

VOLO  
OR  
THE WILL

*WHAT IT IS;*

*HOW TO STRENGTHEN, AND HOW TO USE IT*

BY  
ARTHUR LOVELL

*Author of Ars Vivendi, Imagination, &c.*

**SECOND EDITION.**

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" Nature, impartial in munificence  
Has gifted man with all-subduing will ;  
Matter, with all its transitory shapes,  
Lies subjected and plastic at his feet  
That, weak from bondage, tremble as they tread."

SHELLEY.

" Do you want to rule yourself and others?  
Learn to will."

ELIPHAZ LEVI.

" The alleged power to charm down insanity or ferocity  
in beasts, is a power behind the eye. It must be a victory  
achieved in the will, before it can be signified in the eye."

EMERSON.

By same Author.

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IMAGINATION	...	...	5/- "
CONCENTRATION	...	...	<i>In preparation.</i>

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DEDICATION.



TO

THE LOVED MEMORIES

OF

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

AND

THE AUTHOR OF

"ZANONI" AND "THE COMING RACE."





## P R E F A C E.

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IN issuing the second volume of the *Ars Vivendi* Series, it may be advisable to say a few words on its general scope. The first volume, "*Ars Vivendi*," is the groundwork on which the succeeding numbers are founded, and I strongly urge all to thoroughly study that before going deeply into the contents of the present. In order to avoid one-sided or premature growth, it is necessary to be slow and sure. As we recognise the wonderful possibilities of the microcosmos, man, and learn how to cultivate harmoniously all our forces, we shall develop into a consistent whole, and eventually produce a specimen of the Emersonian "Man of the sphere, fit to grace the solar year," with enlarged power and riper wisdom.

The *Ars Vivendi* System aims at formulating what Kant termed an "Architectonic of Pure Reason"—that is, it embraces the whole man, Spirit, Soul, and Body. It does not neglect the body at the expense of the mind, nor does it allow the body to usurp a position which does not belong to it, but treats it as the indispensable servant and ally of the higher powers of the individual. It is in the cultivation of these higher powers that man becomes more than man.

*The Ars Vivendi System subordinates all knowledge whatsoever to the education and welfare of the Spiritual Man.* This is the living wisdom, without

which "he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." What profits a man if he gain the whole world of knowledge and become an abstract automaton, or a walking encyclopædia? But, you say, posterity will gratefully remember him. Be not so sure of that. Some of the greatest intellects that have ever lived on this earth, men who grappled with problems that appear absolutely insoluble to modern research, are now, even to the few, but *nominum umbræ*, whilst the majority have never heard of them. Small consolation, then, the praise of posterity.

But, altogether apart from the consideration of fame, I not only deny that it is necessary to sacrifice health and vigour at the altar of knowledge, but maintain that *it is impossible to become a really learned man unless, at the same time, one maintains the balance of the intellectual and physical forces, which in these volumes is termed "Health."* To do this effectually, the individual must be self-master.

While one casts a bird's-eye view over the intellectual world of to-day and surveys the undoubted progress we are making in physical science, one cannot but compare it with the state of Medical Science, or the science which relates to the maintenance of health. What poor results! The notion that pain and disease are inevitable results of life, I utterly refuse to accept. Mr. Herbert Spencer's remark that "all breaches of the laws of health are physical sins," conveys to the aspirant after health and vigour a hint of great significance, for it suggests the possibility of getting a more intimate acquaintance with the laws of our being, and thus of avoiding the ills that now are considered impossible to escape from. I may take

this opportunity of explaining my relation to the medical profession. Now and then it is remarked to me and of me, that I wage war *à l'outrance* with the medical faculty. A word will, I trust, show my attitude to be both right and consistent. I myself studied for the medical profession, and intended to take my degree in the ordinary way, but the idea of practising a system which was represented by its leading professors to be, after all, incapable of becoming a *science*, and which was acknowledged to be an empirical collection of facts rather than an organic whole, grew so distasteful to my mind, striving as I was for a system of living rather than for erroneous opinions of this or that learned master of medicine, that I abandoned all thought of becoming a doctor, and plunged into philosophy and theology, after which I trod many unfrequented paths of knowledge. All this may make only "a fool, with useless learning curst," unless the living Will or Spirit takes the helm. It is this great truth that the *Ars Vivendi* System is striving to inculcate in a practical manner. The school of thought to which I belong has little or nothing in common with the medical system of to-day. From my point of view a medical man has quite as much need to learn and practise the art of living as another person, for he is as little exempt from the pains and aches of humanity as the patient for whom he prescribes.

While, however, maintaining this principle of uncompromising opposition to the system of drugging, I want to make it clear that I do not make a general onslaught on doctors as individuals. On the contrary, I have several friends and acquaintances amongst the

members of the medical profession, and I don't think that, as a class, a more thoroughly conscientious and upright body of men can be met with. While cordially acknowledging this, one cannot ignore the fact that the doctor, as we know him, is not himself pre-eminently a man of vigour, which, given that he has a real system to follow, we have the right to expect. *I maintain that it is possible for man to build a lasting edifice of mental and bodily vigour that will be impregnable to the assault of disease.* This has been the cry of man throughout the ages, and this cry must be satisfied, and, I believe, will be satisfied in the very near future.

To me the question is of very little moment whether morphia or opium will relieve pain, or whether such and such a medicine does one what is called "good." *The problem worth solving is how to get out of this wretched state altogether.* To put nimble patches here and there is, at need, a grateful task, but what is it compared to the idea of a suit that will stand wear and tear without the aid of patches? Instead of tinkering the constitution with a dose of this or that, *suppose we can reach a stage where this method of recruiting vitality is crude and childish!*

The Ars Vivendi System aims at unifying the knowledge and the powers of the individual into a self-consistent whole. The succeeding volumes will deal with Imagination, Physical Culture, Diet, Elixir of Life, Chromopathy, etc.

In order not to swell the volumes into an inconvenient size, many points here and there that require further elucidation to the mind of the reader are but briefly touched upon, and may be too scantily treated.

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As my object is to condense as much as possible, consistently with clearness, this can hardly be avoided. And besides, *books can never explain as lucidly as the living teacher, and this is the reason why complete and final instruction was never given in the Ancient Mysteries but by word of mouth.* In the commonest art or trade, the teacher or master is indispensable. Much more so with the greatest of all arts and sciences—the Art of Living—which is identical with the Science of Wisdom referred to so often in the Platonic dialogues. There are many practical questions which it would be impossible to adequately discuss on paper.

The present volume is divided into two parts. Part I. is intended for him or her who is beginning seriously to take self-cultivation in hand. Part II. for the same person when the first is thoroughly mastered.

ARTHUR LOVELL.

5 PORTMAN STREET,  
PORTMAN SQUARE, W.

*June, 1897.*





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PART I.



# V O L O .

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE PROBLEM OF THE WILL.

IT is a remarkable fact that, whilst everybody, and most of all the unfortunate wight who has not got a particle of this estimable commodity, knows perfectly well what is meant by "will," philosophy has never yet succeeded in agreeing upon the simplest problems connected with it, or even in presenting a satisfactory definition of the term. That interminable controversy between Fate or Necessity and Freedom of the Will has hopelessly puzzled many a learned philosopher of old, and will furnish an endless theme of soul-stirring controversy to the cap-and-gown metaphysicians of the future. Some very learned people will not hear of such a thing as "will" at all, and laugh to scorn the idea of "a forked straddling animal with bandy legs"—to borrow an expressive and felicitous, albeit somewhat brusque, expression of the immortal Dean of St. Patrick's—deluding himself with the dream of freedom in a world where the iron, but clankless, chain has bound him from his very birth. The very semblance of freedom, say these remorseless logicians, is but the playful irony of Mother Nature, who amuses herself

by allowing and encouraging her slaves to indulge in tall talk, and pretend that they have knocked off their fetters by covering them with flowers. Analyse the constituents of what is pompously denominated freedom of will, we are told, and you find nothing but Motive, Impulse, Desire, Passion, even what the Americans call "sheer cussedness"—in fact, anything and everything you can think of but the very thing you are continually talking about. On the other hand, other equally learned people insist that man has been endowed with a will as free as the wind, and that he is at perfect liberty to do as he pleases. A fertile theme of discussion a few years ago in theological annals was the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Many a clerical tongue has waxed eloquent, and many an erudite pen has been busied upon the stupendous task of demonstrating the goodness of God in placing Adam within easy reach of temptation, and vindicating Adam's perfect freedom of will.

Leaving these profound and recondite questions to the theologians, metaphysicians, and others who feel impelled to take part in this fascinating controversy, I must beg leave to disarm criticism by frankly declaring at the outset that no attempt will be made in this volume to present a satisfactory definition of the Will. To lay down a definition that will satisfy everybody is a task to which I cannot aspire. Every reader is, therefore, invited to supply the definition that best suits himself, and I am confident that, if he does so, he will succeed to his entire satisfaction. Everybody, at the present day, has a horror of metaphysics. It is to be borne in mind, however, that this is not because man is not a metaphysician by nature, but simply

because he finds it almost impossible to understand or appreciate anybody else's metaphysics. The world is just, and therefore refuses to tolerate metaphysics any longer. The individual, however, can exercise his inalienable right to build up a metaphysical edifice of his own, and need not bother about another person's opinion on the strength or weakness of that edifice. The greater part of the mischief hitherto in the world has arisen from the fact that each metaphysician has not been content with rearing his own edifice in peace and quietness, but wants everybody else to acknowledge and accept it. The theologian, for example, settles privately for himself the precise terms on which he bargains for salvation, and other important matters in the next world; and, when he has done this to his own perfect satisfaction, he proceeds to settle every other person's future affairs. The other person, in his turn, wants to settle the matter for himself. And thus the two parties come to blows. The only solution the world as a whole can arrive at with regard to this vexed point is to abandon metaphysics entirely in public, and to let everybody please himself in the matter in private. The theologian's heart may be saddened at the spectacle of so much apathy, but none the less the verdict is final and irrevocable. All metaphysics—but one's own, of course,—is distasteful to the palate of to-day.

If we look at this verdict from another point of view, we shall find it to be the embodiment, not merely of ordinary common sense, but of the highest wisdom. Man's natural tendency is to strain his eyes at a distant object either in the past or future.



Everything around him is dull, prosaic, and in the last degree uninteresting. In his actual surroundings he can do nothing worth talking about, so he consoles himself with speculating what he might have done if he had lived in an age in which all was Romance and Arcadia, and what he may do in a dim and distant future, far away beyond the grave. Time and again he works himself into a fever over the question whether he will exist as an individual for a million or countless million years hence, utterly forgetting that, if he carries into those countless ages the same ideas and thoughts as he harbours at present—well, God help him! He talks of endless ages of existence, and yet he does not know how to dispose of a single hour, much less a single day, with any degree of real satisfaction to himself. Take mankind as a whole, and how many would one find in whom Faust's despair is not re-echoed?

“Each morn, with a dull sense of something dreadful,  
I wake, and from my bitter heart could weep  
To see another day, which, in its course,  
Will not fulfil one wish of mine—not one!  
The teasing crowd of small anxieties,  
That each day brings, have frittered into dust  
All joy, until the very hope of joy  
Is something that the heart has ceased to feel!  
And life's poor masquerade—vapid and wayward  
And worthless as it is—breaks in upon,  
And dissipates, the world, which for itself  
The lonely man's imagination builds;  
And when the night is come, with heavy heart  
Must I lie down upon my bed, where rest  
Is never granted, where wild dreams come,  
Hideous and scaring.  
And therefore is existence burdensome,  
And death desirable, and life detested.”

To such a being as this what a mockery, what an awful thing is life unceasing! How can he who is utterly unable to dispose of one hour with credit to himself, reasonably expect to dispose of one million years with decent satisfaction? But in another world one would have better conditions, etc. Why? Why suppose that every spot in the universe is a gorgeous paradise, and this poor earth of ours the spawn of creation? In fact, there is nothing at the bottom of this endless-duration idea of immortality but ignorance of the true meaning of life. The real problem worth discussing by man is not whether he will live hereafter—for if it is better for our development that we shall live for countless ages, we can depend upon it with absolute certainty that it has been so planned in the wise scheme of the Universe—but *whether he is living now*. What an absurd question! you may say. Can't we know whether we are alive or not? Don't we know the difference between a man who is dead and a man who is alive? Not always. The very person who is stretched out as a corpse before you may be tenfold more alive than you who are looking upon him in the full possession of your faculties. He may have developed his powers to a far greater extent than yourself, and thus might have passed through the portals of death without loss of consciousness or power.

It is not, however, my purpose to go into the question of a future life. My object at present is to concentrate attention upon the fact that hankering after a *future* life is waste of time in every way. Eternity is not an endless chain of years in uninterrupted succession, but a Now and a Here. *And*



*the question of real moment to every individual is whether he realises this thought.* There are infinite powers lying dormant in man, here, now: powers which, could he but catch a glimpse of, would endow his life on this planet with greater splendour, and impart to it redoubled interest. To suppose that his life will have this splendour and this interest given to it in another sphere of existence, without any effort or merit on his part, is an idea the sooner he gets rid of the better. As we sow, so we reap. If our life is dull and insupportable here, the chances are that it will be dull and insupportable there—a thought that has been poetically expressed by Longfellow in "The Golden Legend."

" Rest ! Rest ! O, give me rest and peace !  
The thought of life that ne'er shall cease  
Has something in it like despair,  
A weight I am too weak to bear !  
Sweeter to this afflicted breast  
The thought of never-ending rest !  
Sweeter the undisturbed and deep  
Tranquillity of endless sleep !"

The amount of force that has been expended by the race in the solution of the problem of a future life would have been far more profitably spent in expanding and deepening the present life, meaning not the mere material life of the senses, but the latent powers of the Inner Man. It is this conviction which has rendered abstruse philosophical discussions on abstract questions so distasteful to the present age. There is a growing feeling that life is wonderful, divine, and, consequently, a great repugnance to squander it in useless speculations on questions which even the most advanced amongst us can only see as

in a glass darkly. Althotas, the magician in Dumas' novel, "Memoirs of a Physician," expresses this impatience of theoretical speculation.

"'And what slime have you stirred up? Eh?' 'The best—the slime of philosophy.' 'Oh! So you are setting to work with your Utopias, your baseless visions, your fogs and mists! Fools! Ye discuss the existence or non-existence of God, instead of trying, like me, to make gods of yourselves.'"

In the chapter treating of the practical cultivation of will-force, I shall deal more fully with this point, and show the absolute necessity of avoiding theoretical speculations in connection with it; for it never can be too strongly impressed upon the mind that the will is an actual living force, and that right opinion upon this or that question does not in the least augment the capacity of willing per se. An Obi woman of Africa or the West Indies does not possess as much accurate knowledge of the conformation and size of the globe she inhabits as an European of average culture, yet an Obi woman can use her will to produce effects that would astonish the civilised man. Scepticism, or Doubt, produces a mental state of negativity which renders impossible the action of Will. To possess an accurate scientific conception, as is possible to obtain at the present day, of the mode of action of the will is, of course, a great improvement upon the view which regards every abnormal manifestation of power as due to the co-operation of the Devil; but, so far as the actual result itself is concerned—that is to say, the effect intended to be produced—it matters not whether your belief is right or wrong, provided the belief itself is firm and

unshaken. That is the explanation of the marvellous powers possessed by certain savages who cannot be compared for an instant with the ordinary member of a civilised nation. Some of the witches and warlocks, again, were ignorant peasants, but there is undoubted evidence to show that they were vastly superior in practical power of will to the judges who condemned them to the rack and the stake.

The importance of avoiding vague and abstruse speculations, which run away with the ordinary intelligent man, is pointed out by Lytton in "The Coming Race"—a book of the very greatest importance to the student of to-day, containing, as it does, hints and suggestions which are of far more practical value to the reformer than the dull and long-spun essays on social and political questions which are so plentiful at the present time. "All that part of literature (and, to judge by the ancient books in our public libraries, it was once a very large part) which relates to speculative theories on society is become utterly extinct. Again, formerly there was a vast deal written respecting the attributes and essence of the All-Good, and the arguments for and against a future state; but now we all recognise two facts, that there *is* a Divine Being, and that there *is* a future state, and we all equally agree that if we wrote our fingers to the bone, we could not throw any light upon the nature and conditions of that future state, or quicken our apprehensions of the attributes and essence of that Divine Being. Thus another part of literature has become also extinct, happily for our race; for in the times when so much was written on subjects which no one could determine, people

seemed to live in a perpetual state of quarrel and contention."

He who aspires upward and onward, and desires to train himself for membership of The Coming Race of superior strength of mind and body, must resolutely avoid useless discussions on topics which do not immediately concern him. There will be no fear whatever that in so doing he will run the risk of lagging behind his contemporaries in knowledge of the world; for the development of Intuition, which is one of the results of this abstention from "a perpetual state of quarrel and contention," will very soon prove of practical service. The reader will do well to bear constantly in mind that the development inculcated in the *Ars Vivendi System* is not an undefined aspiration after vague and shadowy powers, *but a most practical business, an affair, in fact, of every day.* "Inapplicable knowledge," remarked Hegel, "is a cumbrous load. Only the knowledge that subserves the ends of life becomes a working power." To increase one's working power—that is the great desideratum of to-day. Over and over again have I seen frightful hardships caused by the decay of the worker's strength. In these cases modern life assumes an aspect of terror to the stoutest heart, and little wonder is it that there is cursing and gnashing of teeth. I have no desire to indulge in cheap sentiment, but knowing as I do what immense power for good is latent in the will, I yearn to send the doctrine home in a practical manner to every toiling man and woman. To bring about a better state on the material plane; in the language of Christianity, to establish the Kingdom of God upon

earth, not to indulge in rhapsodies over a Summerland, or Heaven, or Devachan beyond (the underlying ideas of these three terms are substantially the same)—that appears to me to be the aim that we should all have in view.

Though, at the outset, I have disclaimed any intention of strictly defining Will, it will nevertheless be an advantage to present an approximate idea of the meaning attached to the term in the present volume.

Will may be regarded as identical with Character, Courage, Heroism, Determination, Pluck, Resolve, Love.

These words express different aspects, or modes, of the same thing. Perhaps the best way of expressing my meaning is as follows. Think of a straight line. At one end put yourself: at the other the object you desire to attain. This object will vary according to circumstances. It may be love, or money, or fame, or a noble idea, or a bad idea. *The will rushes in a straight line to this object, and connects it with you by a chain, the strength of which is in proportion to the intensity of the desire.* Thus:—

- |     |                |       |         |
|-----|----------------|-------|---------|
| (1) | Will<br>Spirit | ————— | Object. |
| (2) | Ego<br>Will    | ~~~~~ | Object. |

No. 1 is the direct and concentrated action of the strong man who goes straight for his object, whatever that object may be; No. 2 is the feeble, vacillating effort of the weak personality, who has not made up his mind what his aims really are, and who cannot “gather his loins” to go for his object in the direct manner of No. 1. The straight and the crooked line



played a leading part in the symbology of the Pythagorean school. In Ennemoser's "History of Magic," we read in reference to Pythagoras:

"The application of the primary numerals to the spiritual and material world we find in the Magicon as follows:—'True mathematics is something with which all higher sciences are connected. Above all things it depends upon the knowledge of the straight and crooked lines. If the former is explained as the continuation of many infinitely small straight lines, this is just as radically false and far from the true laws of Nature, as it is a proof of how much men are inclined to confound all things together. As in Nature everything has its distinctive numeral, thus there are two lines also. Emanations into the infinite is the subject of the straight, and restriction or deviation from the infinite progression the subject of the crooked line. These two numerals, with which the knowledge of everything intellectual and material is connected remain through all gradations of quantity the same; for greater or lesser expansions of the straight and crooked line are but gradations and varieties of action and duration, as all results of their various gradations must always be to each other as 4 to 9. Herein we find all individual as well as generic differences of intellectual and material nature explained. From this it arises that individuals of the same class differ, and yet have one common law, source, and numeral. The signification of the straight and crooked line may be a key to many secrets of physiology and physiognomy. For here the straight line always shows strength, central energy, reason; while, on the contrary, circular formation is associated with less firmness and more

material insolidity. Moreover, the signification of the numerals 4 and 9, the straight and crooked lines, does not only extend to the form and action of the human soul, but also to the whole sensitiveness and energy of its principles. Men of the highest order show themselves in thought like brilliant rays of light, as their style is straightforward; others of a low grade, on the contrary, speak and write in circles and periods, and therefore are so agreeable to material ears.'"

In accordance to the strength and purity of a man's intellect, does he tend to use the straight line in speech, in writing, and in action. He knows that words are merely a means to an end—the communication of thought; and he uses them only for this purpose. And in proportion to the weakness and impurity of a man's intellect, does he tend to use words as things in themselves. He takes pride in a pleasing arrangement, and the critics go into raptures over wealth of diction and beauty of style, even when the underlying thought is a vapid commonplace. Men of action, like Napoleon Buonaparte, frequently sneer at the purely literary man as "a manufacturer of phrase," and nothing else. Too often the sneer is deserved; for if there is not a sterling purpose and firm-set thought at bottom, the writing or the speaking is nothing but a house of cards.

The more one investigates the domain of Will, the more hopeless becomes the task of defining its precise meaning; for Will is the individual, the whole man.  
*It is the fire of life.*

It may be here advisable to refer to the supposed distinction between the Good and the Evil Will.

Strictly speaking, the term "Evil Will," at any rate as popularly understood, is quite wrong. The object of the Will is good for self and good for others. To put it shortly, it can be laid down as a canon of universal application, that *the object of the Will is The Good, The Beautiful, and The True*. But what about evil men? What about Black Magic? Here is involved the question of wisdom. A bad man, or the consummation of a bad man—the Black Magician—cannot in any sense of the word be considered a wise man, for he is at war with himself. There is no peace or harmony within. To secure "that peace which passeth understanding," the Individual Will must work together with the Universal Will, or rather, the individual must become the channel of activity for the Universal Will. "The devil is an ass," represents the true standpoint of evolution. A very admirable representation of the Black Magician is given by the poet Byron in his characters of Lara, Conrad, The Giaour, and Manfred. Byron, it may be remarked, with the intuition of true genius pierced through the veil of Nature, and portrayed the type of the Ideal Man. But as we can never see but what is in ourselves, and as we never write but of what is latent in our nature, so Byron never succeeded in attaining that peaceful summit on which some of Shakespeare's characters—for instance, Prospero (with whom I shall deal a little more fully in another chapter)—live, move, and have their being. The four Byronic heroes referred to here are magnificent specimens of strength, and are the creation of True Poetry, but not the highest. Such "manufacturers of phrases" as Jeffrey and Macaulay did not understand Byron at all, and their criticisms



of the Byronic heroes possess no value whatever from the standpoint of occultism, understanding by occultism the underlying current of which literature is the surface. Great writers are literally the exoteric exponents of the hidden mysteries of God and Man; and when a brilliant surface rhetorician, such as Macaulay, takes in hand the criticism of, for instance, Plato, he never fails to talk such arrant nonsense as is contained in "Tom's" essay on Bacon.

The wise will, then, always desires The Good. It is one with the Universal Will which is to refine and purify and sublimate matter step by step, grade after grade, degree upon degree. "Away with your gloomy phantasies of sorcerer and demon!" Zanoni says to the weak, terrified, and suffering pupil, "The soul can aspire only to the light; and even the error of our lofty knowledge was but the forgetfulness of the weakness, the passions, and the bonds of mortality." And in another passage of great beauty, both of diction and of thought, he says: "Observe yon tree in your neighbour's garden. Look how it grows up, crooked and distorted. Some wind scattered the germ, from which it sprung, in the clefts of the rock; choked up and walled round by crags and buildings, by nature and man, its life has been one struggle for the light—light which makes to that life, the necessity and the principle: you see how it has writhed and twisted—how, meeting the barrier in one spot, it has laboured and worked, stem and branches, towards the clear skies at last. What has preserved it through each disfavour of birth and circumstances—why are its leaves as green and fair as those of the vine behind

you, which, with all its arms, can embrace the open sunshine? Because for the very instinct that impelled the struggle—because the labour for the light won to the light at length. So with a gallant heart, through every adverse accident of sorrow, and of fate, to turn to the sun, to strive for the heaven; this it is that gives knowledge to the strong, and happiness to the weak. Ere we meet again, you will turn sad and heavy eyes to those quiet boughs, and when you hear the birds sing from them, and see the sunshine come aslant from crag and housetop to be the play-fellow of their leaves, learn the lesson that Nature teaches you, and strive through darkness to the light!"

This "striving through darkness to the light" is what in the language of religion is called "Faith," and in the language of Magic or Occultism is called "Will." It is precisely the same principle as is contained in the Pythagorean straight line, *going in one unwavering direction towards its object*—The Good. Wisdom sees the one principle expressed in a myriad of forms by different minds. The strong and self-conscious Spirit utilises all and any of these forms whenever it requires them for elucidating truth either to Self or to others, and gathers all literature into the hollow of its hand. This is what Emerson meant in his essay on History—"The student is to read history actively, not passively: to esteem his own life the text and books the commentary. Thus compelled, the Muse of history will utter oracles, as never to those who do not respect themselves. I have no expectation that any man will read history aright, who thinks that what was done in a remote age, by men whose

names have resounded far, has any deeper sense than what he is doing to-day. The world exists for the education of each man. Everything tends in a wonderful manner to abbreviate itself and yield its own virtue to him. He should see that he can live all history in his own person. He must sit solidly at home, and not suffer himself to be bullied by kings or empires, but know that he is greater than all the geography and all the government of the world; he must transfer the point of view from which history is commonly read, from Rome, and Athens, and London to himself, and not deny his conviction that he is the court, and if England or Egypt have anything to say to him, he will try the case; if not, let them forever be silent. He must attain and maintain that lofty sight where facts yield their secret sense, and poetry and annals are alike."

*Every word of the above quotation describes the action of the strong Spirit in relation to the material world. It is of quite secondary consideration who uttered this or that expression, Pythagoras, Plato, Shakespeare, Goethe, Carlyle, or Emerson. The One Spirit that works in you, in me, worked in them. Idolatry is to bow before a great name or a great man without knowing what you are bowing for. If the spirit within you recognises a greater spirit—in other words, a larger share of the Universal which is the core of your own life—in another, then you bow with reverence; for by so doing you are in harmony with the law of degree, and thus elevate yourself. The object of individual life is to evolve the self-conscious spirit in each and all of us, so that we may develop into "mighty Sons of God," not wallow*

in the mire of fear and imbecility, and pain and sorrow and disease.

“ Too long shut in strait, and few,  
Thinly dieted on dew,  
I will use the world, and sift it,  
To a thousand humours shift it,  
As you spin a cherry.”

The direct aim of literature, as I will show a little later on, is to assist the individual spirit in its struggle “from darkness to the light.” As Spirit is one, it is not surprising that, under various masks, the one principle only is found. The student will find it a great help to compare the great writers with each other, instead of accepting the lucubrations of the several commentators. Thus, for instance, the best commentary on Plato is Emerson, Carlyle, Goethe, and Shakespeare, not the erudite disquisitions of Jowett, though such works as the latter have their independent value for purposes of reference. And, again, the central doctrine of Christianity, that the Kingdom of God is within, is far better elucidated in “Wilhelm Meister” and in Emerson’s “Essays” than in all the volumes brought forth by learned divines and long-winded commentators. *The cardinal rule of first-rate criticism is that every writing can only be understood by the spirit that produced it.* And, if the spirit is not there, you can turn and twist and spin out words more cunningly than the spider spins out his cobweb, but all to no purpose. When we abandon this mechanical criticism, and learn to cultivate insight, or clairvoyance, then we begin to make real progress.

The passage quoted from Zanoni illustrates the same state of mind as the verses of the Apostle

James, chap. i., 5-8. The latter expresses it with greater vigour, crispness, and conciseness, and, in fact, is sublime, while the passage in Zanon is romantic. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."

Though, as I trust has been satisfactorily shown by the foregoing, the symbolic representation of the Will is a straight line joining the ego and the object, yet we all know that the will very seldom indeed attains its object at the first start. There are difficulties in the way—all but insurmountable obstacles. King Canute, says the story, took his seat on the sea-shore and willed the tide to retire; but the latter paid no attention to the imperious summons, and would have tumbled him about with not the slightest regard to his royal dignity, had not the former beat a hasty retreat. King Canute does not stand alone in his experience of the inability of the will to secure its object. If we sprinkle a liberal amount of crosses on the straight line, we shall obtain an admirable representation of the state of affairs with which men and women—high and low, rich and poor—are, alas! but too familiar.

Will— $\frac{\vee \vee \vee \vee \vee \vee}{\wedge \wedge \wedge \wedge \wedge \wedge}$ —Object.

If we took the opinion of the majority, we should find that, whatever was thought of the value of the straight line as a symbol of will, no fault would be



found with the black crosses. They are real enough, would be the unanimous verdict. Whatever object the will fixes upon, the chances are that it will not attain it without an effort, and often not attain it at all. To take a very ordinary example—Love, with which Will is in many aspects identical. Here it would be natural to conclude that the will would easily secure its object. But what does the poet say? "The course of true love never did run smooth." That is, the black crosses continually crop up, in the shape of irate fathers and cantankerous relations. However, the will leaps over obstacles; "faint heart never won fair lady." Those who fail to perceive the identity of Love and Will can here detect the transition from love to courage and determination. Faint heart is fear, cowardice, the opposite of will; and both will and love succeed in casting out fear from the inner man. What is the hero but a lover? The object in this case is different—freedom, honour, truth, country; but the fire of love is present just as much as in your Romeos and your Juliets.

Considering that the ultimate object of the will is Universal Good, it is not surprising that the instinct of man tells him to strengthen his will by every means he can possibly think of. Why is it that the coward is regarded with universal scorn and detestation and contempt? Simply because he has no will. *Cowardice per se confesses itself to be devoid of that central fire which is superior to anything found in the external world.* We love to see a flash of this fire in any living creature. The expression, "Game to the death," expresses our pride in its presence, and our contempt at its absence. It is said that the abject cowardice

of some of the poor slaves in America excited the greatest disgust, even in the very people who were doing their utmost to give them the rights of free-born men. Again, what multitudes of sins will a spark of undaunted courage redeem! Let a man be guilty of all crimes imaginable, if he shows a will of iron, a will that is calm and undaunted in the face of the most terrific dangers, it is impossible to withhold a certain amount of admiration, which mediocrity and goodness can never excite. This is owing to the fact that even the contemplation of a strong will exhilarates and strengthens, even when the object to which it is devoted does not meet with our approbation.

Emerson in one of his Essays expounds the principle that "the exercise of the will, or the lesson of power, is taught in every event. From the child's successive possession of his several faculties up to the hour when he says 'Thy will be done'"—that is, the Universal Will which manifests itself in the world as The Good, The Beautiful, The True,—"he is learning the secret that he can reduce under his will, not only particular events, but great classes, nay the whole series of events, and so conform all facts to his character. Nature is thoroughly mediate. It is made to serve. It offers all its kingdoms to man as the raw material which he may mould into what is useful. One after another his victorious thought comes up with, and reduces all things, until the world becomes at last only a realised will—the double of the man."

Inventions, discoveries, reforms of all kinds, what are they but constant efforts of the will to bring

about a better state of things, making steam, electricity, and the subtler forces of nature subservient to man, in accordance with the eternal principle that the high governs the low? The education of the will is the growth into a higher plane of Knowledge, the conquest of Space and Time, the subjugation of the brutal animal passions, the victory over Ignorance, Fear, and Stupidity, first of all in ourselves, and then in every other self with whom we come in contact. This is the subtle meaning that runs everywhere like a thread of gold, and binds the literature of all the nations of the earth into one grand whole. The unending theme is the battling of Spirit with Matter, Thought with Ignorance, Light with Darkness, and the final triumph of the Will. This is the key to all the arcana of Nature, which "offers all its kingdoms to man as the raw material which he may mould into what is useful." But his path is not an easy one. It is full of thorns and briars. Still, whatever form his adventures may take, whether he encounters dragons, genii, devils, marids, sorcerers, demons, lions, tigers, or serpents, the hero ultimately triumphs, *the will succeeds in attaining its object*. How refreshed we are by the victory of our fellow over external necessity; how delighted that the mind is a match for brute force! Think of a fable, or tale, or legend, that puts before us as an object of admiration a man who quailed before adversity, who cried it was no use trying, that it was better to lie down and die! To exhort us to become cowards would disgust the most lily-livered. The something within—the still small voice—would proclaim the blasphemy.

This something within—call it by whatever name



you like—is present in the child who listens to a nursery tale of enchanted castles, fairies, giants, and the hero and heroine. The hero is taking his walks abroad when he encounters a terrible dragon. The child is all ears, and shrewdly guesses beforehand what is going to happen. The hero will make the dragon bite the dust. "He killed the dragon," he exclaims. "Oh, no! he didn't. He was so frightened that he ran back home, and never dared to go out again." The child is disappointed, and can never be persuaded that it was quite the right thing for the hero to turn tail at sight of such a monster, even though if he stood his ground he might spoil his fine clothes and lose his precious life. The child will tell you that it would be better for him to lose his life than to parade such cowardice. But if you tell the child that the hero not only met the dragon, but smote him with all his might till the dragon ran away, or was killed, and the child claps his hands with delight. A few years more the child becomes the schoolboy, who devours with absorbing interest tales of adventure and derring-do. The dragon and the enchanted castle have given place to Red Indians and cannibals and wild animals. The hero now escapes by the skin of his teeth from the clutches of the redskin, only to find a huge bear welcoming him to his embrace; but in the nick of time he remembers he has got a pistol in his coat pocket, and shoots the bear right through the heart. So true was his aim that the bullet knocks on the head another bear who was making his way towards him. The hero now is desperately hungry, so he kindles a fire, and feasts himself in the forest with as

much enjoyment as if he was home with his mother, after which he goes to sleep. A few years more and the boy becomes the man, who does not believe in enchanted castles and encounters with redskins, but he still clings with admiration to the same ideas under a different form. He now begins to see that there is a profound meaning in the tales of the nursery and the school, and that meaning *is to wipe out the crosses on the straight line which unites the will with its object.* This is the lesson that man is most in need of; for, as was said by Franklin, "mankind are very superficial and dastardly. They begin upon a thing, but meeting with a difficulty they fly from it discouraged; but they have capacities if they would employ them." Who does not delight in a tall story, such as, for instance, that of the Yankee and the shark? "I was once bathing in the sea about a mile from shore when I happened to look round and saw a huge shark bearing down upon me. I thought it a great nuisance to be interrupted in this unceremonious fashion, so whipped my knife out of my side pocket, and ripped the fellow up." To enjoy a good story of this kind you needn't be so dreadfully matter-of-factish as to want to know where he got his knife from, and whether it is the customary thing to bathe with one's clothes on.

Let us now proceed to the investigation of the same principle in a more exalted form—that of the world-wide literature within reach of modern civilisation. I say "modern" civilisation to emphasise the fact that there has been "ancient" civilisation, portions of which are now looming on our horizon, and which attained

a far higher level of intellectual greatness and command over the subtle forces of nature than ourselves at the present day.

In order to derive the fullest benefit from the perusal of Romance and Fiction and Fable and Myth, the Imagination requires to be trained and vivified, for *the imagination is the creative power both in the Universal and the Individual Mind. Will and Imagination, in fact, to attain a high degree of excellence, must work together.* The succeeding volume of the "Ars Vivendi" series will therefore deal with the Imagination, and will form the necessary complement of the present work.

Poetry and Romance, when viewed in the feeble glimmer of the farthing taper of formal criticism, reveal none of their beauties. But when surveyed in the daylight of the self-conscious Spirit which employs "imagination" as one of the instruments in its inexhaustible storehouse of power, Romance and Poetry will gladly display their buried treasures. Imagination is often supposed to be antagonistic to common sense or strict science. Let, then, an acknowledged leader of materialistic science, the late Professor Tyndall, speak:—

"The philosopher cannot consider, much less answer, the question, 'What is Light?' without transporting himself to a world which underlies the sensible one, and out of which all optical phenomena spring. To realise this subsensible world the mind must possess a certain pictorial power. It must be able to form definite images of the things which that world contains; and to say that, if such or such a state of things exist in the subsensible world, then the pheno-

mena of the sensible one must of necessity grow out of this state of things. Physical theories are thus formed, the truth of which is inferred from their power to explain the known and to predict the unknown. This conception of physical theory implies the exercise of the imagination—a word which seems to render many respectable people, both in the ranks of science and out of them, uncomfortable. That men in the ranks of science should feel this is, I think, a proof that they have suffered themselves to be misled by the popular definition of a great faculty, instead of observing its operation in their own minds. Without imagination we cannot take a step beyond the bourn of the mere animal world, perhaps not even to the edge of this one. But in speaking thus of imagination, I do not mean a riotous power which deals capriciously with facts, but a well-ordered and disciplined power, whose sole function is to form such conceptions as the intellect imperatively demands. Imagination thus exercised never severs itself from the world of fact. This is the storehouse from which its materials are derived; and the magic of its art consists, not in creating things anew, but in so changing the magnitude, position, grouping, and other relations of sensible things, as to render them fit for the requirements of the intellect in the subsensible world."

Science—that is, Knowledge—is a weapon of the Will. And until man fully understands and realises this, he will accumulate facts like pearls on a string. In the hands of Spirit these pearls become endowed with life, and subserve higher ends; and, if we talk of *exact science*, we must take into account *all the facts*, not shut our eyes to one half, while vainly trying to



make the other half into a whole. What is called "modern science" was, up till quite recently, a feeble rattling of dry bones by a skeleton hand. But man is not a withered skeleton, but possessed of living blood and flesh, and the dry bones of science do not appeal to him as an edifying spectacle. The subtle meaning underlying Goethe's Faust is the protest of the Spirit against this skeleton—rattling under the name of Knowledge or Science.

" Alas ! I have explored  
 Philosophy, and Law, and Medicine ;  
 And over deep Divinity have pored,  
 Studying with ardent and laborious zeal ;  
 And here I am at last, a very fool,  
 With useless learning curst,  
 No wiser than at first !  
 Here am I—boast and wonder of the school,  
 Magister, Doctor, and I lead  
 These ten years past, my pupils' creed ;  
 Dividing, by dexterous words, with ease,  
 Their opinions as I please.  
 And now to feel that nothing can be known !  
 This is a thought that burns into my heart.  
 I have been more acute than all these triflers,  
 Doctors and authors, priests, philosophers ;  
 Have sounded all the depths of every science.  
 But I have lost all peace of mind :  
 Whate'er I knew, or thought I knew,  
 Seems now unmeaning or untrue.  
 Alas ! and am I in the gloom  
 Still of this cursed dungeon room ?  
 'Mong volumes heaped from floor to ceiling,  
 Scrolls with book-worms through them stealing ;  
 Dreary walls, where dusty paper  
 Bears deep stains of smoky vapour ;  
 Glasses, instruments, all lumber  
 Of this kind the place encumber ;  
 All a man of learning gathers,  
 All bequeathed me by my father ,

Crucibles from years undated,  
Chairs of structure antiquated  
Are in strange confusion hurled!  
Here, Faustus, is thy world—a world!  
Still dost thou ask, why in thy breast  
The sick heart flutters ill at rest?  
Why a dull sense of suffering  
Deadens life's current at the spring?  
From living nature thou hast fled  
To dwell 'mong fragments of the dead;  
And for the lovely scenes which Heaven  
Hath made man for, to man hath given;  
Hast chosen to pore o'er mouldering bones  
Of brute and human skeletons."

What is the sequel of Faust's discontent? He applies himself to magic! Of course, if you mean by magic a conjuring hocus-pocus, you may say that this poring over Philosophy, and Law, and Medicine, and Divinity, had turned poor Faust's head and brought on softening of the brain, as indeed, for that matter, well it might in his case, as has happened in numerous other instances. But the poet has another meaning, and this meaning is, that unless Science lays the facts it patiently gathers at the feet of its master, the living Spirit, all is vanity, and the veriest vanity of vanities. *All the sciences must converge in the grand science of life, and all the arts must lead to the art of living.*

From this standpoint we can now survey the stories of Romance and Poetry. They all spring from the need to create stronger and nobler men and women than the present puny race. With this key in his possession, the wise reader can open doors that will not open to the painstaking search of the scholar, and can survey the treasures lying buried in the most extravagant fables and stories.

(1.) The Arthurian Legends. Tennyson's "Idylls of the King" have familiarised the mind with a far loftier and more poetic, and therefore more truthful conception of the cycle of romance which clusters round King Arthur as a centre, than was prevalent in the last and the early part of the present century, when modern science treated everything that it could not understand or believe as the vagaries of an untrained imagination. The popularity of Tennyson has already borne abundant fruit in the widespread attention accorded at the present time by scholars and the general public to the Arthurian system as a whole, which bids fair to become the great epic of the British race. The whole cycle of Arthur and Merlin is essentially British, meaning, by that term, not the purely Anglo-Saxon or Norman ingredient of the British race, but rather the original inhabitants of these islands—the great Celtic branch of the Aryan race, which was the first to break off from the parent stem generally located on the plains of Asia, and which can lay claim to as great and as direct a tradition as is now the fashion among Theosophists to ascribe exclusively to the natives of the East. The hoary wisdom of antiquity is popularly supposed to be enshrined in ancient Egypt and modern India; but *Druidism, the Celtic priesthood*, is now being more intelligently studied, and will soon vindicate its position *as a grand religious system, second to none either in its traditions or its fundamental doctrines*. The Arthurian Legends spring directly from the Celtic traditions, some of the best known of which are contained in The Mabinogion (young men's tales), which have been very charmingly translated by Lady Charlotte



Guest from the original Llyfr Goch o Hergest (Red Book of Hergest), preserved in the library of Jesus College, Oxford. "It might, I think, be shown," says the translator, "by pursuing the inquiry, that the Cymric nation is not only, as Dr. Pritchard proved it to be, an early offshoot of the Indo-European family, and a people of unmixed descent, but that when driven out of their conquests by the later nations, the names and exploits of their heroes, and the compositions of their bards, spread far and wide among the invaders, and affected intimately their tastes and literature for many centuries, and that it has strong claims to be considered the cradle of European Romance."

The reader who dips into *The Mabinogion* for the first time, and carries with him the insight by which alone facts are illuminated, will be astonished and delighted at the profusion of wealth which lies scattered in the stories. There is a large and increasing mass of modern literature devoted to them on both sides of the Atlantic.

(2.) *The Arabian Nights.* In the collection of stories popularly known as the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments," there are innumerable subtle touches, discernible by the practical occultist, but escaping the ordinary reader, which render their perusal not only a fascinating, but a most instructive task. Many of the tales involve points of the utmost importance to him who hath ears to hear and eyes to see. Perhaps the best course will be to select one story, and consider it from the present standpoint, leaving the reader to go carefully through the other tales in the same manner. The labour will be amply repaid. The story that will answer our purpose is that of Hasan of El-Basrah.

After a series of adventures by the side of which the tales of Jules Verne or Dumas are very tame reading, Hasan of El-Basrah settles down with his lovely wife in the city of Baghdad. During his absence she contrives by a stratagem to secure once more her lost dress of feathers, takes with her her two boys, and leaves a message with her mother-in-law—"When thy son hath come, and the days of separation have become tedious to him, and he desireth approach and meeting, and the winds of love and longing desire agitate him, let him come to me in the islands of Wak-Wak." When Hasan returns he is distracted at the loss of his wife, and after bewailing her flight for the space of a whole month, he begins to set about the hopeless search. In these days of lady-detectives, one might entertain a hope of success in a similar predicament, if one had plenty of money to spend, but the departing spouse of Hasan of El-Basrah threw down a challenge, the acceptance of which made a journey to the moon trivial in comparison. Said his friends to him—"Stretch forth thy hand to heaven, and, if thou canst reach to heaven, thou mayst reach to thy wife and children." A year passes by, and Hasan is still longing for the beloved object. The straight line of the Will, though smothered with crosses, is still the straight line—

Will	V	V	V	V	Object.
Hasan	Λ	Λ	Λ	Λ	Wife in islands of Wak-Wak.

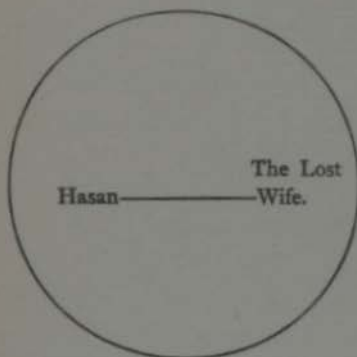
A great sage, Abd-el-Kuddoos, who knows the enormous difficulties of the quest, advises him to give it up:—"O my son! relinquish this most vexatious affair; for thou could'st not gain access to the islands

of Wak-Wak, even if the flying jinn and the wandering stars assisted thee; since between thee and those islands are seven valleys and seven seas and seven mountains of vast magnitude. How, then, canst thou gain access to this place, and who will convey thee to it? By Allah, I conjure thee that thou return soon, and weary not thy heart." But the sage takes pity upon him, and resolves to aid him as much as he can, though there appears no chance whatever of reaching Wak-Wak. "Peace be to thee! But know, O my son, that every one who exposeth himself to peril destroyeth himself; therefore, if thou fear for thy life, cast it not to destruction: if, however, thou fear not, do as thou desirest. I have shown thee the circumstances of the case." But Hasan said to the sheykh, "By Allah, I will never return until I find my beloved, or my death overtake me." "Know, O my son, that the islands of Wak-Wak are seven islands, in which is a great army, and the inhabitants of the interior islands are devils and marids, and enchanters, and various tribes. Whosoever entereth their country returneth not, and no one ever went to them and returned. Know, moreover, that the damsel whom thou seekest is the daughter of the king of all these islands; and how canst thou gain access to her?" But Hasan replied, "By Allah, O my master, were I cut piecemeal for my love of her, I should only increase in fondness and desire. I must see my wife and my children, and enter the islands of Wak-Wak, and if it be not the will of God (whose name be exalted), I will not return save with her and with my children." So the Sheykh Abd-el-Kuddoos said to him, "Then thou must perform thy journey." He replied, "Yes."

Hasan goes on his way till he reaches the domain of a greater sage, Abu-r-Ruweysh, a "Sheykh of the Sheykhs," who, in his turn, strongly advises the young man to give up the hopeless search. But, seeing his undaunted resolution, an efreet is summoned, and Hasan is sped further on his journey on the back of the flying jinn, till he arrives at the land of Camphor, which is within measurable distance of Wak-Wak. But his dangers and trials can now only be said to have begun. His wife is in the seventh island of the islands of Wak-Wak, and the distance between him and her is still seven months' journey, night and day. The old lady generalissimo of the armies of Wak-Wak, upon whose protection he has thrown himself, upon hearing his story, frankly tells him that she can hold out no hope. "Open thine eyes, and consider thine affairs; and if thou be asleep, awake; for it is impossible for thee ever to gain access to her; and if thou gainedst access to her, thou could'st not get possession of her; since between thee and her is like as is between heaven and earth. Return, therefore, O my son, and cast not thyself into destruction, and me with thee."

Obstacle after obstacle has to vanish before Hasan's longing desire for his wife, and at length, when all doors are closed upon him, and his labours seem utterly in vain, *destiny brings him across a rod* by which he is endowed with authority over seven tribes of the powerful Jinn, or elements, and a cap which renders its wearer invisible. This makes him more than a match for his opponents, and he rescues his wife and children, and brings them home in safety to Baghdad.

The moral of this story is: *In all difficulties, Advance and Will, for within you is a power, a living force which, the more you trust and learn to use, will annihilate the opposition of matter.*



(3.) Poetry and Romance. Many of Shakespeare's characters are the embodiments of invincible Will. For instance, the following lines put in the mouth of Julius Cæsar express in exalted language the straight line of the Will.

"I could be well moved, if I were as you ;  
If I could pray to move, prayers would move me :  
But I am constant as the Northern star,  
Of whose true-fix'd and lasting quality  
There is no fellow in the firmament.  
The skies are painted with unnumber'd sparks,  
They are all fire, and every one doth shine,  
But there's but one in all doth hold his place :  
So in the world ; 'tis furnished well with men,  
And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive ;  
Yet in the number I do know but one  
That unassailable holds on his rank  
Unshak'd of motion."



In Scott's "Bridal of Triermain" we have the same idea as the Story of Hasan. The Baron of Triermain is so fired with the love of a beautiful vision which he saw in his dream that he braves everything to secure the object. After overcoming the first obstacle by hurling his axe at the rock which concealed the enchanted castle from the vulgar view, he enters and finds a terrible inscription on the gate.

"Warrior, who hast waited long,  
 Firm of soul, of sinew strong,  
 It is given to thee to gaze  
 On the pile of ancient days.  
 Never mortal builder's hand  
 This enduring fabric planned;  
 Sign and sigil, word of power  
 From the earth raised keep and tower.  
 View it o'er, and pace it round  
 Rampart, turret, battled mound:  
 Dare no more! To cross the gate  
 Were to tamper with thy fate;  
 Strength and fortitude were vain,  
 View it o'er—and turn again.  
 'That would I,' said the warrior bold,  
 If that my frame were bent and old,  
 And my thin blood dropped slow and cold  
 As icicle in thaw;  
 But while my heart can feel it dance,  
 Blithe as the sparkling wine of France,  
 And this good arm wields sword or lance,  
 I mock these words of awe!"

Though to turn the crooked and wavering line of indecision to the straight and undeviating and irresistible line of the will is the problem of man, still there is the other side, that the understanding may be at fault in its selection of the object. I say the understanding at fault, because the ultimate object of Will is the realisation of the good in the world, and if



the will is wrongly directed—that is to say, if the object is wrong—we have the gloom of tragedy and the terror of what is termed the Left-hand Path, or Sorcery and Black Magic. These latter are, of course, not to be despised as the relics of superstition, and they embrace far more than is implied in what is generally called Hypnotism.

Byron is the poet *par excellence* of this type of Will. The same undeviating straight line is presented as in the legitimate exercise of the will. The difference is that in the one case there is in the background the consciousness of union with the Universal Will which, through all the phantasmagoria of material existence, tends to realise The Good, and in the other case this consciousness is wanting. *The will is a straight line so far as the external relations of the individual are concerned, but in the Left-hand Path.*

“Within his soul  
The thoughts like troubled waters roll.”

The poet here expresses precisely the same idea as is contained in Isaiah lvii.:—“But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.”

A very good and truthful description of the Evil Eye is given in the *Giaour*. (What is called the Evil Eye in modern Italy and other countries is an involuntary magnetic condition, and has no direct relation to the character of the individual.)

“Dark and unearthly is the scowl  
That glares beneath his dusky cowl ;  
The flash of that dilating eye  
Reveals too much of times gone by ;

Though varying, indistinct its hue,  
 Oft will his glance the gazer rue,  
 For in it lurks that nameless spell  
 Which speaks, itself unspeakable,  
 A spirit yet unquell'd and high  
 That claims and keeps ascendancy ;  
 And, like the bird whose pinions quake  
 But cannot fly the gazing snake,  
 Will others quail beneath his look,  
 Nor 'scape the glance they scarce can brook.  
 From him the half-affrighted friar  
 When met alone would fain retire,  
*As if that high and bitter smile*  
*Transferr'd to others fear and guile.*  
 Not oft to smile descendeth he,  
 And when he doth, 'tis sad to see  
 That he but mocks at Misery.  
 How that pale lip will curl and quiver !  
 Then fix once more as if for ever ;  
 As if his sorrow or disdain  
 Forbade him e'er to smile again.  
 Well were it so—such ghastly mirth  
 From joyaunce ne'er derived its birth."

*The eye, it is to be remembered, only expresses what is behind, what the will intends to be conveyed. The will, as I shall show later on, sets in motion vibratory etheric energy in proportion to its intensity. A weak will cannot do much either for good or evil, but a strong will can do a great deal. A weak evil man is an object of pity and disdain ; but a strong evil man is an object of fear and hatred, two very different emotions from the former.*

" His name could sadden, and his acts surprise,  
 But they that fear'd him, dared not to despise.  
 Man spurns the worm, but pauses ere he wake  
 The slumbering venom of the folded snake ;  
 The first may turn, but not avenge the blow ;  
 The last expires, but leaves no living foe :  
 Fast to the doom'd offender's form it clings  
 And he may crush—not conquer—still it stings."

A fine description of the strong evil will is given in Scott's "Rokeby."

" Much in the stranger's mien appears  
To justify suspicious fears.  
On his dark face a scorching clime  
And toil had done the work of time ;  
Roughened the brow, the temples bared,  
And sable hairs with silver shared,  
Yet left—what age alone could tame—  
The lip of pride, *the eye of flame* ;  
The full-drawn lip that upward curl'd ;  
*The eye that seemed to scorn the world* :  
That lip had terror never blanch'd ;  
Ne'er in that eye had tear-drop quenched  
The flash, severe as swarthy glow,  
That mock'd at pain and knew not woe.  
Inured to danger's direst form—  
Tornado and earthquake, flood and storm ;  
Death had he seen by sudden blow,  
By wasting plague, by torture slow,  
By mine or breach, by steel or ball,  
Knew all his shapes and scorned them all.  
Even now, by conscience unrestrain'd,  
Clogg'd by gross vice, by slaughter stain'd,  
Still knew his daring soul to soar,  
And mastery o'er the mind he bore :  
For meaner guilt or heart less bold  
Quail'd beneath Bertram's bold regard."

Scott's poems and romances contain, some of them, excellent portraits of the strong will. The character and appearance of Bruce in the "Lord of the Isles" is that of the future "man of the sphere, fit to grace the solar year."

Glancing briefly at the fiction of the present day, from the standpoint of the Will, we find it on the whole extremely interesting, and significant of humanity's march onward. The novelist's imagination is no

longer content with the ordinary surface life of the world, but tries to penetrate into the depths below, and scale the heights above. It is true, some of the writers have the most extraordinary and fantastic ideas of what occultism really is, and raise a smile at the simplicity of their hearts, but all the same an immense amount of good is done to the world at large in opening the eye of the stolid practical "common sense," which puts down everything it can't understand as superstition or credulity. It is a great refreshment of the mind to get out of that three-volume atmosphere in which a vapid young man falls in love with a commonplace girl, and after a few months or years of waiting, the inevitable marriage ceremony takes place, followed in due course by the equally inevitable brood of offspring.

A new era has, without doubt, started in the history of humanity, an era of aspiration, intense, passionate, irresistible, for a larger and a fuller life.

I cannot do better than clinch the present chapter with Shelley's magnificent lines from "Queen Mab." Is it not sad to think that such a man as this has been derided, hated, reviled as an atheist and blasphemer? Fifty years ago, we are told, it was most improper for a Christian young man or young woman to read Shelley. He was an atheist! He didn't believe in a Supreme Being! The man whose soul loathed cant, and hypocrisy, and ignorance, and materialism, both in what has been falsely called "religion" and in what has been falsely called "science"! Verily, the name of Shelley will be blazoned on the banners of the Religion and the Science of the near future.

“ How sweet a scene will earth become—  
Of purest spirits a pure dwelling-place  
Symphonious with the planetary spheres—  
When man, with changeless Nature coalescing,  
Will undertake regeneration's work.

Earth was no longer hell ;  
Love, freedom, health, had given  
Their ripeness to the manhood of its prime.

Here now the human being stands adorning  
This loveliest earth with taintless body and mind.  
Him . . . .

The thoughts that rise  
In time-destroying infiniteness, gift  
With self-enshrined eternity, that mocks  
The unprevailing hoariness of age ;  
And man, once fleeting o'er the transient scene  
Swift as an unremembered vision, stands  
Immortal upon earth.

Happiness

And science dawn, though late, upon the earth ;  
Peace cheers the mind, health renovates the frame  
Disease and pleasure cease to mingle here,  
Reason and passion cease to combat there ;  
Whilst each, unfettered, o'er the earth extends  
Its all-subduing energies, and wields  
The sceptre of a vast dominion there ;  
Whilst every shape and mode of matter lends  
Its force to the omnipotence of mind,  
Which from its dark mine drags the gem of truth  
To decorate its paradise of peace.

Courage of soul that dreaded not a name,  
And elevated will that journeyed on  
Through life's phantasmal scene in fearlessness,  
With virtue, love, and pleasure, hand in hand.  
Woman and man, in confidence and love,  
Equal and free and pure, together trod  
The mountain-paths of virtue, which no more  
Were stained with blood from many a pilgrim's feet.

Ah me ! a pathless wilderness remains  
 Yet unsubdued by man's reclaiming hand.  
 Yet, human spirit, bravely hold thy course.  
 Let virtue teach thee firmly to pursue  
 The gradual paths of an aspiring change :  
 For birth and life and death, and that strange state  
 Before the naked soul has found its home,  
 All tend to perfect happiness, and urge  
 The restless wheels of being on their way,  
 Whose flashing spokes, instinct with infinite life,  
 Bicker and burn to gain their destined goal.  
 For birth but wakes the spirit to the sense  
 Of outward shows, whose unexperienced shape  
 New modes of passion to its frame may lend ;  
 Life is its mode of action, and the store  
 Of all events is aggregated there  
 That variegate the eternal universe ;  
 Death is a gate of dreariness and gloom  
 That leads to azure isles and beaming skies,  
 And happy regions of eternal hope.  
 Therefore, O Spirit ! fearlessly bear on :  
 Though storms may break the primrose on its stalk,  
 Though frosts may blight the freshness of its bloom,  
 Yet spring's awakening breath will woo the earth  
 To feed with kindest dews its favourite flower,  
 That blooms in mossy banks and darksome glens,  
 Lighting the greenwood with its sunny smile."

WILL ————— THE GOOD.  
 THE BEAUTIFUL.  
 THE TRUE.



## CHAPTER II.

### SCIENCE: KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.

IT was remarked in the preceding chapter that science, or knowledge, is a weapon of the Will. That remark calls for a few words of explanation on the meaning of the term "Science." As generally understood, the word is used in many diverse significations, but the more rigidly we keep to its original meaning—knowledge—the better. It may appear to some extraordinary that any emphasis should be laid on the meaning of the term "Science," for does not the ordinary mind associate with the term a trained mind and highly technical knowledge? So far so good. The mischief and the cause of complaint comes in when this very "Science" forgets its sole aim and purpose, and makes itself synonymous with Arrogance, Pride, Prejudice, Bad Logic, worse Metaphysics, and last, but not least, Gross Ignorance. But, you say, such a thing is impossible. Not in the least. So far from being impossible, it has happened very often. In fact, it has happened more often than otherwise. To prove our point, let us embody our "Science" in the "scientific man," with which type the modern world has been fairly familiar for the last century or two. Let us take a particular science, such as Astronomy. This "science" means that it is possible for the general mind to gain a much more accurate knowledge of the motion, and even the constitution, of the sun, moon, planets, and stars, than prevailed

among the mass of mankind centuries ago. Our knowledge is accurate, so far as it goes. We don't delude ourselves with the notion that the earth is the absolute centre of the universe, and that the sun and the starry firmament were expressly made for the edification of creatures whom Professor Teufelsdröckh in his atrabiliar moods was wont to apostrophise, "O my friends, we are (in Yorick Sterne's words) but as 'turkeys driven, with a stick and a red clout, to the market:' or if some drivers, as they do in Norfolk, take a dried bladder, and put peas in it, the rattle thereof terrifies the boldest!" It is a wonderful step forward for man to know that he dwells on an aggregation of molecules called the earth, which in the vast chart of creation is but a mathematical point. A complete science of the universe would be the knowledge of all its constituent elements. The progress of Science means the acquisition of knowledge respecting the cosmos, both as a whole and in its parts. Strictly adhering to this idea of Science, *we cut off very sharply* an immense portion of what has been called science by the scientific man. Take, for instance, the attitude of what has been called "Modern Science" towards the world of occultism—that is, what Tyndall called "the subsensible world." It has been one long cry of derision and scoffing. Now the tables are turned, and it is the fashion to admit what then it was the fashion to deny and denounce as "unscientific." Science proclaimed such and such a thing impossible. Science indeed! It was not proclaimed impossible by Science, which is but a Latin word meaning *knowledge*, but by the very opposite of Science—

Crude Ignorance and Arrogance. If such and such a fact can, and does occur, the province of Science is not to deny, but to find out exactly *how* it occurs. There is more meaning in the soliloquy of Proctophantasmist in "Faust" during the Walpurgis' night revels on the Hartz mountains, than in all the combined arguments of eminent scientific men to prove such and such a thing an impossibility. The "scientific" soul of Proctophantasmist is much moved at what he considers the irregular movement of the revellers (by this the poet implies the unknown, but not the unknowable), and the learned and formal gentleman gives free vent to his feelings.

"Cursed devils—how they murder  
All attempts at keeping order:  
All in vain it is to prove  
To spirits by what laws they move:—  
Mocking at all regulation,  
Ridiculing demonstration,  
See them onward still advancing,  
Ghosts! like men and women dancing.  
I thought that, by my labours brightened,  
The world for this was too enlightened.  
These devils—they rise, and in derision  
Of all I say, still cross my vision.  
What—beings that have no existence,  
To mock each law of time and distance!  
I thought I'd swept away these fancies  
Of plays, and poems, and romances!  
Still here! with all the noise of Babel,  
These dreams of a forgotten fable!"

By and by our "learned scientist" has a little more science, and admits:

"My comments; what are they?—the cavils  
Of a sour cynic on his travels,  
A passing stranger's jealous spite."

The only attitude worthy of a true follower of Science—that is to say, an aspirant after knowledge—is to maintain an attitude of strict independence, and that state of mind called agnosticism, or want of knowledge, towards all alleged facts of which he does not possess a definite knowledge. This is a point of the very first importance to the growth of the individual. That other attitude, by which Science is made synonymous with the effrontery of ignorance, is to the last degree disastrous to real progress. Yet we are continually running against this very attitude. We will take as an instance what is now called Hypnotism, and a few years ago was called Mesmerism. With the hypnotist of the present day, the word to conjure with is “Hypnotic Suggestion.” The idea that the individual hypnotist exercises any kind of personal influence on his subject beyond that of “suggestion” is considered unscientific. The Psychical Research Society has done a great deal to familiarise the mass of the people, scientific and unscientific, with certain facts, which only brazen self-conceit and crass ignorance could ever deny. Having done this good work, its usefulness as a society is fast disappearing, for the instruments it wields are, from a higher standpoint, rude and clumsy, and totally inadequate to equip the individual who desires to penetrate beneath the surface of phenomena. The reason of this defectiveness is very easy to state. It has started on the wrong end of the track; and—while it would be ungracious to forget the work it has done in familiarising the public with phenomena, the real occurrence of which it would be impossible for the ordinary man any longer to doubt—there’s an end on’t.

By far the best way for the general reader to get an idea of the subsensual world is to enter its domain through the portals of present-day Physical Science. It is said that Plato put over the door of his academy the inscription: "Let no one enter here who is ignorant of Geometry." With equal right might we say: Let no one enter the domain of Will without knowing the fundamental ideas of present-day Science, understanding by that term the current *knowledge* of advanced physical scientists, not their speculations on the Universe as a whole, or on Man in particular.

In a century which has witnessed the introduction of the Röntgen Ray and the New Photography, any new discovery will be hardly more than a nine days' marvel. Therefore it will not very much startle those who have not yet happened to hear of the invention, that a *little machine has been constructed that will respond in movement to strength of will and intensity of thought without any physical contact whatever*. A needle is delicately poised and suspended inside a glass bell. If you direct a concentrated gaze upon this needle, it will be deflected. A person of weak will, or in bad health, or under the influence of any lowering emotion, will hardly succeed in producing any movement at all. The stronger the personality, the more decided the movement. (The rationale of this is given in chap. iii. of "Ars Vivendi.") I believe there are several claimants to this invention, but the chief experimenters are d'Odiardi and Baraduc, though I was informed that a similar instrument was shown by a man in America many years before. This little instrument



reveals nothing new, and I would not even think it worth while to refer to it, but that it is a sufficient testimony to the ordinary man that the exercise of the Will or an act of volition is as much a force as Electricity or Magnetism. *In the former chapter we saw that the real aim of literature was to encourage man to cultivate and strengthen the Will.* To the ordinary mind, perhaps, this will appear vague, but when Physical Science can construct a little instrument that will record the power of Will, it is an indisputable fact that the Will can be scientifically described as *a force or energy.* *Therefore when man struggles to strengthen his will, he is developing a force within himself.* The next step is to find out what is the nature and power of this force. When it turns out, as the present chapter will prove step by step, that will-force is absolutely the strongest force in the universe—the mother-force of the natural forces we call Heat, Electricity, Magnetism, Chemical Affinity, and Gravity—a more than academical meaning is given to Emerson's words: "The one serious and formidable thing in Nature is a will."

In those anecdotes of a persistent will in pursuit of its object, given in the first chapter, he who reflects a little on the present-day scientific fact of a needle being deflected by willing, will ascertain the true meaning. Hasan of El-Basrah had a force within him superior in might to all the forces that could be matched against him. *It is this force which moulded to its purpose the inferior forces symbolised by the terrible journey to the islands of Wak-Wak, and subsequently got possession of the wand of power and the cap of invisibility.* It is this force which enabled



Bertram, "inured to danger's direst forms," to scorn them all. It is this force which Shelley sings in passionate verse, as "courage of soul that dreaded not a name, and elevated will that journeyed on through life's phantasmal scene in fearlessness." Why must man banish fear from his heart? Because, absolutely, he has nothing in the universe to fear, if he can confide in the Will. Will is the source of all Nature; therefore, Will is superior to Nature. It must not be supposed that I am elevating the animal man into a god. When the individual will becomes freed from the bondage of the animal nature, and is in harmony with the Universal Will which realises The Good, The Beautiful, and The True in the world, then—and then only—has the will attained the summit of its power, and becomes the absolute monarch, able to manipulate the varied forces of Nature.

This, it may be remarked in passing, is a point very essential to thoroughly grasp, for at the present time a great deal of arrant and, what is worse, pernicious nonsense is written about "freedom." It is the delight of a certain class of writers to picture "the noble savage" as an ideal specimen of Nature's handiwork. They are generally found to favour what are called "advanced" ideas on social questions, and propound the wildest and vaguest notions which would not for an instant withstand the criticism of disciplined thought. So far from being free from the "restraint" of law and order, "Freedom" is the very perfection of Order, and Method, and Discipline, used as means to the end—individual incarnation of Wisdom.

Before we deal with the physics of the will from the

point of view of present-day science, we can approach the same question *à priori*. Seen from the occult standpoint, the explanation of will-force is as follows:—

ABSOLUTE MOTION, ETERNAL ENERGY,  
INEXHAUSTIBLE STOREHOUSE OF FORCE,  
MOULDED  
BY  
UNIVERSAL WILL  
(OF WHICH INDIVIDUAL WILL IS A SPARK)  
INTO  
MODES.

The natural world of conservation of energy and correlation of forces.	{	1. Magnetism and Electricity.	{	Actinic or X Rays.
		2. Chemical Action.		Violet.
	3. Light . . . . .	Indigo.		
		Blue.		
		Green.		
		Yellow.		
		Orange.		Red.
		4. Heat.		Heat Ray.
		5. Sound.		
		6. Mass-motion.		

The above will be found to correspond exactly with the physical science of to-day, as I shall now proceed to show.

The definition of Science as "actual knowledge," and nothing else, will be found of peculiar service, for it enables us to take the facts as they are, without encumbering the mind with the wild theories of this or that individual, and dignifying them with the name

of Science. In this impartial spirit let us inquire what man can be said to actually know at the present time concerning the world of matter.

To the uneducated mind, what is called "solid matter" is a mass of something or other which would be best described as inert and incapable of self-motion. If pressed for a definition, it would be impossible for anyone not acquainted with the fundamental principles of Modern Science to give a reply of any consistency or validity. After beating about the bush, he would most probably come back to the point from which he started—"Well, you know, solid matter is solid matter." His ideas on the subject would be extremely vague. Here comes the immense advantage of Modern Science. It clears our ideas, and gives us a definite and tangible meaning, in place of wild and erroneous notions.

The following account of the structure of the material world, it is to be remembered, is intended to represent what is now a commonplace, accessible to the humblest schoolboy.

All substances, without exception, are regarded by material science as made up of extremely small particles, called "molecules." *Every molecule is in a constant state of rapid motion, or oscillation, and is quite separated from every other molecule.* However small the distance between the molecules, no amount of pressure can drive the one into the other. The spaces between the molecules of the substances which we are able to see, feel, weigh, etc., with our ordinary senses, are filled with a substance which cannot be seen, felt, or weighed by these ordinary senses. This substance is called "ether." It is present everywhere,

between the molecules of all solids, liquids, and gases, and fills all the "void" between the earth, planets, and stars. Through this ether the planets move in space round the sun, and through it the molecules of substances are always journeying to and fro. The three physical states in which matter exists are called gaseous, liquid, and solid, and differ from each other, not in actual structure, but in *degrees of compression*. The reason why a solid substance maintains a definite shape is that the molecules exercise on each other a force called "cohesion," which binds them together and prevents them from moving away from the spot to which they are, as it were, tethered. But the force of cohesion is greatly affected by varying degrees of heat, which is an expansive mode of motion. In liquids, force of cohesion is less than in solids, the molecules moving freely among each other; while in gas there exists no force of cohesion, owing to the frequent collisions and rebounds which take place between the molecules as they move rapidly about, just as glass balls fly apart after striking each other. Density of a substance means quantity of molecules contained in one volume (say, cubic foot), and is estimated by weight, which is the name given to the force of attraction with which it is drawn by "gravitation" to the larger quantity of molecules called the earth. In any elastic medium, a vibration set up at one point produces an undulation which travels through the medium. Consequently, the air and ether are always full of tremors. For example, a slight tap on the end of what is called a hard solid, such as a steel rod, produces a shiver of the particles which runs along to the other end of the rod. When

a lucifer match is struck, a molecular vibration is started which results in the transmission of a series of tremors through the ether. When these reach our eyes we see "light." The instant a particle begins to move it acts on the next particle, this on the next, and so on *ad infinitum*. A "ray" of light means the line along which the vibrations are travelling. Since the ether is invisible to the physical eye, the undulations passing through it are also invisible; but when they are stopped by an aggregation of molecules, the object from which the undulations started becomes visible to us. Just as we can only tell that rays of light are passing through a certain space by the illumination of an opaque body placed in their path, so we can only surmise that such are not passing there by the more or less complete invisibility of an opaque body in the space. If there was a large material body in the space between the earth and the sun, with the molecules so arranged that the rays of light were able to pass through it without being affected, that body would be invisible to us.

If we make use of the imagination *in the wise manner explained and advocated by Tyndall, viz.*, not as a riotous power which deals capriciously with facts, but as *the well-ordered and disciplined power* whose sole function is to form such conceptions as the intellect imperatively demands, what idea shall we get of the material universe? *We shall see, not a mass of dead, inert matter, but a world alive with motion, incessant, never-ending.* What we call "at rest" and "in motion" are nothing but convenient terms to express certain conditions of the eternal motion of the world. The solid world of mountains, hills, valleys,



bricks, stone, and mortar is nothing but a mode of Absolute Motion, ever ready to assume another mode. The highest poetry and the highest science meet hand in hand. "Thought," said Emerson, "dissolves the material universe, by carrying the mind up into a sphere where all is plastic." This sphere is the Ether of the Science of to-day. Shakespeare's words are not only fine poetry, but fine science—

"The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded  
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on."

The key to this fine poetry and fine science is the vivid imagination, or the power to form pictures. Without this, dull and laborious explanations convey no meaning whatever. Therefore, the reader is strongly urged to pause and endeavour to *embody all the preceding scientific presentment of the Universe in a grand imaginative picture*. The value of this will be apparent to him later on, for the very heights of Magic, as the great Paracelsus said, are attained only by the two powers of Will and Imagination. The danger of too much reading is that it has a tendency to blunt the imaginative faculty. *This is the reason why learned men are not wise men*. Their erudition smothers them with a weight they are unable to bear, just as heavy armour and accoutrements will encumber an ordinary person with a weight which a Richard Cœur-de-Lion carries with consummate ease. *The strong spirit uses and governs the facts it requires for its development; while the weak spirit is, as Faust*

complained, "at last but a very fool, with useless learning curst." In the real science and art of living this principle must never be lost sight of, and in the "Ars Vivendi" series, it is hoped, the student will be kept to the point, in season and out of season, till he becomes the real master, "sharing the life of things, and an expression of the same laws which control the tides and the sun, numbers and quantities," instead of being, as now, "a pendant to events, only half-attached, and that awkwardly, to the world he lives in." The object of science is to furnish the facts, to play the jackal to the lion of the Self-conscious Will.

After the reader has succeeded in getting a vivid pictorial representation of the incessant motion we call the material universe, he will proceed another step, and ascertain his own relation to this external motion. Remember that I am not advocating an abstract metaphysical speculation, but a *precise and well-defined method of working* which leads in a straight line to practical power.

What has material science to say about thoughts, ideas, and feelings? We have seen that it describes the material world as the constant motion of minute bodies called molecules, made up, again, of more minute bodies called atoms. It also describes *thought* as matter in motion. The brain and every limb is in incessant molecular motion. An "idea" or "thought" or "feeling" strikes us, we say. As a matter of fact, it is so much wave-motion of the same ether, of which the grossest material substance is ultimately composed. When Prospero said that "we are such stuff as dreams are made on," he uttered a literal fact. Dreams are the vibrations of the ether in the brain.

The brain itself is ultimately traced to vibration of the ether, and so with the body. The reader must not think that this is a fanciful idea of my own coining. It is nothing but the veriest commonplace of the material science of to-day; and the reader who wants to follow the matter more closely will do well to study the writings of the physicists. This chapter is merely intended as a firm scientific foundation on which the activity of will-force is based, and the reader can work upon it with perfect confidence as a faithful resumé of material science. The material knowledge of to-day is extremely valuable, and is so far advanced that, if one can only get the right clue to follow, it can be turned to splendid account. This can only be done on the plan laid down in the present series. How incongruous the idea that Tyndall, who could analyse a beam of light with a master hand, who could transmute one form of force into another, electricity into magnetism, magnetism into electricity, etc., who could put planets and stars "in the scales" and tell you their approximate weight and mass, *yet could not go to sleep when he wished, and was a martyr to insomnia for months together!* From the lofty pedestal of the knowledge which this grand intellect attained, he had to come down to the level of that piece of absurdity called "medical science," and take at its bidding dose after dose of mixtures which lower vitality and sap the very core of health and vigour. It is not without cause that Dr. Fenwick, in "A Strange Story," exclaims, "Recognised science! Recognised ignorance! Had I been less devoted a bigot to this vain school-craft, which we call the Medical Art, and which, alone in this age of science,

has made no perceptible progress since the days of its earliest teachers; had I said, in the true humility of genuine knowledge," etc. What is a paltry existence of seventy or eighty or one hundred years compared to the duration of life held out to man as the fruit of a wider and more profound science of life? One hundred years a long life! Nonsense. It is but a drop of the ocean compared to the life of Nature. Man dies, not because Nature ordains him to do so at a certain age, but because he has transgressed the laws of Nature so much that vitality can no longer inhabit his organism. Nature merely tells man to live *as long as he can. No limit whatever has been assigned* but the limit necessarily imposed upon *Ignorantia Legis.*

"Throughout these infinite orbs of mingling light,  
Of which yon earth is one, is wide diffused  
A spirit of activity and life  
That knows no term, cessation, or decay;  
That fades not when the lamp of earthly life  
Extinguished in the dampness of the grave  
Awhile there slumbers, more than when the babe  
In the dim newness of its being feels  
The impulses of sublunary things,  
And all is wonder to unpractised sense,  
But active, steadfast, and eternal, etc."

It is the science and art of living that man wants now to develop. The conquests of material science at the present day are magnificent in the external realm of Nature, but in the realm of Medicine no real advance has been made. I am not speaking of Surgery, which, of course, is a mechanical art, and is practised now with great skill, but of what is taught under the head of Medicine in the medical schools of to-day. I will



not deny that a certain amount of knowledge is acquired by the student, but it is not a science. It is *not an art by which a person who follows it can acquire greater vitality and self-mastery, which bids defiance to the attack of pain and disease.* Let medical congresses gloat as much as they like over the "stupendous strides recently made by medical science," Dame Medicine, as Helmholtz wofully confessed, is a long way behind the scientific attainments of the age in other branches of knowledge.

To return to etheric vibrations. Science says, and incontestably proves, that thought is vibratory energy or motion in the restless sea of ether which encompasses and penetrates the whole of the universe. Working upon this hypothesis—which, of course, is not an hypothesis only, but an admitted fact—what conclusion must we form of the mode of activity of Will? *It must be vibratory energy. An act of will must necessarily set in motion a certain amount of etheric energy. The stronger the will the greater amount of energy it commands.* That is a logical conclusion from which there is no escape. In order to emphasise the point, I will summarise as follows:—

- (1) Modern Science proves that the material world is in incessant motion, and is composed of one substance called "Ether."
- (2) Thoughts and feelings, being part of the cosmos, are composed of the vibrations of this one underlying substance called "ether."
- (3) An act of will necessarily comes under the same category as No. 2. Therefore, an act of will is composed of Etheric vibrations.



*Corollary.*—This being so, it must follow, as unerringly as the demonstration of a geometrical theorem, that a *strong will produces a different effect upon etheric vibration from a weak will.* This difference has been typified in the first chapter by the straight and the crooked lines.

Those three propositions, with the corollary, require to be thoroughly grasped by the mind, and pictured clearly and firmly by the vivid imagination.

After deducing the conclusion that the Will exercises a force—that is to say, *modifies the motion of vibratory etheric energy*—the next step is to get a glimpse of the capabilities of this force. In this point, again, modern science lends us most valuable aid. We learn, on sound authority, that etheric force is infinitely more powerful than the secondary forces of Nature, known as electricity, magnetism, etc.

Sir J. F. Herschel computes that, taking the analogy of known elastic media, an amount of ether equal in quantity of matter to that contained in a cubic inch of air (which weighs about one-third of a grain), if enclosed in a cube of one inch in the side, would exert a bursting power of upwards of seventeen billions of pounds on each side of the cube, while common air exerts a power of only fifteen pounds. Zolver Preston, in "Physics of the Ether," writes:—"A quantity of matter representing a total mass of only one grain, and possessing the normal velocity of the ether particles, that of a wave of light, encloses a state of energy represented by upwards of *one thousand millions of foot tons.* Or, the mass of one single grain contains an energy not less than that possessed by a mass of seventy thousand tons moving at the speed of a

cannon ball (one thousand two hundred feet per second). Or, otherwise, a quantity of matter representing a mass of one grain endowed with the velocity of the ether particles encloses an amount of energy which, if entirely utilised, would be competent to project a weight of one hundred tons to a height of one and nine-tenths of a mile." \*

Of course, to the ordinary reader, the foregoing really means very little, because it is frightfully difficult to believe—that is, *to realise*—and the imagination hardly makes an attempt to picture it as an actual fact. But, step by step, a lot can be done to vivify the imagination, so as, at any rate, to formulate some kind of idea of the enormous potency of etheric force, by the side of which even electricity and magnetism sink into insignificance.

It is well known that what is called "psychic force," though very closely allied to magnetism and electricity, is not identical with them. To express this difference, the word "od" was used by Reichenbach, and "vril" by Lytton. That much-misrepresented and maligned investigator, J.W. Keely, of Philadelphia, has studied the properties of etheric force for several years, and his researches prove, as he expresses it, "that it is neither the electric nor the magnetic flow, but the etheric, which sends its current along our nerves. The electric and magnetic flows bear but an infinitely small ratio to the etheric flow, both as to velocity and tenuity."

To enlarge upon the potency of etheric force is not necessary for our present purpose, which is that of *bridging the abyss between natural and occult science, and showing that from the very lowest depths of*

*matter there is a path to the topmost heights of will-activity.* I want to lay stress upon this point, lest there will remain a lurking suspicion in the reader's mind that the conclusion is not in accord with the results of the investigations of Modern Science. Once admit, as no person acquainted with the rudiments of Physical Science to-day can possibly deny, that every material substance in the world is composed of molecules, which are in incessant motion, and you cannot but admit that all mental activity is accompanied by molecular and atomic motion, consequently that "willing" must imply some motion or the other in the ether of which the world is ultimately composed.

The next step is to deal with the question whether this motion, that we know to be the result of an act of volition, can be in any way guided or modified to a certain desired end, or is capable of nothing but a chaotic condition. A moment's reflection will make it quite clear that this motion can be so directed, and when we remember that men have in every age of the world tried, and exhorted each other by precept and example, to impose their will upon etheric movement—that is to say, the external world—we feel absolutely convinced that it is possible to direct this vibratory energy to a certain end. Take the world of thought. The ordinary man does not accept any and every idea that crops up, but chooses some thoughts that appeal to him as worthy of acceptance, and rejects others. *This is nothing else than exercising a certain amount of control over etheric movement, for, as we have seen, thought is vibration.* Let us symbolise this by taking a circle to represent the sphere of thoughts, feelings, and emotions. I is the condition of the weak person

who cannot control his thoughts at all—that is to say, in whose brain etheric motion is in a chaotic condition; 2 is the strong individual who controls his thoughts to perfection—that is, brings etheric

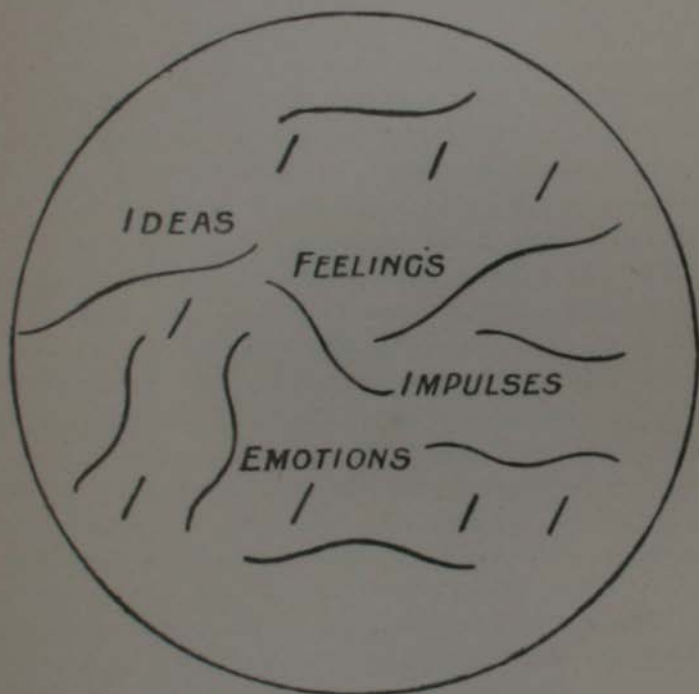


PLATE I.—Irregular Motion with no centre (Will).

motion in his brain in accordance with the dictates of an intelligent will.

Granting that the will can impose a form upon etheric vibration in the thought-realm, what about the external world? Science demonstrates that there is

only the difference in the rate of vibration of the underlying substance—cosmic ether—between thought and inert matter. One is a finer mode of vibration than the other. Consequently, as in Nature there is no chasm or void, but all things are linked together

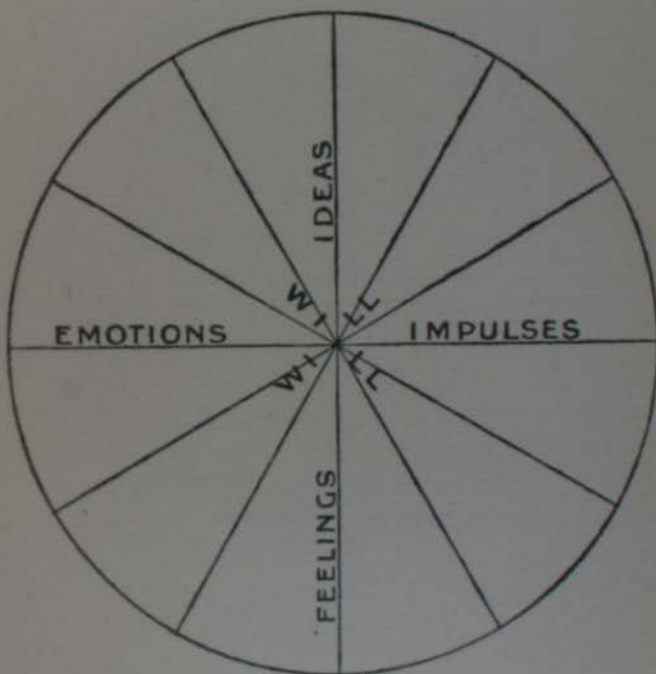


PLATE 2.—Regular Motion from a Centre (Will).

by gradation and degree, it must follow that there is a chain of intermediates between the vibration of thought on the one hand and the vibration of what is called solid matter on the other.



In Diagram 3, let A B C represent the world of thought, and D E F the world of nature. In the inner circle the vibration is extremely fine compared with the outer circle.

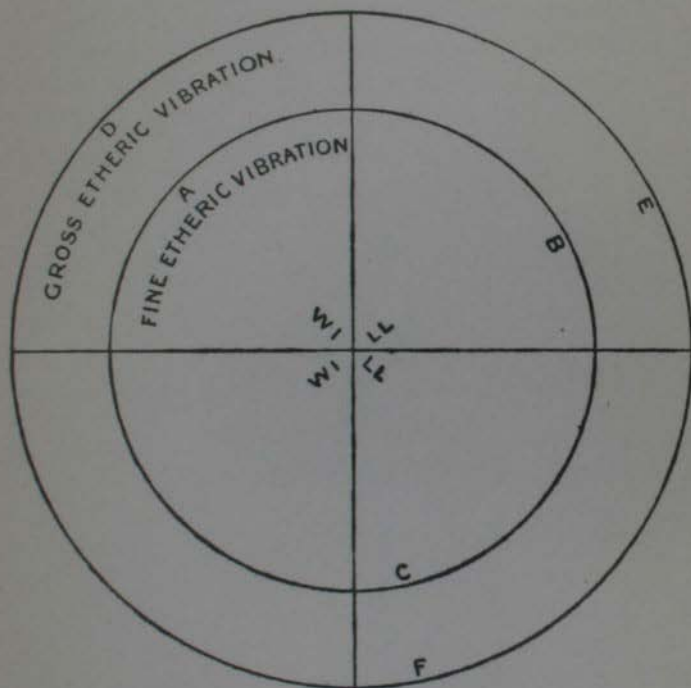


PLATE 3.

Put in the language of Modern Science, *the problem of the Will is to bring the motion of the outer circle into harmony with the motion of the inner: in other words, to realise in the material world the ideals of the thought-world.* This, though a difficult, is not an impossible task. It resolves itself into a question of

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force, inasmuch as willing sets vibratory energy of such and such a velocity and intensity to work from a given centre, which centre is in actual communication with every part of the periphery of the circle—that is to say, the physical world—by the gradation of matter. It is the province of science to measure as accurately as possible the amount of force exerted by an act of will ; for will varies immensely in intensity of energy, and what would be possible for one individual to accomplish would not be possible for another, because the central or initial energy is greater in the one than in the other.

## CHAPTER III.

### HOW TO STRENGTHEN THE WILL.

IT was remarked in the first chapter that the popular distinction between the Good and the Evil Will is not correct, any more than a distinction between good and evil electricity would be correct. The will, as such, only sees the object to be attained, and goes for this object in a line the straightness of which exactly corresponds to its strength. *The grand object of the will, it must always be borne in mind, is the Good.* The two fundamental ideas on which the Platonic philosophy is built, and to which it always refers as the final criterion of what is right and what is wrong, are that no one is willingly evil, and that every individual is endowed with the power of producing changes in his own moral character, changes which are not merely brought about by a fortuitous concurrence of external circumstances, but which can be ordered deliberately and made to correspond to The Highest Ideal. While, as was shown in the second chapter, it is perfectly correct to say that all things are in incessant movement, it is equally correct to say, and absolutely necessary to remember, that this incessant movement is not an *aimless, shifting chaos, but a well-ordered and harmonious movement.* This underlying current has been lucidly and sublimely stated in the Platonic dialogues. In the Phædo, we read that "all things desire to be of the same quality as the Highest Good," a thought which is likewise expressed

by St. Paul in chap. viii. of the Epistle to the Romans:—"We know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God." "The paltry village theology of the Churches," as Emerson called what is commonly styled Christianity, has blinded the mind to the Unity embracing all the various creeds and religious systems of the nations; and the highest compliment that a "Christian" commentator can pay to Plato is to inform the world that the greatest of all the philosophers approaches very nearly to the teaching of Christianity. Such "scholarship" as this, let us hope, is rapidly giving way to the more comprehensive doctrine of Occultism, which regards all the various religious creeds and philosophical systems as the innate aspiration of the human mind for Universal Truth.

In the Platonic philosophy, man is divided into three parts—(1) the reasoning principle, or the supreme ruler of the inner state; (2) the will, whose mission is to carry into execution the dictates of this supreme ruler; and (3) the animal passions, which can be regarded as the substratum of individual activity. The emphasis which has been laid in the two first chapters upon the fact that the ultimate object of the will is the Good, is, therefore, in perfect accord with the Platonic philosophy, not only in its general scope, but also in its practical bearings upon daily life. In the Platonic dialogues, the reader continually comes across *the supreme science of Dialectics, which unites in a complete system all the material sciences, and does perfect justice to each and all as separate members of the supreme science.* In the "Ars Vivendi"

series the same idea will be steadily kept in view. Man is treated as a whole, as a unity. This unity, however, is not simple, but complex. If perfect justice is not observed, using the term "justice" in the Platonic sense of balance or equilibrium, the individual necessarily suffers; for every part reacts upon the whole. If a person has bile in his body, he is bound to have bile in his thoughts, bile in his views, bile, in short, in every part of his being. Given a naturally powerful intellect with a disordered liver, and you have a bilious philosophical system. A keen eye can detect traces of indigestion in every page. Of course, it does not follow that a healthy body will produce a healthy philosophical system, because the inherent intellectual vigour may not be sufficient, but that is no reason whatever why we should tolerate a superabundance of bile. This forces upon us the necessity of acquiring *sound health*, physical as well as intellectual, as the very basis on which the higher efforts are to be built.

Timid people imagine that to strengthen the power of will is tantamount to strengthening the power of evil in the world. To the pessimist the world, as we know it to-day, is groping in the dark. Here and there, it is true, we meet with a powerful will directed upon wrong objects; but, taken as a whole, the world, though groping in the dark, *is groping towards the light*. Ritter, author of a History of Philosophy, speaking of this point, says:—"As the rational soul can only involuntarily be subject to ignorance, it is only against its will that it can be evil. Every volition, by its essential nature, pursues the good; no one is willing to be subject to evil or to become bad,



inasmuch as the end of volition is not the immediate act, but the object for the sake of which the act is undertaken; and no man enters on any act or undertaking except for the sake of ultimate good. Now a man, when engaging in any act apparently good, may err, and choose the evil instead of the good; but in that case he labours under an involuntary error, and does not what he really desires, but what, in spite of his wishes, seems to him either as an immediate good or as a means to ultimate good."

It is essential to distinguish between freedom of will and caprice or ignorance. Suppose a person were to say, "I can do exactly as I like. I am free as the wind. I am rich and powerful." *Such a person is but a mere child in intellectual growth, for he is governed entirely by his whims and passing feelings. He is tossed about on the waves of etheric vibration, as a ship without a rudder is tossed on the sea.* This kind of "freedom" of will deserves all the pitiless scorn and contemptuous epithets heaped upon it by the professed pessimists, of whom Schopenhauer is the most brilliant example. For a "turkey, driven with a stick and red clout to the market, and frightened at the rattle of peas in a dried bladder," to talk of freedom of will is enough to provoke the laughter of the gods, for never was word so misused. To get rid of this erroneous idea of freedom is the first step towards the real idea of freedom. It would be overstepping the limits of the present volume to enlarge upon this topic, beyond pointing out that there is no antagonism whatever between Fate and Freedom of Will. One is the complement of the other. Without Fate there could be no Freedom.

## PRACTICAL CULTIVATION OF THE WILL.

The general principle of Will-culture has been briefly and clearly indicated in the fourth chapter of "Ars Vivendi," and the present remarks will be found to be an amplification of the advice contained therein. I shall now enter a little more into details, with the proviso that written instruction, of course, falls far short of the living word, for every individual has certain peculiarities of temperament and habit that render it impossible to group all cases together. One person will fail to see a thought that strikes another at the first glance, or will assign to it a meaning that was never intended to be conveyed. As a general rule, *this can only be obviated by the living exposition of question and answer direct from one individual to another. This is the reason why the very highest teaching can only be communicated by word of mouth*, as was the case in the Egyptian temples, the Pythagorean system, and the doctrine of Jesus Christ. The Hermetic books can be regarded as an exception, but here, again, it is only the initiated reader who can really understand what they are about. The Bible has been read by millions of readers, with what result? Distortion and caricature, resulting in either a blind worship or a blind denial of the letter; while the hidden meaning of that letter—the real sense of the writing, the vivifying spirit by which alone the words have life—altogether escapes them.

We shall now proceed with the art of Will-culture.

(1) The first requisite, and without which it is impossible to succeed, is to believe in the possibility of

NOTE!

strengthening the will. This may appear a very simple matter, but to believe in the sense I mean is not so easy as one thinks. Every person lives, moves, and has his being in a sphere of thoughts, feelings, emotions, and passions, which, taking the average mortal as a sample, completely surrounds and controls him. How often one hears such an excuse as this:—"I can't help it. I was born so. That is my nature, and I can't change it. There is no use talking or preaching to me. It is in the family, etc." *Such arguments form an impenetrable barrier to real progress.* "Every spirit," said Emerson, "has to make a home, and *too often the home becomes a prison.*" Thus a strong will may degenerate into obstinacy and pigheadedness, and a weak will remain a weather-cock for ever. It is not without reason, therefore, that I lay down as the first requisite of success, *belief in its possibility.* One must not say, "I can't help it; that is my nature," but, "That is the tendency of my nature, it is true; but am I to remain for ever a slave, shackled by stupidity, or ignorance, or laziness? Whether I got it from my father or mother, or grandfather or grandmother, *it has to go.*"

(2) After believing—that is, thoroughly realising by a vivid imagination—the possibility of changing one's "natural" character for the good, the next step is to set to work about it. I need hardly say that it will not be advisable to proclaim on the housetops the coming revolution. On the contrary, say nothing about it, but meditate upon it silently by yourself. The advantage of this is twofold. It actually husbands force on the principle of the physical law of Inverse

Squares, which is to this effect: The energy of motion, starting from a centre of unit area to the adjacent particles, travels outward in spherical waves. Since amount of energy remains the same, but is spread over a greater area as the sphere grows larger, it follows that Intensity (amount of energy on unit area) diminishes in the same proportion as the spherical area grows greater, *i.e.*, as the square of the distance from the centre. This is the reason why men of action have been very seldom great talkers. Carlyle used to unceremoniously dismiss the latter with the forcible epithet "windbags." Of this suggestive text a passage from Emerson forms a fitting commentary. "Real action is in silent moments. The epochs of our life are not in the visible acts, but *in a silent thought by the wayside as we walk*; in a thought which revises our entire manner of life, and says, 'Thus hast thou done, but it were better thus.' And all our after years, like menials, serve and wait on this, and, according to their ability, execute its will. This revisal, or correction, is a constant force, which, as a tendency, reaches through our lifetime." *Cultivate, then, the habit of silent meditation*, as you are taking a leisurely stroll, or going to and from business—in fact, as often as you can. It will repay you far better than random newspaper reading. Pass your thoughts and ideas frequently under review. Some people dread being alone. They find it dull to be in their own company, want excitement, and pass a shallow, unsatisfying existence in perennial company with creatures as shallow and unsatisfying as themselves, and then ask whether life is worth living. All such I heartily recommend to read some of Schopenhauer's



Counsels and Maxims. The second reason why any person who is determined to develop the latent force of the Will should keep the determination to himself (unless, of course, he has a true friend or master), is that the chances are that his acquaintances will kill the budding plant by laughter and ridicule, or by volunteering the opinion that they don't see any improvement, and that he will never do much in that way.

(3) After you have acquired the habit of silent meditation, do not be too impatient to get results. Remember that nothing is so powerful as habit, and that time is necessary to change it. Its very force lies in its silence and stealthiness. But though a powerful minister for evil, it is an equally potent instrument for good.

"That monster, Custom, who all sense doth eat,  
Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,  
That to the use of actions fair and good  
He likewise gives a frock or livery  
That aptly is put on."

The mistake in will-culture always is, to attempt too much in the beginning, to fail to fulfil your ardent expectations of immediate transformation, and then abandon the hopeless task. This is due to that complete want of method which is such a prominent feature in the intellectual world of to-day.

4. The easiest and surest way of attaining success is to *keep to one definite thing.* It really doesn't matter what this thing is. It may be reading aloud a piece of poetry once or twice a-day, or doing something or other you fix your mind on, such as taking a walk to a certain place or places, or getting up at

N.B.



such and such a time, etc. *The principle is the concentration of etheric force round you as a centre.* The following passage from Eliphaz Levi expresses a truth of great importance. "Idleness and forgetfulness are enemies of the will. On this account all religions have elaborated their ceremonial practices, and made their worship minute and laborious. The more one constrains oneself for an idea, the more power one acquires in the domain of that idea. *The power of religions lies entirely in the inflexibility of will shown in those who practise them.* Practices which appear to be entirely without meaning, and which seem in themselves to be quite removed from the attainment of the great end in view, nevertheless all lead to that end by the discipline and exercise of the will." Just as it is only by daily exercise and discipline that an army can be kept in the very top of its condition as a "fighting machine," so it is only by incessant practice that the will can be perfected. This, in fact, is what constitutes the *art* of living. You can have many critics who pass judgment on a picture; but tell them to take the brush themselves, and they are nowhere. You are the actual artist, veritably painting your own picture, and you have not merely to criticise, but to take the brush yourself. It rests with you whether you publish yourself to the world a helpless bungler or a consummate artist. "There is no statue like this living man, with his infinite advantage over all ideal sculpture, of perpetual variety. What a gallery of art have I here! There is the artist himself, improvising, grim and glad, at his block. Now one thought strikes him, now another; and with each moment he alters the whole air,

attitude, and expression of his clay. Away with your nonsense of oil and easels, of marble and chisels; except to open your eyes to the masteries of eternal art, they are hypocritical rubbish." Pursuing this comparison of art, we shall soon see that as the painter works day by day, so the artist of life works day by day. Remember that it is far from an irksome task. *The very force of habit will make things more and more easy with every step forward.*

5. The important part played by health and disease in the life of every individual, necessitates attention to this matter in the course of the cultivation of the Will. There are various terms with which most people are fairly familiar, such as "Faith Cure," "Christian Science Healing," "Mental Healing," "Will Cure," "Hypnotic Suggestion," "Curative Mesmerism," etc. *The basis of all is etheric vibration* influenced by the will of the person himself or of another; for, of course, as it is a demonstrated fact that the ether penetrates every material substance without exception, an act of will, being composed of etheric vibratory energy, as was shown in the second chapter, can produce an effect at a distance as easily as when two people are in close contact. The influence of suggestion consists in imparting to, or rousing in, the person desired to be influenced, an idea of a certain kind, which idea, in its turn, is composed of a mode of vibration of the all-pervading ether. The greater the intensity with which the suggestion is projected to the mental sphere of the subject, the greater the effect. The phenomena of hypnotism can no longer be doubted by anyone at all acquainted with the subject, and furnish a proof of the

power of the will to the sceptic. However, this is a field not worth cultivating ; for what, after all, are the results of hypnotism in comparison with the results *the scientific cultivation of will-force* herein inculcated can ensure for the individual who sets to work on himself? Because you happen to be stronger than your neighbour, it doesn't follow that you must amuse yourself by knocking him down. This principle underlies hypnotic experiments, from those of Charcot on neurotic patients down to the most silly platform exhibitions so much in vogue a few years ago.

A few words on Faith Cure and Mental Healing. As a rule, it will not be possible for the beginner to stop a cold or a headache by an act of will, as is enthusiastically claimed by some of its adherents. I have frequently met with people who claimed all powers for the victorious will, and yet were themselves great sufferers. The explanation generally has been that their pain was sent them for a good purpose, and that it didn't occur to them to will it away. Of course, such arguments are nothing but sheer nonsense. It is the rarest thing in the world to see the ideal carried out in practice, and yet it must be done. How incongruous it is to write of the Will being able to heal, and yet to be utterly unable oneself to remove one's own pain and malady, as has actually happened in the case of several writers! The will is nothing if not a practical power, and the only road to success with this, as well as with everything where practice makes mastery, is to master every step before one goes on to the next.

Therefore, in the case of ordinary health, the best plan is to train the organism *gradually to a higher*

*level of vitality.* Give yourself a certain time for improvement. Mark progress every week or month as the case may be, and you will be astonished what you can achieve with a steady, undeviating resolution. After you have attained this stage you can go on to the higher stages and work some of the loftier practical problems which come within the legitimate scope of the will, and which are dealt with in the second part of this volume. It is absolutely imperative that the student should proceed step by step to make any real and lasting progress. "Do the duty that lies nearest you" is a sound maxim. If you have a weak chest, or a weak heart, or a disordered liver, regard the remedying of this defect as the first object of the will in your case. Take all the measures recommended by the science of living, such as bathing, diet, exercise, breathing, and use them all under the guidance of an intelligent will. Cease not till you have succeeded in accomplishing your object. This will form the preliminary and indispensable training for more difficult tasks.

6. Collect from various books passages bearing upon strength of will, and avoid as the rankest poison any thought or word that is antagonistic. *It is by selection that man makes progress.* The world is full of good things, and from a loftier standpoint what we call "evil" might appear but as a small speck in the ocean of Good. But so far as the individual himself is concerned he is obliged to pick and choose what he wants, and present a firm, hostile front to what he doesn't want. In literature, for example, we have strong and feeble thoughts lumped together. Take Goethe's "Faust" as an instance. The varying moods

of the struggling soul are pourtrayed by a master hand. In moments of black despair, Faust sees nothing but illusion and mockery in the universe. He is a pessimist of the pessimists, and nothing that Schopenhauer ever wrote can beat the following passage:—

“ Oh, cursed first of all be the high thoughts  
That man conceives of his own attributes !  
And cursed be the shadowy appearances,  
The false delusive images of things  
That slave and mock the senses ! Cursed be  
The hypocrite dreams that soothe us when we think  
Of me—of deathless and enduring names !  
Cursed be all that, in self-flattery,  
We call our own—wife, child, and slave, and plough !  
Curse upon Mammon, when with luring gold  
He stirs our souls to hardy deeds, or when  
He smoothes the couch of indolent repose ;  
A curse upon the sweet grape’s balmy juice  
And the passionate joys of love, man’s highest joys—  
And cursed be all hope and all belief ;  
And cursed, more than all, man’s tame endurance.”

If the student were to fix his thought upon the above or a similar passage day after day, he would gradually absorb the depressing atmosphere of gloom and despair. Therefore, *the strong spirit banishes all such ideas*, or merely views them as what must be shunned as the pestilence. Attention is consequently fixed upon the song of Invisibles, who reply to Faust in an entirely different strain.

“ Proud and powerful  
Son of earth,  
To second birth  
Call again the pageant splendid—  
Oh ! restore what thou hast rended—  
Be no more the wreck thou art—  
Recommence with clearer sense,  
And build within thy secret heart ;



Re-create, with better fate,  
Another world on firmer ground,  
And far and near, and all around,  
With songs of joy and triumphing  
Heaven and the happy earth shall ring."

The latter conveys a very different idea from the former, and as soon as one is able to detach one thought from another, and *use only the one that is required for a particular purpose*, immense strides will be made in the cultivation of mental and bodily strength. The developing spirit will soon be able to see a deeper meaning in the best literature than the one usually assigned it by the literary critic. The best style and the most carefully selected words and phrases, unless they convey a meaning which can be of direct service to the humblest intellect, are but sounding brass and tinkling cymbal to the self-conscious spirit.

By proceeding in this manner, the individual will possess, in a little while, a collection of most valuable thoughts that will exercise a practical influence on his daily life. He must not, however, stop short at the collection. He must go on *condensing and distilling* till the whole meaning of the various passages is revealed to him, and then he himself will furnish the living text of which these passages are the feeble commentaries.

"Are mouldy records, then, the holy springs  
Whose healing waters still the thirst within?  
Oh! never yet hath mortal drunk  
A draught restorative  
That welled not from the depths of his own soul!"



PART II.



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE RATIONALE OF INITIATION.

OF no subject is it more desirable for the individual of to-day to get a sound and thorough mental grasp than of the rationale of Initiation. We live in an age of freedom. We can say and do just as we please, without fear of the stake or the rack. There is no longer any need for the occultist, whatever name he assigns himself—Kabbalist, Hermetist, Rosicrucian, Theosophist, Spiritualist—to hide his meaning under the cover of fantastical terms, so as to elude the jealous watchfulness of Mother Church, ever on the look-out for heretical doctrines on the part of her beloved children. And even the tyranny of an equally jealous mistress—Materialistic Science—is fast losing its power to daunt her disciples from trespassing beyond the recognised bounds. No longer is the cry "Impossible," "Absurd," held out by the orthodox scientist in stern warning to daring innovators. The order now is, "Full steam ahead." And that we *are* going full steam ahead, no one who has his or her eyes open can entertain the slightest doubt. There still remain, it is true, a few old-fashioned fogies whose only mission is to growl and grumble, and deny that the world is going anywhere but fast to the dogs.

"I am the spirit that evermore denies,  
No! say I, No! to everything that tries  
To bubble into being."



Time was when this Mephistophelian spirit was a very formidable power in the world. No one who valued a whole skin could afford to mock at him, or do anything without propitiating his favour. Now the tables are turned. Instead of terror, he excites in us laughter and scorn.

"Is it thou? thou standing there? thou to resist  
The healthful energy, the animation,  
The force that moves, and moulds, and is creation—  
In vain spite clenching that cold devil's fist?  
Strange son of Chaos, this may well move laughter."

A great step forward this, for which, let us remember, we have to thank those intrepid men and women who, remorselessly assailed by Respectability in Theology and Science, Ridicule, Indifference, Bigotry, Calumny, and Persecution, adhered to their convictions unflinchingly, and kept their eyes constantly onwards and upwards.

Having got so far towards freedom, let us pause a moment and cast a bird's-eye view around us.

What do we see? *A chaotic condition of thought and action.* The expression "chaotic condition" is not used in any pessimistic sense, but rather to mark our present actual condition, out of which is to grow an orderly Cosmos. In the ordinary outside world, Jack is as good as his master, and, in the opinion of perhaps the majority, a d— sight better. External rank is rapidly deteriorating in value. When Lord A sells tea, and Lord B retails tobacco, and Lord C is in the drapery line, and Lady D is a dressmaker, the dullest can see that the old order changeth verily. And even with the Plutocracy it is not much better. It is already dawning on the *nouveaux riches* that

there are some things which even money cannot buy,  
and that the proud reflection,

“ When to my car  
My money yokes six spankers, are  
Their limbs not my limbs? Is't not I  
On the proud race-course that dash by?  
Yes. I it is that sweep along,  
Swift in their speed—in their strength strong;  
Mine all the forces I combine—  
The four-and-twenty legs are mine.”

provokes the curt retort,

“ You are just what you are—nay, never doubt it,  
Heap lying curls in millions on your head;  
On socks a cubit high, plant your proud tread,  
*You are just what you are—that's all about it.*”

This “you are just what you are—that's all about it,” is not always a pleasant reflection. “People masquerade before us,” says Emerson, in his essay, “Behaviour,” “in their fortunes, titles, offices, and connections, as academic or civil presidents, or senators, or professors, or great lawyers, and impose on the frivolous, and a good deal on each other, by these fames. *But the sad realist knows these fellows at a glance, and they know him.* No carpenter's rule, no rod and chain, will measure the dimensions of any house or house-lot; go into the house; if the proprietor is constrained and deferring, 'tis of no importance how large his house, how beautiful his grounds—*you quickly come to the end of all*; but if the man is self-possessed, happy, and at home, his house is deep-founded, infinitely large and interesting, the roof and dome buoyant as the sky. Under the humblest roof the commonest person in

plain clothes sits there massive, cheerful, yet formidable, like the Egyptian colossi."

The great reality that humanity is striving after is the Dominance of Will. External rank, money, and consideration are only meant to be convenient guides, which, however, like most other guides, often mislead if blindly followed. Nothing can bolster up a pompous outside when the personality within is poor and feeble and wholly insignificant. What constitutes the fascination of Napoleon Buonaparte? You may say his unbounded ambition, his glorious victories, and the dazzling splendour of his career. All these, however, are superficial and incidental, while the foundation is deeper-seated—in man's love for reality. Here was a man who taught us the value of man as man, not as Pope, or King, or Emperor. These, and other titles, the Will or Spirit tosses about like baubles, for it pierces through the inner signification of all ranks and titles. A very fine description of the spiritual man is furnished in Scott's portrayal of Bruce in the "Lord of the Isles."

"That steady, calm, majestic brow,  
With which the elder chief even now  
Scann'd the gay presence o'er,  
Like being of superior kind,  
In whose high-toned impartial mind  
Degrees of mortal rank and state  
Seem objects of indifferent weight."

When this external rank is external and nothing more, then it becomes at best a very poor thing. To such the spirit says: "I will spue thee out of my mouth because thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest

not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." To such an extent has familiarity bred contempt with regard to the writings of the Bible, that quotations like the above (Rev. iii. 17, 18), are thought to be nothing but vague metaphors which mean anything a pious interpretation puts upon them, and nothing practically. *But when they are recognised as referring to the development of the inner man—not in a distant future, but here, now—they assume a very different aspect.*

This topsy-turvydom of external rank, which is becoming every year more and more marked a feature of social life, is equally striking in the intellectual world. There is plenty of reading of mystical and theosophical books. Whatever opinion may be formed of Madame Blavatsky, no one can deny that the world has received a most powerful impetus from her writings, and from the general theosophical literature which has sprung from H. P. B. as the fountain head. Mahatmas or no Mahatmas, the Theosophical Society has done very useful work, for which every student of truth should be grateful. The literature issued has familiarised the public mind with the general idea of occultism, and has to a certain extent created a demand for works which make everything as plain as a hornbook and as simple as A B C. This is the epoch of the X rays, the telephone, and wireless telegraphy, and the ordinary mind wants everything put



before it clean-cut and dry, so as to save unnecessary trouble. If there is a secret behind, that secret must out. We are not going to be frightened by bugbears which terrify children in the dark. The discoverer of a real live Mahatma would make his fortune in no time, and any privations or terrors incidental to the search for this precious species would be more than compensated by the subsequent renown and profit. On the other hand, we are solemnly assured of the awful consequences to the world if the "arcanum" were publicly disclosed; and so convinced are its custodians of these consequences that wild horses will not tear it from their faithful bosom. It must be confessed that the latter seem to be only throwing dust in the eyes of the public, and to be palming off the outcome of a lively imagination.

It is reasonable, therefore, to ask whether, in sober earnest, there is anything in Hermetism, Alchemy, or Kabbalism, beyond a little Hypnotism and Mesmerism. In past times, notably the Middle Ages, when the authority of the Church was supreme, there was a reason for secrecy, but now it is no longer so.

That there is a great secret, a real "arcanum," cannot be denied by anyone who understands what he is talking about. The "arcanum" has for countless ages formed the very core of Occultism, and will do so for countless ages to come. In a nutshell, *it is the development of Will-Force. Adeptship, or Magic, means a more exalted and sustained development of Will-Force than is found in the ordinary individual.*

Is that the secret, the arcanum? you ask. If so, then we all know what adeptship is. Nonsense. It is still quite as much of a "secret" to the man in the



street, and for that matter to the majority of people who read or write books. To take an example. The doctrine of Jesus Christ contains the very last word on the matter. The great arcanum is put before the world in a plain and straightforward way, so that he who runs may read. Yet what has happened? The doctrine crystallised into a hard and fast theological system, the exponents of which did not even suspect that they were themselves the very Scribes and Pharisees, the blind worshippers of the letter, upon whom the Master poured scorn and contempt!

It will thus be seen that a truth can, to use a Hegelian expression, be published and yet not published. That is to say, it can be given out to the world at large, but this does not imply that it will be "understood by the people." So far is this from being the case, that it is impossible to see a truth unless we are prepared for it, for we can never see anything that is not in ourselves. "There is no teaching," said Emerson, "until the pupil is brought into the same state or principle in which you are: a transfusion takes place; he is you and you are he; then is a teaching."

This is the fundamental idea of the various Initiations into the Mysteries of Truth in different ages and in different countries. *It is the recognition of the principle that it is only the degrees and steps, slow and painful sometimes, but always slow and gradual, that it is possible for man to advance in knowledge and power.* Following from this self-evident axiom is the other self-evident truth that some individuals have advanced more than others, and that consequently the inequality between this man and that

man may be enormous. We hear to-day a great deal about freedom and equality; and the motto of the French Revolution—Liberty, Fraternity, Equality—is frequently quoted as an expression of the goal of human progress. But on the face of it the idea is preposterous, for inequality, one can say with perfect correctness, is the first law of nature, and to transgress the law with impunity is impossible. It never has been done, and never can be done, in the wide, wide world. Therefore the motto—Liberty, Fraternity, and Inequality—would be far more true to nature than the former. The following passage from Zanoni puts the case most clearly and convincingly:—

“You will not allow the law of universal equality!”

“Law! If the world conspired to enforce the falsehood, they could not make it *law*. Level all conditions to-day, and you only smooth away all obstacles to tyranny to-morrow. A nation that aspires to *equality* is unfit for *freedom*. Throughout all creation, from the archangel to the worm, from Olympus to the pebble, from the radiant and completed planet to the nebula that hardens through ages of mist and slime into the habitable world, the first law of nature is inequality.”

“Harsh doctrine, if applied to states. Are the cruel disparities of life never to be removed?”

“Disparities of the *physical* life? Oh, let us hope so. But disparities of the intellectual and the moral, never! Universal equality of intelligence, of mind, of genius, of virtue! no teacher left to the world, no men wiser, better than others—were it not an impossible condition, what a hopeless prospect for humanity! No; while the world lasts, the sun will

gild the mountain top before it shines upon the plain. Diffuse all the knowledge the earth contains equally over all mankind to-day, and some men will be wiser than the rest to-morrow. And *this* is not a harsh, but a loving law—the *real* law of improvement; the wiser the few in one generation, the wiser will be the multitude the next.”

And to the same effect as the above, is the speech of the wise Ulysses in “Troilus and Cressida,” act i. sc. 3. There is a council of war in the Grecian camp to decide what measures can be taken to expedite the fall of Troy, and to stay the dissension that is raging in their own ranks. After Agamemnon and Nestor have spoken, Ulysses—the ideal wise man of the Greeks, as Solomon is the ideal wise man of the Jews, and Merlin of the Celts—delivers his opinion in a lengthy speech. It is noteworthy that the poet leads up to the speech by the declaration of Agamemnon:—

“Speak, Prince of Ithaca; and be't of less expect  
That matter needless, of importless burden  
Divide thy lips, than we are confident  
When rank Thersites opens his mastic jaws,  
We shall hear music, wit, and oracle.”

The following is an extract from Ulysses' speech—

“Degree being vizarded,  
The unworthiest shows as fairly in the mask.  
The heavens themselves, the planets and this centre  
Observe degree, priority, and place,  
Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,  
Office and custom, in all line of order;  
And therefore is the glorious planet Sol  
In noble eminence enthroned and sphered  
Amidst the other.

O, when degree is shaken,  
Which is the ladder to all high designs,  
Then enterprise is sick.  
Take but degree away, untune that string,  
And, hark! what discord follows! Each thing meets  
In mere oppugnancy.  
And this neglect of degree it is  
That by a pace goes backward, with a purpose  
It hath to climb."

Social reformers of all grades and shades of opinion would do well to learn by heart this great speech of Ulysses, for it is especially applicable to the present time, when the various degrees of external rank are fast losing their importance. It would be very foolish to conclude that, because external rank is not final, the internal rank of degree is non-existent. The very elements of the art of living, in the proper sense of the word, are made up of subtle gradations, selections, and rejections. To the eye of the foolish and the simple everything is either good or bad, but the developed man displays his wisdom in a scale of merits and demerits as wide as Nature. Though all things spring from and return to Unity, yet in Nature this is not that, nor that this. Space and Time, though illusions to the self-conscious spirit, teach invaluable lessons in the art of putting everything in the proper place, and doing everything at the proper time. (This, by the way, is the basis of Astrology, which endeavours to take into account and turn to man's use the ever-varying magnetic and electric conditions of the earth and the other members of the solar system.)

It is exceedingly difficult to grasp the idea of Unity and Multiplicity in one thought, and most of

us can only get either Unity in a vague way, or Multiplicity in a confused jumble. *The mysteries of Initiation take their origin from the necessity of keeping the two ideas well in hand, and the initiated to a very large extent succeeds in doing so by the recognition of grades, whilst the uninitiated utterly fails and lumps all things together, mixing the low with the high and the lofty with the base. The doctrine of Jesus Christ, for instance, has been trampled in the mire by ignorant fanatics and uninitiated commentators, who dragged it down to their own level. "Sec," says Mejnour, the type of orderly knowledge, "see, for those who would unite the lofty with the lowly, the inevitable curse; thy very nature uncomprehended, thy sacrifices unguessed."*

The fundamental principle of Initiation from a philosophical standpoint is given by Kant and Hegel in the following extracts. The first is from "The Critique of Pure Reason," the second is from the "Logic."

"While we cannot give up the intention of erecting a secure abode for the mind, *we must proportion our design to the material which is presented to us, and which is, at the same time, sufficient for all our wants.* I understand by the transcendental doctrine of method, the determination of the formal conditions of a complete system of pure reason. We shall, accordingly, have to treat of the Discipline, the Canon, the Architectonic, and finally, the History of pure reason. Reason cannot permit our Knowledge to remain in an unconnected and rhapsodical state, but requires that the sum of our cognitions should constitute a system. By a system I mean the unity of various cognitions



under one idea. This idea is the conception of the form of a whole, in so far as the conception determines *à priori* not only the limits of its content, but the place which each of its parts is to occupy. The scientific idea contains, therefore, the end and the form of the whole which is in accordance with that end. The unity of the end, to which all the parts of the system relate, and through which all have a relation to each other, communicates unity to the whole system, so that the absence of any part can be immediately detected from our knowledge of the rest; and it determines *à priori* the limits of the system, thus excluding all contingent or arbitrary additions. The whole is thus an organism; it may grow from within, but it cannot increase by external additions. It is thus like an animal body, the growth of which does not add any limb, but, without changing their proportions, makes each in its sphere stronger and more active. We require, for the execution of the idea of a system, a schema—that is, a content and an arrangement of parts determined *à priori* by the principle which the aim of the system prescribes. This schema or germ of all lies in Reason [equivalent to Will or Spirit as used in the *Ars Vivendi* system]; and thus is not only every system organised according to its idea, but all are united into *one grand system of human knowledge, of which they form members.*"

The difference between the merely learned and the wise man is that the former increases his knowledge by external additions at the expense of symmetry, while the latter has grown from within, and, though he gathers knowledge from without like the former, *his spirit or will subordinates all to the central unity,*

*while doing perfect justice to all the members of this unity.* Thus the wise man aims at acquiring Knowledge, but not at the expense of other members of the organic whole—bodily vigour and practical activity. It is this idea which Kant was grappling with, though he himself was not able to carry it out in his own life.

Hegel is equally strong in the explanation of the fundamental principle of Initiation. Philosophy is commonly understood to be connected with abstruse subjects which "no fellah can understand." And very frequently this is the case, especially with the Hegelian philosophy itself, which has made many a dizzy head and an aching brain. But this very thing is *owing to the neglect of grades of Initiation.* The education given at our universities is very defective, superficial, and cursory. Clever young men are ambitious of getting Knowledge by external additions, and being dubbed M.A., M.D., LL.D., D.C.L., etc., as if a passport to wisdom could be purchased in this cheap way. From this standpoint the universities of the ancients—the Temples and Celebrations of the Mysteries—are immensely in advance of all modern universities, for there the principle which the giant intellect of Kant proclaimed to be the only principle of education sanctioned by reason, namely, growth of an organic whole—not the external additions so dear to the heart of modern university professors—was not only recognised, but *universally acted upon.*

"Philosophy," says Hegel in his "Logic," "is the science in which all terms and formulæ must be scrutinised, and the meaning of them and of their oppositions be ascertained. It tolerates no mere

assertions, or conceits, or arbitrary fluctuations of inference to and fro. Unless it is a system, a philosophy is not a scientific production. *The truths of philosophy are valueless apart from their interdependence and organic union*, and must then be treated as baseless hypotheses or personal convictions. The whole of philosophy resembles a circle of circles. If thought is free and actual, it must involve the union of several elements, must be concrete; it must be an idea; *and when it is viewed in the whole of its universality, it is The Idea, or The Absolute. The Science of this idea must form a System."*

The value of grades of Initiation is shown in dealing with a thought like that. Let a dozen different people give their opinion on that passage, and they will all differ in their estimate. The majority will agree that it is extremely vague, but one or two will admit that there is something in it, while the twelfth perhaps will grasp it as a living truth. How are we to explain such disagreement amongst these twelve persons? The simplest and easiest method is to say that there is no criterion whatever of truth, because there is so much difference of opinion as to what it is. But the principle of *grades of Initiation* into the mysteries of Truth explains it perfectly satisfactorily. The difference of opinion amongst the twelve is easily accounted for, not on the ground of there being no criterion of truth, but because each individual is in a different stage of development. Like people who are climbing a high mountain, the higher they get the more they see, and if they get to the top, they will all partake of the same vision. A person at the bottom cannot see

what a person at the top sees. This, as Zanoni says to the impatient pupil, is not a harsh, but a loving law, the *real* law of improvement, not only not inconsistent with universal brotherhood of the race as a whole, but *the very basis on which brotherhood is founded*. In *Wilhelm Meister*, Goethe makes the highest Reverence of all—Reverence for Oneself—take root in a Threefold Reverence—(1) for what is above us, (2) for what is below us, (3) for what is equal to us. To regard all men and women as equals, endowed at birth with equal rights and privileges, is the pet hobby of shallow thinkers, superficial reformers, and the sentimentalists of both sexes. Of course the inequality here described as the fundamental law of progress is not the artificial inequality of external rank and position, which, having done its work in the panorama of Nature, is now being rapidly levelled down or levelled up, whichever expression one prefers.

The foregoing, it is hoped, will enable the reader to take an intelligent view of the subject of initiation. It is of the very highest importance that the mind should grasp the fundamental principle, for otherwise there will be no order or method in our mode of procedure, and only a confused mass of ideas will be the result where "each thing meets in mere oppugnancy."

Before presenting a bird's-eye view of the initiations of the ancients, it may be advisable to point out that the *initiation of the present day does not assume the same forms as those of the past*. To attempt to revive the mysteries of the past in "their habit as they lived" would be to ignore the great fact that the Soul of the World never repeats itself

*verbatim.* The Spirit or Will uses an infinite number of forms to give expression to the same idea. One other remark is called for. *Unless the forms are continually vivified by the living will, they become useless and, in some respects, evil.* The present-day initiations of the Freemasons and others are a case in point. It is rather a knotty problem to solve how far external forms in themselves are calculated to be of service, but, as a general rule, it can be unhesitatingly asserted that without the vivifying life of the Spirit or Will, they had better not be gone through, for they will very likely end in pedantic formality, cunning, and deceit. This is the reason why Jesus Christ condemned the Scribes and Pharisees so unsparingly. The Scribes and Pharisees are as much alive now as ever they were; and as nothing is gained in occultism by mere outward professions, the cardinal rule is *to do practical work.* It would be the height of absurdity to call oneself a "high initiate," a "high mason," or an "advanced occultist," unless at the same time one was master of the microcosmic world up to a certain point. There is an enormous difference between theory and practice, and the beginner must set it down as an axiom that reading books on the subject is only one step in advance. Reading is either valuable or a waste of time, according to the state of development one is in. In some cases, reading would be a waste of time. "Read no books," says Mejnour to his pupil; "meditate, imagine, dream, bewilder thyself, if thou wilt, Thought shapes out its own chaos at last." In other cases, a course of reading would be advisable in order to quicken and expand the mental faculties.



## CHAPTER V.

### ANCIENT AND MODERN INITIATIONS.

THOUGH it has no immediate practical bearing upon the subject with which we are now dealing, still a few words on the origin of the Aryan race may not be out of place. So much has been made of the antiquity of India and Ancient Egypt by the occultists in general, and the followers of Madame Blavatsky in particular, that it may appear rather late in the day for the Western mind to lay down the claim of antiquity, not for India and Egypt, but for the *very portion of the earth's surface now occupied by the British Isles!* Such a claim may seem so preposterous as to be intended for a joke. But not only is it meant in downright earnest, but I believe that in a few years conclusive and irrefutable evidence will be adduced to prove the truth of the contention, that not only from a geological point of view, but from the very standpoint of intellectual development and occult lore, these islands can boast an antiquity by the side of which the most ancient Eastern cults are but of modern growth. The general idea that prevailed up till quite recently was that the cradle of the Aryan or Indo-European race was a region near the Tigris or Euphrates, from which by successive migrations Europe was subsequently peopled, while the Persians and Indians remained nearer the centre, and therefore maintained a high civilisation at a time when their brethren went

westward and gradually lost their pristine power. Accepting the present views of Comparative Philology, we come to the conclusion that the Celts parted first from the original parent stock, and step by step reached the western coasts of Europe, finally settling in Gaul, or France, and the British Isles. Up till the present century the importance of the Celtic branch of the Aryan race had not been very much felt by scholars, but with the growth of the science of the origin of languages, or Comparative Philology, its immense value as an aid to the solution of the problems of the origin of the race began to be recognised. At the present day it is universally acknowledged, as Professor Rhys, in *The Hibbert Lectures*, a few years ago, on "The Origin and Growth of Religion," pointed out. "The Celtic field of research," he said, "has a rapidly growing interest for scholars, who now regard it as one in which the investigator's labours are most certain to be crowned with brilliant results. 'The great attraction of Celtic philology consists in the very fact that every haul of the net, without exception, brings in a rich spoil.' So wrote a distinguished German scholar the other day; and his words are true of Celtic philology in that wide sense of the term which would embrace not only the study of Celtic speech, but also of Celtic archæology and history, of Celtic religion and folk-lore, of Celtic myth and saga." Those who are interested in Philology can pursue the subject further. Suffice it for our present purpose to point out that the Celtic race and the Celtic language bear to the student of languages traces of as great antiquity as, if not greater than, any of the Eastern races and languages.

Where did the Celts come from originally? The ready answer is from the East. But several philologists assert that the Celtic tongue shows that it has been separated from the original mother tongue *later than the others*—not *before* the others, as we are forced to conclude, if we adopt the hypothesis of an Eastern origin and successive migrations westward. Is there any other way of explaining the fact? Yes. We can give an explanation which accounts for the unity of the Aryan race, and the traditions of the Cymric and Irish members of the Celtic family which represent this country as having once extended far out into the sea, and been subsequently destroyed by water. *Here we meet with the story of Atlantis* as culled from the pages of Plato. It is easy enough to say that the philosopher was only indulging in a joke which is not to be taken seriously. But when we remember that Plato was an initiate, and knew far more than the schoolmen have ever dreamt of, the story wears a different aspect, and becomes not only possible, but probable, and not only probable, but the *tradition of actual facts in the annals of the past*. Atlantis is represented to have been a queen of islands in the North Atlantic Ocean, mistress of the seas and leader of all the nations of the earth at a time which is far anterior to the epoch of the Egyptian, Chaldæan, and Indian nations. The present history of the greatness of the British Empire is an almost exact parallel to the description of Atlantis given by Plato. This great island, the story says, was overwhelmed by an earthquake, and sank in one night beneath the waves of the ocean. Our knowledge of the stupendous geological changes that have taken

place on the earth's surface, renders such a catastrophe not impossible. The question thus resolves itself into one of evidence corroborative of such an appalling disaster. That evidence is not far to seek. We see it in the stories of the Deluge prevalent among all the Aryan nations, who, being members of one family—the Atlantean Race—preserved the memory of this fact in a more or less distorted fashion, each offshoot varying the story according to climatic conditions and other divergent characteristics. The version of the deluge with which the western mind is familiar is originally Chaldee—not Jewish, the latter having only derived it from the former, and incorporated it amongst their sacred writings and traditions. From time immemorial the Celts are known to have occupied the west of Europe and the British Isles, whence the evidence is pretty conclusive that the British Celts are the direct and lineal descendants of the mighty race of Atlantis, the true inheritors of the glory and power of the Atlantean Queen of the Seas. "There is reason to believe," says Donnelly, in "Atlantis," "that the Celts were originally part of the population and empire of Atlantis. The people of Great Britain, it may be said, are still in some sense in the midst of the ancient sun-worship of Atlantis." It is admitted by all competent occultists that the civilisation of Atlantis was higher than the Ancient Egyptians ever attained. This being so, the British Isles are truly "heirs of all the ages," being connected directly and geographically with the great mother of the Aryan nations. May not the Arthurian legend of the mystic sword handed back to the water nymph from whom it was taken, and the

tradition that Arthur shall come again and rule a great empire, be the firm belief that Atlantis would again rise above the waves to exercise even a greater sway than before, both spiritually as well as materially?

The whole subject of Atlantis, with her god-like sons and daughters, her command of the subtle forces of Nature, and her great wealth, is one of fascinating interest, and I believe we shall yet recover a few, at all events, of her glorious relics, now buried a few hundred fathoms deep beneath the billows of the Atlantic Ocean. The exact spot of Atlantis is already known. In the neighbourhood of the Azores an extensive plateau has been ascertained to exist in the ocean bed, and from a comparison with the other Atlantic soundings, the dullest head can draw the conclusion that this submerged plateau was once dry land. And when we remember that Plato's account of Atlantis has so far been borne out by modern science, it is by no means an unwarrantable stretch of imagination to believe that, as we have unearthed the lost treasures of Nineveh and Babylon, we shall yet rescue from oblivion the still greater treasures of Atlantis. Here was the very perfection of Occult as well as Physical Science, and though her Initiations and Rites are now lost to the material mind, the Self-conscious Spirit can pierce through the darkness and lift the veil of Space and Time.

Having placed Atlantis at the head of the Aryan nations, I shall now proceed to glance briefly at the initiations, rites, and doctrines of the various nations of antiquity, with which history is more or less familiar. The reader is exhorted to bear



ever in mind the central fact that the *same occult doctrines underlie all the different forms elaborated by the various races.*

#### THE CELTIC DRUIDS.

I have already referred to the Celtic wave that is now bearing the comparative philologists on its crest, and revealing to them the immense importance of the Celtic language. From the point of view of Occultism, the Celts are equally important, for we see that in the Druidic system they had elaborated a great social and religious system which, from the relics we are now slowly unearthing, we can estimate to be inferior to neither the Egyptian nor the Indian. The hoary age of the Druidic religious system is attested by many considerations, first and foremost of which is the great veneration in which the oak was held. The oak was sacred to the supreme God, the Celtic Duw, the Greek (d)Zeus. The Celtic word for oak, Derw—from which the word Derwydd (Druid) is derived—is the same word as the Greek *drus*. Every schoolboy knows the great importance assigned by the Greeks, since the very earliest times, to the oak. The famous oracle of Dodona was dedicated to the Pelasgian Zeus, the Pelasgians being represented as the ancient inhabitants of Greece. Though our information concerning the Pelasgians is scanty, we know that even at the remote age in which they peopled Greece and Southern Europe, they were not barbarians. They dwelt in walled cities, and were advanced in agriculture and the fine arts. The great object of their worship was the Supreme God, Zeus, to whom the oak was sacred. The ancient oak of Dodona was called by

Æschylus the far-spreading, speaking tree, and the incredible marvel of the world. It was a beautiful tree of immense size. The ancient Pelasgi used to call it the tree of life. In this tree the god was supposed to reside, and the rustling of its leaves and the voices of birds showed his presence. Incense was burned beneath it, and when a question was asked, the oak rustled and the Peliades said, "Thus speaks Zeus." The close connection between the Pelasgians and the Celts stands revealed by the veneration of the oak common to both, and there is a strong probability that these nations were originally united. The following passage from the History of Diodorus refers to the traditions of their ancient friendship. "Over against Gaul, in the great ocean stream, is an island. The inhabitants are called Hyperboreans (beyond Boreas). The soil is rich and fruitful. The fables say that Latona was born in the island. The Hyperboreans worship Apollo, the sun-god [the Greek word *hēlios* and the Cymric *haul* being exactly the same], and there is a magnificent temple to this god, circular in form. *They are singularly well-affected to the Greeks, and have been so from the earliest times.* Some Greeks have travelled thither, and Abaris, the Hyperborean, went to Greece to renew the ancient friendship with the Delians." That Abaris was a Celtic Druid is clearly made out by Godfrey Higgins, and that he was a high initiate is proved by the fact that Pythagoras, who had been initiated by the Egyptian priests, and therefore insisted upon the gradation which is indispensable to sound progress, received Abaris with the greatest honour, and treated him as an equal, not as a pupil. There is a tradition among the British Celts

that in the distant past these islands furnished a great army for a foreign expedition in compliance with an agreement unwarily entered into, and that this army never returned, but ultimately settled in Greece and the South of Europe. The Pelasgi, then, would be originally Celts, and hence the friendship that existed in the time of Pythagoras between the Britons and the Greeks. The whole of the previous and subsequent history of the Druids has been shrouded in mystery, but at the present time the materials are being rapidly gathered for a more comprehensive account; and perhaps we shall have in a few more years a history worthy of the Druidic system. As it is, by reading in an intelligent spirit the imperfect and frequently prejudiced accounts of the classical writers, we can form a fairly correct idea of one of the most ancient occult orders of the Aryan race.

The Druids were divided into three classes.

- I.—The Druids proper, who were the priests and law-givers of the Nation, and had sole charge of religious ceremonials and public festivals.
- II.—The Vates, or Soothsayers, who presided over the departments of medicine and science and art.
- III.—The Bards, who were the chroniclers of the deeds of the nation as a whole, and of individual heroes. The bards were of the lower class of initiates, occupying an intermediate place between the higher initiates and the mass of the people.

At the head of all stood the Hierophant, or the Arch-Druid, whose authority was supreme, and whose sway was not to be questioned. All matters that the lower

orders could not settle were referred to him for settlement, and his word was final. One important trait in the system of the Druids—and one that will for many reasons appeal to the Western mind, especially at the present time when Woman is being gradually rehabilitated in her right position as the joint heir and equal of Man—was the recognition of the right of woman to participate in all the hidden mysteries. There were Druidesses as well as Druids. Marriage was not considered inimical to the development of occult power, and in this respect *Druidism comes in direct antagonism to the Eastern idea that celibacy is necessary for the cultivation of the highest forces of our nature.* The idea of Shelley seems, to me, at all events, far higher than the one-sex basis of Eastern occultism.

“ Woman and man, in confidence and love,  
Equal and free and pure, together trod  
The mountain-paths of virtue.”

At the time Roman civilisation came in contact with the Druids, the chief centre of the system was in the Isle of Mona, or Mon—Anglesey, in North Wales. There were other centres of instruction, not only in Britain, but in France; but the fame of Mon far surpassed all the rest, and thither candidates for initiation flocked from the other side of the channel to drink deep of the waters of wisdom. All the instruction was by word of mouth, and so extensive was the course of subjects taught—Geometry, Astronomy, Divination, Magic, and Astrology—that some of the students remained in the sacred groves of Mon for twenty years. Traditions of the attainments of the Druids are contained in the Cymric myths. Cúchulainn, one



of the national heroes, when asked as to his education, boasts of having been taught by Cathbad the Druid, and of his being consequently a master in all the arts of Druidism, and skilled in divination and magic. The most famous of all the magicians was Myrddin, or Merlin, who is generally supposed to have been born in Carmarthen, though the other Celts patriotically locate him amongst themselves.

The Druids of Gaul were publicly suppressed by the Romans in 45 A.D., and Mon, the sacred isle of the Britons, was stormed by Suetonius Paulinus a few years later, when men, women, and children were brutally butchered, and the sacred groves so rich in hoary tradition barbarously cut down. The glories of Druidism were over; but it could not be altogether annihilated, and the "Eisteddfod" of Wales, though the various ceremonies of the Bards are to most an empty form, from which the spirit has departed, undoubtedly owes its origin, directly and indirectly, by obscure tradition and the characteristics of the people, to the grander institutions of Druidism.

#### ANCIENT EGYPT.

"How can one learn to will?" wrote Eliphaz Levi. "Here is the first secret—the arcanum—of Magical Initiation; it was to make this secret understood and felt to its inmost core, that the depositaries of the sacerdotal art in ancient times surrounded the approaches to the sanctuary with so many terrors and spells. They did not believe in a will that had not been proved by action, and they were right. Force can only be shown in overcoming resistance."



In no system that we are at present acquainted with, was the above principle carried out with such unrelenting rigour as in that of the Egyptian priesthood in its highest splendour. So terrible were some of the tests imposed upon the candidate for initiation that they deterred all but the most resolute and stout-hearted from even making the attempt, and of these it is certain that a great many succumbed to the ordeals through which they had to pass. There were seven degrees of initiation—

1. Pastophoris.
2. Necoris.
3. Melanephoris.
4. Christophoris.
5. Balahate.
6. —
7. Pancah.

These grades were not mere names, but degrees which the initiate attains in his struggle for self-mastery. Every conceivable test is put to the will, and nothing is taken for granted *until the actual result has been secured of more or less perfect control over the serpent of the Astral Light—the undulating motion of the Cosmic Ether*, which not only penetrates all our thoughts and ideas, but is the very substance out of which these thoughts and ideas as well as the rest of the universe are composed. The candidate dwelt for a long time in subterranean caverns, where he would meet the Dweller on the Threshold face to face in the solitude of darkness. Woe to him if the will gave way, and if he abandoned himself a helpless prey to the feeling of horror so natural to the ordinary man in

such a situation. He had to cross subterranean ravines where the least indecision or heart-fluttering would be fatal. These awful dangers left such an impression on some of the initiated that in Greece there was a proverb about the countenance of melancholy left by the Cave of Trophonius—a place where initiations were performed. In such cases initiations would produce an unnatural effect, because the individual will was not sufficiently strong to bear the task imposed upon it. The motto "*Be merry and wise*" is the true one. The pure spirit or will is "yet unquenched and high, and claims and keeps ascendancy" whatever the dangers, whatever the troubles of material existence; and unless this one leading idea is always kept in view, the student is apt to lose himself in bewilderment at the variety of instruments which he has to use. One of the ordeals which the Egyptian initiate had to undergo was the following. He was blindfolded, and then let down into a deep cavern. Having arrived at the bottom, he removed the bandage that covered his eyes, and found himself in complete darkness. Gradually he understood that he was in a den of creeping things, that hissed as they glided past him. Some crawled upon his naked and unprotected body. There was no means of escape. It was useless to run or even to think of moving. Can imagination picture a more frightful ordeal? What was he to do? Was he absolutely defenceless? So far as ordinary weapons are concerned he was entirely so. But he had a power which he could summon to his aid, *and which it was the aim of the ordeal to force into action, failing which he was abandoned to his fate as unfit*

for the higher degrees. That power was the living force within him—the will—which all the lower animals must obey, no matter how fierce they may otherwise be. *If the initiate succeeded in kindling the inner fire of the will, he had nothing whatever to fear from the deadly snakes around him; but if he succumbed to the horror of his situation, he was lost.* When the allotted time of the ordeal was over, the event showed whether the other initiates had to hail a victor or to bewail the loss of a departed brother. You may say that these initiations were ghastly and horrible. Perhaps so. But they are merely the counterparts of actual life, which to many is a dark and terrible enigma impossible to solve, and equally impossible to escape from. And, furthermore, unless initiations are the faithful transcripts of actual life, they become dead formulæ, only serving for the edification of commonplace people. Not such were the Ancient Initiations, and not such are the real—not the bogus—initiations of to-day. To give an example. In one stage of development, the initiate passed over a bridge which, as he advanced, gave way behind him, revealing a chasm into which he would fall headlong were he to attempt to retrace his steps. This is a true symbol of life. The individual must go on. "Forward, forward for evermore" is the cry of Evolution, both in the case of the individual and of the race. What is stationary or retrogressive is ground to dust by the revolving wheel of the Universe. Emerson, in his Essay "Napoleon; or, The Man of the World," admirably illustrates this great truth. "He (Napoleon) came, several times, within an inch of ruin; and his own person was all

NB

but lost. He was flung into the marsh at Arcola. The Austrians were between him and his troops in the *mélee*, and he was brought off with desperate efforts. He fought sixty battles. Each victory was a new weapon. 'My power would fall were I not to support it by new achievements. Conquest has made me what I am, and conquest must maintain me.' He felt with every wise man that as much life is needed for conservation as for creation. We are always in peril, always in a bad plight, *just on the edge of destruction, and only to be saved by invention and courage.*"

To go through an external form is not enough. You must have the eye opened so as to see the lesson taught by that form. This is the reason why at the present time it would be ridiculous to revive the tests of the Egyptian Hierophants, though the underlying principles must be inculcated *in a practical way*, suited to the need of the Anima Mundi of to-day.

The Egyptian temples, it is to be remembered, were not exclusively devoted to the initiations. The temples were not only places of worship like our modern churches, but also the resort of the sick. Diseases were cured by the priests, and in all the traditions of occultism, without exception, Magic has been intimately associated with Religion on the one side and Healing on the other. It was nothing new in the history of the world for Jesus of Nazareth to preach the Kingdom of God, and heal the sick that were brought to him. The true initiate does not develop one half of his being, leaving the other half to be tended by the clergyman or the doctor, but attains mastery over his own elements—



that is, those which compose his body. *As this foundation must at all costs be laid down, it is always advisable to aim first at the acquisition of mental and bodily vigour.* Afterwards the individual can proceed further if he feels inclined; and if he does not, he will never regret the acquisition of the harmonious balance of health which makes life so easy and pleasant.

## OTHER NATIONS.

Though, taken all in all, the Egyptian System was perhaps the most complete that we are at present historically acquainted with, there were Rites and Mysteries and Initiations amongst the other nations of antiquity which, though varied in form according to racial characteristics, still aimed at precisely the same object—the gradual and harmonious development of Man from a condition of weakness, imbecility, and indecision to a state of strength of will, firmness of decision, nobility of character, and ripeness of wisdom, by which man is transformed from a mere animal, obeying the passions and moods of the lower nature, to a God-like being at whose feet matter, with all its transitory shapes, lies subjected and plastic. The ancient mysteries of Samothrace, India, Chaldæa, Assyria, Tyre, Greece, etc., were based upon the same principle, and when once *the Spirit perceives the principle which animates them,* the form assumes a secondary position. As it would take too much space to dwell upon them in detail, I will content myself with giving the following description from Schubert, a learned German author.

“The mysteries were not imparted, as the sciences are in our age, and to all appearances they were

Note



neither learned nor taught; but as a reflection of the old revelations of nature, the perception must arise from an inspiration in the scholar's mind. From this cause appear to have arisen those numerous preparations and purifications the severity of which deterred many from initiation into the Egyptian priesthood; in fact, not unfrequently resulted in the scholar's death. Long fasting and the greatest abstinence appear to have been particularly necessary: besides this, the body was rendered insensible through great exertions, and even through voluntarily inflicted pain [this has played a great part in the initiations of the Red Indians of America, Eastern fakirs, Christian saints, etc.], and therefore open to the influence of the mind. The imagination was excited by representations of the mysteries; and the inner sense was more impressed by the whole than—as is the case with us—instructed by an explanation of simple facts. *In this manner the dead body of science was not given over to the initiated, and left to chance whether it would become animated or not, but the living soul of wisdom was breathed into them.*

“From this fact, that the contents of the mysteries were rather revealed than taught—were received more from inward inspiration and mental intoxication, than outwardly through endless teaching—it was necessary to conceal them from the mass of the people. Among all priests of this age, from the Egyptians to the ancient Scandinavians, the punishment of death was awarded to any of the initiated who desecrated the contents of the mysteries by cold words or descriptions to those who had not received the inspiration. The people only saw the truth in

obscure pictures and parables, and even these parables were not confided to writing among the Scandinavians (likewise with the Celtic Druids). So firm was faith in that old world, that truth and wisdom could not be communicated from man to man, but must be received by the mind through divine influence."

The above passage is explained from another standpoint by Emerson. "There is a principle which is the basis of things, which all speech aims to say, and all action to evolve—a simple, quiet, undescribed presence, dwelling very peacefully in us, our own rightful lord. We are not to do, but to let do; not to work, but to be worked upon. To this sentiment belong vast and sudden enlargements of Power. Heaven deals with us on no representative system. Souls are not saved in bundles. The Spirit saith to the man: 'How is it with thee—thee personally? Is it well? Is it ill?' Religion must always be a crab fruit; it cannot be grafted and keep its wild beauty."

In connection with the foregoing, if one meditates over the following lines from "Faust," the meaning of Initiation into the Mysteries will become still more clear:—

"Every thing fails me—every thing.  
These instruments, do they not all  
Mock me? lathe, cylinder, and ring  
And cog and wheel: in vain I call  
On you for aid, ye keys of Science.  
*I stand before the guarded door  
Of Nature; but it bids defiance  
To latch and ward: in vain I prove  
Your powers—the strong bolts will not move.  
Mysterious in the blaze of day  
Nature pursues her tranquil way:*

*The veil she wears, if hand profane  
Should seek to raise, it seeks in vain ;  
Though from her spirit thine receives—  
When hushed it listens and believes—  
Secrets—revealed, else vainly sought.  
Her free gift when man questions not :  
Think not with levers or with screws  
To wring them out, if she refuse."*

#### THE PYTHAGOREAN SYSTEM.

The Pythagorean System, for many reasons, is one of the most important that we have any record of, for it grafts an open and popular exoteric propaganda on to the profound and solemn mysteries of Ancient Egypt and India. Pythagoras, Orpheus, and Thales are represented as the first foreigners who were initiated into the secrets of Egypt. The extreme difficulty which a foreigner encountered in his endeavour to become an Egyptian initiate can be seen from the following. Pythagoras obtained a letter of introduction from Polycrates, King of Samos, to Amasis, the King of Egypt, warmly recommending him to the latter as a candidate who desired to be initiated into the mysteries of the temples. Amasis, as Chief of the Initiates as well as King, complied with the request, and gave orders accordingly. Pythagoras presented himself first to the priests of Heliopolis, but they, under a plausible pretext, advised him to go to Memphis. Here the same thing happened, and he was recommended to go to Thebes. At last, seeing that the Greek aspirant was not to be put off by excuses, the priests tried to frighten him from his determination by excessive preliminary labours and hardships. However, so apt a pupil did Pythagoras

show himself, that he was at last received with open arms, and even permitted to assist at the sacred ceremonies—a thing which no foreigner was allowed before. Iamblichus says that he remained twenty-two years in Egypt learning the sacred customs of the priests, and, as we know that twenty years was no unusual period of instruction among the British Druids, this lengthy stay does not appear at all improbable. It is very likely that Pythagoras visited India and other centres of learning before returning home, so that when, in the prime of mature manhood, this imposing and majestic figure opens his celebrated school at Crotona in the sixth century B.C., he can be said to give to the world the ripe fruit of a long and arduous training, extensive travel, and the most varied culture. The noble edifice that he reared lasted for centuries, and indeed, for that matter, it is yet standing. Some of the grandest characters and greatest intellects throughout the ages have been followers of Pythagoras. Plato's writings embody the outlines of the Pythagorean system, and though the master himself did not commit his teaching to writing, yet there are left abundant materials which will enable the luminous spirit of to-day to put together the scattered fragments. Perhaps the most celebrated of all the Pythagoreans was the renowned Apollonius of Tyana who flourished in the first century A.D. The attempts made by orthodox theologians to belittle the life and deeds of Apollonius, can now only provoke a smile of contempt at the bigotry and narrow-mindedness that have for the last few centuries passed current for religion. When a "man of light and leading," the

late Cardinal Newman (Life of Apollonius of Tyana), writes such arrant nonsense as this, is it any wonder that the very name of "Christianity" is repugnant to a real admirer and follower of Jesus Christ? "The reputation of Apollonius has been raised far above his personal merits, by efforts to bring him forward *as the rival of the author of our religion*. His life was written with this object about a century after his death." Such a statement as that is so preposterous as to be beneath contempt. Neither Apollonius nor Philostratus ever heard of Jesus Christ. At a time when Jesus was but a local teacher, Apollonius was a conspicuous personality on the world's stage, the friend of kings and emperors, whose profound wisdom and noble character were objects of reverence among high and low in almost every quarter of the then civilised world.

The Pythagorean system had, like the temples of Egypt, seven grades of Initiation.

1. Daily lectures for the general public. To these all were admitted indiscriminately. These lectures were suited to a general audience, and were couched in a popular style. It is said that sometimes his hearers amounted to two thousand. Most of these were perhaps animated chiefly by motives of curiosity to hear what he had to say, and didn't trouble their heads any further. If they were desirous of penetrating into the inner doctrine, they had to prove their resolution in a practical manner
2. Night lectures were only for those who were formally admitted to the circle of Pythagorean scholars and pupils. The first grade



corresponded to the "preparation" for the mysteries; the second grade to that of the acolyte or half-initiate.

3. After the many examinations and trials of the second grade, the scholar became the regular Pythagorean, who lived strictly in the prescribed manner, and observed the "silence" of so many years, two to five as a general rule. During this time he was not allowed to see the master, but received his instruction behind a curtain.
4. In this degree, the instruction was principally by allegories and symbols, usually taken from Geometry and Numbers.
5. Short and enigmatical sentences now formed the principal portion of the teaching.
6. It was only after these numerous preparations and disciplines that the final instruction in the profounder lore was imparted. It included Astronomy, the Unity of the world, the Triune God, and the Nature of Man.
7. The stage of the fully-developed and self-conscious Will.

#### THE ROSICRUCIAN ORDER.

The Rosicrucian Order, founded in the fourteenth century, inherited the traditions of the older schools of occultism. Christian Rosenkreutz, after having travelled extensively in the East, on his return to Germany, about the year 1378, established the famous society of the Rosy Cross. The genuine Rosicrucians always guarded the higher secrets most zealously, as is shown by their favourite motto, "Learn to know"

*Note* ( all, but keep thyself unknown." They did not try to make converts, and published the higher doctrine to the world only by dark hints, and what appears to the superficial reader the veriest jargon. The power of the Church, it is to be remembered, was supreme in the middle ages, and any suspicion of heterodoxy was eagerly dealt with. This may appear sufficient reason to account for the jealousy with which the members of the brotherhood kept their secrets, but in addition to this there stands the fact that *wisdom can never be taught in the full blaze of publicity*. Even to-day, with all the intellectual freedom we enjoy, it would be impossible, from the very nature of man, to make everything as plain as a pikestaff to the first comer.

#### FREEMASONRY.

The freemasonry of to-day is a huge skeleton without flesh and blood. Whether it will be possible to animate this skeleton with the quickening life of Will or Spirit, may become in the future an interesting question. Most certainly it will not be an impossible task, for the Freemasons inherit the traditions of the past, and they have means at their disposal which they could turn to account, provided they can secure the *sine qua non*—the Living Will. As they stand at present, the initiations are void of any reality whatever. I can speak quite freely, because I am not a "mason." "By their fruits ye shall know them." To be labelled a "high mason" may flatter the vanity of a grocer, or a lawyer, or a stockbroker, or a nobleman, but from an occult point of view such a title is supremely ridiculous, unless it corresponds to an inner reality.

## INITIATIONS OF TO-DAY AND THE FUTURE.

The reader is now, it is to be hoped, acquainted with the fundamental principle of initiation, which I have shown to be *the basis of orderly and methodical development*. Without it, there can only be spasmodic and irregular growth, such as is to be seen in what is called "Mediumship," which, in the way it is generally practised, is to be condemned as an unmixed evil. The phenomena of Spiritualism are nothing whatever new in the experience of humanity. Each individual and each generation dwells in a private cave of darkness, with a little light coming in at the entrance. We therefore imagine that because we are dark, everybody else lives in the dark. It is only a few years ago that Elliotson was literally hunted to death by his medical *confrères* for investigating phenomena now universally recognised as realities. Such a thing could not happen now, for we are breathing an atmosphere of liberty of thought and liberty of speech. What is wanted now is for *every individual to secure liberty of thought in his own microcosmos*, not to follow blindly the lead of others. *Every individual should be his own Socrates, always trying to get at truth*, not accepting sophistical opinion, no matter from how great an authority it emanates from. There are far more sophists nowadays than in the time of Socrates. On social questions, for instance, one continually comes across opinions and theories which are not only not true, but if carried out would take us back to "Chaos and old Night" again. We hear a great deal of the dignity of "manual labour," as if the highest ideal of each and all of us was to

secure an acre of land and dig it with our own hands. This shallow idea, which seems to many the profundity of wisdom, springs from a total misconception of the nature of Man. *Everybody has a special bent or bias or gift*, which if cultivated will secure his own good, and also accrue to the benefit of others. One person may make a good thinker provided he has the training and the suitable conditions, but it doesn't follow that the same person would make a good carpenter or a good agriculturist, and it would be only a waste of precious time and force for him to bother his head about the matter. Plato in "The Republic" expounds the whole subject in a clear and masterly manner.

The Initiations of To-day and the future must take into account the great social questions of the age, and must be adapted to the requirements of to-day. *Men and women should be treated on the same footing.* In fact, for the perfection of Initiation into the mysteries of Truth, woman is indispensable to man, and man indispensable to woman.

## CHAPTER VI.

### IDEALS OF POETRY AND ROMANCE.

No mental faculty has been so much misunderstood as Imagination. Amongst even well-educated persons, it is not at all an unusual thing to find a complete ignorance of the real meaning of the word. It is here spoken of with contempt, there lauded to the skies, while the hard matter-of-fact man of the world looks upon it with horror, as the worst enemy of practical, sober common sense. We all know of the castles in the air which the grim realist delights in pulling down and triumphantly demonstrating that they never had even the shadow of a foundation in solid fact. Many a solemn sermon has been preached to the world on the danger of giving rein to the imagination, and many a well-meant warning has been given to shun its snares and pitfalls. As soon, however, as one understands what imagination is, one is able to use it with unspeakable advantage, for it is nothing short of the Creative Power both of the Universal and Individual Mind. *With a powerful will and a vivid imagination, the individual is possessed of irresistible power.* In most cases it is not the imagination which is at fault, *but the will*—which is not strong enough to work out into the material plane the glorious images of the imaginative faculty. In fact, will without imagination is as bad as imagination without will.



Imagination means nothing else than the power to form *images* in the thought sphere, which, as was shown in chapter II., is composed of vibratory etheric energy. Of course these images will vary in distinctness of outline, from a passing whim of the moment to the clear, absolutely life-like image of the Magician. They will, again, be a power for evil or a power for good, according to the purpose or the want of purpose attending their formation.

Bearing this in mind, one can derive incalculable benefit from the contemplation of the ideals of what is called "*fiction*," which is nothing but the exercise of the Creative Power of Imagination. This subject will be dealt with more fully in the subsequent volume on "Imagination and its Wonders."

#### DUMAS' "MEMOIRS OF A PHYSICIAN."

It is perfectly immaterial whether Dumas idealised the character of Joseph Balsamo, and made him ten or a hundredfold more imposing and majestic a person than he showed himself in actual life. Balsamo, or, as he is generally called, Count Cagliostro, was a strange medley of the charlatan, the knave, and the initiate, and it would be a difficult task to make out which of the three characters predominated in him; but to treat him as Carlyle did is preposterous. Carlyle's essay only serves to show how inferior in pure intellectual power he was to his friend on the other side of the Atlantic—Emerson.

The Balsamo of Dumas is an ideal of great force and beauty, in which are focussed some of the very loftiest attributes of man. The first three chapters of the volume are very important from an occult

standpoint, for they give a bird's-eye view of the whole field of initiation. Balsamo may be taken as the representative of the self-conscious Spirit or Will, piercing through the masks of forms to the eternal truth within. He submits to all the ceremonials of the brotherhood, for he knows perfectly well what is the hidden meaning of those ceremonials. It may be objected that the ritual of Mont Tonnerre was only a sham compared with the real trials of Egyptian initiations, but this is no true objection, *for the self-conscious spirit or will, even in the Egyptian initiations, had nothing to fear, for spirit is absolute master over matter.* From this point of view, then, the most frightful ordeals are no more test of *the Masterful Will conscious of innate power*, than the transparent shams which the Balsamo of the novelist is formally submitting to.

"Brethren, how many are present?" asked the president, turning to the assembly.

"Three hundred," replied the phantoms, with one voice.

The president turned to the traveller. "What dost thou wish?" he asked.

"To see the light," replied the other.

"The paths which lead to the mountain of fire are rugged and difficult. Fearest thou not?"

"I fear nothing."

"One step forward and you cannot return."

"I stop not till I reach the goal."

"Wilt thou swear?"

"Dictate the oath."

Balsamo goes through all the prescribed forms one after the other, till the last test of courage and self-sacrifice is reached.

"Bring the dagger," said the president.

"It is useless," said the unknown, making a disdainful movement with his head.

"Useless!" cried the assembly.

"Yes, useless!" he replied, with a voice which drowned every other; "useless! You lose time, and 'tis precious."

"What mean you?" asked the president.

"I tell you I know your secrets—that these proofs of yours are but child's play, unworthy of men. Such things may frighten cowards. Rise, pretended corpse, thou hast no terrors for the brave."

Another shout made the vaults ring.

"Thou knowest our mysteries, then?" said the president. "Thou art one of the illuminated or a traitor?"

"Who art thou?" demanded the three hundred voices; and on the instant twenty swords, in the hands of the nearest phantoms, were pointed, with a motion as precise as if directed by a military signal, at the bosom of the unknown.

He smiled, and said calmly, "I am he who is."

Then he turned his eyes slowly around the living wall which hemmed him in, and gradually sword after sword sank before him.

"Thou hast spoken rashly," said the president. "Doubtless, thou knowest not the import of thy words."

The stranger shook his head and smiled.

"I have spoken the truth."

"Whence comest thou?"

"I come whence comes the light. Learn that snares make him smile who sees in darkness, who acts in spite of the elements, and who lives in spite of death."

"Thou art young," replied the president, "and thou speakest as if from Divine authority. Reflect! boldness overcomes only the weak or the ignorant."

A disdainful smile played over the lips of the stranger.

"You are all weak, since you have no power over me! You are all ignorant, since ye know not who I am!"

*Spirit is ever young, invincible, and irresistible. It is latent in every human being, and all the various forms of initiation, and even of actual life itself, serve to rouse it into action more and more, till it attains to self-consciousness, the light of which is as the noonday sun.*

## ZANONI.

The romance of 'Zanoni' is not only an interesting tale, but contains hints and suggestions of the very highest value to the student. As the author described it, "it is a romance, and it is not a romance. It is a truth for those who can comprehend it, and an extravagance for those who cannot." Here, again, as was pointed out in reference to Dumas' "Balsamo," it is perfectly immaterial whether Lytton himself carried out into practice the ideals he strove to create. The point is *whether Zanoni contains something that the aspirant can turn to practical account in his or her own life*. Sincere admiration of, and gratitude to, the author need not blind the reader to his faults and weaknesses. That "Zanoni" is something more than a mere romance is seen from the following. It gives a thoroughly accurate account of the stages of initiation.

I.—It is necessary to devote oneself heart and soul to the work, and to cut off as much as possible miscellaneous activity. Glyndon, therefore, is taken to a solitary castle, where he is gradually accustomed to the ideas and conversation of the adept Mejnour. "For several days Mejnour refused to confer with Glyndon on the subjects nearest to his heart. 'All without,' said he, 'is prepared, but not all within; your own soul must grow accustomed to the spot, and filled with the surrounding nature; for nature is the source of all inspiration.' With these words Mejnour turned to higher topics. He made the Englishman accompany him in long rambles through the wild scenes around. Insensibly the young artist found himself elevated and soothed by the lore of his companion; the fever of his wild desires was slaked. His



mind became more and more lulled with the divine tranquillity of contemplation ; he felt himself another being ; and in the silence of his senses he imagined that he heard the voice of his soul. It was to this state that Mejnour evidently sought to bring the neophyte, and in this elementary initiation the mystic was like every more ordinary sage. For he who seeks to discover, must first reduce himself to a kind of abstract idealism, and be rendered up in solemn and sweet bondage to the faculties which contemplate and imagine."

This is the necessary preliminary stage, for it is impossible to make much progress unless the conditions are fairly satisfactory. On this point, however, a great deal of misapprehension exists, especially amongst those who are acquainted with theosophical literature, in which the dreariness of initiation is painted with a most sombre brush. Some of the cherished maxims insist on the necessity of cutting oneself entirely away from the genial world of everyday life. This I emphatically assert to be a wrong idea. Everybody lives and moves in a certain sphere, and the first duty is to do what lies nearest to us by getting this sphere into harmony with the ideal. *The material plane is evil only when it usurps dominion over the higher. The ideal should be worked out into the web of everyday life, not kept in a far-away world*, and, therefore, the desire of Eastern occultists to retire entirely from the world, to renounce instead of dominating the world for its good, does not appeal to the Western mind with so much force as the Christian ideal—"preaching the kingdom of God and healing the sick" upon earth.

II.—After Glyndon is saturated with the theory, he is impelled onward to practical work. He has now



reached the line of demarcation between the mystical dreamer and the practical worker. The following lines from Faust aptly describe this stage:—

“To ponder here, o'er spells and signs,  
Symbolic letters, circles, lines;  
And from their actual use refrain,  
Were time and labour lost in vain:  
Then ye, whom I feel floating near me,  
Spirits, answer, ye who hear me.  
Ha! what new life divine, intense  
Floods in a moment every sense;  
I feel the dawn of youth again  
Visiting each glowing vein!—  
Was it a god—a god who wrote these signs?  
The tumults of my soul are stilled,  
My withered heart with rapture filled,  
In virtue of the magic lines.  
The secret powers that Nature mould,  
Their essence and their acts unfold—  
Am I a god? Can mortal sight  
Enjoy, endure this burst of light?  
How clear these silent characters!  
All Nature present to my view,  
And each creative act of hers—  
And is the glorious vision true?  
The wise man's words at length are plain,  
Whose sense so long I sought in vain.  
‘The world of Spirits no Clouds conceal,  
Man's eye is dim, it cannot see,  
Man's Heart is dead, it cannot feel.  
Thou, who would'st know the Things that be  
The Heart of Earth in the Sunrise red  
Bathe, till its Stains of Earth are fled.’  
Oh! how the spell before my sight  
Brings Nature's hidden ways to light.”

Glyndon in the trance, becomes clairvoyant and clairaudient, and sees and hears Zanoni and Viola on a distant shore. When the student has attained this stage, a new zest is given to life, *and the ordinary*

*pleasures of existence are dull and tame in comparison with the enlarged powers of enjoyment opening out before the mind.*

III.—Glyndon is now engaged in work which strains his faculties to the utmost. "For a considerable period, the pupil of Mejnour was now absorbed in labour dependent on the most vigilant attention, on the most minute and subtle calculation. Results astonishing and various rewarded his toils and stimulated his interest." And when he is impatient to progress by leaps and bounds, he is held in check by Mejnour. "Patience! It is labour itself that is the great purifier of the mind; and by degrees the secrets will grow upon thyself as thy mind becomes riper to receive them." *It was the neglect of this advice which converted the previous orderly advance into a horrible and jarring chaos.*

To him who hath eyes to see and ears to hear, the value of "Zanoni" is incalculable.

#### SHAKESPEARE'S PROSPERO.

There is so majestic an air of dignity and might about the magician Prospero, who, with all his occult attainments, remains perfectly human, that it requires far more than the ordinary criticism of the literary man to appreciate the greatness of the creator of such a character. *In Prospero we gain a glimpse of the powers possible for man to attain, without losing interest in the external world, which is alleged by the Eastern occultists to be an indispensable necessity for the development of the highest forces in our nature. Prospero is a father who devotes himself to the education and the welfare of his only child, and, at the*

opening of the play, he has by his magic skill raised a terrific storm, in order to bring his enemies to his power, and restore his daughter and himself to their legitimate position. To Miranda, whose heart melts with compassion at the thought of the wreck of "a brave vessel, who had no doubt some noble creature in her," he says,

"No harm.

I have done nothing but in care of thee  
(Of thee, my dear one! thee, my daughter!), who  
Art ignorant of what thou art, nought knowing  
Of whence I am."

*In Prospero we find none of the weakness of the Byronic heroes, who have all a flaw in the making of them. Compare Manfred and Prospero. Manfred is a "magician of great power and fearful skill," but the powers he is dealing with he approaches from below, not from above. The poet well describes the narrow path of occult progress.*

"From my youth upwards

My spirit walk'd not with the souls of men,  
Nor look'd upon the earth with human eyes:  
My joy was in the wilderness, to breathe  
The difficult air of the iced mountain's top.  
And then I dived,  
In my lone wanderings, to the caves of death,  
Searching its cause in its effect; and drew  
From wither'd bones, and skulls, and heap'd up dust  
Conclusions most forbidden. Then I pass'd  
The nights of years in sciences untaught  
Save in the old time; and with time and toil  
And terrible ordeal, and such penance  
As in itself hath power upon the air,  
And spirits that do compass air and earth,  
Space, and the peopled infinite, I made  
Mine eyes familiar with eternity,  
Such as, before me, did the Magi."

But, in spite of all this, Manfred is wretched :

“ My slumbers—if I slumber—are not sleep,  
 But a continuance of enduring thought  
 Which then I can resist not ; in my heart  
 There is a vigil, and these eyes but close  
 To look within.  
 Sorrow is knowledge ; they who know the most  
 Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth :  
 The Tree of Knowledge is not that of life.  
 My solitude is solitude no more,  
 But peopled with the Furies. . . .  
 My long pursued and superhuman art  
 Is mortal here. I dwell in my despair—  
 And live—and live for ever.”

With the world of Manfred now place side by side the world of Prospero. *The human spirit is here absolute master of the instruments it employs, and the sway over the elemental beings of air and ocean is perfectly serene.* Shakespeare, as well as Byron, describes the narrow path of occultism.

“ The government I cast upon my brother,  
 And to my state grew stranger, being transported  
 And rapt in secret studies.  
 I, thus neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated  
 To closeness, and the bettering of my mind  
 With that which, but being so retired,  
 O'er-priz'd all popular rate.  
 Me, poor man ! my library  
 Was dukedom large enough.”

Ariel, the chief elemental servant in the play, is introduced on the scene in such a manner as to leave no doubt of the relative position of Prospero and his airy ministers. The first is invincible in his strength.

*Ariel.* All hail, great master ! grave sir, hail ! I come  
 To answer thy best pleasure ; be't to fly,  
 To swim to dive into the fire, to ride

On the curl'd clouds ; *to thy strong bidding task  
Ariel and all his quality.*

*Prospero.*

Hast thou, spirit,

Perform'd to point the tempest that I bade thee?

*Ariel.* To every article.

When Ariel ventures to murmur one word of discontent, Prospero has but to raise his little finger in reprimand :

*Ariel.*

Pardon, Master ;

I will be correspondent to command,

And do my spiriting gently.

*Prospero.*

Do so, and after two days

I will discharge thee. Hence, with diligence.

With respect, again, to the lower nature of Caliban Prospero is as much of the master as he is with the lighter nature of Ariel.

*Caliban.* I must obey ; his art is of such power,

It would control my dam's god, Setebos,

And make a vassal of him.

*In a word, Prospero is the very highest ideal of wisdom and power incarnate in Man.*

#### MERLIN.

The character of Myrddin, or Merlin, in the Arthurian legends, and especially in the poetry of Tennyson, is very lofty. He is represented as master of both worlds : the material world in which his advice is sought on everyday affairs by the king and his court, and the *spiritual world in which he roams at will and with perfect consciousness of power.*

In the volume dealing with Imagination, I shall show how the contemplation of high ideals, such as Balsamo, Zanoni, Prospero, Merlin, etc., exercises a directly beneficial influence upon even the dullest reader.



## CHAPTER VII.

### ADVANCED PRACTICAL WORK.

#### ELIXIR VITÆ.

THE preservation of health, the cure of disease, and the prolongation of life has always formed one of the most interesting, as it certainly is one of the most useful, branches of Magic in every age and in every country. "The magician," said Eliphaz Levi, "should be without corporeal blemishes, and proof against all contradictions and all pains. The first and most important of magical works is to attain that rare excellence." No pains must be spared to get the perfect balance of health first of all. The great difference between reading and doing consists in the simple fact that *the former expands and dissipates, while the latter contracts and concentrates*. Therefore, the person who is determined to conquer his own body, or to strengthen a weak organ, can be said to be farther on the road of Magic than the person who spends years in reading books. To take two well-known examples—Anna Kingsford and the Duchesse de Pomar. Both of them had a very good theoretical grasp of occultism, but both of them grievously failed in practical work. Mrs. Kingsford died of consumption in the prime of her life. If, instead of dissipating her forces upon problems which were far beyond her reach, as is quite clear from the hysterical way in which she handled them, she had first of all laid the firm foundation of sound physical health, which is

indispensable for advanced work, she would probably have been alive now in the full enjoyment of her powers. As it was, she was ridden to death by the forces which she thought to be able to hold under perfect control. The same, again, with the Duchesse de Pomar. Some of her books are splendid reading, and her remarks on the will are particularly invigorating. But it all ended here. Her will did not carve its way into the material plane, and compel the body to acquire strength.

The instrument which the magician has at his disposal is Etheric Vibratory Energy or the Astral Light. This is the master-key to all the varied powers of the spirit. That being so, it stands to reason that a *body not under thorough control, or in harmony with the ideal of strength, is a very imperfect instrument to work with.* We might just as well expect entrancing music from an instrument that is battered about and out of tune.

It is possible to attain far higher results with the physical body than is generally supposed. Astral light, for instance, can be condensed about the whole organism to such a degree as all but to materialise it, so that the countenance assumes an indescribable aspect of dazzling splendour. Rider Haggard, in "She," describes his heroine, "Ayesha," as "the veiled white woman whose loveliness and awesome power seemed to visibly shine about her like a halo, or rather like the glow from some unseen light." This "glow from some unseen light" is *the concentration of the intense vibration of Etheric Energy in obedience to a persistent and indomitable will.* This is the natural province of woman, whose object *par excel-*

lence is beauty, while the object of man is wisdom. Margrave, the magician, in Lytton's "A Strange Story," is described as in possession of the Elixir Vitæ. "Never have I seen human face so radiant as that young man's. There was in the aspect an indescribable something that literally dazzled. As one continued to gaze, it was with surprise; one was forced to acknowledge that in the features themselves there was no faultless regularity; nor was the young man's stature imposing. But the effect of the whole was not less transcendent."

*Charming or fascination is one of the results of this condensation of etheric energy to a focus.* Women like Cleopatra, Ninon de Lenclos, and others possess a natural and unconscious, or a deliberately cultivated, strength of will which enhances tenfold their merely physical attractiveness. Without the invisible energy their appearance would often be utterly inadequate to fix attention.

#### TRAVELLING IN ETHERIC OR ASTRAL BODY.

This is one of the greatest pleasures of life. Though the astral body cannot be entirely severed till death, yet it can be sufficiently liberated from the physical body during life to enable one to travel consciously wherever one desires. It is a common mistake to regard ourselves as "here, in the body pent" immovably. The developed man on earth is not confined to this or that spot in space, or this or that period in time. He can roam at will through all spaces and all times. The acquisition of this power of detaching the astral body immensely increases the working capacity. There are, however, certain grave dangers connected

with it which render it very unadvisable unless one has gradually trained the will. In fact it should never be attempted in the beginning—not until the pupil is thoroughly master of the method of controlling vital force within his own organism. The room in which the experiment is attempted should be locked, and precautions should be taken against the possibility of a sudden or violent disturbance. It should never be forgotten that the astral body is vulnerable, and will display the mark or wound on the material body when it returns to the physical body. In advanced stages, however, it can be protected.

#### LEVITATION OF PHYSICAL BODY.

The explanation of this phenomenon consists in the change of polarity effected consciously by an act of will in the case of the magician, or unconsciously by entrancement in the case of a medium under control, or a saint rapt in ecstasies of devotion. Gravitation is only one part of Universal Law, the other part being Repulsion or Centrifugal Force. Under normal conditions, the attraction of the Earth draws all smaller masses towards it; but if Repulsion becomes active, then the attraction of gravity is overcome, and a body is suspended without material support.

#### INVULNERABILITY.

Several instances are on record in which a person bore a "charmed" life. The explanation is to be found in the intense concentration of etheric energy round the person assailed. It can be acquired by conscious training, or under accidental conditions such as have been witnessed among spiritualist mediums.

## INVISIBILITY.

There are several ways in which this can be brought about—by suggestion, pure and simple, acting upon the impressed imagination of another; by hiding one form under the guise of another form; and by acting upon the molecular constituents of a body so as to allow light to pass through instead of being reflected.

There are many other problems for the advanced worker which it would serve no purpose for me to refer to. When the reader has mastered the ones already laid down, it will be time enough for him to think what he is to do next. *A line must be drawn between vague speculation and practical work.*

Though Mephistopheles is not always the best guide to follow, yet he manages to give excellent advice, and he is not so black as he is painted. At any rate he is practical and to the point. Among other good things, he gives Faust the following counsel, which will do well as the conclusion of "Volo":—

" Away with dreams—your theorist  
Is—let me tell you—like a beast  
On a dry heath, whom a bad spirit  
In one dull circle round and round  
Keeps whirling, while on all sides near  
The bright green pastures everywhere abound."



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