient Greece and Rome but was always taught in the Mysteries. "Whoever pursues realities during life will pursue them after death; whosoever pursues *un*-realities in life will pursue *un*-realities after death," was another of these aphorisms which inculcated the importance of right life here as preparation for the hereafter. The myths of Sisyphus and Tantalus were designed to convey the lesson that the after-death states were dependent on the thoughts and actions here.

In connection with Lesser Mysteries, in order to explain Kama-loka, the students were shown genuine psychic phenomena. Often the teach-

ing was in the form of pictures psychically produced in order to display the truths of cosmogenesis, which were also included in the teaching. It was here that in later years, when the power to produce genuine phenomena had left the degenerate descendants of the earlier teachers, recourse was had to theatrical representation which opened the way to charges of indecency. Illustrations of germ development shown by picture, in the same way that we might use a microscope, were employed to teach by the law of correspondences the truths of cosmic evolution. In the Myth of Proserpina, which was another of the Mystery parables, we see the soul descended into matter seized by Desire, king of the lower world, and then passing her time in and out of incarnation after her rescue from the lower region by the efforts of her mother. The Narcissus myth has a similar origin, and it is noteworthy to remark that the flower Proserpina was said to have been plucking when seized by Pluto was the Narcissus. It is thus extremely interesting to trace the real meanings underlying these very ancient and, except in the light of occultism, apparently pointless stories.

The initiated of the Lesser Mysteries were termed *Mystæ* and their special dress was a dappled fawn skin, reminding the student of the leopard skin worn by the Egyptian initiated students, and the tiger or antelope skin used by Eastern Yogis. It typified the Astral Plane, by its bright spots, for one of the most striking characteristics of that plane is, flashes of bright light.

In the Greater Mysteries the Initiates were termed *Epoptæ* and were instructed in the conditions of the Devachanic plane, again by means of visions and pictures produced. Their vestment was no longer the fawn skin, but the *fleece* (hence the golden fleece in the Jason myth), and this symbolised the *Mayavi-rupa*.

Life of the most absolute purity was originally exacted from the students of both degrees of the Mysteries, but in later times, for social and political reasons, it became impossible to enforce this with regard to the Lesser Mysteries, and it was exacted only from the Initiates of the Greater Mysteries, but at all times it has been and will be enforced with regard to any who approach the higher stages of the Path which, as before stated, lies behind the known degrees of Initiation.

Among the interesting facts connected with the Mysteries was the use of certain implements or articles the real object of which has not been generally known. One of these—the *Thirsis*—was a seven knotted wand, said to symbolise the spinal column, and this was not a mere symbol but had probably been magnetised by the high Initiates, who had more or less the direction of the Mysteries, for the purpose of awakening the kundalini, or serpent fire, where required. Then there was a series of articles which had been called the playthings of Bacchus, sometimes described as dice, but they were neither more nor less than the five Platonic solids—in other words, the three dimensional sections of the cone of space, or *real form* of space. A ball was another of

these articles and symbolised the earth, thus showing that knowledge of the earth's sphericity was possessed by those who taught in the Mysteries. A mirror was used to symbolize the Astral Light, and a spinning-top, of the form still known to our childhood, represented no other than the ultimate atom—a fact of the greatest possible interest to all who had familiarised themselves with the recent investigations into the nature and shape of physical atoms, as set forth in Mrs. Besant's *Lucifer* Articles on "Occult Chemistry." When we remember that among the Pythagoreans and Platonists the study of mathematics was compulsory, and that probably by way of the Fourth Dimension they approached a practical acquaintance with the Astral Plane, the use and meaning of these symbols become much clearer to the student. Among the Pythagoreans there were three degrees: 1st. The Listeners who, as the name implies, listened in silence to the preliminary teaching. 2nd. The Mathematicians who were taught numbers and the relations of numbers with colours and sounds, which, it may be noted, have again a relationship to the sides of the Platonic solids. 3rd. The Physicoisæ who were taught physiology and cosmogony. In some of the mystery schools we can trace five stages which apparently correspond to the five stages leading to adeptship which we find in the Eastern teaching.

Generally speaking, the Egyptian and Chaldean Mysteries taught the same truths as those already described. The "Book of the Dead" of which only a part, and that very much mixed up, has been secured, may be called a "guide to the Astral Plane," seeing that it consists in a number of instructions for the conduct of the departed, through the lower regions of Kama-loka. Of the ceremonial connected with initiation into the Egyptian Mysteries, some careful observations had been made in following up a special case which was under notice. The ceremony usually took place in vaults under the temples or in the pyramids. Part of the initiation consisted in the candidate being taken out of his body and taught upon the Astral Plane in his higher vehicles. "After three days he rose again from the dead," that is, he was awakened on the morning of the fourth day as the sun poured through a particular opening. From this ceremony were originally derived those clauses of the Christian creed which have since had such a widely different interpretation put upon them. The period of three days typified the three 'Rounds' of humanity in the solar manvantara, and the awakening of man on the Fourth Round. In the special case which had been observed, the youthful candidate was attired in a white robe, emblematic of the purity which was insisted upon and further symbolised in the preliminary bath (whence Christian baptismal practice), and brought before a conclave of priest-initiators, in one of the vaults before mentioned. He was first tested as to the development of clairvoyant faculty which he had been previously instructed how to awaken, and for this purpose had to read an inscription on a brazen shield of which the blank side was presented to his physical vision. Later he was left

alone to keep vigil ; certain mantrams, or words of power, were given to him to enable him to control different classes of elementals, and various appearances were then caused to approach him, of a more or less terrifying or seductive kind, in order that his courage, coolness and faithfulness might be tested under many trying conditions. A climax was reached when all the various affrighting appearances, which he had severally vanquished with the appropriate mantram, returned together and bore down upon him : the candidate, however, used a master word of power which had been taught him—what is called in the East a *Rajah Mantram*—and thus passed successfully through the trial of his courage and purity. It should be added that perfect purity and courage are alone really needed, and the various charms are only given to aid the human will, itself the *real* power which controls the elemental kingdom.

Once more, it must not be forgotten that behind all which had been described lay the entrance to that Path which was still open to those who were ready to tread the narrow way, but “ few there be that find it.” In the very early days of the Greek Mysteries they were directly under the active care of those Adepts who sought by this means to keep alive the waning spirituality of the civilised world and preserve an opening for all who were ready to enter the shorter way. Through centuries of varying success the Mysteries had lived, and, through the darkness of the Middle Ages right down to our own day, traces of them had survived in spite of religious and political persecution, but of course in a form far, far below their original level, and with the inner light and life faded out. The Rosicrucians and some similar societies could claim such descent and, in a different way, the Theosophical Society itself might be regarded as a re-incarnation or re-embodiment of those ancient teachings. It was, however, on a different line, for it was entirely a new departure in the history of the ages, for all this store of teaching, hitherto most jealously guarded, to be poured broadcast on the world. We in the Theosophical Society are enjoying, freely, knowledge which princes and kings of old would have given any treasure to have possessed, and yet found it not ; all the more should we value and prize the possession which is ours, all the greater is our responsibility for its right use, all the more strenuous should be our effort to make it a part of our very lives, and aid, in its light, the evolution of the world.

BURMESE FOLKLORE.

NO one who has spent any length of time in Burma can have failed to notice frequent indications of the reverence or fear in which the spirit world is held by the Burmese. The generic term for these denizens of the Astral plane, among the Burmese, is 'Nat' and this includes all spiritual beings, from the *Thegya Min*, the great prince of Devas who presides over the enchanted garden of *Tawadehutha*, or *Man Nat*, that powerful evil spirit who tempted our lord Gautama by many subtle means, when on his path to *Neikban*, down to those tricky elves which haunt jungle and stream from one end to the other of the countries. Although some confusion prevails in the minds of Burmans on the subject, there can be little doubt that the latter merely belong to such lower classes of elementals as the indigenous wild tribes of Burma were likely to come to direct cognizance of, before the introduction of Buddhism into the country, with its more complete hierarchy of spiritual entities. The former, on the other hand, without doubt belong to the higher grades of elemental beings, and the ordinary Burman cannot boast any familiarity with such lofty intelligences. With the common jungle and village *nat*, however, he is on terms of the greatest intimacy. The *nat* is with him in his getting up and in his lying down, and takes an interest in all the avocations of his life. When he is in his house he has the *Bum Soung nat* to look after, and whether he goes to hunt or to fish or to cultivate, he never gets free from his sometimes unwelcome companions. The jungle Burmans have many theories about them, among others being that of a division into the good and the bad *nats*. The good are those who have become converted to the Buddhist faith, and the bad those who still hold to their own evil imaginings. In one district in Upper Burma with which the writer was connected for many years, there was a range of three peaks known as *Moung Daw*, *Ama Daw* and *Amama Daw*, the Brother and the Elder and Younger Sisters, after the designation of the *nats* that inhabited them. I was informed that the elder sister and the brother had become good, *i. e.*, been converted to Buddhism, as if it was quite a recent thing; the younger sister was however still as bad as could be, and she kept the few scattered villages about the foot of the mountain in continual terror. When offended she used to appear in the form of a tiger, and I was assured that if anyone attempted to pass one of her shrines in the forest, disrespectfully, *i. e.*, on horseback, or with shoes on one's feet, or umbrella up, it was ten to one she would pop out of the neighbouring jungle and scare the offender out of his wits. She also devoured most of the cattle of a certain village, while in a fit of ill-temper, and was generally greatly to be feared. To show her inuate "cussedness" and opposition to the gentle tenets of Buddhism,

she always insisted that the fishermen who fished the streams flowing down from her lofty seat, instead of throwing young, undersized fish back into the stream, should leave them to gasp out their lives on the bank. I could find no Burman hardy enough to ascend her rocky peak with me, and when I came back unscathed, after rolling stones down into the deep ravine below, and otherwise disturbing her ancient and solitary reign, they were much surprised. Some time afterwards, however, I heard that she had spoken through the mouth of a '*natkadaw*,' or witch-wife (medium), in trance, and explained that my '*kathu*,' or spiritual merit, was too strong for her to be able to do anything against, so she had retired to a neighbouring hill while I was there. It is a curious fact that the *nats*, everywhere, lose power upon our occupation of a new neighbourhood. Whether the potent magnetism that hangs about us is too much for their feeble constitutions, or whether the natives, encouraged by our presence, immediately rebel against their sway, and so deprive them, by incredulity, of their powers, I do not know; but it is a fact that everywhere in Upper Burma where Europeans live, the Burman now does, without fear, things which nothing would have induced him to do under the old regime. The stories of the powers of glamour and enchantment wielded by these beings amongst the jungle folk are innumerable and often curious for their resemblance to similar stories in other countries; for instance, the story of places or towns which the *nats* have hidden away, such as Monyin Mydhoun, the old city of Monyin. In a certain district at the foot of the great Shan plateau, north of Mandalay, there is a wide valley full of dense jungle and tall elephant-grass rising high above a horseman's head. In this valley somewhere is hidden away the once great and populous city of Monyin. Now and then the solitary wayfarer in this valley will find himself surrounded by all the noises of a Burmese town—crowing of cocks, lowing of cattle, the thump of the rice pounder in its wooden bowl, and the click of the shuttle thrown through the loom, and yet not a thing can be seen but the jungle baking in the midday sun or darkling in the lengthening shadows of evening. At other times the traveller will suddenly come upon the very town itself, full of the ordinary activities of life; he will be hospitably entertained and leave with every intention of returning, but, search as he will, never more can he find that vanished town. Or again, sometimes in the bazaars of neighbouring towns, people may be met who, on being asked from where they hail, will say from the Old-town; then perhaps some curious villager will attempt to follow them home, but ever, as the shadows deepen in the jungle, the stranger, seen the moment before, is suddenly found to have vanished, and the secret remains unsolved. Also they tell of paddy husk coming floating in great quantities down streams on which no village is situated, and this is also said to come from the Old-town hidden away by those masters of glamour. This whole country which borders on the Shan plateau is given over to the worship of nature spirits to an enormous extent. It is sparsely

populated by a large variety of tribes of whom the fierce and blood-thirsty Kachins are the chief. The latter, with the Lishaws and Was, are spirit worshippers, pure and simple, and the Shaus and Pataungs, though Buddhists, find it necessary to be on good terms with their spirit neighbours and do all they can to propitiate them if they do not actually worship.

A Kachin village is usually decorated with the skulls of animals such as wild cattle and deer, and the approach to the main entrance will be through an avenue of trees ornamented with these grinning remains. They are apparently so displayed to show the *nats* that they have not been left without their due meat-offerings. The Kachins are great people for '*Nat-pices*' or ceremonial festivals. Before the English occupation of Upper Burma broke the power of the Kachins, they used to make periodical raids from their mountain fastnesses and extort toll of money and cattle and slaves, from the terrified inhabitants of the lowlands, who never were able to make any effectual resistance against these fierce mountaineers. The Kachin, with a cynical assumption of law and justice, used to declare that his exactions were really the recovery of a debt due to him, and the Kachin debt had the peculiarity of never being satisfied. It would extend from generation to generation, and the fact that it had been paid did not in any way cause it to abate. In fact, repayment might be regarded as a recognition of its existence, and a good ground for expecting that it should go on being repaid whenever opportunity occurred to extort it. It naturally becomes an important thing for the Kachin to have as many debts as possible from which he may derive a kind of settled income, and his ancestor's debts being as good as his own, he applies to the local wizard or priest of his *nats* to inform him on the subject. Accordingly when he has gathered in such scanty crops as he condescends to cultivate, and the debt-collecting season is coming round, in each considerable village is held a kind of orgy at which, the proper sacrifices having been made to the *nats*, the young braves fill themselves up with rice-spirit, and the priest, when he has arrived at the proper pitch of mantic frenzy, begins to vaticinate. He then apparently passes under the control of the spirits of former members of the tribe, in whose character he addresses the persons present and informs them in what villages of the lowlanders exist unsatisfied claims on behalf of the deceased. In such and such a village a dog bit him or perhaps barked at him, or a Burman laughed at his uncouth appearance, hence a debt is due which must be extorted without delay. In this manner the warriors soon become filled with a sense of the unavenged wrongs suffered by their tribe in former years, and they are ready to start on a holy mission to get these things set right. I have heard gruesome stories of things that are said to go on at the similar orgies of the head-hunting Was—a most savage people—who, like the 'Dyaks' in the song, are 'famed head-hunting blacks,' and whose semi-mythical country, with its gold mines of fabulous richness and its great walnut forests, has been only

visited recently by our officers. It may charitably be hoped that stories such as I have heard from Shans, of cannibalistic performances connected with human heads of not very recent acquisition, at their *nat* ceremonies, may be exaggerated, though I have myself known a Shan policeman in the dacoity days, pinch a little bit of flesh off the neck of a severed head of a dacoit chief and eat it as a means of inheriting some of the deceased's ferocious virtues. The Shans are, needless to say, profound believers in everything connected with the spirit world. They tattoo themselves in the most elaborate manner with charms against fire and sword and all the carefully tabulated dangers, diseases and accidents to which humanity is heir. They also insert little plates of silver into the flesh of the arms and chest, with cabalistic figures or mantrams inscribed on them, with the same end in view. These can be removed by making a cross slit with a knife over the spot and squeezing them out, a fact with which our troops are said to have become fully acquainted during the Burmese wars, and to have turned to considerable advantage. The dacoit naturally finds it of great service in the exercise of his arduous profession, to become proof against the bullets with which an officious police are apt to molest him, and he can easily find a doctor of magic who will invest him with the desired invulnerability. The effect of his machinations, apparently, is not that the bullet strikes and falls harmless, but that it is deflected in its course, either by the emanations from the protected one, or that the *nats*, compelled by the spell, blow it to one side. It has been darkly hinted to me, however, that there is a price that must be paid for all such magically acquired immunities, and that a man who has thus become invulnerable is by the same spell rendered incapable of procreating his kind. It is also said to be possible to overcome the charm by a countercharm of greater efficiency. It was said by the Burmese, that a certain British official, a few years back, during an encounter with a gang of dacoits was unsuccessfully shot at, again and again, and it was not until one of the gang dipped his hands in the blood of a fallen comrade, that he was able to direct a shot which overcame the protecting charm and caused the death of the official in question.

However, the subject of charms and Burmese witchcraft in general is too vast and too interesting to be trenched upon in an off-hand manner, though it presents a most fascinating field of inquiry to those attracted by such subjects.

To return to the *nat* proper, it is a little curious to find that Burmese spirit-worship seems to comprehend ideas that are duplicates of nature-spirit stories of all times and countries. The oread and dryad of the Greek mythology appear again as the '*Thit-bin-soung nat*,' the tree-inhabiting spirit, in whose honour the jungle man makes his simple offerings and piles up straight sticks against the stem of any great forest tree. The faun with his furry and pointed ears appears not as the graceful and tender creation of Praxiteles and the later Greek artists with whom the old Greek divinities had

ceased to have any actuality beyond a half-humorous, half-regretful memory, but in a form more suggestive of the harpy or chimera dire of earlier myth. The '*beloo*' is redolent of all the terrors of the jungle, under the fiercer aspects of nature; red in tooth and claw, he has a huge grinning mouth armed with sharp fangs, and his whole head with its knotty surface and foliated ears reminds one of some monstrous form of tropical vegetation. He eats men and is to be shunned like the fabled monsters of old. In the waters of the streams and rivers reside their respective rulers known by some honorific title, to whom the fisherman must make his suitable offering if he is to have a successful catch, and though they may be a less poetic creation than 'sleek Panope and all her daughters,' of Greek legend, they are as firmly believed in as any saint in the calendar. The more strictly airy sprites or sylphs are represented by the '*loo-byan*' or flying man, and the '*Geindaya*,' the Gandharva of Hindu mythology, with the females of whom, mythical heroes have become united in matrimony, only to lose them through some misadventure, as the knight his legendary Undine, or through some sudden remembrance of her 'august abodes,' sweeping the fair wanderer away. Other *nats* connect themselves with buried treasure or natural deposits of precious metals or gems. The Ruby miner has no misgivings as to the lasting character of the fields he works, for do not the *nats* put the relics into the ground as fast as they are taken out, and so long as he does not annoy them by performing certain actions or saying certain words, they can be depended upon to do their part of the business without fail. Woe, however, to the miner who mentions a monkey or a tiger in his mine. He must not even speak of the 'North' by its name, because the same word, '*myouk*,' also means a monkey, and the tiger he must call *Taw akhoung*, the 'jungle beast' of the *nats*. The elephant is also most distasteful to these capricious *nats*,—he must be spoken of as '*letmaung she*,' 'Long arm', or something is sure to occur, and the presence of a corpse of one who has died by violence is an outrage of the direst description.

The curious part of all this nature worship is that the Burman is all the time a devout Buddhist and he is constantly being told by his ecclesiastical authorities how wrong it is for him to worship *nats* or offer them any recognition at all; but as under all other religions, poor human nature shrinks from the cold abstractions of a creed too high and stern for its feeble efforts to attain to—"too pure and good for human nature's daily food"—and the simple woodlander finds refuge in a half-friendly, half-fearful familiarity with the childish, undeveloped intelligences not so unlike his own self, easily pleased and devoid of any real malice, and so common and omnipresent that they seem to afford him a sort of companionship in his daily tasks.

N. G. C.

TRUTH—THE BASIS OF KNOWLEDGE.

THERE is something that is the cause of all the mental and moral unrest that now, like an epidemic, disturbs the whole world. From the labourer's cottage to the home of the astronomer in lonely vigil there is something that will not allow of contentment. All are striving for something, longing for something; what is it? Is it not truth? Is it not this soul-hunger for truth that drives one to the arctic seas, and another through the African jungle? Man must satisfy it, and it is not the joy of enduring hardships that satisfies these explorers, it is the knowledge of having discovered the truth concerning those regions. So it is with the scientist in his laboratory and the yogi in his cave. Truth, and nothing but the truth, is the watchword of the day. And the ultimate truth, is it not divine? God is Truth and Truth is God. In the end the religionist and the scientist meet at one common origin. One, by knowing God, knows all truths, and the other, by knowing these truths knows God. Then knowledge will be the true religion for the whole thinking world, and there will be an end of beliefs, for what is known cannot be called a belief. Now it is but a scattered few, seekers after Truth—Theosophists—whose eyes have seen the Light. Neither are all true Theosophists known to one another, nor are they in the Society, by any means. In all of the great religions of the day is the grain of truth in a bushel of chaff, and those with eyes to see, have seen, and the Path is before their feet. One man has seen one phase of truth, he knows it is truth and he follows it up, all his life; another thus follows another thread. Each thinks he is right; he does not notice the other man's thread; he may even doubt if it is true; it may be he is too busy to look. So the world goes on. By and by, one by one, the threads get so close together that each sees the other's thread and so more and more get in the same line: they all are following a larger and more promising lead. Presently they one by one look up; they see how all lines are leading to one source; they see all beginning and ending in one great basic truth, and they leave their narrow trail and grasp the whole. They see how, at first, all were wrong and yet held the truth, but now they know what the goal is and they seek the Path leading direct to that goal. The Path exists by which it may be attained, but perhaps they do not see it. To make that Path plainer; to help others to see it, is now the great joy and duty of the advance guard. The Paths may be only parallel, not identical. Let the direction you are taking be known. Each and every one must "let his light shine before men." But how? That is the great question which must be solved by each in his own way. Some quietly, by action, plodding under heavy burdens; others by writing and lecturing,—famous before the world. Most of us, however, in a small way, among those around us; unnoticed by the

world but all equal in the eyes of the Lord of the Harvest. How can one do this better than in helping the little ones to look higher. Not only your own, of your own flesh and blood, but all children, wherever they may be met. Look at the children of our Christian countries; are the schools teaching them a high standard of regard for truth? No, that is left for the home and the Sunday school. And is the teaching there high and inspiring, philosophical and scientific? Are the teachers living up to the ideals they inculcate? Again, no. In fact the general tendency of our so-called religious training is one of hypocrisy; pretending to believe what is taught; pretending to live a life which is unknown outside the Church walls. And why is this lamentable state of affairs. *From lack of Truth.* From that and nothing else. The human heart knows and seizes instinctively the truth, and at no time is this trait more keen or true than in youth. Gradually, however, this intuitive perception is lost. Every jar of hypocrisy, every conventional lie, every injustice of life which is accepted and condoned on the plea of "being practical," helps kill it out. Instead of learning to lead a true life, one's first years are spent learning the conventionalities. And no wonder that, at maturity, precedence, law, custom and usage take the place of an innate grasp of truth, justice, morality, and harmony with the laws of nature. Can we not remedy this state of things, in our own homes at least, and by looking back at our own childhood see how to apply the truths we know to our present troubles? Who of us cannot remember days and weeks, yes, years, of bewilderment, trying to consolidate the lies told us into logical or just continuity; questioning, wondering at the chaos of nature, not getting satisfying answers, or boldly holding our parents in contempt, for dense stupidity. Sometimes even losing all confidence, because of evasions, prevarications and lies coming as answers to honest questions. Never tell a child he will find out by and by. If he can question he can understand. If he cannot understand your answer clearly, perhaps then he may be told that he is not old enough. One of the first and most interesting of enigmas, to a child, is his own origin. This is of tremendous importance, and concerning it he should get clear and truthful answers. There is so much lying in regard to this point that I suggest a change to the truth. It certainly can do no more harm than the present system of evasion. Boys of twelve will sometimes be quite misled by parents of the best intentions, because of a false and morbid modesty; and the number of children who have to turn to servants, stable boys and school companions, for knowledge concerning the most vital questions of life and morals, is appalling.

Boys, hearing the truth and questioning fathers or mothers, have often been met with looks of shame, so as to destroy the child's attitude of innocent questioning and turn it into morbid, unnatural lines of thinking; driving it into secrecy and false modesty of the most pernicious kind, and why? It does not know; it is pure-minded and sees the innate modesty of nature, and by helping this natural attitude, true modesty can be firmly grounded. Perhaps ignorance of her very functions

and place in nature may shield a girl. Perhaps a baby-like ignorance is best for the young wife and mother; but has the old-fashioned plan worked well? For one thing, that sort of ignorance is well nigh impossible in these days of novels and papers. And again I iterate the importance of pure, dry, scientific instruction at the earliest age that a child, accustomed to seek all information trustingly of its parents, can ask for enlightenment. Girls as well as boys are free to run about our city streets, and curiosity in this line should be destroyed before the temptations of city life, ablaze at every corner, lead them to mischief. The child's mind is very well formed and it does assume conscious control of its actions at about eight years of age, or even earlier. This age is one of nervous hurry and rapid advancement, so that often the child's mind may mature, and its complete consciousness of itself, as an individual, may take place several years sooner. Especially is this the case in that hot-house for precocity, the kindergarten. Though there are many who truly appreciate the intention of the great founder, yet many teachers too often want to show "results" of their success. They want to show to visitors something bright and interesting and striking, for their own name and fame. The result is often a very bright little parrot, head slightly too large for his body, who is sadly mourned, for "he was so promising," but the little body could not supply the nerve-force necessary and so broke down.

The true "child-garden" is a play-ground, where under the care of a loving, well educated woman, the children have time to grow, learn to respect the rights of others, and can develop their own ingenuity in games and even in some easy educational line. A child's mind should be evolved. It should ask its own questions and get correct answers. But when a subject is broached, question it in all the points; see if it comprehends, and correct its mistakes. Never be dogmatic, however, for if the parent is intentionally wrong and is found out, the child's confidence receives a fatal shock. It may wound the father's pride to tell his child that all is not yet known by him or even by scientific men, but it will save the child from the fallacy that all is now known or that all grown people are just second to God in omniscience, and help enlarge his views of life. Children can ask questions that it taxes the imagination of a man to invent or answer. But some are due perhaps to causes not yet accepted by the scientific world. For instance, my little three-year old friend once asked her mother, in all seriousness: "Were you always my mamma, did I never have another, long, long ago?" Her mother assured her she had not, she had only the one and could not have had another. But the child was not quite satisfied and pondered over the subject with the introspective look of a seer. Now, from the standpoint of reincarnation, it is possible she had a faint remembrance of her former life, and the mother, having no direct proof of it one way or the other, asserted what she did not know—blamelessly to be sure, but it exemplifies the subject of the unanswerable questions. Why not say: "I am mother of your body, but the soul in you comes from

God. Perhaps you know of your other life." Questions which puzzle the greatest intellects of science, are often answered with a self-assurance amounting to crime.

A child's earliest training should be physical and moral. Lead it to self-dependence in action; teach your babies, when first beginning to walk, to depend on themselves, and never hurry them. Nature is slow but sure, and though a child often deduces rapidly and intuitively many things from observation, some other ideas do not seem to come to them. Once set up a habit of self-reliance and investigation and the child will keep on and naturally fall into consecutive thought. Gradually his memory strengthens; his own ideas and deductions never leave him. He gradually gets an insight into the ways of men, he is always full of curiosity, wondering, and questioning; he asks what letters are, he asks what books are, and when he finally wants to read, the learning of his letters comes natural to his well developed mind. The reader perhaps knows some child who will not ask for these things. It is because his first questions were not answered, or he was told not to be a nuisance, or that his parents did not know. His first attempts at investigation being thus nipped in the bud, and being thrown back on himself, he stagnates; his unanswered questions are brooded over till the brain is numb and vacuity sets in. Any observer will see that all children naturally ask question after question. This begins as soon as they can talk, and the first opportunity of making a child solve things for himself, the first time he can answer himself understandingly, should not be allowed to pass unused. The simplest way is often the best, and any elaboration of apparatus and plan is unnecessary. Don't try to make a prodigy, like the professor's daughter who could give all the flowers' botanical names, but at two and a half years old could not yet walk. It is not knowledge that is wanted. Mere memorizing is pernicious in a young child. What we want to start into activity is the investigating, the enquiring and thinking principle of the brain, not the mere parrot-like imitation and memory due to habit. At the same time we want to develop independence and self-control. One little chap had his first and only lesson on thinking for himself, when but 18 months old, in the following way: He was toddling around and playing by himself and went up to his father's knees. He, closing his hands, kept the little chap "penned in," much to the latter's disgust. He began to fret. "Don't cry, I am not holding you," said his father. The child pushed the arms in vain and finally sat down in despair on the floor. There was the outlet; he crawled under the arms and was free; he saw that he had not been held. In a few minutes the trick was repeated and, quick as a flash, he ducked under and escaped. A few words about trying for himself were not lost, and at two and a half-years of age he was as bright, as thoughtful, and as self-reliant as many a coddled boy of ten. Everything depends on early training. A Catholic priest, talking of religion, said that if the priests had the training of a child until he was eight years old he would

never leave the church. Quite true; he is then completely psychologised with the idea of not thinking for himself. He dares not look for light, nor use his own judgment. All that is true he thinks has been told him and is known by the priest. He is a helpless coward; afraid of his own thoughts, afraid of his own ideas, afraid of the priest and of the God back of him. Love, for his God, is unknown. This is all very well for the future influx of Peter's pence. "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." But do we know the way he should go? What we want are men who will think for themselves, weighing without bias, and philosophically choosing that which is in harmony with truth—the laws of nature, which are the laws of God. This is not written for those who deny a God or anything which is not capable of physical measurement. They do not wish to believe, they will not investigate, lest they should believe, and many psychologise themselves into the condition of not being able to believe. This is written for those who believe, either from intuitive faith or from the actual facts of experimental Psychology and Spiritism, in a soul. The growth of a child's body is only less important than that of his mind, and it is for the benefit of those who want a strong, brave, and independent thinker, instead of a superstitious semi-psychologised believer in unphilosophical and cruel creeds based on the morbid intellects of the dark ages, and kept quite separate from daily social intercourse because of their inapplicability to the questions of the day.

My aim is to outline a course of training for a philosophical and well-balanced life. Every man should be a philosopher to the extent of living up to the laws of health, and recognising the truths of nature, to use them for his own benefit and those around him. Every man who recognises and lives up to truth makes it so much easier for the next man to do the same. For on every plane there is conservation of energy, moral as well as physical. Truth gathers around and harmonises a true life, while untruth will raise a discord on the mental and spiritual plane, that eventually shatters the doer's whole life.

The ideal therefore is to bring harmony, light, truth, and that most potent spiritual energy, love, to bear upon the child and so surround him that when he has to choose he will be so sensitive to harmony that he will always harmonise, and seek refuge in truth. The ideal is, at this period, very seldom attained. Few homes are free from outbursts of temper, free from ill-will and contention, free from illness and nervousness, all due to lack of determination, to slavish following of fashion, and helpless surrender to the desires of the animal nature. This, being robbed of its instincts, is not guided and checked by the higher principle, but, on the contrary, uses the mind to argue down any promptings of conscience or instinct which may interfere with the gratification of lust and passion. Woe unto you, ye physicians, who for the sake of your pockets, pander to lust and greed, and disguise disagreeable but wholesome truths.

Truly, the training of the child should begin two years before it is born. That is, the mother should be trained to a calm and sensible view of her responsibilities and the possibilities of the effect of her mind upon her child. There is nothing to fear from nature, and nature left alone will take care of herself. But the worry, fear, and anxiety of an untrained and unprepared mind may have, and does undoubtedly have, a great and often unrealized effect upon the child's nervous system. Nature is not fashionable now, and though in her is all peace and happiness, yet is she banished from our thoughts, unknown in our daily life. Unsought and unwelcome, she is blamed for all pain and anguish when she asserts herself in the crowning consummation of her law and evolution. For the human mother is the crown and climax of nature's efforts, when she is natural. Let us make the bold assumption that the child has been blessed with a strong, pure, self-controlled father, and a calm, thoughtful mother. He has therefore unusual advantages. His nerve force is abundant enough to serve as a reserve, he is free from vague fears and horrors vibrating around him, he has nothing to irritate him and he is 'nervy' enough to stand any slight accidental jars. He feels content and he lets the whole house feel it. Of course he is busy growing. He sleeps, and only a watchful eye can detect his mental advancement. Yet the eye of a seer, the clairvoyant eye, can see the bright, clear, luminous cloud of his Aura, undefined but pure, surrounding him. He will not have conscious control of his soul till he is seven or eight years old. It is for his natural guardians to see to it that it is as pure then as it is now, when first incarnated in the little body. Whether it is a spark direct from God, without any previous experience or life, or whether it is a little wayward soul, with a latent consciousness of former struggles and victories, placed here for another struggle towards perfection, does not much matter. Our duty is to give it a chance, better than we ourselves had, to see the light, and make a step or two forwards, consciously and intentionally, towards perfection, and none backwards. We want him to see for himself, act, sow and reap, free from fears and doubts; firm in the idea, the basis of all spiritual teachings, that he is a free and conscious builder of his own destiny; that any obstacle in his way is the result of past inharmonious action, generally on his own part, though often due to others; and that by turning to the right, to the truth, without looking forward and doubting the results, and by that path only, will he avoid the rest of the long chain of evils following each other. Not only that, but any future evil is avoided, by thus ceasing to sow to inharmony and falsehood.

A. F. K.

(To be concluded.)

DOMINATED BY CHRIST.

THE Right Reverend L. G. Mylne, D. D., Bishop of Bombay, being about to retire from service, preached his farewell sermon in July last, when he delivered an impressive address before his congregation and explained that "a life may be surrendered into slavery to a passion, to an ideal, to a person, or two of these, or to all three together." Rejecting the first as unworthy of the aim of reasoning human beings, he went on to speak of ideals, and said that "an ideal may be inadequate or grotesque, and yet it may lead to magnificent self-denial, and may rouse keen enthusiasm in others. It may even pass into fanaticism, and yet the character, on the whole, may be the gainer. But where the ideal is adequate, where the service of God and man is the aim of the idealizing enthusiast, where self-restraint is preserved, where *the unreasoningness, the blindness, the untruthfulness, which characterize the genuine fanatic,* are absent from the honest enthusiast, then what can ennoble a life like possession by a single ideal before which all else gives way. It is men of one idea who have notoriously moved the world. Men like these stir the heart of society, they elicit the latent nobility which underlies mere commonplace hearts, and which awaits but the touch of enthusiasm to arouse it, and put it into action."

"Most masterful of all," he said, "is the force of a predominant character; most potent of forces is the sway of a dominant overpowering personality brought to bear upon ordinary men. St. Paul found in the person of Jesus Christ, embodied in concrete form, the one grand master passion which swayed his life and career—the passion for saving souls; and the one overmastering ideal—the ideal of Divine Righteousness. Jesus embodies not only Salvation with the force of an ideal fulfilled, he is in his own proper person the very salvation which he typifies. Jesus not only exhibits the righteousness of God, in a form more perfect than of any Saint, he is the very Righteousness of God, *through which, endued with which,* nay, through whom, endued with whom, God's Saints have overcome the world. Reflect that if you ever do anything it will not be you who do it, but Jesus Christ in you. Make him your all in all, the beginning, the middle and the end, of all that you fain would do, of all that you have striven to be and failed. This I assure you,—what we do, be it secular or be it sacred, will turn out a real success, so far and only so far as the person of Jesus Our Lord is the be-all and end-all of our lives."

Speaking of himself he observed: "The single claim that I make to be in any way remembered among you, is as *one* who amid weaknesses and failures has yet had this aim before him—to put forward the person of Christ as the be-all and the end-all of the Gospel. If I have taught the supremacy of the Church it has been as the body of Christ; if I have

enforced the reality of the sacraments it has been as the communications of Christ; if I have advocated aggression on heathenism, it has not been in the name of a system, but as the preaching of Christ and him crucified. That Christ is Christianity and that Christianity is simply Christ—such has been my personal creed, and such the sum and substance of my teaching. Would to God it had been more of a passion. Would to God the pursuit of that ideal had been more constant and more determined. Would to God the belief had been enforced as a belief can then only be, when it shakes the believer himself with the force of a passion from without. But still, amid every weakness, this has—as I dare claim—been true; that it has been Christ, and Christ, and Christ, that I have tried to bring home to peoples' hearts."

Bishop Mylne has been at the head of the diocese of Bombay for the last twenty years. He was well known as an accomplished scholar before he came to India, and during his term of office he showed himself to be a divine of high character, upright and honest in his ways. His extreme ritualism had given offence to a part of his congregation in the commencement, and the aggressive policy that he advocated for the Christian Missions in India had surprised many, but the harmlessness of his ways disarmed hostility. It is to be regretted that he did not apply himself to study the ancient Aryan religions and to understand the deep religious and philosophical teachings of those ancient scriptures. He was consequently unable to take a broad view of religious questions, and his strict adherence to dogma and rituals prevented him from taking a correct view of the genesis of religion. Says Dr. David Page: "The sceptic and infidel is he who refuses facts, and rejects the conclusions of enlightened reason; the dogmatist and bigot is he who, overestimating his own opinions, undervalues those of others and obstinately resists all conviction." When Bishop Mylne advised the missionaries to carry on an aggressive policy against the people of India, whom he was pleased to call 'heathens,' his dogmatism scarcely allowed him to see that these so-called heathens could teach him a far grander religious philosophy, in consonance with the laws of nature, than any that he was aware of.

The whole of his farewell sermon shows that when he was talking of Christ his ideas were vague and indefinite. To talk of the supremacy of the Church as being the body of Christ; the enforcing of the sacraments as the communications of Christ, the advocacy of the aggression on Heathenism as the preaching of Christ, and saying that Christ was Christianity, and Christianity was simply Christ, was merely a Rhapsody of words, and to quote his own sentence we might say it characterized "the unreasoningness and the blindness of a genuine fanatic."

He regretted that his creed was not more of a passion with him, that the pursuit of his ideal had not been more consistent and more determined, that the belief had not been enforced with the force of a passion from without, and well may such regret have been expressed, for a highly educated man like himself must often have felt confused,

disappointed and vexed—albeit unconsciously—by attempting the hopeless task of trying to support dogmas which facts—multitudinously brought to light in the present age—and logical reasoning, must show to be baseless. When the myths and allegories of the past are tried to be believed in, and defended, in their dead letter sense, a whirl of confusion is set up in honest minds, and beliefs and dogmas are mechanically supported, owing merely to the habit of early training, without the genuine enthusiasm that shines forth when there is the conviction of a truth by scientific knowledge and reasoning.

Says the learned author of "*The Coming Era*": "Faith in Christ is no part of the constitution which should govern mankind, though it has crept in and usurped a place which it has for ages held by force and fashion. Instead of taking eternal principles, the laws indeed of Nature and of Nature's God, and working upon and through them, the Church has preferred to import and substitute a human invention—faith in Christ. This was doubtless a shibboleth of the early Church; the war-whoop, the touchstone, by which a class would know and recognize its members. The illusions which this ægis has afforded society, however agreeable and charming to some, must be abandoned in favour of a higher, more manly and surer method. Is it not enough that society has waded through all the difficulties and dangers of the past eighteen hundred years—blindly, wearily, exhaustively dragging itself on?"

People with plain understandings discover in the worship of a man nothing useful or meritorious; nor do they find true devotion in the worship of a woman. The belief in Christ and his blood leads to faith in the bleeding heart of a Virgin, immaculate conception, and Papal infallibility. It is high time that all this theological clock-work were laid aside as so much lumber and quackery. Who, in agriculture, would not lament to see chaff sown for wheat? Why trust to figments when you may build on everlasting foundations?

Is it possible that the clergy at this time of day do not see things as they really are? Is it possible that they do not know the difference between a reality and a perversion of fact? Are we asked to believe that they do not see, when the innovation of worshipping a man in place of our Maker is practised? Or rather is it not that *the vested interests are so strong in maintaining things as they are*, that they will not see? These are very important questions and cannot be quietly dismissed. Religion, left in its present condition, suffers corruption. The purity of its wells is poisoned. The increasing evils which afflict society, illustrate the ruinous state to which we are tending. Will our teachers be awakened, and have the courage to face these things or not? Will they discard the unserviceable tools they have been using, and in their stead employ weapons, mighty to strike down the sins and miseries of mankind? That great change which dethroned God for human worship, in the early part of the Christian era, is the prolific cause of many inferior changes which take men so sadly out of their course."

The idea of the "Chrestos" was borrowed by the early Christians from the pagan mysteries in which the highest attributes of Divinity were ascribed to the Spiritual Soul in man. All the greatness and the Divine perfection of the Logos was ignorantly and fanatically attributed to the teacher of Nazareth, in whom alone it was supposed to be centred, to the exclusion of all Divine light from the whole of humanity in the present, past, and future. Not only this, but God himself was thrust into the back-ground and the human teacher was supposed to reign eternally in his place. This illogical teaching is still preached by the most learned Christian dogmatists of the present day, regardless of its undesirable consequences in many respects. When learned Churchmen commence to see that Christ is not a person, but a principle, and that it is latent in every man, and that it can only be evoked by self-effort, by the practice of the highest purity and righteousness, then will dawn a new era for Christianity. We should all hope, and strive and pray that we may be *dominated by Christ*, not meaning, thereby, the Jewish reformer who died 1897 years ago, but that higher Self—the Atma-Buddhi-Manas—which is the God in every man, and which alone can help humanity and further its evolution through the long cycles of existence. When "Christ" is understood in this light, the inconsistency, the unreasonableness and the evil consequences of a dogmatic doctrine disappear, and in stead there comes the enunciation of a magnificent and all-embracing religious law that unites all men and raises them to the perception of valuable spiritual truths. "Each man is to himself absolutely the Way, the Truth and the Life. But he is only so when he grasps his whole personality firmly, and by the force of his awakened spiritual will, recognizes this personality as not himself (but that thing which he has with pain created for his own use), and by means of which he purposes to reach to the life beyond personality." Bishop Mylne commenced his sermon with the text—"Now thanks be unto God which leadeth us in triumph in Christ." (2. Cor. 11). St. Paul was however an Initiate, and the true meaning of his words could only be understood by comprehending the esoteric sense underlying the sayings. The Christ principle may show itself with brilliance in pure men like Zoroaster, Buddha, Krishna and Jesus, but it would be ridiculous to limit the Divine principle to any *one* of these persons only, and make that person the Saviour of all mankind, denying to the whole of the human race any power or potentiality within each of its members to save himself by treading the path of the highest righteousness.

JULIEN.



THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE.

(Continued from page 595.)

II.

“**B**EFORE the soul can see, the Harmony within must be attained and fleshly eyes be rendered blind to all illusion.”

“The Harmony within,” represents the plane of potentiality or latency of activity, where all differentiation being in a state of potentiality, the element of disharmony has not yet made its appearance. Established in this state of potentiality where no activity or impression can reach, and thus being beyond the planes of actual differentiation, the soul’s vision is no more obscured by the illusive appearances which obtain on the planes of differentiation below. The soul that has advanced to this stage after realizing the unreality of the planes below, feels no longer the attraction of the lower planes now left behind, and, strong in experience and wisdom, with its vision no longer obscured by differentiation and limitation, it is fitted to realize its identity with the one Reality.

10. “Before the soul can hear, the image (man) has to become as deaf to roarings as to whispers; to cries of bellowing elephants as to the silvery buzzing of the golden fire-fly.”

The last section, as well as this, refers to the soul’s ceasing to identify itself with the plane of the senses into which the Manas differentiates. Thus ceasing to identify itself with the senses, the soul appropriates not to itself the activities and impressions which affect the various senses, and thus is free from what are called hearing, seeing, &c., on the plane of manifestation and objective existence. Hearing, seeing, &c., as understood on the plane of manifestation, mean, the soul’s appropriating the activities and impressions obtaining on the plane of the senses, by identifying itself with them, and thus, as it were, contracting its powers and knowledge within the limits of the plane of the senses. When no longer bound down by these limits, *i.e.*, when ceasing to identify and thus to appropriate to itself the activities and impressions which constitute what are commonly called hearing, seeing, &c., then and then only the soul really hears, sees, &c., because then only it realizes the source of the activities and impressions which constituted hearing, seeing, &c. It then hears and sees what made all hearing and seeing possible.

11. “Before the soul can comprehend and may remember, she must unto the Silent Speaker be united, just as the form to which the clay is modelled is first united with the potter’s mind.”

The previous two sections contemplate the soul’s ceasing to identify itself with the activities and impressions which the senses convey to the

Mind. This section does the same with regard to the activities and impressions entering into the constitution of the Manas itself.

Every impression or vibration rising on the plane of the Manas, and appropriated by the soul, identifying itself with it, constitutes its thought or knowledge. The impression received by the mental plane through the senses, and perceived by the soul, identifying itself with the Manas, constitutes what is called percept. The various impressions coming to Manas through the senses from external objects, constitute the perceptual knowledge of the man and the brute. The faculty of Understanding takes cognisance of all perceptual knowledge. It consists in direct communication between the Manas which apprehends, and the object apprehended, and concerns itself not with the relations between the various impressions representing perceptual knowledge. The recognition of the points of similarity and dissimilarity between the various impressions, is effected by Manas through its faculty of Reason as distinguished from Understanding. It is the function of reason to form what are called concepts, from the percepts apprehended by the Understanding through the senses.

In thinking, a man operates with the concepts. Manas represents a plane subtler and therefore less differentiated than that of the senses. As being a plane, however, it has its various stages of grossness, and its ultimate stage of grossness coincides with the subtlest stage of the plane of the senses. Thus, Understanding, as dealing with percepts, would occupy the plane where impressions from the plane of the senses enter the lowest region of the plane of Manas. What external objects are to this plane of perceptual knowledge, the percepts formed on this lower plane of Manas are to the plane of concepts above. Perceptual knowledge consists in recognising a certain impression received through the senses. As a percept, such an impression is still recognised as objective to and coming from outside the plane of Manas. An object is, so to speak, a bundle of impressions, and a percept is, reducing these various impressions to a single impression. A percept thus occupies a plane less differentiated than the plane of the object which is perceived. A concept is the transferring of the impressions representing the various percepts, to a plane still less differentiated, and occupies a subtler plane of Manas. It consists in assimilating the impressions representing the percepts, with the subtler impressions entering into the constitution of the Manas itself. A percept, as an impression, temporarily throws the plane of Manas into a particular state of vibration but has no lasting effect and the mind again settles itself into its natural state of vibration when the effect of the percept wears off. But a concept means the assimilation of the impression with the constitution of the Manas, and thus modifies the natural vibration of the mental plane.

As a single percept represents the totality of the various impressions or ideas of which an object is constituted, a single concept represents the various percepts. Thus the percept of a tree, for instance,

would represent the totality of the impressions representing its height, thickness, foliage, flowers, fruits, configuration, &c. Whenever and wherever the tree is presented, the percept is formed. Every tree will have its percept. Perceptual knowledge does not go beyond this. As many trees are presented, so many percepts will result. The same with other objects. But the recognition of a tree as tree, as distinguished from other objects, or of a particular sort of tree from trees of other sorts, arises only when percepts are transformed into concepts. If percepts be regarded as occupying the impression-plane of Manas, concepts would represent the subtler activity-plane of Manas. The Manas active with concepts constitutes the process of thinking which, while going on, reproduces the various perceptual impressions from which the concepts were originally abstracted. The Mind at any one moment is not working with all the concepts it has stored up. These that are thus not in a state of activity at a given time, do still exist in a state of latency and potentiality—a state which admits of a possibility of the rise of a concept to a state of activity. This coming to activity of a concept from a state of latency constitutes what is called memory. The soul is spoken of as remembering a certain thing or incident.

The soul, identifying itself with certain concepts in a state of activity or potentiality, has its knowledge limited by them. The very identification is the cause of limitation. The state of potentiality of concepts forms a sub-plane of the plane of Manas. Taking Manas as the plane of impressions, the potentiality of concepts would correspond to the latency stage, the concepts in activity to the activity stage, and the percepts, to the impression stage, of the Manas plane.

The formation of concepts means comprehension, and the rise of concepts to activity from a state of potentiality means memory. The soul, identifying itself with certain concepts in activity or latency, has its comprehension and memory limited by them. The differentiation, distinction and limitation which properly belong to activity, the soul as the underlying reality attributes to itself and thus, in a way, more or less limits its powers and knowledge. When it comes to realize the activity in association with it as not itself, and thus ceases to identify itself with it, the limitation which affects the activity it attributes not to itself, and its comprehension and memory are then not limited to any particular concept or concepts. The concepts, as a form of activity actual or potential, presuppose their state before the rise of activity which represents them; the state beyond all differentiation, distinction and limitation; the state of the soul before it came to identify itself with activity in any form. This is the state in which the soul becomes united to the Silent Speaker. It is here that all concepts are reduced to a state of Unity. This is the state of comprehension and memory free from the least limitation. It is the state from which proceeds everything that is comprehended or remembered on the planes below.

12. "For then the Soul will hear and will remember."

13. "And then to the inner ear will speak 'The Voice of the Silence,' and say"—

The explanation given under the preceding sections makes the meaning of these sections clear enough. Hearing and remembering, and 'The Voice of the Silence' speaking to the inner ear, mean the realization of the One Reality by the soul, beyond all differentiation, distinction and limitation.

14. "If thy Soul smiles while bathing in the Sunlight of thy Life; if thy Soul sings within her chrysalis of flesh and matter; if thy Soul weeps inside her castle of illusion; if thy Soul struggles to break the silver thread that binds her to the MASTER; know, O Disciple, thy soul is of the Earth."

Here are described the indications of an imprisoned soul—the soul of the Earth, ignorant of its own real nature and mistaking illusion for reality. The Life here means a particular incarnation of the soul. Sunlight of Life would thus mean the enjoyments which a particular life affords to the soul.

When the soul smiles while bathing in the Sunlight of Life, it indicates that the soul is captivated by the harmony of the activity which has become associated with it. Singing and weeping are respectively the pleasure and pain experienced by the soul according as the activity with which it has become associated meets with harmony or the reverse, in its course. Owing to its identifying itself with activity, it appropriates to itself the harmony or disharmony to which only the latter which is not itself is liable. "Chrysalis of flesh and matter," and the "castle of illusion," refer to the activities and impressions which hold the reality underlying them captive, by conferring on it the sense of limitation and distinction and making it forget its real nature. This forgetting by the soul, of what itself in essence is, and being attracted toward the unreal and impermanent activity with which it identifies itself, represent its struggles to break the thread that binds it to the Master. Every time it is attracted towards activity, it, so to speak, gives a pull at the thread which connects it with the Master within.

The smiling of the soul in the Sunlight of Life, its singing and weeping while it is being held captive, and its struggles to break the silver thread, all indicate more or less its identification with activities and impressions and its being imbued with the sense of individuality. Such a soul is described as being of the Earth, i.e., of the plane of manifestation and objective existence.

15. "When to the World's turmoil thy budding soul lends ear; when to the roaring voice of the great illusion thy soul responds; when frightened at the sight of the hot tears of pain; when deafened by the cries of distress thy soul withdraws, like the shy turtle, within the carapace of SELFHOOD, learn, O Disciple, of her Silent "God" thy soul is an unworthy shrine."

This section describes the reality underlying the individuality identifying itself with the activity it underlies and appropriating to itself the modifications the latter undergoes. It is imbued with a sense of individuality, limitation and distinction, and thus tries to avoid everything which is likely to produce disharmony with the activity in association with it and with which it identifies itself. It thus makes a distinction between a pain to itself and pain to others, because it makes a distinction between itself and others. In thus making a distinction between the "I" and those which are looked upon as "not I," the "I" as what itself in essence is, in other words the underlying reality in the "I," has lost its Divinity.

The budding soul lending ear to the World's turmoil, means the underlying reality identifying itself with the activity it underlies and appropriating to itself the various modifications which that activity undergoes by coming in conflict with the activities on the plane of manifestation in the objective Universe. The soul responding to the roaring voice of the great illusion means the same thing. The great illusion is the objective Universe, the result of activity undergoing differentiation and giving rise to distinction and limitation in the One Infinite. The voice of the great illusion represents the sounds which arise from the activity playing throughout the entire Universe on the various planes, from the subtlest to the grossest.

The underlying reality so identifying itself with the activity it underlies, is frightened at whatever produces disharmony in that activity, and attempts to avoid everything which is painful to itself, regardless of the sufferings of others as distinguished from the "I." Such an attitude shows that the soul is imbued with the sense of selfhood. It makes a distinction between itself and others. It is ignorant of the fact that the reality underlying the individual self is not one with the activity which enters into the constitution of the individual self as such, but which is unreal as having no independent existence by itself.

The soul, as embodied in the individual self, when viewed independently of the activity in association with it, is one with the One Reality. It is, as it were, enshrined in the temple formed of activity, and represents the Reality beyond all activity. But no sooner does it identify itself with the activity it underlies and is in association with, than it forgets its divine nature and is an unworthy shrine of the Reality it is a representative of.

16. "When, waxing stronger, thy Soul glides forth from her secure retreat, and breaking loose from the protecting shrine, extends her silver thread and rushes onward; when, beholding her image on the waves of space, she whispers, 'This is I,'—declare, O Disciple, that thy Soul is caught in the webs of delusion."

This section describes the progress of the underlying reality along the course of evolution from subtle to gross. When in union with the One Reality beyond all activity, it was secure from all differentiation

and distinctions to which activity is liable. It was beyond all possibility of disharmony, because beyond all duality. It, so to say, rests secure in union with the One Reality. But when the underlying reality identifies itself with activity, it appropriates to itself the differentiations to which the latter is liable, and thus thinks of itself as being subject to distinction and limitation. Looking upon itself with the activity in association with it as forming one whole, and appropriating to itself every modification which the activity undergoes, it, so to speak, casts its lot with the activity which is, in truth, not itself, and thus, as it were, leaves the protection of the Reality beyond all activity. In identifying itself with activity it confers limitation on itself. Itself thus limited, it looks upon what lies beyond this limit as distinct from itself. It calls itself "I," and everything else distinct from itself as "not I." Thus the sense of "I" marks the underlying reality identifying itself with activity. And as activity is an illusion, because it is unreal and has no independent existence, the soul identifying this unreal activity with itself, the reality is deluded. It is caught in the webs of delusion. The webs of delusion are the various and innumerable modifications which the activity undergoes, and which, coming in conflict with one another, form a sort of intricate entanglement round the underlying reality which identifies itself with activity in any form.

17. "This Earth, Disciple, is the Hall of Sorrow, wherein are set along the Path of dire probations, traps to ensnare thy Ego by the delusion called 'Great Heresy.'"

The earth represents the plane of manifestation. It is the plane where every soul which has ever identified itself with activity in any form, must come, along with the reaction to which that activity gives rise, and must continue to come so long as the least identification with activity persists. The Earth, the plane of manifestation, is the result of activity proceeding along its course towards exhaustion. The soul's being dragged to this plane is giving it an opportunity to ensure exhaustion of the activity with which it had identified itself in the past. It will thus continue to come to this plane of manifestation so long as there remains the slightest trace of attachment with activity on its part. The Earth, the plane of manifestation, is "the Hall of Sorrow." It is here that the soul is brought into relation with everything it had felt attachment for, and as everything existing on this plane is ever changing, the soul, evincing attachment for what is not everlasting, comes to grief sooner or later. To secure the exhaustion of activity which has determined the advent of the soul to the plane of manifestation, and at the same time not to be attached with any fresh activity, the soul must show complete indifference to activities manifesting on this plane, and allow them to have their course without interruption. Actions there will be, because there is activity which must run its course. What is necessary is merely that the soul, the underlying reality, shall not appropriate to itself those actions and thus be ever indifferent to the fruits those actions might give rise to. This is the very thing which Sri

Krishna preaches to Arjuna, in the Bhagavad Gîtâ. The soul assuming such an attitude on the plane of manifestation, is said to be coursing along the probationary path. It means sacrificing everything for which it had once felt attachment. Easy enough to say but very difficult to practice, and hence it is aptly termed "the path of *dire* probations." The powers which the soul acquires in its progress along this path are so alluring and fascinating that they not unfrequently entrap the soul in their meshes, and to the extent to which the soul is carried away by these powers, it is hindered in its onward course.

18. "This Earth, O ignorant Disciple, is but the dismal entrance leading to the twilight that precedes the valley of true light, that light which no wind can extinguish, that light which burns without a wick or fuel."

The Earth, the plane of manifestation, is the "dismal entrance" because it is the grossest plane of objective existence, with total obscuration of the Reality within. The soul, identifying itself with this grossest form of activity, feels attachment for what is pre-eminently transient and is thus doomed to grief and misery. Repeated suffering opens its eyes to the transient nature of what it feels attachment for, and the experience so acquired makes it look for Truth and Bliss in something more permanent. When it has thus learnt the impermanency and unreality of things as they appear on the plane of objective existence, and its attachment for them is more or less weakened by the bitter experience it has had, it is said to have entered the region of twilight beyond that of dismal darkness. But this twilight, though less transient than the darkness through which the soul has passed, is not everlasting, and thus fails to satisfy the soul in search of Bliss. It becomes convinced of the impermanency and unreality of everything as it appears in this region of twilight even, and looks for Bliss in what lies beyond, till it reaches *the* Light which was but dimly visible in the region of twilight, and totally obscured in the region of dismal darkness. The true Light is the Unity beyond all activity and differentiation.

CHAGANLAL G. KAJI.

GLEANINGS.

There are spirits still within the fleshly habitation, that are far, very far ahead of some who have left the flesh upon the earth, in time that hath long been in eternity.

If there were not supreme wisdom in man being placed on the earth, he had never been thereon.

Leaving the flesh is simply one step in existence, and one that is very undesirable unto those who have not lived desirable lives.

God placed man upon earth in order that the rudimental lessons in eternal wisdom might be learned. Then, if in God's sight this was the highest plane in his present existence, it should earnestly be studied whilst upon it.

H. of N.

MODERN PROPHECIES.

(Concluded from page 742.)

THE "Marvellous Book," which must not be confounded with the "Mirabilis Liber," contains some astonishing predictions upon the disasters of the French Revolution and the advent of Napoleon. But as the style is often obscure and in many places symbolical, we refer our readers to the works of Merlin, Raban, Theolome de Lucques and Joschim, because we fear they might accuse us of finding in this book that which is not really there. Behold the judgment which Charles Nodier has passed upon this curious and surprising compilation. "The Marvellous Book," says he, "which at least is as celebrated as the 'Mirabilis Liber,' of which it is not a translation, as its title would lead one to suppose, appears to have for its special object, to terrify the clergy about the necessary consequences of their irregularities, and to help to show the schism that the laxity of morals of Catholics, and the excesses of the Court of Rome, must cause, in due course, a short time after the epoch in which, it is conjectured, the book was written."

One other work, not less marvellous than the preceding, and which has, for a long time, engaged the attention of old writers, but which is none the more known for that, merits being entered in our review of prophetic books. It has for its title, "The Prognostications of Jean Lichtenberger."

We ourselves intended to describe this book and analyse it with care, but we have been prevented doing so, by an excellent description of the little work of Lichtenberger, that fell into our hands, which is a great piece of luck for us and our readers, because it is signed Charles Nodier. "I will mention, for another kind of merit, the 'Prognostications of Lichtenberger,'" says this brilliant writer, "which is in my edition the rarest and nicest of all these little books, and which I make no difficulty in reckoning amongst my most precious volumes: it is adorned with 44 woodcuts, without counting the frontispiece, and a figure at the end, which represents the prophet, and the initial of all the chapters is an illuminated letter; the whole is a work extremely remarkable, especially in relation to the composition, and the typographical execution is very fine." This jewel is well-known to Bauer, who mentions it at page 290 of the second volume, after Bunemann, page 3, as unknown to Maittaire; he would have found it in Jugler, "*Bibliotheca Historie Litterarie*," volume III., page 1807, with very prolix details. Engel thus designates it: "*Inter rarissimos*" in the "*Bibliotheca Selectissima*," *post partem* II., p. 17. This Prognosticator is not entirely wanting in attraction to those with an imagination more accessible than mine to this kind of literature, otherwise I would not have taken the trouble to mention these very remarkable examples. Then M. Nodier quotes one of the Latin passages, which we will

give further on. "I have copied it textually," says he, "at the page marked 52, and I am ready to give inspection to doubters, because my copy would be the only one even at Paris." We should have believed him till now, but for the researches we have made to assure us of its authenticity, and we are able now to say that four copies of the "Prognostications" can be found at Paris—three in the Royal Library, and one at St. Genevieve.

At the chapter entitled: "*Arcana quaedam in vetustissimis reperta scripturas, de maximorum regnorum mutatione, et magnis cludibus,*" we find (folio 59) the singular Latin prophecy of which M. Nodier speaks. We translate:

"An Emperor (Eagle) followed by a multitude of men will come from the East, his wings spread out to the Sun, to succour the 'son of man.' Then fortresses will be destroyed and a great terror will spread throughout the world. At that time there will be war in Flanders (Leo), a war more cruel than all the wars of the past, and there will be torrents of blood in the towns."

"The King of the French (Lily) will lose his crown, which the Emperor (Eagle) will receive, and sometime after he will place it upon the head of the 'son of man.'"

"During the four following years there will be many battles throughout the earth, evils among the sectaries of the faith, and a great part of the world will be destroyed. The head of the world (Papacy) will be destroyed. Then the son of man, traversing the seas, will bring the marvellous sign of promise to the world. And the son of man and the Emperor (Eagle) will prevail, and peace will be over the whole earth, and abundant prosperity." This prophecy is perhaps very curious, but we do not undertake to explain it in any way. We will quote, later, the original text, so that our readers can translate it as they choose to.

Let us speak now of the prophecies concerning the future. But before entering on the subject, we warn our readers that with regard to them we fill the simple rôle of compiler. We have found the following predictions and we have copied them textually without altering anything. As to the events which they foretell, we ask no one to believe them, because we ourselves await their entire fulfilment before pronouncing openly in favor of prophecies which perhaps will never be realised.

The year 1840 has as much occupied the mind of marvel-mongers as the year 1000. They waited for the end of the world in the last years of the ninth century, and they had reason, since it was to be in the tenth century that Christianity should finally triumph over the infidels, and that paganism should have yielded up its last sigh.

Eighteen hundred and forty is considered by some prophets as being a revolutionary year. We shall see in the month of January 1841 if our modern prophets are right. The number forty has always made people tremble. If we enquire from historians and chroniclers we see that in the year 40, Caius Caligula, the human monster,

who said he "prayed the gods that the Roman people had but a single head to be able to cut it off with one blow," reigned at Rome, and perhaps was killed at the end of this same year; there were also horrible massacres in all Italy. In 140 the Britains, Germans and Dacians revolted; historians also speak of a famine, an overflow of the Tiber, and a conflagration in Rome. In 240, Sabinus raised the standard of revolt in Africa; the Barbarians formed a league to attack and destroy the Roman Empire; seven emperors were assassinated between 235—253. In 340 Constantine was killed by order of his brother Constantus; terrible earthquake shocks. In 440 the Vandals ravage Sicily; famine in Great Britain; Attila invades Illyria, overthrows fortresses, and destroys all the towns through which he passes. Constantinople was the following year devastated by an earthquake. In 540 Antioch was taken and burnt; a horrible plague in the armies of the Franks. In 640 Alexandria was taken by the Saracens and its great and magnificent library burnt by order of Omar. In 740 the Duchy of Spoleto was invaded by the Lombards. Constantinople was once again devastated by an earthquake. In 840 a great number of Christians were put to death. The nobility revolted. Louis le Debonnaire died of a swelling of the breast. In 940 the Slavs and Bohemians are driven out of Germany; 80,000 Saracens were killed by Ramirus II. In 1040, earthquakes in Asia; Smyrna is devastated; revolt of the Bulgarians. In 1140, Ladislaus II., King of Poland, is driven from his throne; John Comnenus is mortally wounded. In 1240, a revolt breaks out in Norway. Thibault, Count of Champagne, is killed by the infidels. In 1340, Edward sends Philip of Valois a challenge which he does not accept; the English appear on the coasts; Philip wishes to oppose their descent; he is vanquished at the Battle of Ecluse; revolution in Denmark. In 1440, insurrection in the kingdom of Castile; King John is made prisoner; James of Scotland is assassinated by the Count of Athol; Eric, King of Denmark, is deposed by his subjects. Conspiracy against Charles VIII.; the Dauphin (Louis XI.) marches at the head of the revolters. In 1540, the citizens of Ghent rise up against Charles V. Anne of Cleves is beheaded by order of Henry VIII. In 1640, the Scotch insurgents take Newcastle; Charles I., who died later on the scaffold, is beaten by the conspirators; general insurrection of Catalaus in Spain. Conspiracy against Richelieu. The Portuguese revolt. In 1740 we assist at the death of a pope, a king, an empress, and an emperor, *viz.*, Clement XII., Frederic William, Czarina Ivanovna, and Charles VI; the death of this last plunges Europe in the horrors of that famous war known under the name of the House of Austria.

Every year terminated by the number 40 signalises, in places, earthquakes, revolutions, and deaths of several popes, kings, and emperors—nothing else worthy of remark. We also find this curious popular saying, "I am as foolish as the year 40." The prophecies made on the year 1840 and the following years, are numerous, but we will speak only of the more interesting ones, and will commence by those of that modern sybil, which are held in little esteem now-a-days but whose author has, however, acquired a celebrated name and an im-

mense fortune. Mademoiselle Lenormant, in recapitulating the predictions of Vati-guero, Saint Cesaire, etc., announces for 1840, the following great events: "From 1839 to 1840," says she, "the Turks and the Alains will destroy several Christian islands, and penetrate into one of our Southern Provinces; they will not long remain, but be driven out by the warlike courage of the people of Marseilles. The people of Toulouse, on their side, will arm themselves to crush the barbarians who, soon after, will be vanquished, and they will find in France nought but death, shame, and swords." Among our readers, some will certainly connect this new prophecy with the events in Algeria; but as we wish to remain neutral we will strictly refrain from explaining this prediction of Mademoiselle Lenormant, and even from giving it credence.

In the work which we are now about to mention, and which was published in 1817, the author announces an event which will fill every one with terror, even you who are good enough to read us, because this event is no other than the ruin of the Capital of the World, the destruction of Paris. Listen to the new Daniel lamenting the modern Babylon: "Should the fury of anarchy yet burst out amidst us," says Mademoiselle Lenormant, "I shudder to think of the scourges which will devastate our unhappy country. Paris, especially, will suffer the most frightful fate, because it is predicted that the fire of heaven will second the fury of its enemies; soldiers, women, children, old men, all without distinction, will be given over to the edge of the sword. The Parisian himself, with fury and despair in his heart, and surcharged with the lesson that Russia gives us, will help, with a furious hand, the efforts of the barbarians. Enraged at the ruin of the cities, they will apply burning torches to the roofs of houses. All Paris will soon present only a vast conflagration. The bridges will sink under their overturned arches; the palaces, even of our kings, will encumber the ground with their ruins. The temple consecrated to the august patroness of the capital will sink down into the quarries. The *faubourgs*, sapped at their foundations, will be devoured by the flames and will fall with a great crash and will bury under their still smoking ruins all those who inhabit them. The cries of the unfortunate people, expiring in the anguish of death, will escape from the rubbish, and will arise through the heaps of cinders, to strike the ears of those who have escaped from this terrible conflagration, and who still fear to partake of a like fate. Finally, Paris, despoiled of all which contains the great, the magnificent and the glorious, will re-enter a second time into the fettered limits of the ages of barbarism. Oh, you all, French of every rank, of all ages, bear well in mind these terrible predictions?"

The prophecy of Mademoiselle Lenormant accords perfectly with those of Philip Dieudonné-Noel Olivarius. "In Lutetia, the Seine, red with blood, from frequent conflicts, will extend its bed by ruin and pestilence." Without gainsay this agreement is very curious.

A prophecy upon 1840, and one which made a great noise under the Restoration, is that of the labourer, Thomas Martin. According to this visionary, an angel announced to him that peace will not be given back

to France before 1840. If this prophecy is correct we ought no longer to distress ourselves, for we will at last have that which we have demanded for so long a time at any cost. As to the prophecies that follow and which do not resemble these in any way, M. Henry Dujardin has informed us of a singular prediction which is current at this moment in the south of France, and which differs entirely from that of Thomas Martin. It contains but these two expressive phrases. "In 1793 men have acted; in 1840 God will act."

In a work having for its title: "Conjectures upon the Approaching end of the World," published in 1731, and reprinted in 1828, we find the following passages:—"In 1790: The anger of God upon the earth. In 1800: He will be known by few. In 1840: There will be no shepherd." This prophecy is yet more explicit than the two preceding ones.

But as we fear no longer weary the attention of our readers—forgive us the word attention—we will end this chapter by giving one of the most remarkable of the prophecies of M. Joseph de Maistre upon the events of the future. "Do you wish for a fresh proof of that which is preparing? Search among the sciences. Consider well the advance of chemistry, even of astronomy, and you will see where they conduct us. Would you believe, for instance, if you were told, that Newton brings us back to Pythagoras, and that he has incessantly preached to us that the heavenly bodies are moved precisely as the human body, by the intelligences which are in-born within them, without any one knowing how? It is this, however, which is on the point of being proved, and soon there may be left no loop-hole for denial. This doctrine may appear paradoxical, no doubt, and even ridiculous, because the public opinion, by which we are surrounded, coerces us; but give heed, for the natural affinity of religion and science may reunite them in the head of a single man of genius. The appearance of such a man will not be long delayed, and perhaps even he already exists. That man will be world famous, and bring to an end the eighteenth century which endures until now, because intellectual cycles do not follow the routine of the calendar, as cycles properly so called. Then the opinions which now appear to us whimsical and foolish will be axioms which it will not be permitted us to doubt; and they will speak of our crass stupidity, as we speak of the superstitions of the middle ages. Everything announces," says he further on, "I do not well know how to define it, that great unity towards which we are travelling at an accelerated speed. And I can say no more than that everything is said, that everything is revealed, and that it is useless for us to expect anything that is really new. Doubtless, nothing is wanting to us but salvation; yet, in regard to divine knowledge, we require much; and as for future changes, I have, as you see, a thousand reasons for my belief, whilst you do not possess a single one to prove me wrong."

What shall we conclude from all this?

That prophets and prophecies deserve to be studied more conscientiously, and in a more serious manner than they ever have been, up to the present day.

A. T. B.

THE FAITH OF ELIPHAS LEVI.

AS a master of the Kabbalah, Lévi has grown into a man of note latterly, and his profession of Faith has therefore become of importance. What it is, is shown in some ten pages or so (217 to 226), of his curious book, "Le Livre des Splendeurs." A foot-note accompanies saying that it consists of extracts from his letters communicated by the Baron de Spedalieri, and now for the first time printed. This may account for many defects, as extracts from letters must always labour under two defects; the copyist may select improper passages, which when severed from the context may deitalize and seriously injure, if not pervert the idea intended by the author to be expressed. Secondly, letters are not a proper form in which to set out a man's ultimate *Credo*. Letters are intervehicular as between friends, but the *confessio fidei* is a sacred statement as between man and his Maker, or in presence of his fellow-men in public worship.

For instance, Lévi is made to conclude thus: 'Tolle est profession du foi qui doit réunir et absorber lentement toute les autres.' Now this is cool assumption, to a degree that may simply be pronounced, and without malice, ridiculous. I shall quote in French lest an English version of the words should afterwards be challenged as faulty, by overstatement or understatement.

'Nous croyons en la souveraineté éternelle et infinie.

De la sagesse immuable et de l'intelligence créatrice.'

We have to wade through four pages more before we are told that Lévi believes *en Dieu unique*. Now sovereignty is nothing but an abstraction. Immutable wisdom and creative intelligence are made attributes of this abstraction. But surely this had better have been omitted: the attributes of an abstraction can never represent Deity, as in a creed. I willingly admit with Mons. Papus that there is a grand artistic faculty in Lévi, but with all deference I must say I find that the above sentences are a mere whirl of words, very out of place in hallowed ground, and insulting as spoken as in the Sinai-presence of Deity. For Sinai means the bush of *yodh* or God, the *rubus Domini*.

'Nous croyons en la beauté suprême,' is the next utterance and equally unfit. It is all very well for our artist, Lévi, to worship beauty. But we are upon a creed here, and we have therein to shadow forth as best we may, in the impotence of speech, an invisible FACT. Beauty is a child of the eye, and its imagery carried from nature to the soul is reported there as ideal beauty. It hangs on visibility, how can it then depict in any way 'the vast, the formless and the invisible one?'

'Nous croyons en la fécondité duprogrès dans l'ordre et de l'ordre éternellement progressif.' I see words here, but no mean-

ing. As space is immensity without limitation, the chart-points of the compass are all wanting. To think about it, as the French expressively put it, is to be *Déconcerté* or disconcerted at once. The start-point and goal are both wanting. Tell me, Lévi, most artistic of men! how we shall instruct a pilot to steer from nothing to no-whither. There are a few jets of direct current in the universe, called astral currents, for lack of a fit word, that run direct from sun-centre to star-centre. Do you call that progress, when both those centres are whirling round something else and out of all account of registry by men? If you say,—“Yes, that I call progress,” then I ask what you call the return-current. If I grant you your progress, I demand at once my backwardisation as of equal momentum. If so, there is no eternal progression that does not come back to the same spot like an eclipse in the calendar. Progress is a whirling word; a fly upon the chariot wheel, and a fool upon his holiday talk of progressional advancement.

“And so, from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe,
And then, from hour to hour, we rot and rot,
And thereby hangs a tale.”

The tale of humanity, the V. V. of Solomon, *Vanitas Vanitatum*.

‘Nous croyons au principe de la vie universelle en le principe de l’Être et des Êtres toujours distinct de l’Être et des Êtres, mais nécessairement présent dans l’Être et dans les Êtres.’ Here we have a great show of profundity, but, if I were desirous to invent a phraseology of the most exquisite footing, I should select this sentence as a fine type for imitative development. A principle of Being distinct from Being, yet necessarily present in Being. Absolute nonsense, distinct from nonsense, and yet never separable from nonsense and nonsenses in all their Protean evolutions.

I pass over several sentences and come to this: ‘Nous croyons que pour s’enrichir, il faut donner, qu’on est heureux du bon heure des autres, et que l’égotisme bien ordonné doit commencer par le prochain.’ This is a fixed idea with Lévi. He returns to it again in this very confession and adds the witty argument that ‘The veritably rich are those who give.’ There is a proud show of charitable benevolence in this passage. To enrich yourself you are to give; you are to rejoice in the happiness of others, and a well ordered egoism must begin with your neighbour. As to the first part, Solomon says: “There is that giveth and yet increaseth,” and there is no doubt that in most, ordinary business, a large way of giving out is a probable way of drawing back a large return. But that you should begin by thinking about your neighbour *before* yourself, is not commendable, because it is impossible. You may in some cases give him a preference before or rather over yourself. The utmost that Christianity enjoins is that you should love him *as* yourself; evidently whatever is felt must begin in a man’s self and cannot *begin* in his neighbour. So this improvement upon Christianity is very like a contradiction in terms.

' Nous croyons à la liberté, à l'indépendance absolue à la royauté même, à la divinité relative de la volonté humaine lorsqu'elle est réglée par la souveraine raison.' These are fine but somewhat catchpenny phrases,—the liberty, royalty and almost divinity of the will of man, when after all it has to be submitted to the divine will. True liberty means no liberty, but the most entire submission of all the desires, vanities, carnalities and vices of the human will to the alone rule of right—the divine will. St. Paul is a great minter of great phrases, and one of his phrases is that we are to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." You are thereby free from the yoke and bondage of sin, and so, free to live as you were created to live. But you serve another and a better master, and to serve is not *freedom*. Lévi talks like a Frenchman, about liberty, and there is an encyclopædic and revolutionary flavour about his utterances—I must even call it a claptrap—that places him a long way below the great disciple of Gamaliel whom he sometimes allows himself to treat with disrespect, as Renan foolishly did, also. I am not speaking now as a religionist of any sect or Church, but St. Paul will always be, for any great souled and capable man, one of the vital successes of humanity, an honour to the race and to God the projector of the race. Religions of this world may die and pass away, but men such as Paul and Moses will never pass away from the blessed shrine of holy men's memory, living in solitude till the death of time.

' Nous croyons à la catholicité, c' est à dire, à l' universalité du dogme.'

Of this, it is impossible to say what it means, as *dogma*, in Greek, would simply signify philosophic opinion. You might twist it to anything. Opinion has been called the queen of the world, or as others have said, the verdict of fools when polled in majorities. 'It rides upon the neck of reason' says Browne; he might have added 'and often breaks it.' It is a clattering little sentence, this, and a tinkling cymbal, much of it.

' Nous croyons qu' en religion tous les hommes intelligents acceptent les mêmes vérités et ne se disputent que pour les erreurs.' Here we have a clever sentence enough but what has it to do with a creed? *Nous croyons* is merely in this place equivalent to, I think. It is no confession of faith whatever. Truth is not disputative any more than is charity. When posited broadly, it tends rather to silence than as furnishing discourse, and to a sense of full satisfaction rather than to voluble oratory and the vibratory agitation of air. Errors, of course, are of endless cavil and are often best met in dialectical contests by an elaborate advocacy of the opposite error. When this is so, men dispute *à la Sortonne*, and with like result; they settle nothing, according to Casanbon.

' Nous croyons que tous les dieux sont des fantômes et que les idoles ne sont rien ; que les cultes établis doivent faire place à d'autres ; et que le sage peut prier dans une mosquée comme dans une église ; toute,

fois nous préférons la mosquée à la pagode, et l'église à la mosquée pourvu que l'église ne soit pas salie par le mauvais prêtre.' As a confession of faith this is pure nullity, and as a cogitation it is peculiar. It shows that Lévi was much more of a Frenchman of Paris and the Revolution, than of Jerusalem and the pre-Mosaical Kabbalah. Can there be a church without a priest, and are we to hang the validity of a church upon a bad one? Here Eliphaz shows far more of Voltaire than of the Kabbalah,—of the witty inconsistency of a cultivated logic, than of the broad simple lines of the divinely observing reason. No doubt but the Parisian Romanist prefers much the Madalvina to San Sophia, but is that any more a sign of his superiority than it is of his knowledge of architecture?

'Nous n'admettons pas que le rien puisse être et devenir quelque chose.' To hold that, you must conceive that the substance of Chaos was eternal. I cannot say precisely what the Kabbalah teaches. But the tenet has great difficulties to meet and settle before it can be accepted in its entirety and breadth. Hermetic science Lévi calls the science of nature read out of the symbols of the old world. It is to accomplish the great work, *viz.*, the reproduction by man of the natural or divine fire that creates and regenerates beings. But, as to create is to make a new thing that did not exist before, a nothing must first become a something, or the word *create* must evaporate back into nothing, and so cease henceforth out of language. I could say probably about as much more on this Kabbalic *Profession de Foi* as the foregoing amounts to, but enough space has been occupied for the present. If this should be approved of by readers, a further paper can easily be drawn up. Here, in my study, I have no idea whether such disquisitions as these will or will not find the smallest response in the outer world of men, and if not, and there be no reverberant echo, why the rest may as well remain in the silence eternal and unbroken, where it now lies.

C. A. WARD.

GLEANINGS.

If these great ~~first~~ lessons be not learned whilst in flesh encased, when and where will they become imbedded in man's individuality?

Man may flatter himself that he knoweth more than God, concerning his own welfare, but it would seem that the maker must know more than that which is made.

It is a fearful thing to leave the earth, yet retain within and around the spirit its dense, dark atmosphere. Darkness hath no affinity for light. The blind cannot see. The unlearned cannot know. The deaf cannot hear.

How can he who hath been wilfully dark attract light?

The earth on earth must be learned, and must be forsaken, ere heaven can be entered. False teachings have withheld man from seeking light in the time it should be sought. They who teach that God forgiveth transgression people darkness with the spirits of men.

TOLERATION.

THE question has sometimes been raised as to whether each member of the T. S. pays sufficient attention to the promise made on joining the Society, *viz.*, that he will show towards his fellow-men the same tolerance, in regard to their religious views, that he would wish shown to himself.

An exaggerated sense of separateness, of the many distinctions of personality, of one's own particular belief, and ancestral religious faith, are ever coming to the foreground, and one needs to keep a constant watch over the thoughts and feelings that are welling up in the soul, that the baneful results of selfishness and intolerance may be avoided. It is so necessary that we be imbued with ennobling ideals of universality and solidarity, and that we constantly strive to keep uppermost in mind the thought that we are each but infinitesimal parts of the mighty, omnipresent whole, and that, differing as we do, so materially, in organization, education and surroundings, it is impossible that any one of us has the ability to grasp the Truth in its grand universality. We only view that minute portion of it which we are able to perceive and comprehend, from our own separate standpoints, for no individual consciousness on Earth is yet sufficiently expanded to grasp the whole of truth. Yet we are often so dazzled by the little we are able to comprehend, that we become blind to those variant portions of truth that are revealed to the consciousness of our brethren. It is sometimes very difficult for Theosophists to outgrow inherited tendencies of thought, and still more difficult to bravely ignore that misguided public opinion which is bounded by class-rules, ceremonial distinctions, and pride of birth.

It has been stated that in India the missionaries have set an example of intolerance and pride, but, even supposing this to have been the case in many instances, it should afford no excuse whatever for a Theosophist, who is pledged—above all things—to show entire tolerance to those whose religious faiths differ from his own. It may, we think be reasonably granted that the missionaries have made the mistakes of misunderstanding—and consequently misinterpreting—the simple, straightforward teachings of Jesus, as well as of coupling them with the strange mixtures narrated in the Hebrew Scriptures; and further, of harboring the belief, on coming to India, that the Hindus are a 'heathen' race, and their religious philosophy a false one. It may be further granted that the tendency of all this has been to needlessly arouse the prejudices of the Hindus, a result the opposite of that most to be desired, and which has militated against the valuable educational work which has been accomplished through the persistent efforts of missionaries.

In regard to differences of belief which have caused so much violent discussion in the world, it would be well for us to bear in mind the fact

that Truth is divine and eternal. What does it matter, then, whether it comes to us through this, that or the other channel, or whether given to man in this age, that age, or another age, if it is Truth. It is admitted that the fundamental points in the teachings of Krishna, Buddha, Jesus and others, are similar, or rather, identical in essence; why then should their disciples quarrel, one with the other, concerning any non-essential point, such as priority in time of promulgation? It is Truth that has saving efficacy for man. It does not make the Truths taught by Buddha, Jesus or other teachers, any the less valuable because they had previously been given forth by Krishna, nor should it be imagined that Krishna originated the truths he taught. Other glorious teachers or Avatâras had appeared, again and again, millions of years before Krishna's advent upon earth, though all of them were inspired by the overshadowing of the same Divine Spirit. A portion of this spirit is the Divine inheritance of each one of us, constituting the basis of our individuality, the true foundation of universal brotherhood. Let us then be charitable in our criticisms of others, and keep ever a receptive attitude toward that Divine ray which shines within each soul.

W. A. E.

THE THREE STEPS OF VISHNU.

IT is a great pity that the "Secret Doctrine" is almost a sealed book both to the learned and the illiterate, as the present generation has smothered the germs of intuition, having plunged deep into the mire of material enjoyments. In consequence of this blindness, the men of the present day, with all their boasted knowledge of the "modern exact sciences" and Western liberal education, cannot dive deep into the systematised knowledge of the thoughtful and wise ancients. The ancient sages, notably the Aryan Rishis, analysed the most inscrutable things in nature, and codified the natural laws, laying the most comprehensive and just injunctions for the guidance of humanity in all ages. These injunctions, however superstitious and meaningless they may appear to the letter-interpreters, are based upon substantial truth and are verifiable if correctly understood. For a correct comprehension of these so-called myths, fables and stories that are found in the religious books of the various nations of the world, a preliminary study of the principles on which they are founded is quite indispensable. And this study should be guided by one who is initiated into the secret system prevailing among the Initiates of the Inner Sanctuary.

Self-taught men in any branch of learning are scarce, and more so in Brahma Vidya, and owing to the self-complacency of the present liberally educated and leisureless men, they cannot condescend, with any degree of patience and good-will, to enquire of those who have been well instructed on the subject by competent teachers. Thus they are deprived, unfortunately, of every chance of a glimpse into the truth of the much-abused Puranic lore of the Hindus. It is often found that the same truths, in all the religions of the ancients, are more or

less mutilated, disfigured and disguised under various garbs of expression. When these are divested of the time-gathered incrustations, the different versions of the statement which were at first sight contradictory, self-incriminating and ludicrously absurd, disclose the same eternal truth, which sustains a grand superstructure of the wisdom, wit and genius of several persons—nay several persons of several generations—in whom the spark of intuition has been kept shining.

That the fable of the "Three Steps of Vishnu" of the *Bhagavata Purana* discloses such a story is my contention. The Christian Missionaries have often made short work of the Puranas by their explanations, which are often tinged with Christian prejudice and proclivities. And these stories are made by them to yield caricatures of truth. Mrs. Annie Besant's statement that "a religion can only be understood by sympathy; a religion can only be expounded by the speaker placing himself, for the time being, in the heart of that religion and showing it forth as it would appear to its most devoted and learned adherents," is couched in a language at once most simple, chaste and polished, and impregnated with a most salutary advice that deserves the most careful attention of every lover of truth—and pre-eminently religious truth.

Before I attempt to explain the "Three Steps of Vishnu," I wish to give a summary of the story of Vamana Avatar, the incarnation of Vishnu into *Vama*, as related in the *Sri Bhagavata Purana*—one of the eighteen Puranas of the Hindus, each Purana being, as H. P. B. writes, a "written emblem."

Vishnu is said to have assumed the forms of many avatâras on many occasions, to preserve peace on earth, when virtue was endangered by evil-minded men. According to his own statement in *Bhagavad Gîtâ*, he would be born in every age for the purpose of re-establishing *dharma* or justice. Of these, ten are considered the most important. Vamana Avatar is one of these ten. It will not be out of place here to state that the stories of the Puranas are susceptible of seven interpretations, as our wise and learned teacher, H. P. B., says. I have obtained only a glimpse of one key, and if it does not fit, to others, my readers should not certainly condemn me and charge me with a crime of misinterpretation or misconstruction. I may perhaps throw some hints on some of the other interpretations, following the key of our wise teacher, and those who are bent upon spiritual culture and knowledge may push further and attain further keys and enlightenment.

The story of Vamana Avatar, as found in *Srimat Bhagavata*, is briefly as follows :—

Once upon a time, a king of Danavas named Bali Chakravarty was reigning supreme on the earth. He was a mighty emperor, whose prowess was never challenged by any. All the Dêvas found him unbearable and unconquerable. Hence the Dêvas prayed Vishnu, who was pre-eminently called Danavantaka (destroyer of Danavas or Rakshasas), to save them from fear of Bali. Vishnu, the merciful, and protector of good souls and devotees, granted their prayer and promised to

extricate them from misery. On the dispersion of the Dévas, Vishnu, the Kalarupa (the manifestation of time—or simply duration of time) was born in the womb of Aditi, the mother of gods, in the form of Vamana, a dwarf, with all the paraphernalia of Vishnu. In the form of a Brahmin, he approached Bali when he was performing a great sacrifice, and asked him for charity. Bali, whose reputation as a charitable monarch was world-known, was pleased with the Brahmin and questioned him as to what he desired. Vamana desired three steps of land, or land measuring three steps with his own foot. The monarch granted his request. But to his great dismay and wonder, Vamana assumed a terrific form with three legs, and measured the sky with one foot and the earth with a second, and asked Bali to show land whereon he might place his third foot. Bali bowed his head and desired him to place the third foot on his own head. Vamana placed his foot on Bali's head and pressed him down to patala—underground. This is the skeleton of the story, divested of all details. Enough has been stated here to answer the purpose which I have in view.

It is, however, correct to say that Vishnu incarnated to save Indra, as his younger brother, when the great Bali was threatening him with destruction and humiliation. I have simply picked up here and there a few incidents of the whole story to illustrate the "Three Steps of Vishnu," since the whole story is rather too much to deal with.

In exoteric writings, much confusion has been purposely mixed with the accounts connected with Danavas or Rakshasas. These Rakshasas are popularly known as demons. As shown in the *Secret Doctrine* and elsewhere, these Danavas were first called Asuras and Dévas or Suras. In the Vêdas, these two classes of entities, before they were split into two and placed under two different categories, were called Suras, good entities. The Asuras were so-called by their wicked actions, (A + Sura, not Sura). The original meaning was simply perverted in after-ages, that is, Vêdic and post-Vêdic periods, just as the Christians have played devils with Satan. Hence the Theosophists contend that Asuras are not demons, but highly developed men, that understand the most recondite natural laws, but work with selfish motives, which degrades them to the level of Mantrikas—black Magicians. The fact that Bali was engaged in a great sacrifice (one of the Vêdic rituals) is sufficient to support our contention.

Now, Antahkarana has been, exoterically, divided into four, viz., Buddhi, Manas, Chittam and Ahankaram. To throw some light on the esotericism of the story, Ahankaram is Bali Chakravarti—Ahankaram is egotism. He is called Bali, which means powerful. He was engaged in a sacrifice, which means in other words Ahankaram was satisfying other senses by enjoyments. It is laid down in the Sastras that at the time of a dinner, no guest should be denied a meal. Basing on this principle, Vamana (the Over-Soul), was introduced to Bali, at a time when he could not refuse to make a gift. Ahankara establishes itself well in the jagrat or wakeful condition, though his reign extends over swapna

(dreamy) and sushupti (sleepy) conditions. To overpower Bali, Vamana asked him the gift of "Three Steps" of land, which Bali granted. The three steps are merely the three conditions of consciousness. When Vamana first measured the land, with one of his feet, Bali resigned his sovereignty over it, and thus he was ultimately pressed down to Patala. Ahankara was driven first from jagrat to dreamy, and then to sushupti condition. In the sushupti or sleepy condition Ahankaram has no power, and hence yielded to Vamana, the monad in the Turiya state. Ahankara, being pervaded now with satwika or purity, became a great bhakta or devotee of Vishnu; and hence *Vishnu* is said to have been watching at the threshold of Bali's house.

The "Three Steps" are, in another sense, the three lokas, Bhu, Bhur and Swar lokas. Vishnu pervades these three regions. In the Upanishads and elsewhere, several statements referring to this point have been found, more or less in somewhat strange and often veiled forms. And it requires much intuition before one can trace them to their original source. The three conditions of consciousness play a great part in many a story in our sacred literature, since there are no phenomena beyond this; and a thorough comprehension of these conditions releases us from the bonds of matter.

Vishnu is born of Aditi to save Indra. Indra is the Rajah or king of Indryas or senses. Indra is mind. When Ahankara or impure mind threatens the pure mind with corruption and destruction, the Eswara, or the ray of Eswara, descends to rescue the pure mind, as the pure mind is ever ready to save the lower mind on condition of subjecting itself to discipline and guidance.

The "Three Steps" may also be interpreted as three forms of Vach; they are Pasyanti, Madhyama and Vykhari; the fourth Para being inscrutable and incomprehensible in our present state of knowledge. The fourth Para is the synthesis of all the four forms of Vach, just as Vamana is the synthesis of the three feet or the turiya condition of consciousness.

In discussing of Vach, H. P. B. compares the religious ideas of the Hindus, the Greeks and the Chaldean Hebrews and shows most beautifully that all their ideas on the point in question converge to one and the same notion. She says that "it is this *trinity* that is meant by the 'three steps of *Vishnu*;' which means (Vishnu being considered as the *Infinite* in exoterism) that from Parabrahm issued Mulaprakriti, Purusha (the Logos), and Prakriti: these form (with itself) the synthesis of Vach. And in the Kabbala—Ain-Soph, Shekinah, Adam Kadmon and Sephirah, the four—or the three emanations, being distinct—yet one."

In whatever way we express it the idea is the same. The same actor appears on the stage under various garbs (of expression). A careful observation may at once disclose the identity, notwithstanding the studied attempts on the part of the actor to defeat all detection.

The four states of consciousness—jagrat, swapna, sushupti and turiya—the last being the synthesis of all, have four presiding deities. These may be interpreted as the “three steps of Vishnu”.

Sometimes the same story occurs in two or more Puranas with a variation, a little addition or alteration, according to the interpretation it has to yield in that particular context. And this secret can be discovered only by a regularly initiated chela, as certain blinds, sometimes purposely mixed with the details of the story, frustrate the research of an ordinary reader, and this is the principal reason why one is generally asked to find out a Sat Guru (true Guru); when one wishes to have an insight into the secret of such mysteries. To find out the real interpretation of these stories, two things are most necessary—and they are, the instructions of an initiated Guru and the development of the intuitive faculty of the chela. Without these in combination, it is quite hopeless to dive into the mine of Secret Wisdom.

R. JAGANNATHIAH.

Theosophy in all Lands.

LONDON, August 26th, 1897.

This has been a very quiet month at Head-quarters. The lectures in the Blavatsky Lodge have been discontinued for a time, and several of the chief workers have been absent. Mr. Leadbeater has been in the North of England, where he has visited the different Branches, and been present at the Confederation. Mr. Mead has returned from Holland, where he represented the European Section at the Convention lately held in Amsterdam. Mrs. Cooper-Oakley has just started on a visit to Russia and Germany, and will be absent a few weeks. We are now hoping very soon to welcome Mrs. Besant amongst us again; she is expected to arrive from America towards the end of September.

There is a change to notice which concerns our literary activities. The Magazine to which H. P. B. gave the name of *Lucifer*, and which we have followed through ten years of struggle against popular prejudice, greatly because of its name, will, after this month, exist no longer under that title—that chapter of its history is closed. It is, however, about to be re-born with a new name, that of “The Theosophical Review.” In times past the truth it has lived to proclaim has been hidden under many names, and as the Messenger of Truth, its light cannot fail to shine whatever its name. But in the present day we must be practical; we want to spread Theosophical ideas, we want people to read our Magazine, and if they will not do so because of a name, the change seems a wise one. Several lectures of much interest were given at the Blavatsky Lodge meetings in July.

On the 8th, Mr. Sinnett spoke on “The Theosophical Aspect of Social Problems.” He divided these problems into the several classes of religion, government, social organization, charity, pleasure, and private duty. Taking the question of religion first, he said that with regard to religious activities we must ask, were they appropriate to the class of people with whom they were dealing? Regarded thus, he considered the methods of the Salvation Army as not useless or unfit, though they would be inappropriate to our-

selves. Their effort might be regarded as preparatory to more philosophical religious views. He drew a wide distinction between their work and that of the foreign missionary.

Turning to problems of Government, he referred to the era of the *Divine Kings*. Their rulership and teaching was necessary and appropriate in the infancy of the race. We have now to recognise that the institution of monarchy is fading away—very gradually, and with what might be called a beautiful sunset, of which the unique occasion we have just witnessed may be termed a peculiarly beautiful manifestation. The changes in the direction of Democracy were regarded in two ways by different classes of minds; the one regretted and clung to the monarchical forms of the past, the other was perhaps too hasty in desire for changes; both were extremes. We have to recognise that we are in a transition stage, and from the Theosophic standpoint this state may be regarded tranquilly, knowing that the race will finally evolve the wisdom stage. We ask what is going to emerge from the democratic chaos? We shall get democracy itself transmuted into something beautiful when the reign of selfishness in politics is superseded by the reign of altruism. If one could conceive a House of Commons in which every member should be guided only by the highest and purest motives, there would then be no struggle for place or power, the highest and best leaders would then be voluntarily obeyed and followed, and thus Divine Rulers from another evolution would be replaced by rulers evolved from our own people. Mr. Sinnett then discussed the military problem. In his opinion a Theosophic soldier was not such an anomaly as the 'Christian soldier.' Having regard to the cyclic character of evolution and the force of the *downward arc*, whose impulse was still felt all around us, he considered we should work with the facts and conditions around us, and not be fanatical. In a few words on 'Social organization' he expressed the opinion that Altruism would defeat its own ends if community of property were general yet. The clue to the solution of the problem resides in the fact that little or nothing can be done while those you would benefit claim or *grasp*. To use a forcible illustration:—"You cannot share a beef-steak with a tiger;" you may give him some but you cannot sit down and eat it with him. It was possible in the days of the Divine Rulers to guard against all suffering and poverty; it will be possible again when the oligarchy is actuated by spiritual aim, and wisdom rules.

On the 15th, a most interesting and instructive lecture was given by Mr. Leadbeater on "The Fourth Dimension." It is impossible in a brief report to convey any idea of the wealth of detail with which the address was crowded. The subject was first dealt with from the ordinary standpoint; a very full explanation of the mathematical theory of the fourth dimension was given, much use being made of the work of Mr. Hinton in this department, and many most suggestive illustrations were used to render the subject clear. Following on the lines of Hinton's investigations it appears that if there be a fourth dimension, there are two possible theories with regard to our connection with it; either we may be entirely three-dimensional beings, able only to cognise the possibility of space of four dimensions by abstract reasoning, or we may be four-dimensional beings without knowing it; in the latter case the manifestation of the fourth dimension must be on a scale so minute that we cannot grasp it by the ordinary senses. It follows that if we would search for the fourth dimension, we must go down to the inconceivably minute, i.e., the ultimate atoms. Mr. Leadbeater then referred to Madame

Blavatsky's statement in the "*Secret Doctrine*" that the fourth dimension was a clumsy way of expressing permeability of matter, and to Mr. W. T. Stead's suggestion of "Throughth," both of which, he said, appeared to be explanations of the possibilities of the etheric planes of matter. It was possible on this line of reasoning to account for many of the phenomena of ordinary clairvoyance and spiritualism, and it would be practicable to develop the power of reading a closed book without touching the Astral plane; but when you get on to the Astral plane, then you achieve the power of seeing into things in a different way, more truly realizing the idea of a fourth dimension, for solids in our three dimensional world could be looked *down into*, as we ordinarily see (from our three dimensional altitude) the whole of a surface or two dimensional figure. In the case of etheric vision you see as it were through the interstices, i.e., your eye responds to the finer vibrations of the etheric matter which interpenetrates the solid body, an effect which is partially obtained by the Röntgen Rays. Broadly speaking, we might define the method of the etheric vision as seeing what you focus the sight upon, while in using the astral sight you see the whole at once; the difference between looking into a solid cube by different chinks, and looking into a cube of clear glass.

On the 22nd, Mr. Bertram Keightley delivered a lecture on "Knowledge and Wisdom." He defined knowledge as the making of more or less definite images on the brain, and the working of the ego upon the raw material thus supplied from without; our only possibility of growth consists in the working up of this material. Wisdom might, he thought, be regarded as standing in the same relation to the *faculties* of the mind, as they stand to the *facts* with which they have to deal. It was a fusion of faculties *plus* the working of the higher Buddhic element in them. Stress was laid upon the impossibility of developing the Buddhic nature without the scaffolding of the intellectual nature. A one-sided development was possible both on the planes of wisdom and knowledge, but the unevenness had to be made up ere the 'perfect man' could be reached. There were no short cuts in evolution in the sense of escaping the work, only a short cut in point of time, if we chose to take ourselves understandingly in hand and hasten the rate of our development.

It is wonderful how rapidly old manuscripts are being brought to light at this time. *The Times* has just given a long account of the finding of a hoard of Hebrew MSS. They were found by Dr. S. Schechter, and given to the Library of the University of Cambridge. They consist of fragments—about 40,000 in number—of sacred and semi-sacred documents, which had been hidden away in a *Genizah* attached to a synagogue at Old Cairo. A *Genizah* is described as a sort of grave for dead, worn-out, and what may be called 'disgraced' books. The word is derived from the Hebrew verb—*ganaz*, and signifies treasure-house or hiding-place; it is at once a sacred lumber-room and secular record office. Dr. Schechter's treasures consist of autograph documents, extending from the 8th to the 14th centuries, and represent situations in the lives of men, besides a vast amount of other matter, philosophical, mystical, and controversial. Every fragment seems to belong to a separate work, and all are now undergoing the process of thorough examination, the results of which will certainly prove interesting to the theologian and historian.

E. A. I.

 THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION.

The European Section of the T. S. held its Seventh Annual Convention at St. James Hall, London, on the 10th and 11th of July last. The Vice-President of the Society, Mr. A. P. Sinnett, was elected to the chair, and Mr. G. R. S. Mead and Mr. A. M. Glass were chosen Secretaries. After the reading of the minutes of the last Convention Mr. B. Keightley spoke of the increased activity in the Indian Section, and Mr. Martin called attention to the steady progress in the Australian Section from which he came as a delegate. The General Secretary's Report was then read. The chief event of the year had been the formation of the new Section in Holland. During the past year some 200 new members had been enrolled, and ten new charters issued. Special attention was called to the publication of important Theosophical works, and the general spread of Theosophical literature. An abstract of the able address of the chairman, Mr. Sinnett, is given in the published report of the Convention, from which we quote the following extract:

"This Society began under peculiar circumstances.....But after many blunders a nucleus still remained which kept to the great purpose set before the Society and brought it to its present condition and it is now improbable that the future Theosophical movement will lose continuity with the existing one. The bare chance that the present movement might succeed has been changed into practical certainty; but it is still necessary to make the most strenuous efforts. We are moving on to great results. Religious thought will become more and more permeated with the scientific thinking of Theosophy and our work is partly to diffuse as broadly as possible those ideas which tend to purify religious belief. With very little change the formulas of all religions may be adapted to Theosophical views.

There is also another great purpose. One of the functions of the Society in time to come will be that of drawing in people who are prepared to enter on the true path which we have now before us as our goal. We are going to be a funnel through which will be turned into the narrower path of the higher evolution those who are ready.

But besides all this, I believe that it is more than probable that in the course of the coming century the majority of educated people will accept the broad principles of our philosophy. We shall still have the same work to do, but our efforts will be much more powerful. I think also that we shall find that, in the coming century, people will be incarnated and drawn into the Society better fitted than we are to carry on the work. We really have come to play a great part in the moral and spiritual progress of mankind. We are a small body of people and no better than others, but we realize that we have picked up the work that was to be done. It is certain that people of greater power will be brought into the work we are feebly attempting to do, and the Society will then have the ability to do the great task set before it."

 MRS. BESANT'S AMERICAN TOUR.

When they left Chicago, on July 16, Mrs. Besant and the Countess rested at Streator for a day or two and lectured, and then went on to Galesburg, where a lodge was formed of which all the members happened to be men. The next lecture was to be at Clinton, Iowa, and to the unaccommodating ways of Sunday trains we owed a pleasing variant on our usual programme,

although we had to be up at four in the morning to catch a Mississippi steamer at Rock Island at eight. We passed a charming morning on the river and arrived at Clinton in time for Mrs. Besant to lecture; the next day a lodge for study was started. That night, Monday, we slept on the train and the following morning found as in Minneapolis, warmly welcomed by Mr. & Mrs. Buffington Davis and other members of their lodge. Colonel and Mrs. Dodge had very kindly placed their comfortable home at our disposition in their absence, and we rested there until Monday, July 26th. with the exception of two nights spent by Mrs. Besant in St. Paul, where there is also a lodge of the Theosophical Society. Every evening Mrs. Besant lectured to attentive audiences, and during the day held public receptions and private classes for the members, so that she had no spare moments. All the lectures were well attended and the papers gave good reports. The last lecture that Mrs. Besant gave in Minneapolis was by especial request, on "Theosophy and Social Problems," and created much sensation. Both the lodges here and in St. Paul had considerably increased their membership when on Monday, July 26th, we left at 7-35 A. M., for Menominee, a small Lumber town in Wisconsin. We were to have arrived soon after ten, but a "cloud-burst" had swept away three bridges the day before, and we had to patiently wait for six hours until they were patched up sufficiently to permit our train to crawl slowly over them.

Two lectures were given in Menominee and a class was formed, under the guidance of one of our old members who had been working there for some years, and then we passed on to Milwaukee, on the western shore of Lake Michigan. Here two evening lectures and afternoon talks produced enough interested people to form a lodge for study, and, satisfied that the interest in Theosophy would have a nucleus in the town around which to grow, we crossed the lake on Friday night, in the comfortable S. S. "*Nyack*," to Muskegon in Michigan, where the Society already had a lodge and where we were well taken care of by members and friends.

Here nightly lectures were given and in addition to her usual talks and classes, Mrs. Besant was driven out to Lake Harbour, a bathing resort, and spoke to an interested gathering on Sunday afternoon.

We left the Muskegon lodge refreshed and strengthened by her visit, and part of the next week was spent in crossing the Peninsula of Michigan, leaving a trail of lodges behind us at Kalamazoo, Charlotte, Jackson, Ann Arbor and Detroit, each of which chances to have a doctor as its president. We hope that good work will be done by their study to spread the ideas of Theosophy far and wide.

On Tuesday, August 10, we left Detroit for Toledo, where our members were very glad to be helped, and classes for instruction were held. Mrs. Besant's lectures were so well attended and reported that she gave a free lecture on "Theosophy and Social Problems," before she left. This meeting was crowded and created much sensation, for many come to hear such a subject treated who otherwise would not listen to Theosophic thought.

On Friday, August 13, we went to Sandusky; Mrs. Besant lectured, and we came on to Cleveland, Ohio, the next day, on our way along the southern shore of Lake Erie. The Cleveland audiences were diminished by heavy rain and thunderstorms, but quite a number braved the weather and some thoughtful people joined the lodge and more than doubled its membership.

It is encouraging to see that some of the schemes to give practical help to the American Section are taking form.

A corresponding member is being appointed for each state, to whom lodges can direct all their questions and either receive a direct reply, or, if the matter is too difficult for this, an answer from an older student.

The Free Lending Library Boxes, containing books for a graduated course of study, are also coming into use, and before you read this, every lodge in America will have in its hands the carefully prepared plan of study, which will help all students to systematize their work and to quickly gain a clear insight into the teachings of the esoteric Philosophy.

A. J. WILSON.

[In addition to the above we are glad to state the following which we gather from a letter received from the General Secretary of the American Section, T. S. : "The Lynn T. S., Lynn, Mass., seceded in 1895 and joined Mr. Judge's Society, but has now returned to the T. S., and resumed its place on the roll. Twelve of its fourteen members voted in favor of applying for restoration to the Theosophical Society. This is the first Branch to recant its secession. The number of Branches in the American Section is now 48."—*Ed.*"]

NEW ZEALAND SECTION.

August 1897.

The greatest interest in the Section at present is the expected visit of the President-Founder who is due in New Zealand very soon, and is accompanied by Miss Edger who is returning from her lecturing tour in Australia. They land in Dunedin, and expect to reach the head-quarters of the Section in Auckland, in October.

The Annual Meetings of Wellington and Christchurch Branches were held recently. At Wellington the officers were re-elected, Mr. Gibson being President, and Mr. J. Davidson (23, Owen St., Newtown, Wellington), Secretary. At Christchurch Mr. J. Bigg Wither was elected President, and Mr. J. McCombs (3, York St., Christchurch), Secretary; the Branch reports a steady increase in numbers and activity.

Mr. A. W. Maurais lectured in Dunedin on August 9th, in reply to an anonymous letter on the dangers of Theosophy, received by the President of the Branch, and in the course of his answers to the more serious objections raised, he said that the idea of the Theosophical movement culminating in the formation of a powerful priesthood skilled in practical magic was chimerical in the extreme; that it was necessary that those who undertook the cure of souls should have some knowledge of the unseen world and those principalities and powers whereof they preached; that Theosophy would never attempt to draw men from their Churches, would never found a sect, but would continue to point out the inner verities of each religion; and lastly, Theosophy did not encourage self-sacrifice for the sake of gaining Nirvana, but taught men to help their fellows without regard to the progress of their *own* souls, saying with the Buddha,—“Never will I be saved, and hear the whole world cry.”

Reviews.

HUMAN MAGNETISM, OR HOW TO HYPNOTISE.

A HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS OF MESMERISM,

BY PROFESSOR JAMES COATES.

(George Redway, London : 5 shillings, net.)

This is undoubtedly the most practical and thoroughly up-to-date English work on magnetism which has yet been brought out. The author has had an extensive experience as a teacher and practitioner of the science, especially in its most important phase, the curative, and has endeavored to dispel what he considers "erroneous ideas about animal magnetism and hypnotism"—the latter being simply an aspect of the former, under a new name. In the tenth chapter—"How to Heal"—the various systems of Psychopathy, Mind Cure, Christian Science, Divine Science, Faith-healing, and Self-healing, as well as healing by hypnotic and magnetic methods and manipulations, are carefully discussed, and much practical information given that all may profit by. The book contains over 250 pages, is illustrated with photo-engravings, and the printing and binding are unexceptionable.

E.

THE BUDDHIST CATECHISM.*

By COL. H. S. OLCOTT,

President of the Theosophical Society.

The Thirty-third edition of this standard work has been carefully revised and re-arranged, and having received copious additions in certain departments, and an appendix, it is placed before the public in the hope and with the assurance that it will continue to meet the wants of that increasing class of people who are seeking reliable information on the subject of Buddhism. The main portion of the work is now arranged in the following sections: (1) The Life of the Buddha; (2) the Doctrine; (3) the Sangha, or monastic order; (4) a brief history of Buddhism, its councils and propaganda; (5) some reconciliation of Buddhism with science. The leading and most thoroughly qualified priests of the Southern Buddhist Church have lent their aid to make this a reliable work, and it is used in the Buddhist Schools of Ceylon, over one hundred of which have been established under the general supervision of the T. S. This little work has already been published in twenty languages, and the low price at which it is offered places it within reach of all.

E.

* Theosophist Office, Adyar, Madras. Price 12 annas; paper cover, 8 annas.

ON THE OUTER RIM.
STUDIES IN WIDER EVOLUTION,
BY GEO. E. WRIGHT,
[Alfred C. Clark : Chicago.]

This is an attractive booklet of 86 pages, very neatly gotten up. The sub-title affords a clue to the author's trend of thought. As he says in the preface:—

"What is left of materialistic science now hobbles upon crutches; the most advanced scientific writers are going beyond the evidence of the physical senses, long since proven to be inadequate and deceptive, and are accepting the arguments based upon analogy and reason. And very many good people who have been afraid to peep into nature's book, lest they read something that might interfere with some of their preconceived ideas and conclusions, are now daring to think about the creation of man as being somehow different from the account given in the Jewish Bible."

The work is divided into nine chapters which treat of the growth of humanity, the origin and development of religions, "Magic of Nature," "Real Occultism," "Religion of the Future," and other matters. It is well written, and well calculated to dispel illusion and prepare the Western mind for the reception of Theosophic truths. The frontispiece illustrates the author's idea of cyclic evolution.

E.

LADY VERE, AND OTHER NARRATIVES,
AND
MAMMON; A SPIRIT SONG,
BY LOUIS M. ELSHEMUS.

These two attractive little books of poetry have been received from the author. They are very neatly gotten up, and uniform in size, containing 126 pages each. The second of the two is dedicated to the author's mother. Lovers of poetry will find some beautiful thoughts in these companion works.

We acknowledge with thanks the receipt of a pamphlet containing the Report of Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Convention of the European Section, T. S., to which is added a list of Theosophical works published during the past year, and a list of T. S. Branches in Europe: also a pamphlet presenting the Constitution and Rules of the Theosophical Society, and its European Section—received from the General Secretary, G. R. S. Mead, B.A.

E.

YOGA.

A free Tamil translation of Mrs. Besant's Adyar Convention Lecture on Yoga; by Mr. Paranjoti Chettiar, of Coimbatore Branch T. S. The pamphlet contains 19 pages and will be useful to the Tamil-speaking public. Price two annas.

Satwa Sadhau (No. 4), the Telugu organ of the Aryan Association is Edited by Mr. T. A. Saminatha Iyer. The articles in this issue are good. The first, on "Wisdom Religion" treats of the seven Principles of Man according to Theosophic teachings. There are two pages devoted to Sanskrit, showing the authority of caste-marks.

R. A. S.

MAGAZINES.

August *Lucifer* commences with Mr. Mead's continued article, "Among the Gnostics of the First Two Centuries," which treats of "The Valentinian Movement." Some of the Epistles of Valentinus which Mr. Mead quotes are replete with noble ideas. "The Cadet's Story," by C. W. Leadbeater, is remarkably interesting and weird, even if not entirely new. Mr. Keightley's article, "The Desire for Psychic Experiences," is calculated to satisfy, at least partially, many an anxious mind who has been somewhat disappointed on account of slow development and the non-fulfilment of too eager desires. It merits careful reading. "Eckhartshausen's Catechism," as translated by Madame de Steiger, contains many wise apothegms; it is concluded in this number. "A Singular Dream," is from the Swedish as translated by Mrs. Haig. "Reality in Theosophy," by Alexander Fullerton, presents in strong contrast and in clear light, the difference between the true and the false, the sham and the actuality. It will result in mental profit to all readers. "The Confession of Trithemius" is from "*Traité des Causes Secondes*," as translated by A. A. Wells, and illustrates the trend of that work. "Activities" and "Reviews" are, as usual, of interest. The Editors of *Lucifer* announce that "with the next issue of the Magazine (the first number of volume XXI.), the title will be changed to *The Theosophical Review*." Though improvements in form, type and paper are to be made, and the size enlarged, the price will remain the same.

Mercury for August has, first of all, "A Theosophist's Description of Heaven," the substance of which is gleaned by F. E. Titus, from Mr. Leadbeater's exceedingly interesting work entitled "The Devachanic Plane," which constitutes the *Theosophical Manual* No. 6. Those who have not read the *Manual* will be deeply interested in this. In "Confirmations of Theosophy by Science," John Mackenzie presents a somewhat remarkable corroboration of a statement made by one of the Masters and recorded in the *Secret Doctrine*, to the effect that 'Venus is in her last Round.' This corroboration is deduced from discoveries made by Percival Lowell, as recorded in *Popular Astronomy* for December and January last, from which the *Mercury* contributor concludes that the evolutionary wave on the planet Venus must be nearly at an end. The "*Children's Department*" contains "A Norse Legend," and "Irene and the Yesterdays." This issue closes the third volume of *Mercury*.

Theosophy in Australasia first notices the successful lecturing tours which are being made by Col. Olcott and Miss Edger. "The Vestures of the Soul," by H. A. W., is a philosophical article treating mainly of vibration as the chief factor in evolution. "Ecstasia, or Spiritual Illumination," is the first portion of an important essay by W. A. M., who is also a contributor to the *Theosophist*. "Activities" are on the increase in Australasia.

The Theosophic Gleaner—September 1897. With the present issue this useful little periodical commences its seventh year, and we say amon to the good advice expressed in its leaderette. "The Signs of the Times," is a lecture delivered before the Blavatsky Lodge, by E. G. Sutcliffe,—the first portion only being given in this number. N. D. J. follows with an interesting article on "Mrs. Besant at Chicago," which gives an account of her large audiences and successful labours in that city. The selections which fill the remainder of the journal are good.

Intelligence. The August issue of this first-class American periodical contains numerous well written essays which are glowing with thought. As specially worthy of mention we might name,—“Life and Health in Metaphysics,” “Mental Illumination,” “Intelligence, Thought and Being,” “The Real and the Ideal,” and “Thought Work.” “The Hermit of the Sierras” is a story that will be read with more than usual interest, and “The World of Thought, with Editorial Comment,” affords an intellectual feast.

Theosophia—Amsterdam is doing good work in the Netherlands Section—the youngest of the seven.

The Thinker. Later numbers finish the editorial on “The Rationale of Re-incarnation,” and present others on the “Linga Sarira,” and “Love and be Happy.” *The Prasnotlara, The Prabuddha Bhuruta, The Journal of Education, The Journal of the Maha Bodhi Society, The Light of the East, The Christian College Magazine, Sophia, The Light of Truth, and Dawn*,—one of the best of our Indian exchanges—and *The Brahmavidin*, which comes to us in an improved form, are each thankfully received.

Our European T. S. exchanges, *The Vahan*,—one of the most interesting, *Teosofisk Tidskrift, Sophia*—Spanish, *Lotus Bluthen*, and *Nova-Luz*—Italian, are acknowledged with thanks; also our valuable contemporaries, *Light*, and *Modern Astrology*. *Le Lotus Bleu* will be noticed in our November issue. *Rays of Light*, and *The Harbinger of Light*, are always welcome visitors, and among our American Exchanges we mention with thanks, the receipt of *The Pacific Theosophist, Theosophy, The Theosophic News, The Forum, The Phrenological Journal, The Philosophical Journal, The Herald of Health, The Banner of Light, Notes and Queries, The Twentieth Century Astrologer*, from New York City,—a little ahead of the times in name, and *The Temple*, from Denver Colorado. E.

CUTTINGS AND COMMENTS.

“Thoughts, like the pollen of flowers, leave one brain and fasten to another.”

“*Old
Diary
Leaves.*”

As the time of the President-Founder was too much occupied by his duties in the Southern Hemisphere, to furnish the usual monthly instalment of “*Old Diary Leaves*” in season for the present issue, we have inserted, instead, the first half Mr. Fullerton’s valuable essay on “*Initiation.*”

* * *

*The
“Theosophist”
premiums.*

In commencing a new volume of *The Theosophist* we desire to call attention to the offer of the various premiums noticed in our September issue, as an incentive to a little additional effort on the part of contributors and subscribers. First, a gold medal will be awarded for the best original essay furnished for publication in the *Theosophist* during the year commencing with the present October number; a silver medal will also be awarded for the second best essay. Next, any person in India, Ceylon or Burma sending the names of two new subscribers in addition to his own, by V. P. order, will receive free of cost, a copy of the paper-bound Indian Edition of “*Old Diary Leaves*,” and the cloth-bound edition, on like terms, to persons sending from other countries; and for the *largest* number of new subscribers, the third volume of “*Secret Doctrine*” is offered.

* * *

E.

*Prayer
as a
therapeutic
agency.*

Dr. Koseffnikoff, President of the Moscow Medical Society, in a lecture before the professors and doctors of the University of Moscow, relates an astonishing instance of the cure of a distressing case of disease which had baffled the skill of learned physicians. A brief report of this lecture was sent to *Light*, from which we glean. The sufferer was Mons. D., a professor of law at the University of Moscow, and his disease was Sycosis, or inflammation at the roots of the hairs of the beard and moustache—very difficult of cure, and sometimes lasting a lifetime, but if cured, leaving unsightly scars on the face, where the beard has ceased growing. After being treated nine months by noted specialists in various foreign countries, with the result of being worse rather than better, he became almost hopeless, occasionally trying a prescription offered by some friend—one being ammonia, which a soldier wished him to try. This caused the patient increased suffering, the face becoming one mass of scab which constantly discharged a disagreeable secretion. Though he had always enjoyed perfect health previous to this attack, he was now obliged to isolate himself in his room, refusing to see his acquaintances. His distressed condition touched the sympathy of the laundress, who advised him to consult a good woman of her acquaintance ; so Mons. D. sent the laundress to bring the woman who, after examining his face, told him she should not treat him with medicines, but solely by prayer, as all remedies had proved useless in his case. She directed him to go, at five o'clock on the following morning, to the church of the 'Holy Saviour.' The woman met him at the church next morning, at the appointed time and, going to a secluded corner, knelt down with him and engaged in prayer for fifteen minutes, after which they left the church. That very day the eruptions diminished so rapidly that he was able to attend the later church-service "without any bandage on his face, and a few days afterwards, being completely cured, he visited a hair-dresser who made a remark to him about the delicacy of the skin of his face." At the close of his lecture, while speaking of this cure, the professor added :

"It is a surprising case, and as a representative of science I declare that this cure of Sycosis in the manner I have related must be regarded as a proof of the great influence of mind over matter." Nothing need be added to this statement of facts.

*From
a private
letter.*

"I agree.....that after all, each must be his own—work out his own—salvation, and that a philosophy has no right to degenerate into dogmatic theology and all the substitutions, intercessions and vicarious virtues of priestcraft. Poor humanity no sooner feels the least stir towards growth in its soul, than it eagerly hands that soul over to some priest, who swaddles it up, for good and for all, in innumerable wrappings of superstition, and lays it away from the light of day, out of reach of all wholesome conditions, in some pretended holy of holies. The priests are not entirely to blame.....for mankind, with the strange propensity of handing its thinking over to some one else, has so thrust the office.....upon its teachers."

*Sources
of our
happiness.*

An American who had travelled much in Europe, speaking of the peasantry, especially those in France, says :

"I feel bound to say that my observations in Europe thus far force me to the conclusion, that while we have more energy, enterprise and inventive genius, and more of what we call and consider the comforts of life, yet we get out of them a less percentage of substantial happiness than any other people I have seen. I believe there are millions on this side of the ocean living on a few sous a day, who have more of real enjoyment than our millionaires. And the thought often occurs to me here, whether we have not in our country too much of that unhealthy ambition which struggles for larger houses, richer furniture, and costlier dress and equipage—sacrificing in the struggle the true sources of happiness."

Perhaps it may be truthfully said that the peasantry of Europe occupy the happy medium between the eager, restless, wealth-seeking American, and the majority of the people in India and China, who seem so averse to material progress and almost indifferent to their surroundings.

*"Brain-cells
in
finger-tips."*

Probably nearly every reader is aware of the wonderful nicety of touch attained by the blind, and the following scientific demonstration of the deposition of an additional quantity of nerve matter corresponding to brain-cells, resulting from constant use and mental concentration, as described in *The Microscope*, will be found of interest :

"The gray matter brain-cells of perception have been dissected out of the finger-tips of the blind. Standing point up, beneath all the ridges so plainly seen with a magnifying glass on the skin of the inside of the finger-ends are the so-called corpuscles of Pacini, which are arranged in the exact semblance of the keys of a piano, and are said by Meissner to crepitate and give forth a different sound in every age of each person. This Pacinian corpuscle, which contains within its lining membranes a nerve-trunk, an artery, and a vein, lines all the tactile surfaces of the body, particularly the inner finger and thumb tips.

A medical man recently assisted in an autopsy on a person blind from birth, and he sought to discover by scalpel and microscope the secret of the extraordinarily delicate touch the blind man acquired during life. Sections perhaps a sixteenth of an inch thick were carefully sliced off the inner surfaces of the index and middle fingers of the right hand. Under a high power these showed, instead of a single nerve trunk and artery and vein of the average man, a most complex and delicate ramification of nerve filaments, dainty and minute nerve twigs branching from the main stem. Through constant use the finger-tips of the blind acquire this unusual development, with more and more perfect performance of function."

*The human
Aura made
visible by
photography.*

Modern Astrology, in speaking of the luminous mist or Aura which surrounds us, alludes to the thought-currents which "act and re-act continuously, causing the Aura to become fine or coarse. The purer and stronger the life, the more delicate and beautiful will the radiation of the colours in our Aura become."

The following remarkable scientific proof is also added :

"Dr. Luys has described some experiments made by him, showing the presence of luminous emanations which surround the human body, and he has demonstrated it, according to the *Electrical Review*, in the

following extraordinary manner by means of photography. In the dark room, place your fingers for about twenty minutes on an ordinary photographic plate which is itself in a bath containing the usual solution of hydroquinone, and after this exposure fix the negative in the usual way. You will see not only your fingers and the lines on the skin reproduced, but also their pores and, what is still more interesting, round the fingers a sort of zone or halo a third of an inch wide, which would lead one to believe that we live in a luminous fluid which has enabled us to obtain a photographic print of itself and of the fingers, as if under the influence of light. Dr. Luys has tried the same experiment, but without any results, on patients whose hands were paralysed, numb or insensible to touch. No image appeared on the plate."

* * *

The eminent French scientist, whose photographic demonstration of the Aura was narrated in the preceding paragraph, has been suddenly transferred to another plane of existence. The following notice is taken from *Light* :

"Dr. Jules Bernard Luys, the famed French specialist in diseases of the brain, who was born in 1828, has died suddenly at Divonne-Les-Bains. He was in succession attached to several Paris hospitals, to the Salpêtrière, to the Charité and to the lunatic asylum at Ivry. In 1877 he was elected a member of the Academy of Music. He leaves some authoritative works on the brain, on the nervous system, and on hypnotism. * * *

* * *

A
primary
virtue.

The Dutch are said to excel all other nations of the earth in the wholesome virtue of cleanliness, and, according to *The Ladies Home Journal*, "Holland, in proportion to its population, is the most moral nation on the globe." That there is an inseparable connection between the two is very evident. Outward surroundings of filth, slovenliness and disorder have their inevitable effect upon the moral nature of man, and the character that is wholly uninfluenced by such environments must be an uncommonly strong one.

As the editor of *Light* says in a recent issue, "Every spiritual person ought to pay steady (not restless and over anxious, but 'steady') attention to diet and ablutions. It is not our duty, as some say, to fight the animal in us and to subdue the body, in the sense of weakening it, but it is our duty to cleanse it through and through. It is useless to adorn the mind with beautiful thoughts if we let the body wander into defiling ways. The body at present is, as a rule, the dominant partner." Sydney Smith came to the conclusion, that half the unhappiness of the world might be traced to improper conditions of the body, and that noted pulpit orator, Henry Ward Beecher, said, in one of his sermons, that he believed many in his congregation were "not so much in need of a change of heart, as of a change of liver." This latter change could be effected by faithful attention to diet and bathing. Surely it is incumbent upon every one to endeavour to make the body a pure and fit temple for the indwelling of the spirit. Any Theosophy or Theology that does not include physical purity is not the kind that humanity needs. We think, however, it may well be doubted whether Holland is any more moral, in proportion to its population, than is India.

E.

The efficacy of Prayer.

Borderland for July contains several short articles copied from the *Sunday Magazine*, on "Answers to Prayer," which seem quite convincing. We select the following which is similar to what was published in the *Theosophist* of September 1896, page 776, and is entitled—"A Manchester Barnardo." The writer says of Mr. Leonard K. Shaw, who has established refuges for children, one of which is a comfortable home and hospital known as Belleville:—

"The institution (Mr. Shaw's) was founded after prayer and has been maintained by prayer. When it was first started they only took in boys between the ages of ten and sixteen. It was proposed that they should take in younger children, but the money was lacking. The work could not be extended without £600, and his wife and he agreed to make this test as to whether or not it was the will of God that this should be done. They made it a special matter of prayer, issued a general appeal, but no individual person was asked to contribute. In a few days a letter came with a cheque for £600. The Home was opened, and soon became so full that Mr. Shaw was again short of money. He sent out a second appeal, and asked for another signpost in the shape of funds. A few weeks afterwards a lady sent them a cheque for £1,000. When he wanted his third home he prayed again, and sent out another appeal. Two or three weeks later there came a cheque for £700. The fourth home was founded in the same way, a cheque for £1,000 coming in after special prayer for a special sum. After twenty-seven years of work Mr. Shaw expresses his profound conviction that both in money and in personally dealing with the children and others, he has no doubt whatever that definite prayer receives definite answer."

The likeness of this case to those cited one year ago—of Mr. George Müller and Dr. Barnardo—is striking, and we may repeat what we then said that "This is an object-lesson for Theosophists, on the power of thought when sufficiently intense and divested of selfishness. The world would be the better for a little more of this kind of practical occultism"; also that if our friends, who don't believe in prayer, know of a better method of accomplishing works equal in magnitude and utility the world should have the benefit of their knowledge.

The way to review books.

The editor of *Light*, who received a book accompanied by a request for 'a favourable review,' says:

The noticing or reviewing of a book is a serious duty, if undertaken at all, and, of course, calls for perfect sincerity. It is as wrong to have any personal bias in reviewing a book as it is to have a personal bias in trying a prisoner or deciding the result of a race. At all events, *Light* intends to be honest, whatever happens. ***

It is no wonder that the editor says he shall be "a little exacting." It would do no harm if some who send books to *Theosophist* for review were to read the above remarks of the editor of *Light*.

A singular post mortem experience.

The *Boston Post* publishes a most singular story told by Mr. W. A. Laufman, a commercial traveller, well known in Minnesota, who claims to have been dead for nearly forty-eight hours, and to have been restored to life by an electrical experiment. He also states that, while dead, he walked about in another body, passing to and fro, in and out, at his pleasure, and hearing, perfectly well, what was said concerning him by his friends and the doctors. This is what he states:

" My strange experience dates from about two years ago when I took sick in Mankato..... On December 26th, at 11 o'clock in the morning, the doctor pronounced me dead and my body was turned over to M. Maul's undertaking establishment for preparation for shipment. My brother, C. H. Laufman, of Des Moines, Ia. was telegraphed for and came on to take charge of my remains.

" On that fatal morning I was suddenly aware of an indescribable sensation, beginning at my feet and snapping clear through my frame and out at the top of my head. I was then conscious of something like a ball of cotton released and spreading out, in form the size of a man at least three feet taller than myself. I was standing in the centre of the room and plainly saw my dead body lying on the cot. I started to leave the room and met one of the doctors. I wondered that he did not say something to me, but as he made no effort to stop me I went out on the street.

" I walked down Fourteenth street to the corner towards California Avenue, and there met an old acquaintance from Mitchell, S. D., named Milt Blose. I attempted to strike him on the back by way of salutation, but my arm passed right through him. I did not speak to him, but struck at him again with the same result. I utterly failed to attract his attention, although I followed him for at least a block. I distinctly saw him walk across the street and gaze at a miniature Ferris wheel in a window."

In support of this statement, it may be well to mention that Mr. Laufman has letters and telegrams which prove that his friend, Mr. Blose, was really in Omaha at the time and looked at the Ferris wheel on Fourteenth street as above-mentioned by Mr. Laufman, who states further :—

" After leaving Blose I went up to the hospital to see the body. I found the door closed, but as I could see into the room, I passed through the door and gazed at myself for a while. I then went out and found the doctors and heard them discussing my case. I hung around with them until the arrival of my brother. I went in with him and the doctors and watched his anguish as he looked at my dead face. He remained at the hospital that night, as it was very late, and I went into the room with him and watched until he fell asleep.

" I was laid out dead exactly thirty-seven hours and fifty-eight minutes. I stayed around with the doctors and my brother during all of the time, and heard and remembered every word spoken by them. The doctors wanted to make a *post mortem* examination, but my brother objected.

" Of course, you want to know how I got back into my shell, and it happened in this way. One of the specialists wanted to try some experiment with an electric apparatus. My brother consented to it, and I accompanied them to my death-bed to watch the operation. The instruments were attached to my feet, and I distinctly felt the sensation while standing out in the centre of the room. I was next conscious of excruciating pains all through me, and I knew I was in my body again."

These are the principal points in Mr. Laufman's story. The *Past* says the facts relating to his protracted illness and gradual recovery are well known in the vicinity of Mankato.