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TRANSACTIONS
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On the Higher Aspect of Theosophic Studies.—Read at an open
Meeting of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society,
held on the 10th of December, 1884.

By MOHINI M. CHATTERJI.



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THE study of Theosophy, in which we are engaged, is in its character unique. The Esoteric Science, which is but another name for Theosophy, is at once a complete system of Physics, Ethics, and Metaphysics, demanding the devotion of all the faculties of man for its proper comprehension. Unlike those departments of knowledge which usually occupy attention, it directly deals with the great problem of happiness, a happiness which is complete and eternal. The ultimate value of all effort is the production of happiness, and objects excite our interest in so far as we believe them to be conducive to that great and ultimate consummation of existence,—happiness. Thus it will be seen that Theosophy, claiming, as it does, to be the science of happiness, must embrace within itself all objects of human interest. In fact it must be omniscience itself. The definition here attempted is, no doubt, infinite in extension, rendering every claimant to a complete knowledge of it worthy of supreme contempt and ridicule, or, perhaps, even unworthy of that. One thing, however, is certain: the Great or Supreme Knowledge, as it is called in the East, is the science of supreme bliss and the art of acquiring it. As a Science it recognizes the direction in which our highest faculties

perceive the unfoldment of existence to be the direction of happiness, and looks upon all divergence from that direction as productive of unhappiness. As an art it naturally concerns itself most with the objects of our highest interest,—our selves (it is necessary to adopt this form for the plural in defiance of grammar), and attacks the problem of happiness from their standpoint. These selves, or as they are technically called, personal egos or personalities, are candidates for happiness, and therefore entitled to special consideration. It is needless to discuss here the contention which is sometimes heard that action, life, or existence is possible without a tendency towards happiness. Even a superficial examination will show that while pursuing apparently an unpleasant object, the man's real motive is still a desire for happiness. The author of the Upanishads shows great wisdom when he asks: "Who would have moved or who would have lived if happiness did not pervade all space?"

The universally admitted relations of the personal ego to objects, usually regarded as external by reason of their non-identity with the self, must be recognized before any scheme can be formulated or means devised for the acquirement of happiness. This part of the inquiry is confined to the domain of what is commonly, though empirically, called positive knowledge, and is physical; it is conducted by means of physical senses.

Having found the object to be made happy in the self, it becomes necessary to examine its nature, so as to discover how to make it happy. This branch of the inquiry, which is metaphysical, must be pursued with the aid of what may be called super-physical senses or higher intellection. Ordinarily we find all actions in life, proceeding upon a system of trial and error, seek to attain that happiness in which hope promises unchanging enjoyment and rest. But as the investigation into the true elements of happiness advances, a very important fact becomes apparent from our conception of time. We see that the personality, the aspirant for happiness, has itself such a characteristic as to be unable to exist without change in consciousness, and that exist it must. That which is can never absolutely cease to be; no relationship can be legitimately

postulated between a thing and its utter negation. Therefore the scheme of happiness, which the personality sets up in ignorance of its own nature, must be given up for its true happiness. In order to be truly happy the personality has to realize its own perpetual changefulness, and the result of such realization will be the surrender of the desire for the permanence of any particular state of its existence, a desire springing from ignorance of its own nature. When this ignorance is dispelled and the personality conforms itself to its own nature to change, the character of the ego is so completely altered as to render the personality, to all intents and purposes, extinct; to mark the difference of state the entity is then called an individuality. It is not within the scope of this paper to discuss the nature of the existence of the individuality during the time when the personality lasts, or, strictly speaking, engages attention. Suffice it to say that if one could survey the universe from the standpoint of eternity there would be no change, but everything would appear present, changeless, and everlasting. But such a state can never be realized. The only eternity that exists is an eternity of change. Change alone is permanent. Forgetful of this our personalities build up schemes of happiness in which the desire for the permanence of some particular state occupies a prominent position. As a consequence we bring pain upon ourselves when that desire meets with inevitable disappointment. A thorough realization, therefore, of the perpetual mutability of existence is essentially necessary for that happiness which is most perfect. To be supremely happy we must renounce all desire for happiness as the result of our work, but find it in the work itself.

This being concluded, the next step is to know our work. A proper examination of the nature of change, the law embodied in the personality aspiring to happiness, furnishes this knowledge as the highest faculties of each project their searching light upon the massive darkness of what is to be as involved in what was and what is. Examining the true nature of our consciousness, we find that the great cause of pain and suffering is the personality itself, or, in other words, the great interest we feel in our self under the

conviction of their separateness and opposition to other selfs. But the changefulness of the personality necessitates the existence of a permanent basis; and its separateness implies an underlying unity. This permanent basis must not, however, be considered a distinct entity. It is merely a state which has no more existence without change than change has without it. The more the personality realizes this permanence, this state of unity of all personalities, with which, in its present state, it feels such an opposition, the greater does its happiness become. For at each step of this realization the limitations imposed by the personality upon itself diminish in number and generate happiness. The effort to realize the ideal of Universal Brotherhood,—the emotional counterpart of the consciousness of unity which underlies the diverse forms of manifestation,—is usually known as the practice of morality. As the work of ethical evolution proceeds, the personality, which produces the consciousness of opposition of self and selfs, slackens its bonds and expands until it loses itself. The presence of opposition produces pain, which disappears in proportion as its true cause, the feeling of separateness, disappears; happiness grows with the growth of more permanent interests, and reaches its consummation when the “dewdrop slips into the shining sea,” and the personality destroying its limitations merges in the all and loses its name. The peaks of perfection that the glorified individuality then begins to scale are far beyond the ken of mortal eyes. It never indeed loses “the glory of going on and still to be.”

The path, however, by which this truth—this happiness—is realized is not the same for all. The very fact that one personality is not another shows that each has a peculiar path of its own. No man is a superfluity in the universe. The existence of the humblest human creature is not without a reason. A contrary supposition involves the assumption of omniscience, and is tantamount to a denial of the existence of Reason itself. Each man, therefore, has a right to a perfect liberty of conscience, and no man is entitled to judge his fellow man. One's opinions are one's own, but one is not justified in imposing them on others. A neglect of this rule has a tendency to transform the whole of the human race

into multiple images of a single individual, which must necessarily produce pain by its opposition to the natural law which underlies the diversity of manifestation. Nothing in Nature can be annihilated, and all attempts to achieve the impossible must produce unhappiness. Leave the meanest individual to enjoy his birthright-liberty of conscience. When another's acts cross our path of duty and offend our sense of fitness and propriety we have a right to condemn the deed and endeavour to neutralise its evil effects, but it is wrong to shut our hearts against the doer; he is entitled to all the pity that is in our nature. For by the Law of Karma

The false tongue dooms its lie; the creeping thief
And spoiler rob, to render.

The law of Karma is the true order of our personal experience, as seen in the light of that mode of Nature's manifestation, commonly called Causation. That which is cannot cease to be. But it cannot remain in a state of permanence, for that would be contradictory with the idea of succession, which is inseparably connected with existence. Our acts, therefore, live in their effects or subsequent forms. Until we can remove all material desires from our acts they will always necessitate material effects and produce re-incarnations. It will be out of place in the present paper, which deals but with the practical aspect of our studies, to elucidate the Law of Karma and Re-incarnation, or to meet even the principal objections which are raised against it. But attention is to be drawn to the fact how this Law offers a satisfactory explanation of the apparent injustices of life. We find around us not only pain and suffering but also moral excellence and depravity, forced upon individuals by circumstances over which they seem to have no control. No amount of speculation or dogmatism will furnish a clue to this anomaly so long as the above-mentioned Law remains unrecognized. Exception is taken to this Law on the ground that it is repugnant to justice that a man should experience the consequences of a prior act without preserving the memory of that act. It is hardly necessary to point out that this line of

argument is based upon the assumption that the word justice, as applied to the working of natural laws, has the same meaning as the justice demanded by us in intercourse between man and man with their limited knowledge and selfish motives. Is a man, who is struck down by a disease, ever told the precise moment and circumstances when he received the germs of his malady? The justice of Nature is vindicated by the undisturbed sway of the law of Causation. If *you* suffer there must be a reason for it, and that reason must have some connection with *you*, otherwise it would not have produced *your* suffering. It should not, however, be supposed that the cause for suffering is here sought to be connected with the present form of you, your personality, the aggregate unity of a certain bundle of experiences, that personality being in fact but the form which your old self has assumed under the operation of self-generated causes, which are the progenitors of your present suffering and enjoyment. "Ye suffer from yourselves;" "that which ye sow, ye reap."

From the considerations, so briefly urged above, it will be obvious how wrong it is to entertain resentful feelings for evil done to ourselves. We must be indifferent to it and pursue our path of duty: the evil experienced is the outcome of our own previous deeds. No power in heaven or on earth can, by a moment's duration, prolong or shorten the term of our suffering or enjoyment. The sum-total of human happiness will receive considerable addition if unswerving allegiance is given to this law, which alone can furnish a true and scientific basis of Ethics. Our Ethical notions, however, cannot be fixed and permanent, because the personality in which they inhere is itself changeable. The morality of a Polynesian savage will be converted into its opposite when he is changed into a civilized man. The same law also obtains in the domains of Physics and Metaphysics. What is Metaphysics to-day will be Physics to-morrow as the right of now will be the wrong of then. This truth, nevertheless, remains constant, that there will be always something unknown with which Metaphysics will concern itself, and which Ethics will demand to have brought within the grasp of Physics—the science of objectivity. There dominates throughout

the whole range of existence the eternal struggle of converting Metaphysics into Physics, and Ethics is the power that fights. Any scheme of life or happiness that neglects one and enthrones the other of these will always defeat its own ends. Physics without Metaphysics is empiricism; Metaphysics without Physics is dogmatism; and Ethics by itself is superstition. The harmonious combination of these three elements forms what is called Theosophy, Wisdom-Religion, or Esoteric Science. The study of this Great Science leads to a proper development of all the different faculties, the synthetic unity of which is the man. Physics requires the cultivation of the intellect, Metaphysics can be comprehended only by the development of the intuitive, or purely rational, faculties, while the emotional nature is expanded by Ethics. The feeling of reverential awe which we have for what we call spiritual is produced by the combination of the metaphysical and ethical faculties. Metaphysics recognizes the true nature of consciousness, which Ethics, acting through the emotions, forces us to realize. This impelling conviction produces the feeling of awe for the subjective side of nature, and makes it sacred.

Objection is sometimes taken to Theosophy for not being new. The logical connection between novelty and truth is, however, not easy to discover. If Theosophy is the Divine Wisdom which is the Science of Divine Bliss, and if happiness is the tendency of all existence, there must be Theosophy whenever there is metaphysical faculty in man to contemplate problems that lie deep in his nature. Novelty is an attribute which has never been claimed for our doctrines. But at the same time it must be recognized that a truth is the richer for having passed through a larger number of minds. It is the realization of the truth that we seek, and in this great task we expect help from each other's experience; no statement is authoritative but has to be accepted or rejected according to individual judgment. Abstract truths are like mathematical formulæ, of which the underlying principles must be understood and then facility acquired in their application, and it is no detracting from the value of mathematics that some of its results can be accomplished by empiric rules.

The Great Science is the Science of Eternal Life, the contemplation of which causes the present life to assume its true proportions. Misconception of the true value of the existence we now lead shrouds from view the permanent basis which underlies all changes of form, and has on the one hand led some to sink into the condition of Tennyson's St. Simon Stylites, and on the other produced Epicurean Corporealism. A right understanding of the subject shows, however, the worth as well as the worthlessness of this existence, which at once imprisons us and gives us liberty. It is but a small link in an unending catena of changes—it is but a drop in the ocean; but still it is a link and a drop. Our happiness entirely depends upon a correct estimate of the value of life. Ignorance is painful, and it is immaterial whether that ignorance begets an over estimate of the importance of life or the opposite. The great delusion of an absolute existence outside the Cosmos produces a perfect paralysis of the present life and all the misery consequent thereupon, while the over estimate of life ends in sensuality and bigotry. This over estimate proceeds from two distinct causes, both equally dangerous: Corporealism, which cannot conceive of any existence dissociated from the present body, and certain forms of dogmatic religion which supplement this erring, miserable life of humanity by an eternity of existence, taking its colour from causes generated in finite time. The pleasures of this life appear in gigantic proportions to a votary of the former system, and dogmatic morality becomes the omnipotent ruler of the so-called religious man.

But the only eternity we recognize is an eternity of change. This life is only one out of the numberless patterns which the ceaseless motion of the kaleidoscope of existence produces. The contemplation of this great fact of our nature broadens our view of life, and helps us to realize the present existence in its true light. As we penetrate further into details, the realization of the harmony of being grows upon us in strength, and the darkening medium of ignorance loses its density.

The fragments of Esoteric cosmogony contained in Theosophical literature now before the world carry us a long way towards

estimating the true worth of life. This teaching must, however, for the generality of our age, take its place as Metaphysics, appealing for sanction to the human reason, until the practice of Ethics makes it capable of realization as Physics, a task already accomplished by some individuals. But the practicability of converting Metaphysical concepts into Physical facts by the help of Ethics must not be lost sight of.

A mere intellectual study of this system of Metaphysics is no doubt productive of great good, but at the same time it is to be observed that the best result can be achieved only by its practical application to life and conduct, or, to translate an Eastern phrase, by constant sitting beside it—assiduity in its etymological sense. An effort to realize the immense tract of time during which the course of human evolution has been traced by the above-mentioned fragments makes the mind dizzy at first, but in the course of the process, when even a shadowy comprehension of the truth is obtained, the factitious importance with which ignorance invests each fleeting phase of existence disappears and leaves earth-life to take its proper place in the endless manifestation of being we pass through.

Taking the present objective life itself we find it to be like a note in music, which when sounded must inevitably produce its third and fifth, and then return into itself in the higher octave. When a unit of consciousness, called a human entity, coursing along the present curve of objective evolution, reaches the furthest point of that curve and turns in a different direction, the phenomenon of death takes place. Death marks the point of comparative no-motion or unconsciousness. Of course absolute unconsciousness has no existence in a universe, which is itself a grand consciousness. On death the unit of consciousness begins to disappear into the subjective side of existence. It is obvious that the rate of motion will be affected by forces tending in an opposite direction. In other words, an entity which generates material inclinations, is retarded in its progress heavenward, to use a popular expression, by those inclinations in proportion to their intensity. This state of conflict is rightly termed in the East,

Kama-loka, or the World of Desires. It corresponds to the Purgatory as understood by some schools of Christian theology. The duration of the Kama-loka state depends upon the relative intensity of the material and spiritual inclinations of the personality. This state succeeding, as it does, the earth-life, is the nearest to it, and therefore the first which meets a psychic.[^] The direction in which the living psychic moves being opposite to that of the retiring entity, he gets of it but a retrospective glimpse, and reflects such of its thoughts and emotions as are of the earth earthy. We must not forget that in the view of life taken in this paper, the spiritual is closely connected with what is ordinarily called the abstract, and is something higher than what is considered moral by the work-a-day world. It need not, therefore, excite surprise to find men, considered good on earth, passing through the state of Kama-loka. Those alone who, during a long course of unselfish life have shed every atom of material craving, are able to overleap Kama-loka altogether, while in the case of the generality its duration varies from some hours to a great many years. It will, I believe, be supported by the experience of those who investigate the character of existence in Kama-loka, that men dying at a ripe old age with the satisfaction of having accomplished all life's labours, very rarely manifest through mediums. This gives some indication of the true nature of Kama-loka entities.

To pursue the already instituted comparison of human life to a musical note. A man possessed of a peculiarly constituted hearing, which prevents his taking cognizance of any other overtone besides the third of the original note, will never suspect the existence of the fifth and the octave. Thus the untrained psychic or medium, whose purview is confined to Kama-loka, cannot obtain an idea of the higher states. It is a matter of regret that transcendental Metaphysics should not be more generally studied, as that alone, in the absence of the incomparable clairvoyance of the trained seer, can fathom the mysteries of spiritual life. To some minds the manifestations of the séance-room are conclusive and satisfactory proofs of the immortality of man, but the illegitimate process of reasoning which yields such a result is clear to all

metaphysical thinkers. It is not our purpose to enter into further discussion of a subject, whose importance demands separate treatment. For the present, it will suffice to remark that an examination of the state of consciousness known as Kama-loka does not give a clue to a right understanding of the higher existence, even though the examiner be assisted by the testimony of entities which have passed into that state. What amount of reliance is to be placed upon the information obtained through mediums regarding the mysteries of true spiritual life? In answering this question we must remember that there is nothing in the mere fact of death which would invest an otherwise incompetent person with the authority of pronouncing the last word upon spiritual matters. Problems which are amenable to reason are as much within the grasp of an embodied as of a disembodied spirit. We do not put any value upon a man's belief that his brain is made of wax or molten lead, although the brain is his and not ours. Nor do we throw our Euclid overboard on the assurance of some one, that at the North Pole the three angles of a triangle are not equal to two right angles.

The secrets of the soul will never be revealed to sense. The physical man can only cognize astral existence, the borderland between the physical and the spiritual. It will thus be seen that the information obtained through Spiritualistic mediums will never solve the questions of the true spiritual life. In the meantime there is a grave moral objection to the practice of Spiritualism, which all its services against the fatal progress of materialism do not remove. Concluding upon insufficient data obtained by communication with the astral or semi-ethereal phase of existence that the personality is eternal, one is sure to take an exaggerated view of the present life, and of the personality which is manifested in it. As a consequence the very life-stream of true Spiritual development, which is but another name for liberation from the bondage of personality, is poisoned at its source. The immorality of Spiritualism thus lies on a higher plane, and is, therefore, the more reprehensible. It is more pernicious to plant in a man's mind a germ of

thought which grows into a upas tree of evil, than to rob or even murder him. From another point of view it is evident that the entity communicated with by a medium, is very seriously injured by being turned away from the higher life towards which it is pressing. The injury thus resulting is liable to be underrated by reason of our want of familiarity with the operation of causes on super-physical planes of existence. The illustration cited above as to the effects of thought-energy will throw some light on the subject. A tendency being set up in a Kama-loka entity to repeat the act it is once drawn into, its stay in Kama-loka will be prolonged to a much greater extent than will be readily admitted. The evil effects on the medium himself of his astral intercourse are quite manifest. The surrender of will is the surrender of duty, and treason to manhood.

We now enter upon a consideration of the truly spiritual counterpart of our life on earth, a state called Devachan in recent Theosophic teachings. In this state the entity lives in the highest spiritual manifestation of its personality on earth, and in the realization of all its hopes and aspirations. No communication, not subjective, is possible with such a purified being. While the spiritual life of an individual is unfolding itself in Devachan, sympathetic souls on earth feel the vivifying and spiritualizing influence of that unfoldment, and translate it into their physical lives according to their respective spiritual development. Whenever an individual on earth is enabled by his highly spiritual life to live upon the plane of soul, he can consciously receive the influx of spiritual energy thus showered upon the world, and trace it to its source. True spiritual communication must be of a subjective character. The pure spiritual being, even while on earth, vibrates in unison with some glorified predecessor, a good man in life and goodness in death. It will thus be seen that good men, freed from the limitations of the flesh, become inspiring influences to their race, and so remain for a period immeasurably greater than the span of their lives on earth, before making another descent into objective life. But the state of Devachan is, from a higher stand-point, still

a very selfish state. Although the spiritual energy evolved by a habitant of Devachan is a factor in the spiritual development of the race, yet the entity, wanting in the element of self-consciousness (as all entities are in Kama-loka and Devachan, when left to themselves), cannot be credited with unselfishness any more than the tree can be styled unselfish for affording a shelter to the weary passer-by. In each fact of consciousness there are two elements, the mere perception and the reflective consciousness of that perception. When I see a thing there are two facts present in my mind; the fact of seeing the thing and the fact that *I* see it. When the higher thoughts and aspirations are realized by an entity in Devachan, it is in the position of one who is lost in an enjoyment, the intensity and keenness of which prevent this reflective consciousness or self-consciousness. Truly unselfish beings do not enter into the state of Devachan, but obtain immediate re-incarnations so long as there is any possibility left for their further development on earth, after which they pass into the state of Nirvana, as Sakyamuni has, and become the true spiritual pabulum for those who thirst and hunger after righteousness.

This is the doctrine against which the charge of selfishness is sometimes very hastily preferred, but its extravagant injustice is manifest on the least thoughtful consideration. If happiness is to be the supremely important object of all effort, our adversaries urge, where is that spirit of self-sacrifice which alone can open the portals of the highest good? Such a contention can live only in the shadow cast by the ignorance of the true nature of self-sacrifice and the highest good. Neither good nor evil has any absolute existence. No act performed in a finite period of time can ensure results which will retain their power of producing happiness or unhappiness to the actor through all eternity. The same reasons which condemn eternal punishment as absurd, also sap the foundation of eternal bliss, as the consequence of energy operating during a finite period of time. It is not here maintained that even the feeblest flash of energy is destructible, but that owing to the changefulness of the personal ego the manifestations of a

cause lose in time their unhappy or happy character as regards the unit of consciousness which originally produced the cause. Happiness alone is the constant factor and the final criterion to which all our conceptions of goodness must be referred. But what is the highest happiness? It is an utter renunciation of all desire for happiness, and a supreme satisfaction in the performance of one's work which in reality is one's nature, purified from egoism. Selfishness, or egoism, being the greatest enemy of happiness, is the greatest evil. Applying this principle to self-sacrifice as ordinarily understood, we find that by itself it is neither good nor bad, but may be either, according to the motive which underlies it. The surrender of self to duty is the only sacrifice of self; under all other circumstances there will be self-slaughter, not self-sacrifice. A subtle and dangerous form of selfishness is often found mixed up with many acts commonly regarded as self-sacrificial. Consciousness of personality is the great evil, and that evil is not removed by the way in which the consciousness is manifested. When one rushes on death with the determination of giving up *self*, no matter with what object, there is still a consciousness of self which is being given up, and consequently the object is selfish. Self-forgetfulness in the performance of duty, which reaches its consummation when duty and nature become one, is the true self-sacrifice. So long as there is an opposition between self and other selves, the self has not been sacrificed. Self-sacrifice is a perpetual effort towards the attainment of that goal where, to quote the words of a great Indian teacher, the "All is filled by the self, as the world is filled by water at the great universal cataclysm." It often involves a greater act of sacrifice to live on and perform one's duty than to be relieved from it by the approach of death. Thus the ideal sacrifice of self, is to be found exemplified in the life of Buddha, who, for our sakes, lived on. If, by confounding a thing with its polar opposite, this is considered selfishness; so be it.

We have dwelt upon a few facts regarding Kama-loka and Devachan, not with the intention of expounding the subject, but to demonstrate its practical value. We have attempted to show

how a careful study of the Esoteric Doctrine, with earnestness of purpose and sincerity of heart, must needs impress us with the immense importance of cultivating the spiritual side of our character on earth, as something higher than mere blind submission to conventional morality, which is based upon a recognition of human selfishness. Further, from this study we derive the lesson of universal toleration and brotherly love. And above all it teaches us the sublime doctrine of Renunciation and unselfish devotion to the cause of Humanity, a doctrine which the greatest teachers of all time and every country have preached and realized, which the great, good men of every age and every land have worshipped and followed, and which it is the greatest glory of mankind to have the ability to receive.

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A Synopsis of Baron Du Prel's "Philosophie der Mystik."

By **BERTRAM KEIGHTLEY.**

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A Synopsis of Baron Du Prel's "Philosophie der Mystik."

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KANT'S Critique of Pure Reason is a most convincing demonstration that no knowledge is possible for us outside the limits of experience, since *à priori*, and apart from experience, we can know only the abstract forms of pure thought: the laws imposed by our nature on the external world of phenomena as given to us in "intuition" (*Anschauung*). Since, however, these laws are inherent in *us* and apply to that which we call the "Not-self" only in so far as *our* consciousness is concerned, it follows that the limits of true knowledge are for us the limits of our possible experience.

Advancing from this ground, Dr. Du Prel states the problem which his work is an attempt to solve, the problem which lies at the root of all Mysticism, of all Occultism, nay, even of spiritual progress itself, as follows:—

"Is our true Ego entirely contained in our *self*-consciousness?"

"The extent of knowledge and self-knowledge possible to any organised being is determined by the number of its senses, and by

the degree of stimulus to which they respond, *i.e.*, by its psychophysical limit of sensation. In biological evolution this limit has always been variable, and thus, not only have the senses been differentiated in the succession of living forms, but the consciousness of their possessors has been enlarged as well."

These remarks suggest the following somewhat different statement of the fundamental problem: Is not man a being whose consciousness is distinguishable as dual from the existence of a variable limit of sensation; the consciousness of the one form (at present outside the range of our *ordinary* experience) including that of the other; while the latter (our normal consciousness) is not distinctly cognizant even of the existence of their integral unity?

The problem, thus stated, is clearly a legitimate rider to the Kantian philosophy, since it implies nothing more than an enquiry into the possibility of any extension of the present limits of our experience and the conditions of such extension.

That such an enlargement of our field of observation is possible is more than suggested by the Theory of Evolution, as well as by the past history of Knowledge itself. A careful consideration of this branch of the enquiry very properly forms the Introduction to the subject under consideration. In order to give a clear idea of the method pursued, we shall analyse at some length one or two chapters; translating freely from the text and adding only the connecting links.

The Introduction consists of an investigation as to the possibility of a real growth of Knowledge. At the outset, Dr. Du Prel remarks that the logical instinct of mankind always leads them to adopt a line of conduct in harmony with their conception of the riddle of existence, and that therefore men's moral progress is necessarily dependent on the growth of knowledge; and thus, if knowledge admits of growth, we may hope to attain to a better state of things; to a form of culture tinged at least with loftier ideals. He then continues:—"Now, the most common of popular assumptions is that knowledge not only can, but does, grow. Unfortunately, however, this belief is largely coloured with misconceptions; the first and

most serious of which is the idea that this growth proceeds solely in breadth, not in depth. True progress ever goes deeper; yet each generation fancies that it leaves merely surface work to be done by its successors. The second misconception lies in the expectation that the riddle of life will become more intelligible to us through the increase of knowledge. The contrary has in truth been the case up to the present, and will be for a long time to come; although that expectation may some day be realised."

"We have, therefore, two questions to examine :

"1st. In how far does the human mind progress in depth?"

"2nd. What contribution can it bring to the solution of the Riddle of the Universe."

After showing by the examples of Copernicus and Kant that the real advance of knowledge has been in depth rather than in mere surface extension, the author pursues :

"The modern Theory of Evolution follows, consciously or not, the lines traced out by Kant. Biological Evolution began with the simplest organisms and has reached in the most complicated human being its highest point for the moment. Thus, a tree stands in but very few and very simple relations to external nature ; it responds to sunshine and rain, wind and weather, and unfolds itself accordingly. In the animal kingdom these relations to the surrounding external world have increased in number and extent ; and hand in hand with organic, advances also intellectual evolution."

"From the oyster to man, the growth of consciousness proceeds parallel with that of organisation. But even supposing the organic evolution had reached its close, the domain of human consciousness would still receive additions through the advance of the technical and theoretical sciences."

"Thus, from the standpoint of every animal organism, external nature is divided into two unequal parts, the inequality of which increases as the organism descends in the scale of life. On one side is that portion of nature with which its senses connect it; while the rest of nature is transcendental to it : *i. e.*, the organism in question stands in no conscious relation to that part of nature.

This frontier-line has been continually pushed backwards and onwards during the process of biological evolution: the number of the senses having increased, as have also their working powers."

"Thus, what Fechner has termed the 'psycho-physical threshold' has been steadily pushed back in proportion as the senses differentiated, and responded to ever-weakening degrees of physical stimulus; while stimuli falling below this threshold do not enter into consciousness at all. So that the biological advance, as well as the growth of consciousness implies a constant pushing back of the frontier-line between the realms of Thought and Reality, at the expense of the transcendental and unknown, and to the profit of the known world."

"This is the view of Darwin, who has proved the necessary existence of a transcendental world for every organism. It is also that of Kant, who demonstrated the same fact by his distinction between the 'Thing in Itself' and the 'Appearance.'"

The opposite of this is the view held by the materialists, who regard the eye as simply a mirror for appearances. According to them, the world exists in our brain as it is in reality outside of us.

Materialism, therefore, rests upon an assumption with which it stands or falls; viz., that all that is real is perceivable by the senses. Thus Feuerbach, one of the most consistent and philosophical thinkers of that school, writes: "The object of the senses, or the Sensuous, is alone truly real; and therefore Truth, Reality and Sensuousness are one." But this assumption, that to every force in nature there is a corresponding sense, stands in direct contradiction with the fact that our consciousness is demonstrably a growing product of biological development. For the forces of magnetism and electricity escape our sensuous perception, and their very existence would be unprovable if they could not transform themselves into equivalent amounts of other forces which do appeal to our senses. The world remains an unsolved problem, only because Perceptibility and Reality do not coincide; for were they coincident, a few centuries would suffice to discover all Truth."

Pursuing this line of argument, Du Prel next reaches the follow-

ing conclusion:—Our consciousness in its relation to the Real is therefore imperfect, both quantitatively and qualitatively; quantitatively, because we have not as many senses as there are natural forces which act upon us; qualitatively, because objects become transformed in the process of sensuous cognition: thus, what in nature is ethereal vibration becomes in consciousness light; while aërial vibration becomes sound. Therefore, not only are there more things than senses, but further, the things themselves are different in Reality from our Conceptions of them. In other words, "Consciousness does not exhaust its object, which is the Universe."

Passing then to the second branch of his problem, he continues:

"We have dealt, hitherto, with the first only of the two great riddles placed before the mind of man, the Universe. Let us now consider the second, Man himself."

"As the world is the object of Consciousness, so is the Ego that of Self-consciousness. As Consciousness strives to penetrate its object, the world, and to define it logically, so does Self-consciousness its object, the Ego. As regards consciousness and the universe, the materialistic view has at least been repulsed; but materialism still flatters itself with the hope of resolving all psychology into physiology. But even were this hope fulfilled, there would still remain the unsolved problem, whether self-consciousness does indeed exhaust its object."

"Such a question is quite as legitimate here as was a similar question in regard to consciousness: and we have every ground to suppose that both questions must be answered in the negative, and that the same relation obtains between self-consciousness and the Ego, as between consciousness and the world. Both analogy and the history of evolution support this view; for if Nature spent some ten million years in developing man's consciousness to the point of realising the riddle of the universe, and the difficulty of its metaphysical problems, it would hardly seem likely that, in contrast thereto, self-consciousness should have been perfect in man from its very dawn, not susceptible of development, but a finished product from its earliest appearance. And this is what is implied in

the assertion that our self-consciousness embraces its object, our Ego, in its entirety."

Summing up the arguments contained in the Introduction or first chapter, we are led to the conclusion that consciousness does not exhaust its object, but is, on the contrary, engaged in a ceaseless process of adaptation to it, which is still very far from being even approximately completed. Similarly, it would seem at least highly probable that the adaptation of our Self-consciousness to its object, our true Ego, is also far from complete or perfect ; and that the failure, so far, to demonstrate the existence of a Soul in man, by no means warrants the assumption that it does not exist at all.

It has been shown that the purely materialistic view of science is incompetent to explain fully the very facts upon which science itself rests ; while the Law of Evolution, its last and greatest generalisation, requires by its fundamental assumption of the unbroken continuity of natural laws, that man should be capable of an indefinite amount of further progress—a result which can only be achieved if knowledge can grow in depth as well as breadth ; implying thereby a further development of man's faculties of observation.

The second chapter is occupied with an investigation into the scientific importance to be attributed to "Dream."

Now dreaming itself implies mental activity, while it is an acknowledged fact, that dream pictures differ very largely from the contents of our waking consciousness, a fact which proves them to come from a region from which we are shut out when awake. Du Prel, therefore, concludes that the nerve stimuli which form the basis of these dream-pictures must lie, during waking, below the threshold of sensation, and hence that, during sleep, this threshold must be displaced. Now the region thus brought into sensation may lie either in ourselves or in the outer world. In the former case the heightened sensibility during sleep would be of interest only for the physician ; but in the latter, sleep would beget a relation between ourselves and the outer world different from that of waking, and which might well give to dreams real meaning and importance.

"Waking to external life is partly subjective, partly objective : it embraces our bodily sensations, and extends also to the world

without us. It may, therefore, naturally be asked whether the internal awakening of dream has also both characteristics: *i. e.*, whether the displacement of the threshold of sensation can give rise to a relation with the outer world of which we are not aware in our waking moments."

"The answer must be affirmative. Physiology has long since proved that the contents of our waking consciousness come to us through the senses; but this consciousness is limited by those very senses themselves. There exists, therefore, a more intimate connection between ourselves and nature than we are aware of. There are sounds inaudible to our ears; rays, which produce no sensation of light in our eyes; substances, which do not affect our taste or smell. Although, then, our sensuous consciousness disappears in sleep, we still remain immersed in the general life of nature, to which we belong as the part to the whole. Sleep can only suspend our relation to nature through the senses, but never that relation of which, though present, we remain unconscious in our waking hours. The latter, sleep can but bring into consciousness, since it displaces the limit (Schwelle) of sensation."

Sleep has, therefore, not merely the negative aspect of suspending the waking consciousness, but also a very positive one, in that it brings into prominence a relation existing between ourselves and nature, of which we are unconscious when awake.

Further, we find that the vast majority of dreams, especially those of deep slumber, are totally forgotten; while, when awake, we could not possibly forget in an hour or two what we have clearly and distinctly seen. This fact is physiologically incapable of any other explanation than that our waking and dreaming consciousness are functions of separate organs, or that, at least, the dream of deep sleep depends on the action of other brain-strata than those in activity during waking. For, if from the identity of our consciousness on successive days, we infer an identity of the organ of consciousness; then, from a difference of consciousness, we must infer a difference of organ.

But the fact that dreams are remembered at all implies a ground common to both; thus the confusion and the illogical, meaningless

character of such remembered dreams—those of light and imperfect slumber—may well be due to an admixture of elements from our normal consciousness among the ordered and logical memories of the dream-state during profound sleep.

“Now we fall asleep and awaken gradually, and the dreams we remember belong to the transition state between the two, in so far as the organs active in waking and dreaming are common; such dreams are, therefore, confused, because they lack organic unity, being the mixed product of the partial activity of two organs. Such remembered dreams will, therefore, usually consist of fragments from our waking thoughts; of the true products of the dream-organ itself; and lastly, of pictures arising from vegetative stimuli within our own organism.”

In this middle state, then, between waking and deep sleep, we must not expect to find the characteristic functions of the pure dream-organ. Since, however, as will be seen later, the course of a dream becomes not only connected and logical, but even directed by definite purpose, as soon as the causes of disturbance are removed, we may assert that the foolish and meaningless part of dreams is due to the partial activity of the organ, whose full functions are displayed during waking; while its reasonable and connected part proceeds from the undisturbed action of that organ which is specially concerned with dream-activity.

It remains to show the existence of connected, reasoned dreams, marked by conscious purpose. This Du Prel proves—1st, from the phenomena of sleep-walking, when the dreamer translates his dream-thoughts into action; and 2nd, from those of somnambulism,* where the dreamer can express his thoughts in words.

We find, then, reason to attribute the irrationality of dreams in general to the action of external disturbing causes, and we should, therefore, expect that the deeper the slumber, and the more these sources of error are excluded, the more rational will dream-thought appear. First, however, we must show that thinking does still go on in deep—nay, in the deepest possible slumber.

* The words Somnambulism and Somnambule are not used in their etymological sense, but denote throughout this paper a state of mental activity during trance.

"Here somnambulism comes to our help. Whether produced by mesmeric manipulation, or, as sometimes happens, spontaneous, it is a condition of sleep to which is united an internal awakening, and in it ordered, connected and logical series of ideas make their appearance. The connection with the outer world through the senses has vanished from the somnambule's consciousness, while his insensibility to physical stimuli has enormously increased; and in their place a new and ordered, though partially limited connection with the outer world has arisen. The 'I' of *waking* consciousness has disappeared from the self-consciousness of the somnambule. This self-consciousness, indeed, now includes the contents of the former, in their entirety and in logical order, not in fragments merely, as in ordinary dreaming; but these contents are not referred to the inner, waking 'I,' but to another and strange 'I.' The same 'subject' is thus split up into two personalities; a state of things also occasionally found in ordinary dreaming."

Du Prel thus finds in somnambulism a dream-state susceptible of accurate observation, and one which bears out to some extent his former conclusions as to "dream" in general. But, leaving a detailed investigation of its phenomena for a later section, he passes on to consider the metaphysical value attaching to the existence of the dream-state itself.

After a general review of the position, Du Prel points out that regularity and logical order are observed in such dreams as, from the extremely short time they have occupied, may fairly be considered as, on the whole, free from outside disturbance. This shows that the organ active during dreaming produces logical and connected representations, which, however, as a rule, become confused in our remembrance, owing to the admixture of elements derived from those organs which become active as we awake.

He cites Schopenhauer and Fechner in support of his belief in the existence of a special organ, whose activity constitutes dreaming; and shows from numerous instances the marked difference both in form and matter existing between our dream-thoughts and those of waking life. He then proves that this state of things, of which the existence is widely admitted by investigators of very

different schools, is in reality equivalent to an alternation of two personalities within the limits of a single subject, and therefore bears out the hypothesis of a transcendental Ego existing in man.

Next, he gives a clear and concise sketch of the results arrived at hitherto in this direction, in their bearing upon the two great philosophical problems—Man and Nature; and in analogy with the definition of the “transcendental world,” as that portion of Nature lying outside the domain of our consciousness, he suggests the term “transcendental subject” in man (“subject” meaning the whole human being) as proper to be used in opposition to the “empirical or self-conscious Ego;” remarking, however, that the former can only be considered as a “transcendental *Ego*,” if it be shown to be capable both of knowing and of self-consciousness.

If now the empirical or personal consciousness be capable of development, it follows that the boundary between it and the transcendental subject cannot be impassible; and we should therefore expect to find occasional evidences of the existence of this higher self. But the thread which holds together the personal consciousness is the faculty of memory, and hence any such evidence of the presence of faculties properly belonging to the transcendental part of man ought to be accompanied by modifications of this faculty. And thus our usual forgetfulness of such dreams as occur in deep sleep is merely what we ought to expect, and we shall find but seldom any signs of abnormal faculties under normal conditions; and they must therefore be sought in abnormal states, such as somnambulism.

Summing up the conclusions reached in this chapter, Du Prel indicates the *à priori* conditions under which such a transcendental Ego in man (if it exists at all) may be expected to manifest itself, and the form which such manifestations must necessarily take, as logical consequences of its existence as defined. These results he states as follows:—

“If a transcendental Ego possessing self-consciousness and the capacity of knowing exists at all, the following facts must be capable of logical, scientific proof:—

“1. The existence of a dual consciousness in man.

" 2. A regular alternation of the two states of consciousness.

" 3. Modifications of the faculty of memory in connection with this alternation.

" 4. The functions of Knowing and Willing must operate in both states, and probably subject to :—

" 5. Modifications of the standards of space and time (since these are known to be the special and characteristic modes of perception and thought of our present, actual consciousness)."

Should these logical consequences of the hypothesis be found to fit in with observed facts, there will then be a great probability in favour of the truth of the hypothesis itself.

The third chapter deals with the dramatic aspect of dreaming under its two forms :—1st, as affecting our normal measure of time, by substituting in its place what may be termed a transcendental standard ; and 2nd, as producing a dramatic division of the Ego.

It has often been noticed, both by patients and doctors—many of them practised and highly-trained observers—that, under the influence of anæsthetics, either the mental processes go on at an enormously greater rate, so that the patient seems to himself to have lived through a series of eventful years in a few short seconds ; or, on the other hand, he awakes with a merely general impression of having been unconscious for many hours. The abnormal rapidity and crowding together of thought and feeling, proved by these observations, have also been noticed and described by opium and hashish eaters, as well as by many of those who have been nearly drowned.

Now the investigators* who have occupied themselves with experiments on dreaming have succeeded in tracing many dreams to external causes, and in most cases they have found that the catastrophe of the dream, to which its entire course led up, could be unmistakably identified with the external stimulus which woke the sleeper. This seems to imply that the *effect*—the dream and its climax—*precedes* its cause—the external stimulus awakening the dreamer. And this holds equally good both in natural dreams and

* See the works of Volkelt, Hennings, Lemoine, Maury, Scherner, Richter, Steffens, &c.

those excited for experimental purposes; so that it is a very common, almost nightly occurrence, and cannot, therefore, be ascribed to chance coincidence. We have thus to solve the following problem:—How can a dream, excited by a given external stimulus, and seeming to cover a lapse of years, end with a climax which is merely the original stimulus itself in disguise: the stimulus which at the same time awakens the sleeper; the stimulus, and the seemingly prolonged dream leading up to the climax, and the awakening at that climax, being thus all included in an imperceptible (to us) period of time?

Now Helmholtz has proved experimentally that nerve-stimuli require a definite, measurable time for transmission; and Fechner has also shown that their transformation into conscious sensation further requires an additional time. And the only possible solution of the above problem is that, under certain conditions, the mental processes take place independently of this physiological time-measure; so that the whole series of dream-events, explaining, leading up to, and culminating in the catastrophe which wakes the sleeper, are interposed between the moment when the stimulus in question reaches the consciousness by some direct avenue, and the moment when the same stimulus reaches it through the normal channel—the nervous and cerebral system.

Since, then, conscious mental processes can thus go on at a much greater rate, than the normal, physiological nerve-time admits of, it follows that this mode at least of consciousness is independent of the physical nervous system, and is subject to a different and much smaller time-measure. But this is practically to admit that our consciousness has two different laws in two different states—*i. e.*, that its functions are dual; hence that it may itself be regarded as a duality.

Again, if dreams are not to be regarded as inspirations, we must ourselves be their architects. But dream places us amidst events unfolding themselves dramatically; so much so, that every dream involves dramatic division of the Ego, since what we think dialogues (in dreams) can be in reality but monologues. More still; we are not only actors and spectators in the play-house of dream, but a

part of ourselves goes into the stage itself, since the whole drama—scenery, actors, and spectators—are of our own creation.

This suspension of our subjective unity, however—this externalisation of internal processes—is only possible so long as we do not consciously grasp the fact of their *being internal*; so long as we do not knowingly produce, but have them, as it were, given to us. All, therefore, depends on the relation of these externalised processes to consciousness; and this relation must lie either in the mental or in the physical region.

Now, of internal physical processes the only ones which can thus be projected as objective, without our recognising them as internal, are the automatic and vegetative functions of circulation, digestion, &c. Hence, when in dream the subject is split up into several persons, the plane of this cleavage, so far as it is produced by physical causes, must be that dividing conscious and voluntary, from unconscious and involuntary functions and movements. And again, since every stimulus must attain a certain minimum limit before it can excite in us conscious sensation—which limit, as the line dividing conscious from unconscious thinking and feeling, is called the psycho-physical threshold or limit; and since all internal stimuli which pass this limit enter into consciousness, while those falling below it remain in the region of the unconscious, it follows that in the dramatic division of the subject in dream, the plane of this cleavage—so far as the division is due to psychical changes—must be this very psycho-physical threshold or limit itself.

Du Prel then enters on a detailed and convincing proof of these conclusions by an examination of the recorded observations of the most famous scientific psychologists, some of them belonging to the extreme materialistic school. The following are some of the instances :—

Van Esk had a patient afflicted with asthma, who, on falling asleep, regularly suffered from the following dream :—Her deceased grandmother came in through the window, and, kneeling on her chest, endeavoured to suffocate her.

In a case reported by Schindler, a somnambule, in one of her illnesses, saw her deceased aunt enter the room with the words “This

sick girl is in danger of dying, but will recover with my help." Subsequently, in a more advanced state of trance, the same patient characterised this vision as a mere personification of her condition, which had intensified itself from a vague feeling into a dramatic picture.

This last case shows that the subjective meaning of such visions is only perceived when we become conscious of the difference between the one state and the other. Similarly we recognise, after each awakening, our dream-pictures as illusions, while, in the dream itself, they are taken as realities. With the change of state there comes a disbelief in the reality of the perceptions of the previous state. The existence of a standard of comparison does away with the illusion, but as a rule the standard can only be attained through a change of state, which allows of a comparison between the two sets of perceptions. In all conditions in waking, as in every stage of sleep-life, man consists, as it were, of two halves; as far as either his waking or his dreaming consciousness extends, so far extends his "I" (his self-consciousness). Whatever wells up from the unconscious, and crosses the threshold of consciousness, the dreamer conceives as belonging to the "Not-self." Thus the dualism of conscious and unconscious, the dividing psycho-physical threshold, is the common cause both of the dramatic division of the Ego in dream and also of the illusion, in virtue of which we hold the dream to be real. A remarkable illustration of this is afforded by one of Werner's somnambules, who had prescribed for herself a journey for the benefit of her health. Werner asked her how she would be, when away on her journey, and she replied, "My Albert" (in spiritualistic phrase, her spirit-guide) "cannot then approach me so closely, because you will not be there; but still he will come and help me as much as possible." Translated into physiological language, and stripped of its dramatic garb, this means that she would miss the mesmeric treatment, but that the effects of that already undergone would remain with her.

The foregoing are cases of the dramatisation of physical conditions or states. The following are cases which take their origin in mental or psychic stimuli or conditions.

Boswell relates of Dr. Johnson that the latter dreamt he was engaged in a contest of wit with a stranger, who proved himself Johnson's superior, much to the Doctor's annoyance. On this Du Prel remarks:—"No wonder; the dreamer Johnson was split up into two persons along the cleavage plane of the threshold of consciousness; of whom one, the stranger, worked with unconscious talent, the other, Johnson, with conscious reason; and therefore got the worst of it." Another case is taken from Maury, who relates that once when learning English he dreamt of conversing with some one in that language; and, wishing to tell him that he called upon him the previous day, he used the words, "I called for you yesterday." The other, however, at once declared that the expression was wrong and corrected it with "I called on you yesterday." On awaking, Maury looked up the question and found that his critic was right.

Then, taking the fact of this dramatic division of the subject in dream as granted, and assuming also as proved that the plane of cleavage is in all cases the plane (for the moment) dividing the conscious from the unconscious; Du Prel proceeds to draw the following inferences, which he derives by analysis from the foregoing propositions:—

1st. It is, therefore, *psychologically* possible that a subject should consist of two personalities, without the latter recognizing their mutual identity, or their identity with the common subject; or, in other words, that man is psychically dual.

2nd. It is further *psychologically* possible that between the two personalities existing in a single subject, intercourse should take place without their recognizing their own underlying identity.

The consideration of natural sleep leads inevitably to that of its abnormal phenomena, and especially those of natural and artificial somnambulism. In dealing with the former of these, Du Prel cites a number of the best authenticated cases of very protracted sleep brought on by nature herself as a means of cure, and lays just and necessary emphasis upon the need of always bearing in mind the radical difference between "*causa*" and "*conditio*;" between the adequate cause of an occurrence, and the condition which, though necessary for its appearance, is still not the producer of it. He

points out that the deep and prolonged sleep of nature, in which clairvoyance sometimes makes its appearance in the indication of appropriate remedies, is the *condition*, not the *cause*, of that clairvoyance. Just as, in artificial somnambulism, the mesmeric passes are the mediate cause of the deep sleep which ensues ; but neither they, nor the sleep itself are the cause, but merely the condition of the clairvoyance which often accompanies that state.

Du Prel then considers at some length the recorded facts and conditions of mesmeric clairvoyance, pointing out that these abnormal faculties are clearly alluded to in the Vedas, and that they afford the strongest experimental proof of the existence of a soul in man ; a soul, that is, not identical with our present daily consciousness, which, being bound up with our physical organism, must be modified if not destroyed with it, but a soul in the wider sense of a conscious transcendental Ego. In support of the genuineness and reality of clairvoyance itself, he quotes the unanimous report of a special commission of eleven doctors of the Paris Academy of Medicine, which in 1832, after prolonged and exhaustive investigation, fully confirmed the existence and genuineness of these abnormal faculties.

Furthermore, Du Prel shows that all these phenomena do not appear suddenly or *de novo* in the somnambulist state, but that they are, on the contrary, merely extensions and modifications of phenomena whose presence and action may be traced even in ordinary dreaming. Then, after refuting Dr. Braid's Hypnotic explanation of mesmerism by opposing the evidence of other observers to his, he concludes the chapter by saying—

“In fact somnambulism furnishes the most convincing proof of another order of things besides the sensuous, as also that man is interwoven with this transcendental order through that side of our consciousness which lies beyond the ken of our personal Ego in its normal state. Somnambulism proves that Schopenhauer and Hartmann were right in basing that passing form known as man upon Will and the Unconscious ; but it proves also that this Will is not blind, and that that of which our personal Ego is unconscious is not *in itself* unconscious ; and further, that between our personal

selves and the Universal Substance, there must be interposed a transcendental subject, a knowing and willing being. Thus man's individuality extends beyond his passing phenomenal form, and life on earth is but one of the forms of existence possible to his true self."

Among the many strange phenomena of sleep, there occur cases in which our dreams represent the state of our bodily organs, and these cases Du Prel considers in the fifth chapter, under the heading "Dream—a Physician." Instances are cited in considerable number which show that our state of health not only gives the keynote to our dreams, but even becomes symbolically portrayed in them with surprising accuracy. Hence he concludes that in dream we are much more vividly conscious of our bodily condition than when awake; a circumstance only explicable from a displacement of the psycho-physical threshold or limit of sensation, taking place during sleep.

Then, passing to the diagnosis of their own and other peoples' diseases which so often characterizes somnambulist clairvoyance, he infers, after examination of a series of remarkable instances of this faculty, that the vague and usually sub-conscious feeling of our own physical condition becomes conscious and definite in somnambulism, owing to a displacement of the threshold of consciousness following the exclusion of all external stimuli. Hence the statements of clairvoyants as to matters not relating to their own bodily state should be received with great caution, and should not be encouraged or sought after, since the sources of error to which clairvoyants are exposed must be much greater, in dealing with facts not in direct physical relation to their consciousness, than in taking cognizance of such facts as present themselves spontaneously, from the displacement of the psycho-physical threshold.

In explanation of the diagnosis itself, Du Prel observes that the most advanced scientists have seen reason to ascribe "sensibility," *i.e.*, the foundation of consciousness itself, to the ultimate atoms of which their so-called "dead matter" consists. He points out that the brain and the solar plexus are two almost anatomically distinct centres, each of which may well be the seat of a form of consciousness, that of the solar plexus being in our waking state below the

level of our consciousness; and he inclines, therefore, to the view that the latter is the centre of that consciousness which takes cognizance of our bodily states in detail, or at least is closely connected with it. And he finds a confirmation of this opinion both in statements of the clairvoyants themselves, and in the ancient records and traditions of the East.

After an exhaustive examination of the facts bearing on the subject, Du Prel comes to the conclusion that this whole series of facts is due in the main to two causes. 1st. To an alternating and mutual relationship between Will and Idea; and 2nd, to a displacement of the psycho-physical threshold. Thus Will, or desire, excites or calls up an idea; and, *vice versa*, an Idea calls up or excites the desire or will to realise it. We are thus brought to the conclusion that our normal self-consciousness does not exhaust its object, our Self, but embraces only one of the two personalities forming our Subject. Man is thus a monistic and a dual being: monistic as subject or individual; dual as person.

Now it is apparent on reflection that the existence of personal consciousness depends mainly on that of memory, and further, that reasoning, thought, and action, depend for their value on the clearness with which our memory retains past experience and on the presence of mind with which we draw therefrom our conclusions as to the future. It is, therefore, not too much to say that in proportion as a creature rises in the scale of life its memory expands; while, on the other hand, every disturbance of the sense of personal identity in madness or mental disease is accompanied by derangement of this faculty.

But in the chapter on Dream, it was proved deductively that if our Ego is not entirely contained in self-consciousness, then some modification of the faculty of memory must accompany any manifestation of the inner kernel of our being. And to denote this latter, the word "soul," or "psyche," may appropriately be used, not in its theological, but in its purely philosophical sense; not as opposed to "body," but as denoting that element in us which lies beyond our normal consciousness and is divided from the latter by the psycho-physical threshold.

Before proceeding to analyse the disturbances which have been observed in the faculty of memory, we must draw a distinction between *Memory*, *Recollection*, and *Reproduction*. The power of the psychic organisation to recall past sensuous impressions as images is *memory*. This is the common root of both recollection and reproduction. When an image recurs without its being recognized, it is reproduction only; recollection implying reproduction accompanied by recognition as well. But memory does not embrace all the images and sensations of past life, and we may well seek the reason and law of their selection.

According to Schopenhauer, whose opinion is now widely accepted, the selection depends on the will, which he considers the indispensable basis of memory. With this opinion Du Prel agrees, so far as the will is here regarded as determining the *contents* of memory; but he points out that the possibility of reproduction and recollection proves that the forgetting of an image cannot be equivalent to its annihilation or total obliteration from our nature. It follows, therefore, that such forgotten images and thoughts must as much inhere in some basis as those not forgotten inhere in the will. And as this basis is not to be found within our self-consciousness, it must be sought without it. But the mere atomic and molecular changes in the physical brain are insufficient to account for the facts, and hence the basis sought must lie in a (to us) unconscious part of the soul.

Du Prel then shows that on Schopenhauer's own premises he ought to have recognized in brain and intellect the objectified Will to know the things of sense, and should therefore have concluded that Will in itself is not necessarily blind, since, just as the eye cannot see itself, so neither can our intellect see itself; *i. e.*, recognize in itself through pain and pleasure more than a metaphysical aspect of Will; while any second attribute of that Will, which Schopenhauer considers as the root of Being, must remain unknown and unperceived by the intellect as such.

To apply this to memory. Assuming that our metaphysical Will has two aspects or attributes—Willing and Knowing—the Will, as the basis of intellectual memory, would decide *its* contents, *i. e.*, those of our empirical consciousness; while in the latter attribute

—Knowing—would be found the real basis of memory in general, the common receptacle of all images and thoughts without distinction. Forgetfulness would therefore be confined to our brain-consciousness, and would not extend to its transcendental side, which alone, in union with the will, would embrace our whole being.

But we have shown that it is only during sleep and analogous states that our transcendental Ego can manifest itself, and we, therefore, now pass on to consider the enhancement of memory and the extent and evidence of its latent riches, in dream, mesmeric somnambulism, and other abnormal states.

On all these subjects ample experimental evidence is adduced by Du Prel, from the published records of the most scientific observers; but as it would require too much space to deal with it here in detail, we shall content ourselves with indicating the general conclusions he arrives at. Du Prel demonstrates:—

1st. That the reach and clearness of memory is largely increased during sleep.

2nd. That the latent wealth of memory is enormous, and that its existence has been recognized by many competent observers in cases of madness, idiocy, fever, accident, &c.

3rd. That these latent riches become most apparent and striking in somnambulism, while in that case the subsequent and complete forgetfulness proves the previous absence from physical consciousness of these stored-up treasures of memory, which are far too complex and minute to be capable of preservation as mere molecular alterations of the brain structure.

We now come to a class of cases in which memory, which links as by a bridge our successive states of consciousness into a united whole, is so completely wanting, that, looking only to the difference between the successive states of the same person, we may well speak of “alternating consciousness.” These cases go far towards giving an empirical and experimental proof that a single subject or Ego can split up into a dual personality.

Besides the well-known absence of memory after mesmeric trance, the same phenomenon has frequently occurred spontaneously. Du

Prel cites and discusses the principal instances on record, but of these we shall quote only one, that of a Miss R——, given by Dr. Mitchell in IV. Archiv für thierischen Magnetismus.

“Miss R—— enjoyed naturally perfect health, and reached womanhood without any serious illness. She was talented, and gifted with a remarkably good memory, and learnt with great ease. Without any previous warning she fell, one day, into a deep sleep which lasted many hours, and on awakening she had forgotten every bit of her former knowledge, and her memory had become a complete *tabula rasa*. She again learned to spell, read, write, and reckon, and made rapid progress. Some few months afterwards she again fell into a similarly prolonged slumber, from which she awoke to her former consciousness, *i. e.*, in the same state as before her first long sleep, but without the faintest recollection of the existence or events of the intervening period. This double existence now continued, so that in a single subject there occurred a regular alternation of two perfectly distinct personalities, each being unconscious of the other and possessing only the memories and knowledge acquired in previous corresponding states.”

This very remarkable case is illustrated and confirmed by many others analogous to it, and fully justifies us in assuming at least the empirical *possibility* of a *conscious* individuality in man, of which his normal self is totally unconscious. This hypothesis also goes far to explain many curious phenomena observed in abnormal mental states which hitherto have defied explanation.

Du Prel then proceeds to apply these facts and conclusions to build up a consistent and adequate theory of memory. Having cleared the ground by proving the utter inadequateness of the materialistic theory to explain even the facts which it admits, let alone those of abnormal memory which we have just examined; putting aside the almost unthinkable attributes with which the materialists find themselves forced to endow their “atoms” in order to make their mere combinations and permutations the sole basis of memory; leaving aside even these glaring absurdities, there still remains a residuum of admitted fact which their theory cannot explain, viz., our recognition of previous images and sensations,

the *unity* of our consciousness, and lastly, the fact that these two factors are in a great measure independent of each other, which could not possibly be the case if both were merely due to blind atomic combinations.

But a correct theory of memory must also explain "forgetfulness." Now, what happens when we forget? Simply a disappearance from our sensuous everyday consciousness. This, however, cannot imply the annihilation of what is forgotten; otherwise its reproduction would be and remain impossible. And, hence, as the theory of material traces on the brain is considered by Du Prel to be untenable, there must be a psychic organ which has the power of reproducing a mental image even when that image, as a product of its past activity, has been annihilated; and further, this organ must lie without our self-consciousness, and therefore can only belong to the (*quo-ad nos*) Unconscious. But, if this organ possessed merely and only the latent potentiality of reproduction, and did not rather take up the mental image as a product into itself and there preserve it unchanged, then we should be forced to distinguish between the conscious and the unconscious within this organ itself. Since, if not, the image would, in being forgotten, merely sink back into the purely "Unconscious" and no reason or explanation could be given why or how this "Unconscious" could return on a sudden to consciousness. Such an explanation would be none at all, and we are therefore driven to conclude that this organ is *not* in itself unconscious, and that accordingly it possesses not a merely latent potentiality of reproduction, but that it takes up into its own consciousness the images which disappear from ours.

This hypothesis, further, has the advantage of explaining how an enlargement of the field of memory can take place through a simple displacement of the psycho-physical threshold, as is the case in mesmerism, &c.

Let us compare this theory with that of the materialists. The latter assert that every thought or image leaves behind a material trace on the brain. Hence every recollection would be equivalent to an extension of the *sensuous* consciousness—the only one they recognise—beyond its previous sphere, whereby the trace so left

behind becomes "illuminated," while it otherwise would remain in "darkness." But in reality we find that it is in sleep and similar states that the memory is enhanced, and that in proportion as sleep deepens, *i.e.*, in proportion as sensuous consciousness grows feebler and disappears. Whence it follows that memory cannot be a mere extension of sensuous consciousness. On the other hand, when we forget anything, our theory teaches that nothing is changed in its mental representation, which neither becomes, in some inexplicable manner, unconscious nor yet is annihilated, but there takes place an alteration in the subject or individuality of the man. This subject has a dual consciousness and is separable into two persons; so that in forgetting, as in remembering, a simple transfer of the representation in question takes place between these two persons of the same subject. The thought does not become unconscious, but one of the two persons of our true self, the "I" of every-day life, becomes unconscious of the existence of that thought.

What we forget is not annihilated as thought; what we remember is not begotten afresh as thought, but merely transferred into sensuous consciousness.

We have now reached the last chapter of this outline of a philosophy of Mysticism, in which Du Prel applies the results already obtained to establish the existence and indicate the nature of a monistic soul, or individuality in man. In spite of the inevitable repetition which it will involve, we shall follow at least the general outlines of his argument, with the hope of bringing to a focus the proofs scattered throughout the book, and of enforcing the importance and validity of the author's conclusions.

First, then, it must be borne in mind that man, like every other organism in the scale of life, faces in two directions—gazing, as it were, on the past and the future; bearing within him the foot-prints and outlines of Nature's past development and history, but showing also the rudimentary organs and dormant faculties which he is destined to develop in the future. And to these dormant faculties, promises, as it were, of new worlds of experience and knowledge, belong the so-called abnormal powers and senses which have already occupied our attention. They are the germs of man's

transcendental capabilities, the re-actions of his soul on impressions received from without, which, however, usually remain unnoticed and unperceived because they fall below the normal limit of sensation.

Second. In addition to the arguments already brought forward (from the phenomena of memory, &c.) for the existence of a principle in man, beyond and higher than the known laws of nature, it may be urged that the existence of organised matter proves the action of some agency, which suspends for the moment the operation of the usual laws of chemical affinity, and brings about atomic and molecular combinations of the most unstable and ephemeral character, which could never come into existence were the atoms free to follow their normal affinities ; and this organising principle throughout nature may well be identified with the transcendental subject of the organism under consideration.

Thirdly. It has been shown that the Ego, individuality, or Subject in man embraces two distinct personalities, since in somnambule and allied states the knowledge and memories present in the subject's consciousness are radically different from those present in his normal state ; while further, the sense of individuality, far from being lost or weakened—as it ought to be on the Pantheistic theory of Hartmann—or fading away into the Universal Unconscious, becomes, on the contrary, more strongly marked, while new psychic powers and faculties make their appearance in those states.

That we are, indeed, entitled to speak of two personalities in one and the same subject is fully borne out by the fact that the antagonism between them often extends to the mode and contents of their activity, *e. g.*, when a somnambule asleep prescribes for himself, and insists upon a remedy which is abhorrent to him when awake. Such instances show that the transcendental subject regards the man's situation from a purely objective, impersonal standpoint, and is as indifferent to his fate as to a stranger's—as, indeed, should be the case if the two sides of man's nature are divided by the threshold of sensation. This view is further confirmed by the dramatisation of dream-life already dealt with.

We are thus led to consider that higher Self within us (of which

we are unconscious) as individual and conscious, but independent of our senses. Pursuing further the consideration of this transcendental subject and its functions, the following thoughts suggest themselves.

The transcendental Subject or Ego being thus interposed between man and the synthetic unity of existence called God, Nature, or the One Life, we should expect some fresh light to be thrown on those fundamental contradictions, which neither Theism, Pantheism, nor Materialism, has been able to interpret or explain: the contradiction, for instance, between man's undying desire for happiness and the misery and suffering of his existence. Now, no view of existence, which regards man as called into being from nothingness at birth by a foreign external power (*i.e.*, as only *then* becoming an individual), can possibly attribute these miseries and sufferings to causes generated by himself. To reconcile the contradiction we need a view, which, while recognising to the full the ills of life and the overbalance of its suffering and misery, shall regard man's birth and life as the free act of his very being itself; a being, whose individuality cannot, therefore, begin with birth, and hence must have more than a mere transient importance, must last beyond the brief moment of life's passing. If, then, I am the creation of my own actions—as both Fichte and Schelling admit—there must then be a duality of persons within me. So, alone, can I be the cause of myself, for my individuality can well be the cause and producer of my earthly personality, provided that only the sensuous, earthly personality takes its rise at birth, and Earth-life would thus result from the tendency of the individuality towards incarnation. The actual proof of this view, however, can only be given through real facts and arguments; and Du Prel then proceeds to analyse the circumstances causing the birth of any given individual, and to examine the metaphysical basis of "Love" in its bearing on human evolution. The evidence thus obtained is most conclusive, and suggests many lines of further investigation, but is too long for quotation, and too condensed to admit of a useful summary.

In the Chapter on Memory it was proved that the passage from Consciousness into the Unconscious really implied a passage from

the personal memory into the transcendental subject or individuality. At this point the materialistic theory of evolution loses sight of the process, and confesses its inability to explain how acquired mental habits and memories can be transmitted hereditarily.

Now, what is true as to the passing of memories out of consciousness, must be equally true of thought and ideas in general, of which the accumulated contributions constitute our psychic talents and powers. The individuality thus appears as the heir of our psychic earnings during life, and especially so of moral qualities and development, since the forms of intellectual knowledge (space and time) are the most modified by death, which does not equally affect the moral nature. (See the phenomena and observations of the mesmeric death-trance and other states.)

In somnambulism we have found evidence that the process of life is not simply engaged in calling into existence ephemeral beings and then annihilating them; but that, on the contrary, the object of earthly existence is the growth and strengthening of the individuality. This must be the reason why it seeks incarnation, since physical man is the common point determining, on one hand, the evolution of the individuality, on the other, that of the species.

But the stress of evolution must fall wholly on the development of the species, if we assume, with the materialists, that the acquired talents and progress of the individual are only stored up in his germ-cells, by which the type of the next generation is determined; while the individual himself is finally annihilated by death. Clearly this assumption contradicts that universal law of nature, admitted by the thinkers of all schools alike, the "*lex parsimoniae*," the law of least effort. For would not far less energy be expended in producing a given progress, if the individual stored up his own mental and moral progress in successive lives for the future advantage of himself and the world, instead of merely bequeathing the objective fruits of his labours to succeeding generations? If it be not so, then nature is wasteful of her forces, careless of the means she employs, and acts in contradiction with herself.

We found, however, in the transcendental subject, the psychic faculties of normal waking life, and if, therefore, this higher individuality but stretches, as it were, its feelers into the material world through the senses, and if, as seems almost certain, our sensuous being is capable of psychic evolution, then so also must be our true Self, our Individuality. In other words the individuality must absorb the essence of our conscious activity, and grow, as grows a tree-trunk from the nourishment brought it by leaf and branch.

This granted, it follows that the evolution of the individuality cannot be confined to a single earth-life, but that the distinct personal and individual character, with which we come into the world, must have been previously acquired by the same means through which it grows and expands in this life. Hence our individuality or transcendental subject must have grown into what it actually is through a long series of successive existences.

Thus, not only is the existence in general, but also the individuality of man metaphysically determined and shown to be his own creation; for as in our dreams we are unconsciously the poets, managers and even scene-painters of the plays therein enacted, so also is our individuality or Self the synthesis of the threads by which destiny guides us through life, although the fact that this is so is not patent to our sensuous consciousness.

We will now state in brief this, at least partial, solution of the problems of life and death as a whole, and then pass on to consider its ethical bearing and the answer it gives to that mightiest of all questions—What is the purpose of life?

The human psyche exhibits faculties which are *physiologically* inexplicable, not during the exaltation and greatest activity of sensuous consciousness, but, on the contrary, during its complete suppression. Hence it follows that the soul must be something more than a mere product of the organism, and thought something other than a mere secretion of the brain.

Still the soul can and must be conceived of as material, but of a materiality lying as far above that of the body, as the materiality of the latter is removed from that of a stone.

Soul and consciousness are not identical conceptions. As be-

longing to the transcendental world the soul is unconscious, but not in itself, only in respect of the brain-consciousness. Thus the mesmeric trance which produces on the one hand the phenomena of clairvoyance, is, on the other, attended by so complete a suppression of the brain-consciousness, that the most serious surgical operations can be performed in it painlessly. This relatively, but not in itself unconscious, Ego, as the true substance of the individual, is united together with man's personal Ego, the basis of our normal everyday consciousness, into one single subject, which is, however, divided into two personalities. The man, who alternately sleeps and wakes, is one single subject, possessing, however, two alternating forms of consciousness, which have but few points of contact between them.

Hence man is not called upon to play his part in the history of the Cosmos merely as a part of the species. Man is no mere passing phantom, forced to serve another's purpose by some strange fatality, but, on the contrary, he himself, as an individual being, is capable of infinite progress towards absolute perfection.

But what is the purpose of life, the true end and object of existence? We have seen that life's sufferings, spurring us on to progress and deeds of love and charity, thus become means to expand and develop our individuality. But they have an even more direct purpose, for in them lies that purifying power recognized alike by christian and pessimist, by poets and thinkers. We can still say with the pessimist that through earthly suffering the will to live is checked and brought to rest; remembering, however, that this holds true but of the desire for earthly life; while the Nirvana we strive for is not absolute annihilation, but transcendental Being, and is to be attained, not through quietism and idleness, but through untiring effort on the battle-field which we ourselves have chosen for ourselves. Therefore may we say with Eckhard the Mystic, "The fastest steed to bear ye to perfection is suffering," or with the wise Hebrew, the author of Ecclesiastes, "Sorrow is better than laughter, for through sadness is the heart made wiser."

One thing alone is acknowledged by all thinkers alike as the actual result of earthly existence—the growth and enhancement of

the individuality. And we shall attain earth's true object and fulfil its highest purpose by subordinating our personal interests to those of our true selves, our Individuality—in other words, by serving the cause of Universal Brotherhood; for the individuality is but an expression of the supreme synthetic unity. The entire contents of ethics may be summed up in the precept; that the personality shall serve the individuality. Thus the highest rule of conduct is impersonality and unselfishness—love and charity.

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TRANSACTIONS
OF THE
London Lodge
OF
THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

A Paper on Reincarnation.—Read at an open Meeting of the
London Lodge, on the 4th March, 1885,

By MISS ARUNDALE.

And other Proceedings on the same occasion.

TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

London Lodge of the Theosophical Society.

*Proceedings of an open Lodge Meeting, on the 4th March, 1885,
relating to a Paper on Reincarnation,*

By MISS ARUNDALE.

MR. A. P. SINNETT (in the Chair) introduced the subject by explaining the Esoteric doctrine concerning Reincarnation. This doctrine was not represented as the creed of the Theosophical Society. The Society was engaged in an inquiry into the truths of spiritual science, the range of which was infinite. It was bound down by no dogmatic conclusions, but was always ready, on the contrary, to revise and purify its earlier conclusions by the light of later study and knowledge. At the same time, some general principles appeared clearly to be guiding the processes of Nature in the accomplishment of that spiritual evolution which Theosophy sought to interpret, and of these none stood out more intelligibly before the mind than the principle of Reincarnation. This had merely been caricatured by theories concerning transmigration, which popular writings attributed to some Oriental religions. The notion that if a man led a very ignoble and animal life, or fell into certain lines of misconduct, he would be re-born as a brute, was never more than a popular misconception of the Esoteric doctrine on the subject. This regarded successive re-births as a progress of spiritual growth, which might entail suffering on human Egos mis-

using their opportunities, but could not involve a retrogression from the human state.

Miss ARUNDALE then read, as follows:—

Human life, in its varied aspects, presents the greatest mystery for the mind of man. On all sides is found a constant struggle for existence, in which the one who wins does so at the expense of his fellows. The life of man is subject to pain and disease—to sorrow and evil. Injustice meets us at every turn. Frightful maladies attack helpless infants, and follow them from the cradle to the grave. The blind, the deaf, the dumb, the idiot, and the criminal, stand side by side with the rich, the powerful, the intelligent, and the virtuous; the child of the thief and the beggar is clothed in rags and nourished in vice, the child of the king lies in purple and fine linen, and has every aid to virtue that position and nurture can bestow; no action of his own has entailed this punishment on the one, no merit brought this reward to the other. Failure and disgrace accompany virtue, while success and honour follow evil even unto the end; the good man dies in misery, the selfish and vicious lives out a life of worldly prosperity. In the same family, subject to the same conditions of birth, children may be found who differ widely in natural capacity, both in body and mind. One starts on the journey of life equipped with a rare and brilliant intellect and high moral qualities, while his brother, the offspring of the same parents, reared in the same manner, is sometimes a drivelling idiot or hopelessly vicious. The Theologian seeks to account for this inequality in the conditions of human life by assuming a personal Creator ruling all things by His fiat, turning evil into good and rewarding men in a future life according to their deeds. An all-powerful and benevolent Being is credited with the creation of a world in which all the facts of life contradict the possession by such a Being of the attributes of justice and love. Love is supposed to be "Creation's final law;" but pain and sorrow, sin and suffering, want and disease, are the heritage of a large portion of the human race, and this through no fault of their own. The misery and crime in human life must, therefore, be the handiwork of this loving God, who is also represented as omnipotent and appointing unto each individual his nature

and surroundings. Theology gives no satisfactory explanation of the injustice manifested in the moral inequality of human beings. If in a future life men are to be punished or rewarded for deeds done in this, justice demands that *all* should have the same chance and stand on equal ground. It is useless to assert that God made all men equal, for nothing is more obvious than the inequality of the conditions of life and the moral nature of men. Moral disease contaminates the child ere it has seen the light; some are conceived in vice, and come into this world with a hereditary pre-disposition to crime, and those who rise above their fellows owe their position, not so much to nurture as to a natural superiority both of body and mind. The only outcome to the teaching of this school may be briefly summed up in the words of an ancient scribe, "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel to honour and another to dishonour."

The Materialist, on the other hand, starts with an assumption entirely different from that of the Theologian. For him there is no design in Nature—"It has no purpose mind or will"—and all the varied developments of life, and the inequalities of human existence, are due to the blind action of natural forces. Thinkers of this school have sought to find in variety of atomic and molecular activity and configuration, all differences both on the physical and mental planes, from the simplest fact up to the complex mental and moral characteristics of man. But the original question of the inequality in human existence remains untouched. No reason can be given on the materialist basis to show why the minute particles of nitrogenous matter should differ so widely in their subsequent development; for it has been shown by microscopic analysis that up to a certain stage in embryonic life the embryos, whether of horse, monkey, dog or man, cannot be distinguished one from the other. Neither from the materialist nor theological standpoint can a satisfactory answer be given to the problem of life. Each school proceeds to investigate along a fixed groove, and concerns itself with but one side of Nature.

To rightly understand the true basis underlying the diversity in the conditions of human life two factors of the problem have to be considered. First, the relation of cause and effect; second, the nature of man himself. No solution can be recognized as satisfactory that is not equally valid in the domains of Physics, Metaphysics and Ethics. It will readily be granted that the varied manifestations of being are the expression of forces, whether those forces be considered from the materialist or spiritual standpoint. It would be beyond the subject of the present paper to enter into any metaphysical argument to prove the axiomatic truth of *ex nihilo nihil fit*. The *I am* includes within itself the *I was* and *shall be*, for if the *I am* had no pre-existent form then a relation would be postulated between a thing and its utter negation, which is absurd; what exists not can, by no operation of cause, be brought into existence; therefore effect exists in its antecedent condition of cause. It will thus be seen that no phenomenon in Nature can be considered as separate from cause, and the question to be first answered in regard to man is the bearing of the law of cause and effect upon him, or in what previous form the forces existed which condition his present life.

That which we call matter has been declared by Professor Tyndall to hold within itself the "promise and potency of every form of life," and the theory of evolution traces the development of man through the many-linked chain which extends from the lowest vertebrate to humanity. Man, therefore, on the physical side, is the product or effect of a long series of changes, in which each stage is at once the effect of a past development and the cause of its successor; in other words, each form or effect existed as cause in the form which preceded it. But man does not consist only of a physical body, he possesses a mind as well. It will, therefore, be necessary for the proper unfoldment of the subject to consider man as a conscious being, and see how far that consciousness is confined to the operation of the senses.

The application of reason to the facts of experience must convince any candid observer that the human being is possessed of conscious-

ness, which manifests in varying degrees independently of the body, in fact, that there is a sensuous and super-sensuous man. This super-sensuous consciousness, which is shown in some of the more complex phenomena of dreams, and especially in those states known as somnambulism and trance, is conclusive evidence that the Ego in its totality is not contained in self-consciousness. Those who have studied du Prel* will know how satisfactorily he has dealt with this question. He demonstrates that conscious life consists in a perpetual transfer of the experiences of self-consciousness into super-sensuous consciousness, where they exist as habits, instincts, and tendencies. This is the essential characteristic of life; so that if man is not annihilated by death, and has a post-mortem existence, this characteristic must persist in it. Further, it is evident that all earthly possibilities of experience are not exhausted in one life. Consequently, if we adhere to the rule of not multiplying hypotheses uselessly, we are bound to hold the necessity of a plurality of earth existences. For if life is admitted to be the acquisition of experience, it would be contrary to the laws of reason to suppose a final change to another sphere before the maximum of earth experience has been gained. That this is incompatible with the theory of a single life on earth is very evident, and becomes irresistible when the premature death of children and their consequent privation of any earthly experience whatever is taken into account. It would be absurd to say that, *ceteris paribus*, an existence of a few minutes can have the same value to the Ego, or fulfil the same purpose, as a lifetime of experience of three-score years and ten. Either the earth life is a necessity for the development of the Ego, or it is not; if a necessity, it must be so for all alike, with but small variations. To hold therefore that children dying prematurely can dispense with the experience of life on earth is a baseless assumption. This same argument applies with equal force in the case of idiots, who through mental deficiency are totally incapacitated from the acquirement of experience.

The Esoteric doctrine teaches that man comprises seven principles, of which the first three form the exterior or gross body, and

* See Synopsis of his *Philosophic der Mystik* (Transactions, No. IV.).

follow its destinies. The fourth and fifth may be considered as the personal soul, consisting of the desires and will of the personality: the egoism or self-consciousness, the vehicle of the permanent Ego, which is the sixth, overshadowed by the seventh, the Atman, the One Life which alone renders any permanence possible.

It is unnecessary for the present purpose to discuss further the sevenfold constitution of man, as given in the Esoteric teaching. It will suffice here to consider the human entity in its dual aspect as a permanent and an impermanent being, or to use another form of expression, we shall consider the relation of the personal Ego to the individuality. The embodiment or manifestation of this individuality in successive personalities has received the name of Reincarnation.

The theory then of Reincarnation proceeds on the basis that the entity entering on objective life is not a fresh creation, a blank page with no recorded history, but that it has been linked with matter in innumerable changes of form, and that it will also have to undergo like transformations in future stages of being. It teaches that there is an evolution of individuality, that the child enters upon earthly existence "not in entire forgetfulness, not in utter nakedness," but with distinctly marked characteristics and idiosyncrasies. These are the resultant of a past and past lives, and form the foundation or the superstructure of a new personality.

The consciousness of man has been divided into sensuous and super-sensuous, and is the relation that exists between the past and the present Ego: the individuality, the higher self, in its passage through the earthly personality assimilates the experiences of the sensuous consciousness, and in this way the essentials of the past Egos are included in the individuality and exist in the super-sensuous consciousness. The possession, therefore, by men of varying degrees of moral and mental qualities is the result of the unfoldment of the Ego in time. As the child has been called the "heir of all the ages," so may the personal Ego be considered as the heir of all the previous lives through which the monad has passed, and the tendencies engendered in one life as cause unfold themselves in the next as effect. Thus no circumstance of earth life can be rightly considered apart from the cause—the previous

life-history of the entity. It will thus be seen that the conclusions drawn in the light of this theory with respect to the unequal distribution of happiness and pain will differ entirely from the tenets of both the Materialist and the Theologian. The pains and pleasures of one life are but the effects of causes generated in a previous life, and the misery and suffering in so many existences are not the creations of those existences but the inevitable sequence of cause and effect. Man is his own creator and responsible to himself alone for the good and evil, the pleasure and pain of life. It is sometimes urged as an objection to this theory that it gives no adequate answer to that demand for strict and scrupulous justice, which is considered as indispensable to the satisfactory solution of any question dealing with human life and the working of the law of development. It is asserted that justice requires the offender to be conscious of the offence for which he is punished; and the objection urged against the theory of Reincarnation is that as man in one life experiences the effects of actions done in a past existence of which he has no knowledge, it is as unjust as if he were punished for the misdeeds of another individual.

A little reflection will show the fallacy of this argument. The idea of justice as applied to natural laws implies only the sequence of cause and effect. But justice in the dealings of man with man, with his imperfect nature and limited knowledge, requires the act and its punishment to be simultaneously presented to the offender as a guarantee against remediable injustice. In the case of absolute justice governing the operation of natural laws, this necessity cannot arise. Nature is the totality of cause and effect, and the working of the law of nature admits of no such absurdity as an effect without a cause. The justice of Nature is not dependent upon the amount of knowledge which an individual may possess of the causes leading to an effect, but is dependent upon the fact that the effect is produced by the cause. There is no want of justice in an individual having no consciousness of a previous life, the actions of which he is now experiencing in their results. A man may suffer from a disease although in ignorance at what time or under what conditions the germs of that disease were sown in his body, but

the right sequence of cause and effect is not imperilled by his ignorance. The fact that an effect is connected with any particular line of individuality necessitates a corresponding connection of cause with that individuality, otherwise there would be no relation between the cause and the effect; therefore the conditions and events of one incarnation, being the necessary sequence of a previous existence, do fulfil the law of justice.

The ethical value of the doctrine of Reincarnation is not exhausted by the vindication of justice in the operation of natural laws. It promotes the unification and solidarity of all members of the human family by overthrowing the barriers that conceit and pride have raised between man and man. This doctrine teaches that there is no favouritism in Nature. The highest manifestation of mental qualities, the greatest development of moral consciousness, are not special gifts, but have been laboriously acquired on the path of evolution, in accordance with the same laws that operate in the growth of the seed into the tree. The true unity of Nature becomes apparent. Brotherhood of man means no longer brotherhood of race or creed, but embraces the whole human family from the savage to the philosopher. Our attitude towards those who are clothed in the garments of sin and shame will be influenced by the knowledge that progress is gained by experience. The fact that our conscience has been aroused to a knowledge of the error of a certain course of action and its consequent rejection, is proof that we have realized the futility of such action as a step towards the attainment of happiness. No indignation will be felt towards the being who has not yet realized this position; his sin and shame are only our own, viewed from another point of time. We shall recognize that there is a potentiality of good even in the most degraded, and discern the truth in the words of one of our teachers, who says, "the vices of men are but steps in the ladder of virtue."

The influence of this doctrine on the ideas of right and wrong will be seen in its effect on the individual, and his conception of the value of action in its double aspect of cause and effect. It involves in its very nature the idea of responsibility and the doctrine

of Karma, which is inextricably interwoven with the doctrine of re-birth. A man's present actions creatively determine his future life, and the merit and demerit, or collective result, of each earth life is the Karma which awaits suitable conditions for manifestation in the next incarnation. The dogma of Original Sin may thus be seen to be not entirely without foundation : there is in a sense original sin, but this sin of Adam, which theology tells us has laid its poisonous touch on each child of humanity, is no heritage of woe, falling on all in equal injustice, and brings no eternal punishment for the finite sin of one man. The Adam that sins is the creator of each person, and the creator and the creature stand face to face in the relation of cause and effect. As there is no vicarious sin, so also there can be no vicarious punishment. By our own actions shall we stand or fall, receiving judgment from the fruit of our works, and none other can bear the penalty of that which we have ourselves done.

Man must be his own Saviour, and work out his own salvation.

We have here dealt with the ethical aspect of Reincarnation, but this point of view throws additional light on the doctrine itself. From the ethical standpoint all action is governed by purpose. Now we all know that many of our highest, many of our noblest, thoughts and feelings are stifled in the ungenial atmosphere of life. These must have an appropriate sphere of fruition, which can only be found in a subjective state succeeding death ; but it is unnecessary to enlarge on these states known as Devachan and Kama-loka.

The period at which Reincarnation takes place must vary with each individual, as it is dependent upon the forces that have been engendered by that individual during life on earth. Time has but a relation to earth conditions, and whether the period between incarnation is long or short in reference to physical standards, the entity has to pass through a condition in which the spiritual effect of the earth-life is withdrawn from the personal soul into the immortality of the individual. This process, which takes place in those states known as Kama-loka and Devachan, may require minutes, days, or years, according to the intensity of the material desires that draw the soul to earth-life, and hinder the liberation of the spiritual Ego. To the duration of Devachan no time limit can

be fixed : it may last from a short period to many thousand years ; but just as in dream life a whole history is sometimes within the limits of a few seconds, so it may be in the Devachanic life ; but whether the time is long or short the whole spiritual effect of the earth-existence must be realized and its energy exhausted. The varying causes that determine the duration of subjective existence between two incarnations are not within the scope of the present paper, and the only point that need occupy our attention for a moment is the agency that operates in the re-attraction of the entity into earth-life.

Karma is the result of all action connected with self, and it is Karma that draws the entity again into earth-existence. To be free from Karma, or the relation of action to self, is the only path to liberation. So long as action, good or evil, is influenced by motives of personal desire, so long must the effect of that action be worked out in personality ; it is only the self-less man who obtains liberation from re-birth : he who works untouched by blame or praise, without desire for the fruit of his labour, unelated by success, undaunted by ill-success. Few have reached the goal, but all may strive towards it. As a sequence of the continuity of spirit and its permanence in change, the doctrine of re-birth is the only theory that will yield a true metaphysical basis for the explanation of the phenomena of life ; it is translated on to the physical plane in the laws of evolution, and manifests its ethical value in the unswerving law of justice. As a great whole stretching from the first faint flutter of objective manifestation the past existences in their myriad changes are gathered into the present, and although unknown and unrecognized in the life of sense, are perceived by the awakened faculties of the soul ; even in dreams and visions it catches dim echoes from a past without beginning and glimpses of a future without end.

None sees the slow sure upward sweep,
By which the soul from life-depths deep
Ascends—unless, mayhap when free,
With each new death we backward see
The long perspective of our race,
Our multitudinous past lives trace.

— *A Record*: W. SHARP.

Mr. A. KEIGHTLEY addressed the Meeting as follows :—

The mechanical theory of the universe does not entirely satisfy anyone. Although it embraces the larger part of the sensuous facts of the universe, it requires as a condition the pre-existence of an external force to communicate motion to its atoms. If this theory holds water the universe must consist of a number of atoms alike in every particular, and the fortuitous concurrence of atoms would be the sole guiding law. This would leave no room for the working of the law of evolution, and thus the evidence of that law which we already possess would almost stand forth in the light of a *reductio ad absurdum*. It is not possible here to enter into the earliest workings of the law of evolution which have reference to consciousness, and we may for the present purpose pass over the earliest evidence of the relation of sensation to consciousness. Thus, if we take up the organic kingdom at a comparatively low point we perceive that any organism is limited by the action of its senses. We see the development of sense gradually progressing with the development of the organism, and with this extension of the limits of sensation the extension also of the limits of consciousness. At the same time, while consciousness extends its limits with those of sensation, it is wrong to suppose that consciousness is limited by sensation. We are able to bring within our consciousness the forces of electricity and magnetism, but they do not enter into the sphere of the perception of our senses until they have been somehow transformed into their mechanical equivalents. The vibrations of the ether do not enter upon our sensuous perceptions save under the disguise of light ; those of the air under the disguise of sound. Thus the world of sense is not co-extensive with that of our consciousness, and the human organism at least has two spheres of action—the sensuous and what for convenience we may call the super-sensuous or transcendental.

In dealing with the organism we are too apt to forget this. We are too apt to assert that the physical body which comes within the sphere of our senses is real, instead of being only the cloak or skin of something beneath ; which cloak may be cast off as occasion requires, when worn out, disabled, or at regular intervals, like a

snake's skin. This super-sensuous substratum of the human organism must necessarily have relations and properties which lie beyond the ordinary limits of sense. The earliest and most common limit of sense with which we are acquainted is seen in the phenomenon of sleep. But although our sensuous consciousness may begin to disappear in sleep, we are still as much as ever a part of Nature. Sleep simply alters that sensuous relation to Nature of which we are conscious while awake, and begins to open out to us the world of sense of which we are unconscious while awake. This brings into prominence the relation which memory bears to sleep, somnambulism, trance, and other like conditions, and also the relation between memory and Reincarnation. If during sleep, when we are merely on the threshold of the super-sensuous condition, we cannot remember our experiences at will when we awake, how much the less should we remember them when we have passed deeply into the super-sensuous state, and have no sensuous consciousness to awake to.

Now experimental evidence clearly demonstrates that the reach and clearness of memory are greatly increased during sleep; and secondly, that there is a still greater increase in these properties during somnambulant trance. So much is this the case that it would not be an error to say that the memory of somnambulant trance and that of waking consciousness are totally distinct, and might almost belong to distinct individuals. But we see that while the memory of sensuous consciousness does not retain the facts of somnambulant trance, the memory of somnambulant trance retains and includes all facts of the sensuous consciousness.

Many interesting cases of alternating consciousness are cited in Baron du Prel's *Philosophie der Mystik*, one of which will be found in *Transactions* No. IV. There are numerous other instances to be found in the annals of psychological medicine, some quite similar, others analogous to these. Thus we are justified in assuming, according to the law of correspondences, that some such alternation of consciousness will occur after the great change known as death. This case merely applies to the alternation of two states of sensuous consciousness, and not to the alternation of the sensuous and super-

sensuous. The numerous cases of mesmeric and somnambulist trance show plainly enough that in the passage between the super-sensuous and the sensuous the facts are forgotten. This case merely shows that even between two states of sensuous consciousness the facts are forgotten, but not annihilated. It may, however, be urged that we ought to carry the facts of one state of consciousness from that state to its alternation. In short, that we ought not to forget these facts. This case, however, does show that there are alternating states of sensuous consciousness, in which the facts are not carried from state to state. The facts of the first state disappeared from the second, but on the resumption of the first state they were remembered. Where did they reside meanwhile and where are they preserved? The theory of mechanical traces on the brain substance is not sufficient to explain the facts. These point to the existence of an organ of memory more subtle than the brain, which merely forms the medium of translation from that organ to the world of sensuous perception. Thus when we enter the super-sensuous condition, we enter a state in which the organ of memory has free and untrammelled action, and its range is consequently extended. This action when we re-enter the sphere of sensuous perception is confined and reduced, and the twin children of memory—the recollection and reproduction of images—are limited; nay, very often do not come into action at all. Now even with regard to the images and sensations of our past sensuous condition, memory is at fault and can only recall a mere selection. This selection may be recalled at will, and we have already seen that the fact of forgetting images and sensations is not equivalent to their annihilation. Consequently the forgotten images must have some basis in which they inhere as strongly as the unforgotten do in the will. This basis it is evident is not to be found within our sensuous consciousness, and must lie therefore in the super-sensuous part of the human organism. There these images are stored up and accumulated by painful experience; and just as the power of reading with facility is gained by long and difficult com-

parison of letter after letter, and word after word, until the drudgery of learning to read words is absorbed into the swift intelligent comprehension of their meaning and becomes a reflex act; so this experience of life is stored up in the organ of memory which forms part of the super-sensuous or subjective man, and becomes when digested the reflex acts of his earliest life—those actions which we are accustomed to class under the heads of instinct and inherited tendency. We can see the human embryo passing rapidly stage by stage in its development through all the animal forms which, as types on the Darwinian hypothesis, may be said to have led up to man's physical constitution. The processes which have been the gradual growth of perhaps millions of years are compressed into a few months, and the organism inherits all the tendencies of those forms, though modified by their manifold combinations. The same rule applies to organisms below man, so that the instinctive action of young animals can only be explained by the light of past experience. The science of ethnology holds within its grasp the gradual development of the savage into the intellectual man, which development might perhaps be supposed to be merely due to the survival of the fittest. The fittest, perhaps, if we look only to the physical attributes of a race, but when we regard intellect, the *lex parsimoniae* of Nature inexorably forbids us to suppose that effort should be made to develop a super-sensuous consciousness in man or animal from which physical consciousness should not get any benefit, and of which the accumulations would be absolutely wasted save on the supposition of their re-appearance. This simply means that the super-sensuous individual absorbs the essence of our conscious activity and reaps the benefit of all experience. Assuming that the object of existence is the acquisition of experience, the death of young children would simply stultify the *lex parsimoniae*. Moreover, it is impossible that all experience to be gained on earth should be acquired in one short life, and thus the fact of an intellectual evolution proceeding *pari passu* with the physical can only be explained under the action of that *lex parsimoniae* by a series of Reincarnations.

Mr. B. KEIGHTLEY then said :—

Closely connected with the doctrine of Reincarnation is the subject of Heredity. The view taken of Reincarnation in the opening paper leads us to regard man as literally his own creator : the man of one earth-life being, in very deed, the father, the Karmic ancestor, of the man in his next incarnation. But children take after their parents, and the hereditary transmission of qualities and defects, of beauty and disease, has long been a recognized fact. It is therefore a pertinent question to ask, how the facts classed together under the law of heredity bear upon the theory of successive lives on earth for the individual, and how they accord with its underlying doctrine, that man is what he makes himself—the child, the offspring of his own thoughts and deeds. It may be urged that man is not thus begotten of himself ; that the facts of heredity show that the conditions of his birth, his mental and moral qualities or defects, come to him from his parents, not from himself. It may be pointed out that the gifts of fortune, the opportunities of progress, health and happiness, disease and misery, all come to a man from his parents. How then, it may be asked, can the assertion be true that no man can add to or diminish the happiness or misery of another ?

To explain this apparent contradiction, it will be necessary to examine somewhat closely into the real meaning and bearing of the facts of heredity. But in order to deal effectively with the subject, the way must be cleared by a few observations on the theories by which modern science endeavours to account for the phenomena in question.

Science maintains the generalization, formulated as the law, that throughout Nature every organism tends to reproduce its own image. This is obviously no explanation. Accordingly, the leading thinkers of the scientific school have sought to penetrate below the facts themselves, and to give a real explanation of them in terms of the mechanical theory of the universe which is at present current.

Thus, although the germ-cell, which undoubtedly forms the

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centre of activity at which the new organism is produced, is defined by Professor Huxley as "matter potentially alive and containing the *tendency* to produce a definite living form," this "tendency" is explained to mean merely a certain arrangement of parts within the germ. This vague hypothesis assumes definite shape in the rival theories propounded by Darwin, Haeckel and Herbert Spencer; but however much these theories conflict among themselves, they all agree in seeking the cause of the tendency, manifested by a germ-cell to reproduce the parent organism, in a mechanical arrangement of the smallest parts of the cell among themselves, and in the specific character of the vibrations with which these parts are assumed to be endowed.

Now, without going into the mutual contradictions between these theories, or insisting upon the difficulties involved in the atomic theory itself; without laying stress on the special difficulties involved in each theory or upon their character of unphilosophical dogmatism, there is one strong objection to which these theories are open.

The fact observed is, that the germ-cell moulds the *pabulum*, or surrounding matter of a suitable kind, into the form of the organism from which the germ itself proceeds. Any theory seeking to explain this fact by the arrangement of the parts of the germ, and the nature of their vibrations, would seem to violate the law of Conservation of Energy. For to modify the character of the vibrations, or the arrangement of neighbouring matter, must require an expenditure of energy on the part of the cell. Hence the new structure so produced must contain a measure of energy on the average lower than that originally possessed by the cell. Speaking generally, this would imply a chemical structure of less complexity. Thus the larger the quantity of surrounding matter moulded by the cell, the less complex ought its chemical structure to be, and the less should be the quantity of energy possessed by it. But this is not found to be the case. On the contrary, as the germ grows and expands, the more complex becomes its structure, and the greater the amount of its energy. But this would mean that the original cell contained an indefinite quantity of energy, although the amount

of energy liberated by the disintegration of the cell is almost imperceptible. This is subversive of the fundamental propositions of molecular physics and the law of Conservation of Energy.

These considerations show that modern science is not in possession of all the factors of the problem. Many forces which mould human life operate in the ante-natal condition; and this view derives support from the facts observed in the life history of twins by Mr. Galton, and recorded by him in his work on Human Faculty. That two individuals, born under precisely identical conditions, and having precisely the same heredity and education, should differ completely in physique, character, mind, and emotional nature, is a fact which seems imperatively to demand the existence of a something in man beyond his mere physical organization. It would also seem to show that this something, which incarnates, possesses marked and definite characteristics in the ante-natal condition.

Having seen the inadequacy of the mechanical theory to account for heredity, and indicated the direction in which further investigation lies, a few general observations on the connection of the law of heredity and the doctrine of Reincarnation may be introduced. It is clear that a satisfactory explanation of the facts demands the existence of forces in Nature which escape our direct observation, and are only accessible to our intellect through inferences drawn from their effects or manifestations on the plane of our normal sensuous consciousness. These forces lie on the plane of super-sensuous consciousness or soul, and mould individual aptitudes and faculties, character and emotional nature. We should, therefore, regard the growth and development of the germ-cell as the progressive manifestation or effect of these forces on the plane of sense-perception. The support lent by these considerations to the doctrine of Reincarnation has been discussed in the opening paper.

The doctrine of Reincarnation explains the general law of heredity, that every organism tends to reproduce its own likeness. For it is an axiomatic truth that like causes produce like effects, and that if the causes are related the effects must be so likewise; the inverse

of these propositions being also true, and, indeed, forming the basis of all scientific reasoning.

Now, all organisms are related by the very fact of their being organised; and further, the members of any given class are still more closely related in virtue of their belonging to that class. Hence it follows that those sets of causes, on the super-sensuous plane of which such organisms are regarded as the effects or manifestations, must be similarly related to one another.

Or, reversing the argument, we may say that if any two sets of causes are closely related or interwoven, it will follow that the corresponding series of effects must be so, and the necessary expression on the sensuous plane of these common points of identity must be the germ-cell itself, the special element common to both parent and offspring. This view leads us to expect, what is found by experience to be the fact, a more or less close resemblance between parents and their offspring, and it accounts also for the differences which invariably accompany this resemblance.

To consider the case of hereditary disease. The disease as existing in the parent represents a definite system of causes operating on the super-sensuous plane. But in order that the same disease should make its appearance in another individual, an identical set of causes must have existed in that individual on the higher plane. Thus, in the two systems of causes, of which the individuals in question are the manifestations or effects, there is at least one element common to both. Such a case would be that of all persons afflicted with the same disease, but otherwise unrelated. If, however, we increase the number of identical elements present in the causal constitution of two individuals, we shall come to a point where the relation between the two systems of causes will be such as to require the physical relationship of parent and child for their expression, and the identical elements in the causal constitution of the latter will be represented by identical elements in the physical manifestations of these causes. In other words, we have the law of hereditary disease, or, generally, of the transmission by heredity of physical and other peculiarities.

But these causes, whose manifestation we witness on the physical

plane, could not have sprung into existence out of nothing, while the very fact of their manifestation on the physical plane itself shows that they were previously related to that plane. In other words, the conditions under which a man is born, the aptitudes, faculties, and character with which he is endowed at birth, are the outcome of causes which have themselves been previously related to the sensuous plane of manifestation. That is to say, that these causes must have been generated in a previous physical existence on this earth. And the obvious answer to an objection, based on the apparent difficulty of accounting, on this view, for an Ego's first appearance on earth, is the fact that both the earth and all Egos manifesting on it evolve on parallel lines and by slow degrees.

This is exactly the doctrine of Reincarnation with its corollary the law of Karma.

MR. MOHINI M. CHATTERJI observed that—

The confusion existing in the popular mind between the doctrines of Reincarnation and Metempsychosis has been already touched upon. It is proposed briefly to advert to the true Esoteric doctrine, which has given rise to the superstitious belief in the transmigration of souls. The theory of modern science as to the atomic constitution of bodies, though not accepted by Esoteric Science, may for the present purpose be assumed. It is well known that the constituent particles of the human body are in a state of ceaseless change; the consciousness of self-identity, when applied to the body, is a complete illusion. But at the same time the consciousness of self-identity shows the existence in man of something in the nature of a comparatively permanent frame-work, underlying the perpetual flux of atoms. No doubt there are philosophers who would deny reality to the underlying frame-work, by characterizing it as a subjective process. Their position, however, is not very rational. No reason at all is conceivable why the subjective process should be conceived of as less real than an objective process, since the latter to exist at all, otherwise than as a mere metaphysical abstraction, necessitates the

former. If the subjective facts, such as æsthetic and teleological perception, memory and reflection did not exist, objects would not have existed at all.

Granting the existence of this comparatively permanent framework in which our subjective nature inheres, we are bound to admit that the particular atoms which constitute our bodies, however temporarily it may be, are governed by a law which is determined by the nature of the underlying basis of our existence. Mental characteristics persist very much longer than the individual constituent atoms of the body. Therefore it is plain that the atoms attracted to our bodies must have a definite relation to mental characteristics. Here a slight digression may be permitted to indicate the direction in which the Esoteric doctrine of the constitution of matter diverges from the atomic theory. Esoteric science maintains that if individual atoms are entirely devoid of consciousness, no combination of them could evolve consciousness, even if it be for a moment conceded that the Ego, which no analysis can reduce further than the mysterious "I am that I am," is capable of having an atomic constitution. Further, no advantage can be gained by attributing consciousness of some unknown form to every individual atom, as the change of atoms in a man does not impair the consciousness of "I," or even ordinary memory.

To return to the subject. It has been seen that the particular atoms which enter into our constitution have a definite relation to our mental characteristics. Atoms, in fact, enter into organic combinations according to their affinities, and when released from one individual system they retain a tendency to be attracted by other systems, not necessarily human, with similar characteristics. The assimilation of atoms by organisms take place in accordance with the law of affinities. It may be hastily contended that whatever may be the relation existing between the mental characteristics of an individual and the atoms of his body, it ceases altogether when the atoms no longer constitute his body. But such a contention is futile. In the first place, the simple fact that certain atoms are drawn into a man's body shows that there was some affinity existing between the atoms and the body before they were so drawn to each

other. If there had been no affinity at all they would never have been so drawn. Consequently, there is no reason to suppose that the affinity ceases at parting. In the next place, it is well known that the class of abnormally developed psychics called psychometers can detect the antecedent life-history of any substance by being brought into contact with it. This proves the persistence of some kind of relation. The absence of this relation in self-consciousness will not excite surprise if we remember that the Ego in its entirety is not contained in self-consciousness—a fact which recent German speculation may fairly claim to have demonstrated. It must, however, be insisted upon that the true human Ego can in no sense be said to migrate from a human body to an animal body, or to a new human body, otherwise than by Reincarnation, although those principles in man which lie below the plane of self-consciousness may do so. And in this light alone is metempsychosis accepted by Esoteric Science.

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THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT.

A Paper read at an open Meeting of the London Lodge, on the
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THE Theosophical Movement in this country has naturally been misunderstood, outside the circle of persons earnestly working at it, for within that circle even the objects pursued were but cloudily perceived at first. Wonderful occurrences have been associated with the movement, and these have attracted attention—either to be scornfully ridiculed or too enthusiastically proclaimed—in a way which has confused public understanding of the questions really at issue. Patiently engaged on these meanwhile, Theosophists have penetrated regions of thought in which they are quite beyond the reach of all discussion concerning psychic phenomena. These may have first started some of the European pioneers of the present movement on the path of inquiry they have followed, but this inquiry has led to results the value of which may now be recognized without reference to the circumstances which gave rise to their discovery. A bridge once built is a bridge, no matter whether the

scaffolding used in its construction was well or irregularly put together. That consideration explains the callous indifference of advanced Theosophists to all attacks which endeavour to discredit persons associated with the movement. Apart from reasons they may have for distrusting such attacks on their own merits, they cannot be argued out of the consciousness that they stand on their intellectual bridge, and can cross by its means to a new realm of knowledge. Their opponents may declare that bad timber was put into the centering it was originally built upon; but the bridge stands none the less, and processions of people are beginning to pass over it.

In other words, the views of Nature and human destinies which Theosophists are enabled to take, are too satisfactory to the mind and too harmonious with all previous knowledge to be relinquished when once they are fairly comprehended. This is why the Theosophical Society in Europe is a growing body in spite of having been launched here under circumstances which rendered it an easy mark for satire. Last year was only the second that has elapsed since the Society in London took a new departure from its original policy as a private association of persons who merely hoped for certain results. These have now been attained in a considerable measure, and the Society courts public examination of the principles it has worked out. My present object is to set these forth in broad outlines, and before doing so I need only take one precaution. Theosophy cannot be expressed in hard and fast dogma. Just as the Society itself is the embodiment of the principle of Tolerance—asking from its members nothing but an open mind in the pursuit of truth, and leaving them perfectly free to adhere to any religion they profess on the single assumption that they will recognize the human brotherhood which underlies all—so the system of thought which Theosophists speak of as the Esoteric doctrine is no dogmatic creed to be learned by rote and accepted. The Esoteric doctrine in its theoretical perfection would be omniscience concerning the operations of nature. All that finite human faculties on the present plane of human evolution can attain to is a presentation of the Esoteric doctrine; a conception of the general scheme of things

as visible from the standpoint of this physical life. So when, for convenience' sake, I may employ some such phrase as "Theosophy teaches" this or that, the words must only be understood to refer to aspects of the truth as recommending themselves at present to the general body of Theosophical students, but open always to expansion and revision, not in the sense of being liable to ultimate surrender as erroneous, but as subject to a process of spiritualization which continually elevates and illuminates all sound principles of Esoteric thinking in minds that are steadily bent upon them.

It is chiefly because the Esoteric doctrine, to begin with, thus spiritualizes and illuminates the whole theory of *Evolution*, that it is borne in on the understanding which grasps some of its central ideas with such irresistible force. In dealing with the development of the human race as a whole, it provides us with a theory which does, for the soul, what the familiar theory of evolution does for the body. It accounts for it. Accounts for it, let me hasten to add, in a sense which need not offend religious feeling, any more than that is hurt by physical discovery which interprets the methods by which the original Divine impulse works. We have long been used to the notion that on the physical plane the Divine impulse operates through law. Theosophy teaches us to transfer this conclusion to the spiritual plane also. By the light of the Esoteric doctrine, we can trace and follow in imagination the evolution of an individual soul, just as we can that of a physical bodily type by the light of modern biology. And we find that whereas there is no continuous individuality of consciousness in the line of succession along bodily forms, there *is* exactly that permanent individuality along the one thread of spiritual evolution. From the period when, emerging from lower kingdoms of Nature, and entering humanity, the newly evolved soul is distinctly invested with self-consciousness, its identity, though undergoing many transmutations, is never lost. Its progress may carry it through a prolonged series of transitions from one state of being to another, and recollection of specific events may fade away as time passes, but the accumulated cosmic value of its experiences never fades away, and this is the spiritual

growth which constitutes the higher kind of evolution. Are the other states of being which alternate, for a human soul, with this, as summer and winter alternate, or day and night,—unfathomable and hypothetical for us? By no means, because abnormal senses may, under certain conditions, be awakened in living men which render other states of existence perceptible to them besides this of the physical incarnation. But the acceptability of the Esoteric doctrine in regard to the alternate passage of human entities through the physical and spiritual states does not rest merely on the assurance of those whose finer senses are alive to both conditions simultaneously. The view of things thus afforded might not have been inferred from the set of disjointed physical facts before us all, but, once observed and described, it is seen to fit in with this disjointed series, and to reconcile with our instinctive sense of justice many of the otherwise insoluble problems which the painful riddle of the earth presents.

For the law of cause and effect which we recognize as invariable in mechanics, is not outraged on the higher plane of Nature's activity. As each more or less morally responsible human entity advances along its epicyclic path, it can never be exempt from the consequences of its own acts. That spiritual existence into which for a time it passes at the termination of any one physical life is the inevitable expression, on that plane, of the causes set in operation here—themselves, of course, influenced in a large degree by the preceding accumulation of causes gathered up from former lives. Nor do they come to an end,—they are merely worked out and ripened,—in the spiritual existence. When the forces which have given rise to that phase of existence for the particular entity concerned are exhausted, the general cyclic momentum which is the primary law of its being, reasserts itself, and the soul is borne on again into a fresh physical incarnation, the character of which is the exact expression, on the physical plane again, of the surviving affinities carried over from the last birth. This law of existence is referred to in Buddhist and Brahminical philosophy as the doctrine of Karma, which bewildered students of entangled exoteric presentations of those systems often greatly misapprehend, even to the

extent of regarding Karma as a mystic name for the soul itself. A soul's Karma is its accumulated sum of affinities at any given time, these being subject to modification during every fresh life.

A correct appreciation of the doctrine of Karma reduces to harmony and reconciles with justice some of the most exasperating phenomena of human life, and while thus giving us a clue to the comprehension of the world with all its varying states of suffering and enjoyment, it does not, as might be imagined at the first glance, superinduce a callous indifference, on the part of those who are happily circumstanced in life, for the sorrows of the less fortunate. For Karma (apart from higher considerations which the Esoteric doctrine brings into play in other ways) would inexorably visit with penalties, which selfishness would anxiously avert if it knew what it was about, the entity which during its own periods of enjoyment neglects the cultivation of sympathy with its kind. And thus the doctrine leads, like every other pathway of occult metaphysics, to the supreme central idea of unselfishness, as the goal of human evolution. The intuitions of profound thinkers, and of all moralists entitled to the name, have given rise to the affirmation of a great many ethical precepts which men have accepted without always bringing them within the area of wider generalizations; and the notion of living for the sake of others, as a beautiful idea adapted to the moral sensibility of advanced civilization, is certainly not an original discovery of the modern Theosophical movement. But just as the Esoteric doctrine accounts for the soul, as a phenomenon of the world, in the sense that it traces back for a long way the working of Nature which has established it on the stage of evolution we have reached, so does the teaching of Theosophy supply us with an intelligible *raison d'être* for ethical principles sometimes treated as ultimate facts of human consciousness; for the picture it discloses to us of the higher states of spiritual existence introduces us to a very subtle and beautiful conception. That extreme separation of individualities which is brought about by physical incarnation is only an attribute of existence on this plane of Nature. On the higher spiritual planes there is a faculty which only our deeper intuitions during physical life can enable us

to realize,—a faculty of sharing consciousness. This idea brings us in contact with a misconception of Eastern philosophy common among Esoteric students, but even more disastrous than the mistake about Karma referred to above. People have sometimes fancied that Buddhist teaching inculcates a desire for a mergence in Divinity, in the universal consciousness or whatever name may be used, which is equivalent to individual annihilation. It is an acquisition of new kinds and not a forfeiture of old kinds of consciousness that is contemplated as the ultimate consequence of human perfection. We need not attempt in imagination to pursue this new consciousness beyond imaginable limits, but with the help of the Esoteric teaching we are enabled to realize that, even in that comparatively adjacent spiritual state which intervenes between one physical life and the next, a degree of diffused consciousness is attainable which renders the growing soul capable, without losing its own individuality or consciousness, of sharing in the collective consciousness of other entities on the level to which it has attained. Now this capacity for an exalted life, far transcending the isolated happiness of a consciousness entirely imprisoned in flesh, is obviously developed in direct ratio with the expansion of those sympathies which are the product of unselfishness. In this way we may see that the law of unselfishness is something immeasurably greater than it would be shown by reference to the range of motives having to do with this physical life alone. The growth of a diffused consciousness moreover,—only conceivable in the higher states of spiritual existence,—is a growth *towards* omniscience with which the principle of unselfishness is thus seen to be identified. Knowledge in its higher aspect, and unselfishness, are, if not one and the same thing, two aspects of one and the same thing. Unselfishness is thus the corner-stone of true occultism, which is the science of Nature's working on the higher, and to that extent so far for us the hidden planes, of her activity.

In regard to the detailed teachings of Theosophy, and the view it presents of existence on these higher planes, the consideration which recommends these to begin with, is the same that applies to the doctrine of Karma, and to the broad principles of spiritual

evolution generally. They are always found to adapt themselves with exquisite flexibility to the facts within our observation. Spiritual beatitude has often been spoken of as a state, not a place ; but imagination is apt to rebel against a description which invests Heaven with many of the attributes of place, while locating it nowhere. But an occult interpretation of the world we live in solves the problem with marvellous facility. The world itself has other states, coincident and simultaneous with those of which we are cognisant in physical life. These are the higher planes of Nature's operation, and to the faculties adapted to them the gross physical state is as imperceptible as the higher states are to the physical eye. It is a profound mistake to suppose that the realm of spirit is shadowy, intangible or unreal to the eye of spirit. For the appropriate faculty it is the only reality. Heaven is not merely around us "in our infancy." In a true sense, not merely as a poetical fancy, it is around us always, as truly as electricity is lurking unperceived in the London pavement, though it may only flash visibly in the sky. And the behaviour of electricity, though an attribute of gross matter, may help to suggest the state of things referred to, for prison walls do not impede its passage about the earth, nor does distance disconcert its sympathetic attractions. The human entity may think and perceive in more than one state, and in just so many states does the earth exist to furnish it with a sphere for the exercise of thought and reflection. Into another of these states, when it quits the imprisonment of flesh, does the liberated soul transfer itself. It has not necessarily retreated to unimaginable distances ; but it has entered what is a new world to its senses. The intricate metaphysical reasoning which has brought men, by toilsome processes of thought, to deny the absolute existence of matter independent of human perception, is vindicated by the Theosophic teaching, but at the same time reduced to an interpretation of relative simplicity. The senses perceive their kindred matter, and no other. Matter of whatever order must be relative to some perception ; but each order may be real within its own limits, and yet vindicate the metaphysical doctrine of its non-reality for consciousness unprovided with the corresponding

faculties of observation. The fact of the matter is not merely that this earth which we inhabit, with its cloud-capped towers and so forth, *shall* pass away like the baseless fabric of a vision. It is passing away in this manner every day from the souls which glide into new conditions of being, and for them it has ceased to exist, just as the world to a perception of which they then awake has not yet come into existence for us who are still on the physical plane. But *they*—the souls which change their state—do not pass away at all, and have only transferred their consciousness to another plane, from which in some remote period—for spiritual existence is enormously more prolonged than the struggle of physical life, as a rule—they will transfer it back again, oscillating from the one condition of existence to the other, as the pendulum swings, as the world revolves through light and darkness, as the tides ebb and flow, and as all Nature suggests.

Independent metaphysical speculation in Germany has lately arrived on the threshold of the Esoteric doctrine. Baron Karl du Prel, in his *Philosophie der Mystik*, a very profound examination of the conditions under which human consciousness exists, has carried the conclusion a step further even than Hartmann in his *Philosophy of the Unconscious*. In a deeper order of consciousness than is manipulated in the daily experience of physical life, Du Prel discerns the thread of individuality which must unite the series to which each physical life belongs. The distrust of the theory that there must be such a series, which springs from the fact that in each rebirth the specific events of the last are forgotten, is no longer sustainable, in view of the fact that even during life there are certainly states of consciousness possible to man which are totally obliterated from his ordinary remembrance. Such forgetting is no disproof of their occurrence, and the attributes of the human soul (assuming that there is such a thing in man, and that its apparent manifestations are not merely functions of matter), clearly suggest the probability that they have grown to their present high state of perfection by degrees, through a series of manifestations, as every-thing else in Nature grows.

With the other assumption meanwhile, that consciousness is

merely a function of matter, Theosophy in its aspect as a science of psychic phenomena is very well able to deal. This first conjecture of common sense rebelling against some conceptions of exoteric theology, may be regarded as the dead point in the cyclic process of human reason which leads inevitably up to the Theosophic position ; for as human faculties expand, those which directly cognize phenomena outside the sphere of physical cause and effect are evidently destined to come into play more freely and frequently than hitherto. A comprehension of the general scheme on which human evolution is proceeding enables us to look a long way forward, as well as backward, over the processes of spiritual evolution. We are enabled to discern some of the future developments for which we are all reserved, and to perceive that psychic senses which now distinguish a small minority of persons abnormally constituted will gradually be inherited by all. Long before this is the case, the more liberal diffusion of psychic vision and other gifts will become so notorious that the facts of nature these senses disclose will be as firmly established beyond the reach of bigoted denial by materialists, as the revolution of the earth round the sun is now beyond the reach of ecclesiastical incredulity. We might perhaps say as firmly as these facts themselves are already established for students of the psychic phenomena taking place around us at the present day ; for within the limits of more than one modern association, and assuredly within those of the Theosophical Society, the "powers latent in man," which it is one of the objects of that Society to investigate, are well known to include a direct perception of matter and existence under other conditions than those which are alone subject to the observation of the physical senses. One of the most familiar misconceptions concerning their position which Theosophists encounter is the notion that their belief in other states of human existence linked with that of the body, rests on the *ex cathedra* assurance of certain persons who have dazzled the imagination of their pupils by the performance, or the apparent performance, of miraculous feats. Theosophists are probably not the only people who are ridiculed for illogical reasoning which the opponents who laugh at it have invented themselves. It is true that

some conclusions concerning Nature, led up to by Theosophical study, are of a kind which no imperfect psychic faculties spontaneously manifesting themselves in natural-born "sensitives" are yet in a condition to confirm, and the Theosophical Movement would not have attained its present development if it had not been that assistance has been rendered to its promoters by persons whose psychic faculties have been cultivated to an extraordinary degree by special and peculiar training. But people entirely outside the area of all psychic inquiry, who suppose that we who are engaged in it have no guarantees but those of blind faith for our trust in the capacity of the human intelligence to discern spiritual truth transcending the evidence that appeals to physical sense, are mistaking our attitude altogether.

We fully apprehend,—and some of us by personal experience are already beginning to partially realize,—that certain modes of life awaken and develop the dormant powers of humanity in such a way that new realms of knowledge open out before the liberated senses. In their ultimate consequences we know that these modes of life superinduce,—always presuming that they operate under favourable physical conditions,—that very exalted state of the faculties known in occult literature as "adeptship." And certain persons who have attained that state are now interesting themselves in the elucidation of the Esoteric doctrine for the benefit of the public at large in a way that appears to be producing more striking results than any previous effort of a similar kind. The Theosophical Society is one special channel of their teachings,—though not dedicated to these exclusively,—and thus it comes to pass that its opponents have misrepresented it as a band of fanatics sitting open-mouthed in the receipt of eccentric dogma. The truth of the affair is so far unlike this caricature that European students of the Esoteric doctrine, once grasping its beauty and coherence, and realizing that the knowledge of the adepts extends vastly further than the revelations they have yet made, are apt to grow very impatient with the cautious and tentative policy which animates their communications. They appear above all things anxious to steer the intelligence of their exoteric pupils up to the truths they them-

selves have realized through chains of thought and reasoning which may afford such conclusions, when reached, some independent support and justification. To make a statement which cannot be sustained by any appeal to analogies and correspondences within our reach, is a course from which they have always shrunk, and to which they are only rarely driven.

But to a great extent now they have shown us the methods and systems of exoteric thinking ; and though these have been very carefully conveyed to us in a way which keeps back as yet that sort of knowledge which has to do with the manipulation of the occult forces of Nature on the physical plane, still the Theosophical Society is now in a position to employ these methods and systems of thinking in the elaboration of theoretical knowledge almost *ad infinitum*. The abundance with which this has been evolved along these lines already, is itself the characteristic which first of all provokes distrust from the casual reader of Theosophical books. If a hundredth part of the knowledge attained to had been put forward with a hundred times more parade of its importance, it might have struck many imaginations, which rebel against the teachings *en bloc*, as embodying great and wonderful achievements of thought. The progress of ordinary metaphysical speculation has been slow and tedious, and generations have employed themselves on the promotion of the inquiry along a few steps of its journey. The Theosophical Movement has been associated with a sudden letting out of intellectual waters which the world at large can hardly be expected to absorb all in a moment. Our minds have been irrigated by a Nile flood rather than by soft showers from the familiar sky. But we who are concerned with the movement realize that this knowledge has come from men who have attained abnormal spiritual evolution by a short cut through natural processes that would in the regular course of things have been spread over a very prolonged series of lives, and we are not surprised to find them in possession of information which in a corresponding degree anticipates the inheritance of a very remote future.

Many people who attain through Theosophical study to a comprehension of the way in which the ordinary course of evolution

may thus be hastened come to regard the pursuit of personal development tending in the direction of adeptship,—which signifies the passage beyond the limits of that educational process which Nature carries on gradually by means of successive Reincarnations,—as the only object which a man, once fairly appreciating his ultimate destinies, can worthily pursue. And the influence of Theosophical study on any mind which is prepared to assimilate its fruits in even a moderate degree can hardly be altogether inoperative on life and conduct, while assuredly it is never operative except for good. But whether by an impassioned and complete devotion of all their energies to the cultivation of their higher nature, according to the final dictates of occult science, the students of Theosophy strive to develop abnormal spiritual faculties and abnormal spiritual growth within themselves, or whether they are content for a time to accept the reports of others as a clue to the truth of Nature, so far as that may be reached by abstract speculation and thought, the feeling that Theosophy brings them closer than any other line of inquiry possibly can to a clear scientific understanding of the real state of affairs beyond the limits of this transient life may account for the powerful attraction which the present movement has been found to exercise on the sympathies of all persons who pay enough attention to the subject to realize its true character and scope, and the purposes towards which it tends.

NOTE *by* MR. MOHINI.

THE Esoteric doctrine teaches with special emphasis that there must exist at every moment of the history of human evolution a class of men in whom consciousness attains such an expansion in both depth and area as to enable them to solve the problems of being by direct perception, and therefore with far more certainty and completeness than the rest of mankind. This class of men have been called Mahatmas (great souls) in recent Theosophical literature. The existence of Mahatmas as a part of the Esoteric doctrine is independent of the claim of any particular individual to that title, just as the existence of the colours of the spectrum is independent of the capacity of any given prism to exhibit them. In reality, the problem of the existence of Mahatmas in the world is not without a great resemblance to the problem of the existence of a soul in man. It would be an illegitimate process of reasoning if we believe or disbelieve in the existence of the soul upon the assertion of a man as to his possession of a soul. For the testimony of an ordinary human being that he feels the existence of a soul in himself simply comes to this:—he is conscious of the existence of certain perceptions of a definite character: the rest is an inference whose validity is not proved by the perceptions themselves, although it is dependent upon them. The perceptions will prove the existence of the soul with all its connotations only when all those connotations are contained in the perceptions. It is clear, therefore, that such a demonstration of the existence of soul can only be given by one to another, if both of them have one and the same definite range of perceptions, far transcending that of an ordinary man. Otherwise a part of the demonstration must rest upon inference, which can be tested by its own appropriate canon of proof. An exactly similar process of reasoning applies to the problem of the existence of Mahatmas. To entitle an individual to the status of a Mahatma what requires to be proved is that consciousness in him has attained a certain development both in surface and in depth. Now depth in consciousness cannot be measured by surface consciousness, which alone the normal human being possesses. Physical consciousness manifested in the ordinary phase of existence

cannot therefore test the consciousness in a Mahatma. The exhibition of psychic phenomena in itself is no proof of Mahatmaship, as it does not contain all the connotations of the term Mahatma; it only proves the power to perform those phenomena, and if a satisfactory explanation of the process of their production is given it proves the possession of the knowledge of such process. The statement of anyone that he has seen a Mahatma splits up into two components on analysis, namely, that which rests upon direct sense-perception, and that which belongs to psychic perception or intuition (if the witness possesses it) or inference. The first set will prove only the existence of a man, his power of producing abnormal phenomena (if any has been witnessed), and other kindred facts. The other set of impressions cannot be directly conveyed to one in whom the intuitive faculty has not been developed. Consequently, by the generality this set must be treated as a matter of inference, subject to the ordinary canons of reasoning. The first thing therefore that requires consideration is whether the existence of Mahatmas contradicts any known fact of experience. For simplicity of treatment, this proposition may be subdivided and the inquiry first directed to ascertain if we have any proof to show that knowledge is capable of growth in depth. We contend that such a proof is furnished by the workings of evolution as manifested in the world around us.

As bearing upon this point, I quote from "A Synopsis of Baron Du Prel's 'Philosophie der Mystik:'" *—

"After showing by the examples of Copernicus and Kant that the real advance of knowledge has been in depth rather than in mere surface extension, the author pursues—

"'The modern theory of evolution follows, consciously or not, the lines traced out by Kant. Biological evolution began with the simplest organisms, and has reached in the most complicated human being its highest point for the moment. Thus a tree stands in but very few and very simple relations to external Nature; it responds to sunshine and rain, wind and weather, and unfolds itself accordingly. In the animal kingdom these relations to the

* By Bertram Keightley, *Transactions*, No. IV.

surrounding external world have increased in number and extent, and, hand in hand with organic, advances also intellectual evolution.

“From oyster to man the growth of consciousness proceeds parallel with that of organisation. . . . Thus, from the standpoint of every animal organism, external nature is divided into two unequal parts, the inequality of which increases as the organism descends in the scale of life. On one side is that portion of Nature with which its senses connect it; while the rest of Nature is transcendental to it, *i. e.*, the organism in question stands in no conscious relation to that part of Nature. This frontier line has been continually pushed backwards and onwards during the process of biological evolution: the number of the senses having increased, as have also their working powers.’”

The most striking illustration of the growth of consciousness in depth that we have is the case of the caterpillar evolving into the butterfly. Here an organism during its lifetime develops into another, possessing additional faculties for the manifestation of consciousness. These considerations tend, no doubt, to diminish the incredulous bewilderment with which Mahatma-evolution may at first sight be regarded.

It is also evident from the abnormal phenomena of clairvoyance and other similar manifestations that the human ego is not entirely confined within the prison-house of physical consciousness. Every fair-minded observer, though ignorant of the science of practical psychology, will therefore see that no absurdity is involved in claiming the existence of a science which by an examination of the conditions upon which psychic phenomena depend can bring them under the control of the scientist.

Thus it will appear that the Mahatmas can exist, not only without outrage to ordinary experience, but that their existence derives great support from facts a portion of which, even though unrecognized by the official science of the day, are too notorious to be ignored.

For the positive proof of the existence of Mahatmas, however, we must plunge into metaphysics. If we believe in the uniformity of Nature, and accept the law of evolution for the physical as well the super-physical side of being, the existence of Mahatmas will be

found to be a logical necessity. That the line of existence and evolution is continuous is a universal axiom. It is impossible to conceive an absolute breach between any two states or things in the universe. For if such a breach were possible, it would be absurd to speak of the universe at all, as the universe means nothing but the unity of all things and states that are. Then, the Esoteric doctrine teaches that the subjective pole of being is the great unmanifested, the eternal spirit. It may here be noted, that under the name of the Unknowable, and various other designations, the necessity for the existence of the unmanifested pole of Nature has been inferred by metaphysicians of all ages and every country.

Applying the principle of continuity, therefore, to the universe, it becomes plain that all states of consciousness from the absolute unmanifested to that of man, for instance, must exist as an unbroken chain. If one link of the chain be for a moment wanting, it can never be supplied, and evolution must at once cease. Consequently there must exist in the universe an infinite gradation of beings on the subjective side of Nature. Descending to the plane of human existence, it is also certain that there must be the same gradation of consciousness connecting the ordinary human being with the nearest egos on the subjective plane. The spiral of Nature, in fact, must for ever be inviolate.

In weighing the evidence for the existence of any particular Mahatma, the most important consideration is necessarily psychical. For the statement as to their existence must in the nature of things be founded upon the super-sensuous and intellectual impressions of the witnesses. And so long as these are not taken into account, the conclusion must be defective and fallacious; this has been made clear by the arguments brought forward above. The only logical course to adopt, in the absence of conviction on this point, is to suspend judgment, and not to resort to the dogmatism of negation. And, above everything, it is to be remembered, that the doctrine is the Mahatma.

Let me add, in conclusion, that although I may not explain the process by which I acquired the knowledge that a certain individual is a Mahatma, I have no hesitation in declaring my conviction that he is one.

The following extracts, translated from a celebrated treatise by

the great teacher Sankara, give us some idea of the nature of a Mahatma, one who is emancipated even while in the flesh :—

“ One who, having assimilated his soul with the Supreme Spirit, is awake without possessing any other property of that state, is emancipated while in the flesh.

“ One in whom the limitations of conditioned existence have come to an end, and who, though an individual ego, is yet the Supreme Spirit, and whose thinking principle has reached the equipoise of tranquillity, is emancipated while in the flesh.

“ One who is present in the body, and is yet devoid of the feeling of ‘I’ and ‘my’ in connection with the body, which follows him only like a shadow, is emancipated while in the flesh.

“ Not to inquire into what has passed, and not to think about the future, to be without attachment to any object, are the characteristics of one emancipated while in the flesh.

“ To feel the ego to be different from the world of objects (*svabhavat*), in which good and evil mingle, to be equally affected by all objects in the world, without distinction, are the characteristics of one emancipated while in the flesh.

“ The absence of any difference of happiness in the equanimous self, by the attainment of what is desired, and what is not desired, is the characteristic of one emancipated while in the flesh.

“ He alone is emancipated who, while in the flesh, does not associate the notions ‘I’ and ‘my’ with the exercise of any function of bodily organs and the rest,* and with absolute dispassion lives in union with the self.

* * * * * * * *

“ He alone is emancipated while in the flesh who, by reason of purified spiritual knowledge, is unconscious of any difference between the individual ego and the Supreme Spirit, and between the Supreme Spirit and the universe.

“ One, who takes adoration from good men and persecution from bad men without feeling any difference between them as regards himself, is possessed of the characteristic of being emancipated while in the flesh.

* * * * * * * *

* By this is to be understood the ten organs, mind, egotism, germ of egotism (Mahat), and, in fact, what the Sankhyam philosophy calls Nature.

"One, possessed of self-knowledge, roams over the world sometimes naked, sometimes clothed, sometimes robed in the bark of trees, sometimes in the skin of animals, and sometimes clothed in pure intelligence.* Sometimes he appears as a child, sometimes as a madman, and sometimes as a *pisacha* (demon).

* * * * *

"Ever enjoying the supreme bliss, the illuminated one appears one time as a fool, one time as a wise man, one time with the splendour of a king, one time like a wanderer, one time at rest, and one time he assumes the lethargy of a boa constrictor. One time he is the object of reverence, one time of disgrace, one time unrecognized.

"Though without possession he is always contented, though without aid he is most powerful; he is always satisfied even though there be no object of enjoyment, he is always even-minded though appearing to be uneven.

"Such a one, a Mahatma, is not the actor even while performing an act, is bodiless though embodied, though limited he is unconditioned.

"Such a bodiless knower of the supreme is never touched by the pleasant or unpleasant, good or evil.

"Pleasure and pain, good and evil, are only for him, in whom the egotism is tied to the body; but for the sage who has severed that bond, and whose spirit is the reality, where can be good or evil result?

"Men not acquainted with the real nature of objects conclude from the appearance of the sun being devoured by darkness that it is really so devoured; similarly from the reflection of a body fools imagine a body for the excellent knower of the Supreme Spirit.

"The emancipated sage, intoxicated by the drinking of the juice of the supreme bliss, does not apply his faculties to objects, nor does he, being but the witness himself, restrain them from such application, and never does he even cast a glance at the fruit of Karma (consequences of acts)."

* This is a very significant expression, referring to the infusion of spiritual knowledge into receptive persons by the Mahatmas without physical intercourse.

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TRANSACTIONS
OF THE
London Lodge
OF
THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

THE HIGHER SELF.

The substance of an Address delivered at a Meeting of the London
Lodge, on the 28th of October, 1885,

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THE more we study Nature, even on the physical plane, the more complex do we find her phenomena to be. The same rule holds good on the higher planes of natural activity. Conceptions we form of super-physical processes expand *ad infinitum* the longer the mind dwells on their wider significance. The first notion we may form of any such process can rarely, indeed, in the beginning bear any closer resemblance to the truth than the notion we form of a solid by examining one of its sides. The mind may ultimately be enabled to hold all the attributes of the solid in its grasp, but that achievement is only possible as the consequence of a large development of first impressions. It may be unnecessary to discard those impressions: from the later standpoint they will seem to have afforded a crude view of the truth, but they may eventually be valued chiefly as having led up to more complete conceptions,

which, in turn, may be developed in a similar way at further stages of this inquiry.

On this principle the picture of the soul's growth or evolution presented in "Esoteric Buddhism" appears to me susceptible of additional treatment which, without uprooting any ideas it may have legitimately established in our minds, may expand and solidify our comprehension of the course Nature actually pursues. Briefly summed up, the first view of the subject we were enabled to form was to this effect. The human soul once launched on the stream of evolution as a human individuality passes through alternate periods of physical and relatively spiritual existence. It passes from the one plane, or stratum, or condition of Nature to the other under the guidance of its Karmic affinities; living in incarnation the life which its Karma has preordained; modifying its progress within the limitations of circumstances, and,—developing fresh Karma by its use or abuse of opportunities,—it returns to spiritual existence after each physical life,—through the intervening region of Kama loca,—for rest and refreshment and for the gradual absorption into its essence, as so much cosmic progress, of the life's experience gained "on earth," or during physical existence. This view of the matter will, moreover, have suggested many collateral inferences to any one thinking over the subject; for instance, that the transfer of consciousness from the kama loca to the devachanic stage of this progression would necessarily be gradual; that in truth no hard and fast line separates the varieties of spiritual condition; that even the spiritual and physical planes, as psychic faculties in living people show, are not so hopelessly walled off from one another as materialistic theories would suggest; that all states of Nature are all around us simultaneously, and appeal to different perceptive faculties; and so on, with a great procession of ideas which immediately collect round the primary truth that the evolution of man proceeds through successive and recurring phases in which material and spiritual tendencies are alternately predominant.

But this family of ideas does not necessarily come to include a conception which now seems to me required to give our view of

the whole process a truly Nature-like aspect. To begin with, it is clear that during physical existence people who possess psychic faculties remain in connexion in some way with the planes of super-physical consciousness; and, although most people of our day may not be endowed with such faculties, we all, as the phenomena of sleep even, and especially, when they are presented, those of somnambulism or mesmerism, show, are capable of entering into conditions of consciousness that the five physical senses have nothing to do with. We—the souls within us—are not as it were altogether adrift in the ocean of matter. We clearly retain some surviving interest or rights in the shore from which, for a time, we have floated off. The process of incarnation, therefore, is not fully described when we speak of an *alternate* existence on the physical and spiritual planes, and thus picture the soul as a complete entity slipping entirely from the one state of existence to the other. The more correct definition of the process would probably represent incarnation as taking place on this physical plane of Nature by reason of an efflux emanating from the soul. The spiritual realm would all the while be the proper habitat of the soul, which would never entirely quit it; and that non-materializable portion of the soul which abides permanently on the spiritual plane may fitly, perhaps, be spoken of as the Higher Self. F

One great comfort to the understanding afforded at the outset by this idea is that we escape from the embarrassment of having to think of the whole complete soul of a highly advanced human creature as inhabiting the very unsuitable body of a child. Unsatisfactory as that conception would appear, it was always impossible to imagine, in filling up the details of the reincarnation theory, that the young child could be born first and, so to speak, ensouled afterwards; from the earliest beginning the new child and the soul to which it might be destined to give incarnation were clearly already in union. But it was deeply repugnant to the understanding to suppose the greater included in the less.

The conception with which I am now dealing harmonizes with the fitness of things and with the analogies of Nature. The soul in the spiritual plane, ripe for reincarnation, takes note, as it were,

*As for it last man was bludgeoned off as a victim from a
sublimation place.*

of the newly germinating human being whose physical associations and destiny render it the most appropriate physical habitation that soul can find. Of course there is no conscious, deliberate selection in the matter. The Karmic affinities constitute a line of least resistance along which the soul throws out a magnetic shoot into the objective world, just as a root germinating in the earth throws out through that portion of the ground which most readily gives way before it, the first slender blade of green growth which makes its appearance at the surface. Along that magnetic fibre,—itself no doubt growing in vigour simultaneously with the growth of the child,—the psychic entity flows into the child's body by degrees. This view, it will be seen, corresponds with a statement that has been made in Theosophical writings to the effect that a child does not acquire its sixth principle,—or become a morally responsible being capable of generating Karma,—until seven years old. If it dies before that time, the soul simply sprouts in another place. It is still a complete soul with growth energy fermenting within it. It has never passed into the dead infant in any true sense of the term. It had simply begun to animate the infant,—a process which by the hypothesis has been arrested almost as soon as begun. But if the child does not die, but advances to maturity as a physical being, more and more of the Higher Self passes into its organization, till at last the Higher Self is, as it were, drained of, we cannot tell exactly of how much, but perhaps of the greater part of its consciousness. None the less, even when the soul is thus again fully manifesting on the physical plane, does the Higher Self still remain a conscious spiritual Ego on the corresponding plane of Nature, with greater or less capacity, according to the nature of its own Karmic elements in incarnation, for communion with its own physical brain. People with psychic faculties may indeed perceive this Higher Self through their finer senses from time to time, and may not, in the present state of occult knowledge in the world, realize at once that they are, as it were, beholding the other end of that curve through space which constitutes their complete entity. As the Higher Self would, by the hypothesis, be manifesting thoughts of a kind that had not fully passed into incarnation, there

It is a very important point in the "Gospel of the Future"

might seem to be a distinct interchange of ideas between the higher and lower selves, as though two persons were conversing. In other cases, where the incarnate man would not have faculties enabling him to cognize his Higher Self as an objective being, he might nevertheless receive impulses from its thought from time to time, which would be described as the voice of conscience prompting him to do this or that.

The theory we are considering harmonizes very well with the treatment of this world in which we live as a phenomenal world of illusion, the spiritual planes of Nature being on the other hand the noumenal world or plane of reality. That region of Nature in which, so to speak, the permanent soul is rooted is more real than that in which its transitory blossoms appear for a brief space to wither and fall to pieces, while the plant recovers energy for sending forth a fresh flower. Supposing flowers only were perceptible to ordinary senses, and their roots existed in a state of Nature intangible and invisible to us, philosophers in such a world who divined that there were such things as roots in another plane of existence would be apt to say of the flowers, These are not the real plants; they are of no relative importance, merely illusive phenomena of the moment.

The Higher Self doctrine is also recommended by its correspondence with that in-breathing and out-breathing of Brahm which symbolizes natural operations on the macrocosmic scale, and, therefore probably fits in likewise with the microcosmic scale. Physical incarnation is the out-breathing of the soul; the death of the body is associated with its in-breathing. And to some extent it looks reasonable to suppose that the still more familiar analogies of day and night, of sleeping and waking, find their place in the system we are contemplating. For during the nightly trances of the body it is more than possible that the Higher Self recovers a wakefulness which is partially in suspense during the full activity of the body. Consciousness may turn to and away from the spiritual state by alternate processes of sleeping and waking, even within the limits of that grander alternation which has to do with the periodic transfer of the whole Karmic soul from spirit to matter, at birth and death.

The Karmic progress of the soul, as depicted by the first simple conception of its passage backwards and forwards between the planes of spirit and matter, is in no way interfered with by the permanent existence of the Higher Self on the devachanic plane. No essential idea to which that broad statement of the case gives rise is discountenanced by the more advanced and elaborate theory. For instance, let us consider the case of an incarnate being, regarding Nature from the point of view of the physical plane on which his consciousness seems to him to be altogether concentrated in his waking life, and clinging earnestly to the hope of retaining his present personal consciousness after death. This is a hope which has entirely coloured the popular notion of immortality and the creeds of exoteric religions. People say—If I do not remember my present life in the next that I may lead, there is no “I” left in the transaction at all,—I do not obtain any immortality or survival. And the esoteric doctrine does not rebuke or put aside this very natural aspiration. In its simplest form it certainly tells us, You will eventually wear out, get tired of and be done with your present personality, as you have got rid of many others in the past; but you will not be violently torn from it. When you pass after death into the relatively spiritual planes of existence, you will still be your present self, remembering all that is essential in your present life, and finding, if all goes well, on the devachanic level of Nature a much freer scope for the development of all that may be noblest and best in your present life than you can possibly hope for in the body. It is only when the spiritual soul is once more colourless as regards its recollections of the former physical life that it will return through the Lethe of a fresh incarnation to the experiences of an altogether fresh personality. But now let us see how this view of the matter is affected by the doctrine of the Higher Self. Its essential idea is preserved, according to that doctrine, as completely as by means of the most materialistic statement of which the case is susceptible.

The Higher Self may be regarded as dominating the earthly personality with very different degrees of completeness in different people; and this consideration will show that personalities deeply

attached to themselves would represent souls in which the Karmic elements were largely in the ascendant. The reunion of Higher and lower selves in such cases after death would probably mean the saturation of the Higher by the lower in a commanding degree. But, in truth, after a soul has just been going through a complete span of earthly life, the Karmic elements can hardly fail on reunion to have so much to do with the completely restored consciousness as to determine the colour of the compound for the time being. And this infusion of the last personality through the Higher Self, or saturation of the Higher Self therewith, fully meets all aspirations we may feel in the direction of a personal survival after death.

I do not regard that aspiration as either blameworthy or misleading. For all men below certain exalted levels of spiritual perfection, which we need not at present consider, a survival of the personality is alike required on abstract grounds of justice and common sense, and as a part of our primary conceptions of the esoteric doctrine. We shall be, in the devachanic condition, in no sense less ourselves for feeling our personality expanded by a large super-addition of spiritual consciousness. And it will be to the gradual reassertion of the supremacy of the spiritual consciousness that we must look forward as constituting that fading out of the personality which is either dreaded or longed for by people in the flesh according to the degree of their psychic advancement, but which will, probably, be no more a source of regret to the Higher Self in its actual occurrence, than,—on our poor plane of physical analogies,—the digestion of the day's dinner is a subject of regret to a healthy man at night. That dinner may have played its part in the nutrition of the body. At the time of its consumption, perhaps, it may have been a source of some transitory pleasure in itself, but, absorbed into the body, it is merely so much renewed strength and health. So with the personality, and the Higher Self which digests it. We need not push the analogy too far; but it is quite clear that the conversion of the specific experiences of a life just past—which constitute its personality—into so much cosmic progress for the Higher Self—which is the ultimate motive, so to speak, with

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which those experiences have been incurred—is a process which, while it goes on, constitutes a prolonged preservation of identity for the personality itself, and one which only yields to the conscious pre-eminence of the Higher Self's identity, which is inextricably blended with that of the earthly personality as soon as the two are united.

From the last phase of our conception, which shows us the Higher Self absorbing the experiences of each lifetime in turn, we can readily infer that all through the long ages of its existence it is going through a process of growth on that higher plane, just as a man's mind grows within the narrow limits of our physical life. And as we reflect upon all that is implied by such a growth, we shall find our conceptions of the whole process expanding readily in both directions. To go back on the past in the first instance, it is clear that each Higher Self must have existed at one time in a very imperfectly developed state. As soon as any individuality is defined by the earliest process of human evolution, in the beginning, of a cosmic period, there must be associated with that individuality throughout its incarnations a focus of activity and consciousness on the spiritual plane of Nature which constitutes, from the beginning, its Higher Self. But the Higher Self of the primitive savage, and the Higher Self of the spiritualized man of later races, are two very different entities. It is clearly by means of the experiences gathered by its successive manifestations of activity on the physical plane, that each Higher Self grows and advances to loftier perfection. Certainly the quality of pure spirit can never vary; but the individualization of spirit may be accomplished around different foci of activity with very different degrees of success. And as the process can rarely be a rapid one, we may easily comprehend that the growth of Higher Selves on the appropriate planes of existence during a planetary manvantara is going on all the while *pari passu* with the improvement of the races in incarnation.

The Higher Self must always exercise a consciousness of an elevated quality, though, in the beginning, a consciousness deficient in vigour and intensity. But as it throws out one plant after another into incarnation and successively draws back into itself

such experiences of earthly life as may be susceptible of absorption into its own consciousness, its horizon widens, its knowledge expands, its individuality intensifies. The normal rule of its growth appears to be very slow, and to be symbolized in this respect by some of the physical processes of Nature, like the accumulation of sand on ocean beds, or the accretion of particles by a coral reef. But in course of time seas are filled up, and islands of coral built upon foundations in deep water. So the Higher Self selects its spiritual particles from the lives of its innumerable offspring, and the greatest Mahatma or the greatest Dhyān Chohan is a final consequence of processes that must have been carried on at one time as slowly as those by which the Higher Self of any African savage is rising in the scale of Nature by virtue of its all but unprofitable manifestations on earth.

It follows from this view of the subject that there must in one or some of these aspects be as much difference in spiritual elevation between various contemporary Higher Selves as between incarnate human beings. But just as all human beings have some attributes in common, so, no doubt, all Higher Selves have some attributes of spirituality in common; and these must give rise to a certain community of consciousness on the spiritual planes which may go far to elucidate some features of the devachanic doctrine that were apparently irreconcilable with the understanding at first. Along the channels of the higher self-consciousness, there is in Devachan not only a true and complete intercourse between souls in affection and sympathy, but intercourse of a very much more intense and vivid description than any which is possible between the separately walled-off tenants of two prison-houses of flesh. Meanwhile those relationships which did not have to do with Higher Selves at all are, not necessarily forgotten in the devachanic state, but, for the comparatively undeveloped entities absorbed in them, thrown into a subjective existence of an illusory nature. Take the case of a person whose Higher Self is a very great engine of power—the growth by that hypothesis of a very prolonged evolutionary process—and what happens when the last personality returns to it? As already said, the experiences of the personality must infuse them-

selves into the Higher Self and colour it for a time; but the illusions of earthly relationships will not present themselves as all-important to the restored and complete self when the threshold of the spiritual state is recrossed. The situation will be that of a man wakening from a dream, which he vividly remembers, but at once assigns to its legitimate place in his life. The reawakened life asserts supremacy over it. Perhaps a dream, indeed, may sometimes have to do with a higher life than that of the awakened state; but the consideration of that possibility would be another question. The earth-dream to the Higher Self will *not* be higher than itself, but of the kind rather which supply us with the flimsy visions of uninspired slumber. The exalted Higher Self will put aside their delusions, and quickly centre its consciousness again in the realities. It will not be disturbed because its own elevation in Nature may, perhaps, deny it the unenlightened comfort which a less developed soul might find in the beautiful reproduction of its earthly memories, thrown out of its inner depths on to the astral mirror of its subjective consciousness. With these the undeveloped soul may be happy; and happiness may have been, so far, all it sought. It will not, like its more inquiring and therefore more elevated elder brethren, have been asking so many questions of Nature concerning her processes and their own part therein, as to have grown superior to the use of the astral mirror and to the craving for its kindly illusions.

The theory of the Higher Self thus conceived seems to me to recommend itself to the mind as a scientific idea,—that is to say, as a view in harmony with the pure and subtle dignity of Natural operations,—which, often as they may be symbolized by theatrical or fantastic allegories, never betray the taint of such a character when exhaustively understood. But none the less does the clear scientific verity enable us to detect the element of truth running through various beliefs concerning the soul thrown out by independent thinkers, endowed perhaps with psychic faculties, and receiving some true inspiration, but liable, by reason of being untrained in the grammar of esoteric science, to associate such inspiration with pre-established fancies, conventional or poetical, as the case may be.

Thus one school of independent occultists has gathered round the teachings of a Seer who attaches very great importance to a view of the soul's development known as the doctrine of counterparts. *Lucifer* According to this idea every human being as known to us in incarnation is but half a human being, the complementary half whereof—of the opposite sex—is somewhere about the universe waiting for a perfect and celestial marriage at some future period. In the first form of this belief the counterpart was supposed to be another living being—a contemporary man or woman with whom it was theoretically possible that the person concerned might effect a union in life. Afterwards the theory was so far purified, I believe, as to include the condition that the counterpart of a living man or woman must always be in Heaven. Here we evidently have an imperfect presentation of the doctrine of the Higher Self, minus the detail which our esoteric guidance has enabled us to accumulate around it. Again, the involved and fantastic conception of the “Sympneumata,” which another Western mystic has worked out, is only a fresh distortion of the living fact in Nature; while the Guardian Angels of some spiritualists constitute once more a poetical presentation of the idea, and may embody one aspect of the truth very efficiently, though we are apt to fall into a great many misleading beliefs if we people the skies with entities external to ourselves, and ever on the watch to guide our tottering footsteps, like mothers with so many children. *gib*

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY AND ITS WORK.

A Paper read at a Meeting of the London Lodge, on the 25th of
November, 1885.

By MOHINI M. CHATTERJI.

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MANY, no doubt, will look forward to an apology for the selection of the present theme. But the existence of such a feeling is, in itself, the best justification that can be offered. No one, who has with any degree of precision grasped the significance of Theosophy, for the spread of which the Theosophical Society has been organized, can for a moment fail to be impressed by the necessity of frequent and full statements of the nature and scope of Theosophy and the method of work of the Theosophical Society. The tardiness of the mind to assimilate ideas outside the range of its every-day interests is well known; and the benefit of constant adjustments of our first, and necessarily imperfect, realization of an ideal in practice to the perfection of that ideal in theory, will be readily perceived. It is proposed, therefore, to examine the character of the goal for

which we are making and the efficiency of the means we are adopting for its attainment.

The word Theosophy is ordinarily accepted to mean the Wisdom-Religion of mankind. But this substitution of phrases does not remove the necessity of explanation. It is as difficult to correctly apprehend the full significance of religion as of Theosophy itself. There is a cloud of witnesses with regard to the import of this term. But it may unhesitatingly be asserted that no better definition of religion has been framed since the time of Gautama Buddha who declared, according to some Chinese authorities cited by Beale, that "religion is the realization of the true," although it forces us to consider what truth is. It is useless to enter into an historical consideration of the views of truth that have been propounded to the world by numberless generations of sages. It will suffice for our present purpose if we recognize one essential characteristic of truth. Experience shows that even in the transitory life of man there are things which are more permanent than others. The many that pass away are untrue in comparison to the one that remains. Such a thing as an absolute untruth or error does not exist in nature. What we call error is but the mental condition which passes away when the mind dwells long enough upon the object with regard to which the error is postulated. From this it appears that the chief characteristic of truth is permanence, and that the highest truth is the eternal principle in nature. Religion, therefore, is the realization of the permanent basis of all existence. At the same time it is also clear that this goal of religious activity is the ideal limit of our being, which remains an ideal for all creatures at every moment of their existence. In truth, this ideal remains for ever unrealized by the thinking principle in man. Nevertheless a steadfast attachment of the mind to the ideal is of supreme importance. It is the highest aspect of faith and devotion, and it gives the right direction to the development of man. As faith and devotion gather strength from knowledge and action, the vague and dimly perceived ideal becomes invested with meaning and reality. At times human beings are born who realize the ideal to such an extent as to perceive in what form the ideal will be

pursued by a considerable portion of mankind for a long period. And this perception enables them to embody it in a way calculated to give life and precision to the vague religious yearnings of the generality. Such men, the spiritual heroes of our race, are the religious teachers of the world. It is manifest from the very nature of things that what is directly perceived by one man can only be communicated to another who has the same kind of perception within certain limits, and that in the absence of such perception the communicator can but use formal words or similar symbols to modify the mind of the other in a way calculated to lead ultimately to the desired perception. Religious systems are thus but the formulation of truth by symbology of words and emblems. They are the shadow of truth, never truth itself. They represent truth in the same way as the top of the tree indicates the position of the moon when we say "the moon is just over the tree." A misapprehension of the true object of religious symbology is caused by the operation, in the human mind, of the law of association of ideas, which very often produces a confusion of the means with the end. It is in this manner that religion becomes converted into mere ecclesiastical forms. Theosophy, therefore, as the Wisdom-Religion, is more immediately concerned with the ideal which all systems of religion are really intended to represent than with the symbology itself. At the same time with jealous assiduity it attaches to each form its right value; just as an intelligent man correctly estimates the utility of the tree-top in marking the position of the moon. Theosophy—itself the inner truth of all religions—recognizes this, and is, in consequence, the enemy of no religious system whatever, but of the distortions and misconceptions of them all. There is, however, one particular feature in ecclesiastical systems which Theosophy is bound to oppose. The founder of a religion, as has been said, seeks to offer a representation of the ideal which he perceives generations of men will follow; but the conditions, upon which the possibility of making such a representation depends, constrain him to deal only with averages. He can never represent fully the natural ideal of one single individual. The non-recognition of this fact by followers, separated from him by time and

not spiritual enough to perceive the spirit of his work, gives religious systems their obligatory character. In ecclesiastical hands all religions are made to impose, with iron rigour, upon each individual what is strictly applicable only to the average. Theosophy recognizes individuality, and insists upon the fact that rules are made for man and not man for rules. In this insistence, however, it does not ignore that the average has to be properly comprehended in order that the individual rule may be evolved. Theosophy in this respect recognizes communism only to the extent that it is compatible with individualism, and maintains individualism only so long as it does not interfere with communism. Its ideal is the harmony of the unit with the whole. Thus Theosophy deals with the universal, while no religious system can rise beyond the general. Further, in the relation of different religious systems to one another, Theosophy, being the inner truth of them all, can never recognize any hostility, and its constant effort is to lay bare the universal truth upon which all religions are based, and thus bring about their harmony.

The various functions of the Wisdom-Religion give it four different aspects. *First*, abstract metaphysics, dealing with the limits of knowledge from the point of view of abstract wisdom. *Second*, concrete metaphysics or occultism, which regards the problem of being from the position of the individual. *Third*, theoretical ethics or theory of practice, examining the individual in relation to the universal law. *Fourth*, practical religion, or obedience to the law. In all religious systems, the last two aspects possess the greatest importance, and the other two occupy a subordinate position. It is for this reason that the true religious impulse becomes, in all systems, crystallized into dogmas for belief and injunctions for practice.

Theosophy harmonizes all religions by supplying the missing counterparts, and converting apparently antagonistic fragments into a coherent whole.

The relation of Theosophy to the so-called exact sciences is not very difficult to define. It will appear from what has already been said, that Theosophy, being the realization of truth in all its

aspects, is itself the most exact of exact sciences. It cannot have any possible hostility to the scientific spirit, and for the same reason it cannot countenance scientific dogmatism. In fact, it is dogmatism which creates a barrier between science and religion. Theosophy destroys all dogmatism which imposes an arbitrary limitation on the possibilities of human nature, and establishes the universal science, which is as religious as it is scientific.

As regards individuals, Theosophy establishes a brotherhood of man in the largest sense of the term—a brotherhood that deals with men as men, without any qualifying limitations; and contemplates a union of the race, without imposing any restrictions upon the development of every possibility in individuals. It requires no other qualification in its members than that they should be true to themselves and respect the truth in others. Absolute sincerity, and an ungrudging and brotherly toleration, form the only sound basis upon which the brotherhood of man can and must rest. The selection of any other basis degrades the brotherhood of man into a brotherhood, not of man but, of men holding a certain ideal which is defective in comparison with the ideal of humanity as a whole.

There is no doubt a certain ideal of brotherhood in Mahomedanism, for instance; but it is the brotherhood of Islam, and not of the human race; in fact its relation to humanity outside the ranks of the faithful is quite the reverse of brotherly. Through Theosophy alone, the ideal of brotherhood can be realized—a brotherhood the privileges of which are the common inheritance of the human race. No one entering the Theosophical brotherhood has anything to give up, but a pearl of price to gain, namely, brotherhood. This is the ethical aspect of Theosophy. In its metaphysical aspect it deals with the conditions upon which the brotherhood of man depends; and is the science for the investigation of the elements for the production of the utmost possible happiness of man.

Thus it is obvious that Theosophy is as wide as the world, and as deep as the life of the human race upon this planet. It is broader than the broadest organization that man can form, being in

fact the natural organization of the human family : it exists in spite of men and beyond them. The whole world may conspire to deny Theosophy, but yet it is not destroyed. The denier of Theosophy, by ignoring the deepest truth of his own nature, causes injury only to himself and not to Theosophy, which forms the eternal bond, established between man and man by human nature itself, and not by the act of any man or any number of men. It has existed and it will exist, even though unrecognized by men living at any particular period. Easier is it to get rid of our shadow than of the ultimate unity of man and man.

Why then, it may be asked, has the organization called the Theosophical Society been set on foot? May not its existence be even dangerous to the true cause, inasmuch as Theosophy transcends all man-made organization? Is it not plain that all Theosophical organizations must be more or less a limitation of the truth, a prison-house, so to say, for the ideal spirit? But a little reflection will show that these objections are really based upon the non-recognition of a very important natural law. Truth certainly is eternal, but it is never fully realized at any given moment. And it is upon this fact that all possibility of progress depends. Evolutionary progress is nothing but the struggle to realize the truth through successive attempts, one more perfect than the other. The objections we are now considering will, driven to their logical termination, be applicable to the manifestation of the spiritual principle through material bodies, necessarily imperfect in comparison with the spirit that is manifested, and thus demonstrate their own unreasonableness by collision with natural facts. The Theosophical Society is the body, however miserable, imperfect, or crippled it may be, whose soul is Theosophy, ever resplendent in its glory. This body is not only harmless, but absolutely necessary and capable of great work, so long as it does not renounce its soul—so long as it does not turn its back upon its ideal, and sacrifice spirit to form. In the present state of the world the spirit of Theosophy has to incarnate itself in some imperfect organization in order to reach the plane of the greatest activity of the human race.

How far the claim of the Theosophical Society to be the

incarnation of Theosophy is just, can be determined by a careful examination of its declared aims and objects, infidelity to which on the part of any worker in the Society, no matter what his official position may be, is chargeable on the shortcomings of the individual and not on the Society. In its universal toleration the Society, though recognizing these shortcomings, will pass over them without condemnation.

In the nature of things such shortcomings must be expected, as otherwise there would have been no necessity for the formation of a Society for the promulgation of Theosophic ideas. Moreover, Theosophy would not be itself if deficiencies did not exist in all individuals. For how could it be universal, if any individual ever fully embodied it? Defective conception of Theosophy, and its still more defective presentation, must therefore be always expected and allowed for.

The Theosophical Society, then, as it stands before the world, is the material representation of Theosophy. Its ultimate goal is to fructify all Theosophic possibilities upon the present plane of our being, and then to return to the ideal Theosophy, as matter returns to spirit, fulfilling its mission. The Society will sleeplessly work and expand until it loses its being by establishing the universal religion of mankind, its ultimate end and aim. In all our dealings with the Theosophical Society we must steadfastly keep in view the fact that its relation to Theosophy is as that of the body to the soul.

The Society has three objects, as will appear from its printed rules, which, we may mention, form the only publication it has authoritatively issued. All other writings given to the world as connected with the work of the Society are to be regarded as contributions to the study of Theosophy, but in no way as manifestoes. And all attempts to fasten the authority of the Society to any creed, philosophical or otherwise, which is not covered by those rules, are void *ab initio*; not because of the merits of such creed or doctrine, or of their exponents, but simply for the reason that the Theosophical Society, by its constitution, is not capable of holding any creed or doctrine in its corporate character. But at the same time the Society would be untrue to its principles if it did not use

its best endeavours to draw attention to writings bearing upon subjects calculated to promote a better understanding of Man, his nature and destiny.

The objects of the Theosophical Society are :—

- “ 1. To form the nucleus of a universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, or colour.
- “ 2. To encourage the study of Eastern philosophy, from which the Society believes that important truths are to be learned.
- “ 3. To investigate the psychic powers latent in Man.”

Of these three objects the first is to be looked upon as the crown and end, the other two are merely accessories and means. Every member of the Theosophical Society must be inspired by that end, but may or may not be interested in the other two objects. Next in order of importance is the second object, a large number among the members of the Society being engaged in the study of archaic religion and philosophy. It may not here be out of place to briefly advert to the reason for the selection of archaic religions in preference to those current. The reason lies in the difficulty of penetrating through forms, familiar and contemporaneous, to the spirit that underlies them; while forms, removed from the field of interest, more readily lend themselves to this treatment. It is certainly from no hostility to current religions that the Society has been guided in this selection. It has also to be mentioned that contemporary forms themselves are not properly intelligible except in relation with the past. Furthermore, the study of things that exist around us does not stand so much in need of any special organization for its appreciative pursuit as those that have passed away. The third object is the least important of the three, and occupies the attention of a comparatively small group of members. Whatever views outsiders may take, those in the Society must not forget this classification of its objects in order of importance, which,

it may be added, has been all along recognized, and is by no means brought forward now for the first time. The substance of it has been constantly reiterated by Col. Olcott. In the preface to the London edition of his Lectures Col. Olcott complains that "an inordinate importance has been given to the psychic phenomena produced by Madame Blavatsky, which, however striking in themselves, are nevertheless but a small part of Theosophy as a great whole." Dewan Bahadoor R. Ragoonath Row explains the position with great force and clearness in a letter published in the *Theosophist* magazine for March, 1884. He says:—

"Theosophy, as understood by me, is made up of three elements, viz., universal brotherhood, knowledge of truths discovered by science generally known to the ordinary scientists, and knowledge of truths still in store for them. It may be described in another way, viz., 'universal religion and science reconciled.' To be a Theosophist he must acknowledge and practise universal brotherhood. If he is not prepared to admit this principle, he cannot be a Theosophist. In addition to this, he should be a student of truths generally known, of course, to the extent of his capacity. He should, besides, be a searcher of truths hitherto unknown. If he be all these three, he is undoubtedly a Theosophist. It is, however, possible that one may not be capable of knowing scientific truths, extant or prospective, and yet may be able to recognize and practise universal brotherhood; he is still a Theosophist. No one who does not admit and practise universal brotherhood, though he be a scientist of the first degree, can ever be a Theosophist."

Returning to the consideration of the third object of the Society, we find the public mind greatly impressed, either in favour of Theosophy and the Theosophical Society or against them, by a body of phenomena illustrative of the psychic powers latent in man, which some prominent members of our Society have placed before the world; and the importance of these phenomena to the Society most grossly exaggerated. The unfamiliarity of the public with the subject has conspired with the misrepresentations of hostile critics to produce this result. It

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1 becomes necessary, therefore, to clearly define the position of the Society in relation to these phenomena. And it is believed that the foregoing considerations will show that no particular phenomenon or group of phenomena is intertwined with the Theosophical Society.

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1 It has been, however, contended by some of our opponents, that the Society ought to make an exception in the case of phenomena connected with the philosophical and esoteric writings of its members, and accept them as of vital importance: because, it is urged, they touch not only the less important third object, but also the second, which is admittedly of greater gravity. This contention, no doubt, appears plausible at first sight, but it will not bear close examination. In the first place we must guard against the confusion of the subject matter of a phenomenon with the phenomenon itself, and then we must not forget that the Society as such has not expressed any opinion whatsoever, either on these phenomena or any other. Clearly, therefore, anything proved or disproved about all the phenomena, testified to by its members, does not affect the position of the Society. Even if the philosophical tenets connected with phenomena had been assailed or overthrown, the Society would have found in it only a further stage of the development of Theosophic thought. But as a matter of fact, all philosophical attacks have hitherto been resisted with success.

2
1 A number of phenomena claimed to have been witnessed by some members of the Society have been impugned by the committee appointed by the Society for Psychical Research for their investigation. Attempts have followed to force the Theosophical Society to identify itself with those phenomena.

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1 It behoves us, therefore, to clear the ground on which the Theosophical Society stands, and repulse all attacks directed against it through phenomena, by demonstrating that it is outside the logical line of the charge. We should be untrue to the cause intrusted to us if we let ourselves be inveigled into a false and illogical position. It would be a gross violation of duty on our part to allow the Society to be identified with phenomena, no

matter of what interest and importance they may be to many of us personally. Following its third object, the Society has afforded every facility for the investigation of phenomena by those interested, and will always continue to do so, but, at the same time, it will never cease to recognize the superior importance of the study of the law underlying phenomenal manifestation. True to the principle of Theosophy the London Lodge, on the 18th March last, long before the investigations of the delegate of the Society for Psychical Research were completed in India, came to the following resolution :—

“That the Lodge regards the statements made in Madame Coulomb’s pamphlet concerning Madame Blavatsky as not calling for any special action on its part at present ; inasmuch as those allegations do not bear upon the corporate character of the Society.”

The Executive Council of the Theosophical Society in India, as far as known, also came to a similar conclusion. Nothing has occurred since then in the further progress of the investigations of the Society for Psychical Research which calls for any change of position on our part. Nor does it seem likely that these investigations, when concluded, will disclose grounds for the abandonment of the policy of the Theosophical Society.

Those among the members of the Theosophical Society who are personally concerned with these investigations have expressed their views on the subject in proper place, and will, no doubt, take such other steps as to them may seem fit, but the Society, as such, is not bound up with their conduct.

No one who has followed the subject so far will fail to perceive that the Theosophical Society is a noble institution with a great and good work before it. Those who are distressed by the spiritual famine which crass materialism has brought on find within the Society a plentiful harvest, for the impulse with which it started has already begun to fructify. To those who are anxious to do good to their fellow creatures the Society offers the largest field of work directed towards the highest well-being of the race. To the philosophical student of Man, his nature and destiny, the Society furnishes opportunities which it is difficult to obtain elsewhere.

And lastly, those desirous of realizing spiritual truths in practical conduct find their paths smoothed by the sympathy and co-operation of fellow-students and fellow-workers within the Theosophical Society.

With such an ideal before us we confidently look forward to increased help in carrying out the work we have undertaken as soon as we succeed in removing prejudices and misconceptions which, in too many instances, are due only to insufficient information.



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