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Shakespeare

The World's Greatest.

PSYCHIST

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—By—

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“The Foundations of Life,” “Dreams and Visions,”
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SHAKESPEARE:

The World's Greatest Psychist.

WHEN Hamlet said to Horatio "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy," Shakespeare expressed his own views in his own characteristic way. In Hamlet's soliloquy, "To be or not to be," in which he refers to death as an undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveler returns, Shakespeare does not express his own views, but those of Hamlet, whose mind had not yet solved the problems of life and death. For how could Shakespeare think of death as leading to a country from whose bourne no traveler returns when in this same play Hamlet's father does return? The truth is that Shakespeare not only understood human life as no other man before him understood it, but he had also solved the

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mystery of death and the life that lies beyond it.

The Tangle of Life.

No man can delve very far into the mysteries of life without becoming lost in a labyrinth of seemingly endless confusion. The mind becomes distracted trying to unravel the intricate tangle of life. It wants rest, or at least something tangible to hold on to while it prepares for a fresh start. This is the experience of every mind in its search for truth. Most minds give up the struggle almost at the outset and accept some form of religion, or some system of philosophy, and let it go at that. Others, as Herbert Spencer, formulate a philosophical system of their own; but this is always unsatisfactory, because no system of philosophy can possibly circumscribe the infinite. A few, like Shakespeare, solve these problems for themselves, and at the same time realize that they are problems which every mind must work out for itself.

The Mystery of Death.

But whichever way we look at this subject, it must be self-evident to every thinking mind that Shakespeare, who was so profoundly interested in every phase of human life, must have been just

as deeply interested in the subject of death. And it is only necessary to look into his writings with this object in view, to learn that he had studied this subject to such good purpose that he clearly understood the change which we all pass through at death, when we enter upon a higher state of existence, with more congenial surroundings and better conditions of life. And it is just this problem of death which is so perplexing to the earnest student of life; because it constitutes a sort of Chinese wall, beyond which his mind is unable to penetrate with such imperfect tools as his religion or his philosophy allows him to use.

The Continuity of Life.

In all his tragedies, and most of his other plays, Shakespeare constantly reminds us of the intimate relations which exist between this life and that to which those have gone who have passed through the portals of death. In Hamlet, Othello, Julius Caesar, Richard III, The Tempest, and other plays, this subject is frequently referred to; but it is in Macbeth where Shakespeare shows most clearly that the relationship existing between this life and that which death ushers us into, was perfectly understood by him. This life is only a preparatory one. Death is an essential step in our develop-

ment. We must die; we must get rid of this body, before we can reach a state of perfect development and become what nature intends us to become—a living, self-reliant soul or spirit having within itself the power to get everything which it requires for its own eternal welfare.

Death Sets the Spirit Free.

Throughout his writings, Shakespeare leaves us in no doubt as to what his answer would be to the query, "If a man die, shall he live again?" But does he furnish us with any evidence that he knew just what the process of death is? He does. In the play of Macbeth Banquo is murdered just before he appears at the banquet table. His ghost, or spirit, appears just as it left his body; with all the marks of his wounds still visible. Hence, Macbeth's exclamation, "Never shake thy gory locks at me!"

The New Birth.

We all enter this world by the same essential process of birth, and we all leave it by the same essential process of death. We may die suddenly, or be killed by accident, or die peacefully in bed; but the process we pass through and the end we arrive at is the same for everybody. At birth we

arrive here as a new-born babe; at death we arrive in the spirit world as a new-born spirit. No doubt, in a violent death, such as Banquo's was, the shock overwhelms the spirit and it enters the spirit world in a dazed and semiconscious condition. Shakespeare intimates as much in the description which Macbeth gives of the ghost: "Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold; thou hast no speculation in those eyes which thou dost glare with!"

Ghosts.

All Shakespeare's ghosts had met with violent deaths. These are almost the only spirits who have a motive strong enough to hold them near the earth. When Banquo was being murdered he knew that Macbeth was the instigator of the crime. Hence, his exclamation to his son: "Oh, treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly! Thou may'st revenge!" And it was the strength of this impression of his former friend's treachery that carried his new-born spirit into Macbeth's presence, with the twenty mortal gashes on his head which had caused his death.

Hamlet's Father's Ghost.

The ghost of Hamlet's father was impelled by

the altogether unworthy motive of revenge. After inciting Hamlet to help him in his devilish work of vengeance by saying, "If thou didst ever thy dear father love, revenge his foul and most unnatural murder," the ghost cautions him thus: "Taint not thy mind nor let thy soul contrive against thy mother aught; leave her to heaven and to those thorns that in her bosom lodge to prick and sting her." Why did not the ghost leave his brother's punishment to heaven and the prickings of his conscience? Because Shakespeare knew that if the ghost of Hamlet's father had reached a stage of development where he could realize the eternal truth—that it is not our business to punish our enemies—he would not, and could not have returned to earth as a ghost.

A Ghost Is an Evil Spirit.

A ghost always comes for a sinister purpose, and therefore is, necessarily, an evil spirit. The ghost of Caesar was naturally enough concerned in the downfall of Brutus and the triumph of his own political friends. Nevertheless, as he says himself, he was an evil spirit to Brutus. Ghostly visits are volitional. That is, the spirit returns to earth to get even with somebody, or to carry out some other unworthy purpose. No doubt, Caesar

justified himself, under the circumstances, in visiting Brutus. But a ghost always has the cards stacked and the dice loaded in his own favor. He always has his adversary at a disadvantage. He waits till he has got him on the brink of a precipice, and then appears and tells him that he has got him where he wants him and then pushes him over. Under such circumstances, perhaps the best we can do is to follow the example of Brutus, who says: "The ghost of Caesar hath appeared to me two separate times by night: I know my hour is come. Our enemies have beat us to the pit: it is more worthy to leap in ourselves than to tarry till they push us."

Apparitions.

Banquo's ghost was not a real ghost, but an apparition. An apparition does not appear volitionally. When a man meets with a sudden and violent death, his spirit will immediately visit the person he is most strongly attached to. The spirit of a man killed in an accident, and having no strong attachment for any particular person, will stay around the scene of the accident till he can pull himself together, and gain control of his newly developed psychic faculties. In the play of Romeo and Juliet, after having tried in vain to

avoid a quarrel with Tybalt, who has just killed Mercutio, Romeo says: "Now, Tybalt, take the villain back again that late thou gav'st me, for Mercutio's soul is but a little way above our heads and thou or I must keep him company." Romeo had no doubt of his soul's existence after the death of the body. Neither had Hamlet. For when Horatio tried to prevent him following the ghost, Hamlet said: "Why, what should be the fear? I do not set my life at a pin's fee, and for my soul, what can it do to that, being a thing immortal as itself?" Again, King John says: "Within this wall of flesh there is a soul." It is evident that, to Shakespeare, the soul is a distinct entity, and that at death it leaves the body with all the attributes and functions of life intact. And the play of Hamlet clearly shows that if a spirit clings to the scenes of its former life it will be actuated by the same selfish and unworthy motives that make human life in the aggregate seem so sordid and unlovable. Hamlet's glowing tribute to his father may have fitted him physically, but his ghost never manifested any such moral qualities as the eulogium calls for. How could a really good man or spirit say of itself "I am thy father's spirit, doomed for a certain term to walk the night, and

for the day confined to fast in fires, till the foul crimes done in the body are burnt and purged away''?

Words Express Ideas.

Most people, when they read Shakespeare, read words, without troubling themselves to find out what Shakespeare meant the words to imply. Had Shakespeare openly defended the Jews, the Merchant of Venice would have been hissed off the stage. Shakespeare veils the truth to suit the ignorance and intolerance of the people of his time. When he wrote Romeo and Juliet he had already solved the problems of life and death. Death, in itself, is neither a punishment nor a misfortune; and Shakespeare deals out death to his characters in much the same way as Salvationists ladle out soup to the guests at their free dinners.

Hamlet a Universal Type.

Hamlet said: "The times are out of joint. Oh, cursed spite, that ever I was born to set them right!" The times are just as much out of joint now as they were in Hamlet's time. The times always have been out of joint, and always will be, as long as people think it is their business to set other people's business right and neglect their

own. Hamlet started out to set things right; and just see what an awful mess he made of it. After killing off all the principal characters of the play, and going down himself in the general slaughter, he leaves it as a legacy to his best friend to set matters right. Hamlet and his work are a universal type. And the graft prosecution, here and now in San Francisco, are doing Hamlet's work; and doing it just about as well as Hamlet did it. The moral is clear and obvious—if every man puts his own affairs right, there can be nothing wrong.

Macbeth a Seer.

In the play of Macbeth, Shakespeare draws aside the veil which hangs between this world and the next and shuts out our view of what is going on behind the scenes of our every-day life. Macbeth was a good and great man who went wrong; and he was just as much of a seer as the old Hebrew prophets were. Macbeth fell under the influence of those lying spirits which St. Paul warns us against, and which Macbeth himself calls "Fiends that lie like the truth." "And be these juggling fiends no more believed that palter with us in a double sense, who keep the word of promise to our ear and break it to our hope." Macbeth also shows that the doctors of that time

were much like the doctors of today, in that they pay too much attention to mere bodily ills, and neglect those of the mind and soul. When Macbeth was told of his wife's troubles, he recognized them as akin to his own. These were cases which his doctor did not understand. Why, Macbeth asks: "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased, pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow, raze out the written troubles of the brain, and with some sweet, oblivious antidote cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff which weighs upon the heart? If you cannot do this, then throw thy physic to the dogs; I'll none of it." The logic is clear enough—you cannot cure a sick soul by doctoring the body. And the lesson of the play is—Do not be led by spirits.

Murder Will Out.

The ghosts which visited Richard III on the eve of his downfall drive home the fact that we do not get rid of our enemies by murdering them. For, as Macbeth says, they rise again, even with twenty mortal murders upon their heads, and push us from our seats. And the ghost of Julius Caesar enforces the lesson, that, by paying up and squaring our accounts, as Brutus did, we turn an enemy into a friend. For I am quite sure

that when Brutus met Caesar on the shores of ghost land they shook hands and renewed their former friendship. The dying words of Brutus, "Caesar, now be still," are characteristic of Shakespeare, and reveal to us the underlying spiritual purpose which runs through all Shakespeare's tragedies. Caesar accomplished the purpose of his ghostly visits. Brutus, by his death, laid Caesar's ghost. And together their spirits left the confines of the earth forever.

Affinities.

Brutus and Caesar had a great deal of admiration for each other. There was a strong magnetic attraction between them. The same magnetic force existed between Macbeth and Banquo. And the same conditions were present, but not so fully developed, in Hamlet and his father. In Henry V we have another instance of this soul-companionship which death makes stronger. When the duke of York lay dying on the battlefield of Agincourt by the side of the Earl of Suffolk, whose body had just yielded up its ghost, the duke cries out to him, "Tarry, dear cousin, my soul shall thine keep company to heaven."

Eternal Justice.

In King Lear Shakespeare shows us how justice



finally triumphs, even without the aid of judges, juries or prosecutors. Lear expiates the wrongs he did his daughter by his sufferings and anguish of soul after his elder daughters turned him out of the home he had given them. The Earl of Gloster expiated the injustice he had done his son Edgar by the mental and physical suffering which followed the destruction of his eyes. Edgar was restored to all his rights, and Kent was made happy in the knowledge of a duty well performed. Edmund, Goneril and Regan were punished by death, which robbed them of everything they had been plotting and scheming for. But why did Shakespeare allow Cordelia to be hung? Death, in Shakespeare's view, is a mere incident of life, and the manner of our death is of no consequence whatever. It does not matter whether we die in bed or on the gibbet, or in a train wreck. The essential thing is, that the soul quits the body for all time, and begins a new and higher form of life. Cordelia was hung in her father's presence, to bring him back to his right mind, and arouse him to strike in her defense. Lear's time had come; and as he had paid the penalty of his unjust treatment of Cordelia, she went with him to console him for the loss of his other daughters.

This, too, was in line with the treatment she herself had received. For, when her father disowned and disinherited her, she was consoled with the love of a husband who appreciated to the full the womanly qualities which prevented her from denouncing the unnatural conduct of her sisters. Thus Shakespeare shows "that ever the truth comes uppermost and ever is justice done."

The Supreme Purpose of Life.

In many of his plays Shakespeare portrays the devious and tortuous paths which most men pursue in working out their destiny. In *Romeo and Juliet* Shakespeare gives his own philosophy of life, and shows us what is the one essential thing needful to lift a man to a level with the gods. All men have one supreme object in view, no matter what their condition of life may be; and that object is happiness. There is only one condition of life in which perfect happiness is possible; and that condition can only be brought about by being in love. The tragedy of the play was only the prelude which ushered *Romeo and Juliet* into paradise. We have already seen that *Romeo* had no doubt of the soul's existence after death. He again refers to his soul when he says "My bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne." This joyous feel-

ing was the result of his dream. "I dreamt my lady came and found me dead; and breathed such life with kisses in my lips, that I revived and was an emperor." This dream was truly prophetic. True, there was a night of darkness and anguish to pass through before the day of everlasting happiness dawned upon them. But even this was foreshadowed in the words "my lady came and found me dead." We enter this world through turmoil and suffering, and we leave it under like conditions. And Shakespeare was concerned with the death of Romeo and Juliet only in so far as it was necessary to set their souls free to begin their real life in the world of spirits.

The Power of Love.

Shakespeare's purpose is clear enough. Romeo and Juliet had no penances of their own to work out; so why should their happiness be marred by the senseless quarrels of their parents and relatives? True love had so quickly developed the souls of these young people that they were fully prepared to enter paradise. But flesh and blood cannot enter that blissful state; so they had to pass through the gates of death before they could get there. They could not lie down and die, in a state of vigorous bodily health. To have had

somebody else kill them would have left regrets behind; which would have kept them out of paradise until these accounts had been squared up. There was only one way out of the dilemma; and that was for them to kill themselves. There was no question of cowardice about the act. Nor did they kill themselves to escape their troubles. Our troubles are mostly of our own making; and we must work them out and square up our accounts, or death will bring us no relief. Romeo and Juliet had no such debts to pay, and their only thought was to be together.

Having Eyes, We See Not.

In our spiritual blindness we fail to see the goal of life, which Romeo and Juliet reached at a single bound. The lesson of life, which Shakespeare so well exemplifies in this play, is that we only waste time and make matters worse by trying to regulate other people's affairs. Our whole duty consists in acting our part in the drama of life, and leaving others to act their parts unmolested. Our body is merely the scaffolding which we use temporarily while building the soul. When the soul is sufficiently developed to take charge of itself, nature tears the scaffolding down; that is, we die a natural death. We leave the body and

enter upon a higher and better life. The souls of Romeo and Juliet had already reached that stage of development where their bodies were no longer necessary, so they tore themselves loose from their physical moorings and started on their journey to paradise. This is the place where all truly great spirits will arrive at some day. But we shall have to take a soul mate with us and go in as lovers. No unattached bachelors, old maids or grass widows can ever enter there. It is a place where joy is unconfined and happiness is unending. It is the final home of the good, the true, the just and the faithful. It is the place which Romeo and Juliet reached as early in life as it is possible for anybody to reach; and the road to which Hamlet and Macbeth missed, because they blindly tried to thwart others in the race of life, instead of working out their own destiny in an honorable and straightforward way. "To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."

The Devil.

The devil is not as black as he is painted. A devil is simply a misleading spirit. If it has not already occurred to you, it will some day happen that the devil will appear before you smiling, with

a beautiful scheme of how to get rich quick; or how to become President of the United States; or how to triumph over your bitterest enemy; or how to make the man or woman who has spurned you throw himself or herself at your feet and ask your forgiveness. But just as Faust traded his soul for a year's youthfulness; and Macbeth traded his, so that he might become king out of the natural course of events; so you will be selling your soul to the devil if you follow the advice of spirits, mediums or fortune-tellers against the dictates of your own conscience or judgment.

Othello.

Shakespeare has given us a perfect example of a devil in the character of Iago, in the play of Othello. If you will divest Iago of his body, and look upon his words as suggestions entering into Othello's mind when he is meditating on his wife's conduct, you will then place Othello in that relation to his familiar spirit which you and I, and every other human being sustains. It does not matter what you think about it. It's a living fact that a good many of what you consider your own thoughts are merely the suggestions of your familiar spirits.

Mediumship.

In Macbeth, Shakespeare gives us the whole philosophy of spirit communications, fortune-telling and divination. When the wierd sisters told Macbeth and Banquo of the great honors in store for them, they were simply doing what all fishermen do every day—using bait to lure their prey into their own power. The better nature of both Banquo and Macbeth warned them of the dangers ahead. Banquo says: "'Tis strange; and oftentimes to win us to our harm, the instruments of darkness tell us truths, to betray us in deepest consequence." And Macbeth says: "This supernatural soliciting cannot be good; cannot be ill. If ill, why hath it given me earnest of success, commencing in a truth? If good, why do I yield to that suggestion whose horrid image doth unfix my hair and make my seated heart knock at my ribs?" It is quite true that each one of us is interested in our own future; but it is also true that the future cannot possibly have anything in store for us but what is a natural development or unfoldment of the latent powers which are now present within us. Shakespeare presents this in the words of Banquo, who says to the witches: "To me ye speak not. If you can look into the seeds

of time, and say which grain will grow and which will not, speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear your favors nor your hate.”

Our Own Judgment the Court of Last Resort.

What is the lesson which Shakespeare elucidates in the meeting of Macbeth and Banquo with the witches? It is this—never seek outside information about the future. What the wierd sisters told Macbeth was true enough. Of course, it was intended to lead him astray. But he need not have gone astray; and if he had followed the dictates of his own conscience he would not have gone astray. It was his own ambition, to be king out of the natural order of things, that led Macbeth to ruin. Banquo was jealous of the partiality shown Macbeth and asked them to tell him something. This was where he did wrong. It was mere sophistry on his part to say that he neither begged nor feared their favors nor their hate. The only favors they had to give was to tell him something about the future. It was this he asked for, and it was this they told him about, to the destruction of his own peace of mind. Banquo should not have asked them to tell him about his future. By so doing he placed himself in their power, and enabled them to keep him guessing at the riddle of their

prophecy: "Hail! Lesser than Macbeth, and greater. Not so happy, yet much happier. Thou shalt get kings though thou be none."

Spiritualism.

Shakespeare was a spiritualist; so was St. Paul. But while St. Paul could not divest himself of the notion that somehow a Christian had a better show in the next world than a Jew or a pagan had; Shakespeare knew that the spirit world is just as natural as this world is, and that our religious beliefs are mere shadows of the truth. If you kill a chicken by wringing its neck, the spirit of the chicken passes into the spirit world in exactly the same manner as the spirit of a man does, when he is hung. If you go out and shoot a deer, or a lion, or a rabbit, the spirit of the deer, lion or rabbit passes into the spirit world in the same manner as does the spirit of a soldier when he is shot and killed. Shakespeare understood this perfectly. In Henry VI, when Lord Talbot realized that he and his army were sacrificed through the jealousies of York and Somerset, he said to his son: "Come, side by side together live and die; and soul with soul from France to heaven fly." In King John, Philip Faulconbridge says of the dead body of Prince Arthur: "From forth this morsel

of dead royalty, the life, the right and truth of all this realm, is fled to heaven." Even the murderers which Richard III sent to kill his brother, the Duke of Clarence, are made to express the same truth. They told Clarence that when they murdered him it would release him "from this world's thralldom to the joys of heaven." To Henry V the herald says: "Besides in mercy, the constablè desires thee thou wilt mind thy followers of repentance; that their souls may make a sweet and peaceful retire from off these fields, where, wretches, their poor bodies must lie and fester."

The Soul Immortal.

In the play of King John, when the impatient Constance enters the presence of the King of France, he exclaims: "Look, who comes here! a grave unto a soul; holding the eternal spirit, against her will." And in her ravings about the imprisonment of her son, Constance says; "He will look as hollow as a ghost, as dim and meagre as an ague's fit, and so he'll die; and, rising so again, when I shall meet him in the court of heaven I shall not know him."

Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Lord Melun, when dying, a fine description of the difference between our life here and that which we shall

live after death, where deception can be of no possible use to us: "Have I not hideous death before my view, retaining but a quantity of life, which bleeds away, even as a form of wax resolveth from his figure 'gainst the fire? What in the world should make me now deceive, since I must lose the use of all deceit? Why should I then be false, since it is true that I must die here and live hence by truth?" And when King John dies, Faulconbridge exclaims: "Art thou gone so? I do but stay behind to do the office for thee of revenge, and then my soul shall wait on thee to heaven, as it on earth has been thy servant still."

Death Sets the Soul Free.

Shakespeare puts this subject of death before us in a thousand different ways, but always to the same purpose. Death is merely the soul leaving the body. The soul, the spirit, the vital force, the intelligence, the living entity which makes us what we are, lives on after it has left the body. The body is merely an incubator in which the soul is developed. The body is a shell in which we are imprisoned; and at death we break open this shell and escape into a better world. There is no mystery about death, except in our own ignorance. We must study it at first hand, as it occurs to

those around us, and as it manifests itself throughout the whole animal kingdom. We do not realize what either life or death means as long as we think we are essentially different from the rest of the animal kingdom. Our religious ideas are simply vain imaginings.

Psychotherapy.

Shakespeare was a Psychotherapist. In the play of Macbeth, Malcolm, speaking of the king of England, says: "The mere despair of surgery, he cures, hanging a golden stamp about their necks, put on with holy prayers." And when Macbeth asks his doctor why he cannot cure his wife's disordered mind, the doctor gives us the essence of psychotherapy when he replies that "therein the patient must minister to herself." It is immaterial to us whether the doctor understood the full import of his words or not; but it is an absolute fact that whenever a patient is cured of any disease, whether of the mind or body, he cures himself. If you break a leg and call in a doctor, what does the doctor do? He simply puts the broken parts in as nearly their normal position as possible. But the actual repairing and healing is done by nature. But "nature" in this instance is a

very indefinite term. In each case it is the vital force, or the soul force, which constitutes the life of the patient. When you are the patient, it is your soul; when I am the patient, it is my soul which does the healing and restores the broken parts to normal condition.

Psychical vs. Physical.

When Christ said to the man, "Take up thy bed and walk," what happened? When you are driving a horse with a heavy load, and come to a hill at which the horse balks, although you well know the horse is able to draw the load up it, what happens? Why, essentially the same thing in both these cases. You whip the horse and he pulls the load up the hill. The whip did not make the load any lighter nor the horse any stronger. By using the whip you merely caused the horse to put forth sufficient energy to pull the load up the hill. The words of Christ stimulated the man to try to get up and pick up his bed and go about his business. And he found out that he had strength enough to do these things when he tried. If the horse had not been strong enough to pull the load up the hill, no amount of whipping could have made him do it. And if the man had not sufficient latent

strength to enable him to get up and walk, the words of Christ could not have made him do so.

Psychic Force.

All force is psychic force, in its final analysis. It becomes physical force to us when we can see some physical links in the chain of its procedure. Some drivers could have urged the horse on with a command just as well as with a whip. Then the two cases would have been exactly parallel—the mind of the man acting on the mind of the horse, and the mind of Christ acting on the mind of the man. The horse had sufficient strength to pull the load up the hill, or the man's command could not have made him do it; and the bedridden man had sufficient strength to get up and carry his bed away, or Christ's command could not have enabled him to do so.

Suggestive Therapeutics.

The foregoing paragraph shows us the real nature of Suggestion as a curative agent. The friends or attendants of the bedridden man had told him that if he could but see this wonderful healer, whom everybody was talking about, he would get cured. His faith or confidence was so strongly worked up that it only needed the com-

mand of the person on whom his faith rested to bring forth his utmost efforts. If his friends could have convinced him of the real facts of the case—namely, that he was strong enough to take up his bed and walk whenever he made up his mind to put forth the effort—his faith in himself would have cured him, just as surely as his faith in Christ did.

Faith and Works.

Faith is simply a firm belief in the ultimate realization of our highest aspirations. But faith does not relieve us of any of the efforts which are necessary for the accomplishment of our purposes. A few months ago, when business was very dull, somebody got hold of the idea that if everybody would say that business was good, then business would be good. The idea was acted on; and the store windows were placarded with the legend, "BUSINESS IS GOOD." The idea was puerile, and had its inception in a mind that was meddling with a subject it knew nothing about. Business was bad, and to say that it was good was a misrepresentation of the truth. The right thing to do is to find out the cause of poor business, do your best to remove it, and thus encourage your-

self and others with the fact that business is improving.

Good Government.

Human nature is short sighted. It wants to get results without putting forth the necessary efforts to obtain them. Shakespeare shows that the rank and file of humanity, that is, the working classes, were just as unreasonable in the days of the Roman Empire as they were in the days of Jack Cade. And we have abundant evidence since the fire that they are just as senseless and unreasonable today as they were in the days of Julius Caesar. Only about five per cent of men can conduct their own business successfully. How, then, is it possible for them to conduct other people's business in a successful manner?

Majorities Never Rule Wisely.

Government is a business. And as only about five per cent of any given community know how to conduct business successfully, it follows that only this five per cent are qualified to govern, or to select those who are able to govern properly. For this reason a Republic can never be a good form of government. The people, that is, a majority of them, will never be able to select a good

government. All great leaders, from Moses to Roosevelt, have been leaders, not because the people chose them, but because they were able to control the people. Leaders who are the people's choice in the first place are almost without exception either unprincipled demagogues, or vain and superficial time-servers. The people mean well enough, but they are no better qualified to choose a good government than primary school children are qualified to choose a good Board of Education. In either case they lack the necessary knowledge and experience.

A Fallacy.

The man who broke several sticks of wood, one at a time across his knee, and then tied a like number in a bundle to prove that they could not be broken in that way, formulated the maxim that "In Union There Is Strength." That is true enough as applied to sticks; but it is not true of living things. A field of wheat is not strong and healthy because one stalk helps another to grow, but because each individual stalk is able to appropriate the material necessary for its development. It is just the same with human beings. Everything depends upon the individual; not upon the

masses. When living things move in overwhelming numbers, with a common object in view, they are always destructive; no matter whether they be locusts, stampeded cattle, or human beings. All constructive work is the result of individual effort.

Human Nature Is Always the Same.

Shakespeare has drawn his characters true to nature; and therefore, they are true for all time and for all nations. What could suit our present condition better than this “—the law’s delay, the insolence of office and the spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes—”? Shakespeare had the prototype of Francis J. Heney in mind when he said: “—but man, proud man, drest in a little brief authority, most ignorant of what he’s most assured, like an angry ape, plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven as make the angels weep; who, with our spleens, would all themselves laugh mortal.” And of those unfit office holders, who always abuse their powers, and which are now more numerous than ever before, he well says: “O, it is excellent to have a giant’s strength but it is tyrannous to use it as a giant. Could great men thunder as Jove himself does, Jove would ne’er be quiet, for every pelting, petty of-

ficer would use his heaven for thunder; nothing but thunder."

Looking into the Future.

When we consider how imperfect our physical vision is, it is not so very surprising that our psychic vision is still more imperfect. And when we further consider that our psychic faculties are subject to so many disturbing influences, we ought not to wonder that we so often go astray. Still, as this is one of the most important faculties of the soul, it deserves our most serious consideration and our untiring efforts in its development. In the temples of old there were altars before which the supplicants appeared to ask for the aid of their gods in the matter about to be undertaken. Each temple was dedicated to some particular god whose favor was sought by the supplicant. In the play of "The Two Noble Kinsmen," by Shakespeare and Fletcher, three altars are represented in one of the scenes. The altar of Mars, who is the god of war; the altar of Venus, who is the goddess of love, and the altar of Diana, who is the goddess of maidenhood. The two noble kinsmen are in love with the same maid. As each of the kinsmen thinks he has just as much right to love the maiden as the other has, neither of them

will retire in the other's favor. So they agree to leave it to the maid's choice and whichever loses agrees to relinquish all claims to the maid's affections. But the maid thinks they are both so perfect that she is unable to make a choice. They have already tried to settle the matter with the aid of their swords; but they were so evenly matched that neither gained any advantage over the other. So the Duke of Athens, who is the maid's brother-in-law, sets them a feat of strength; the winner to have the maid and the loser to lose his head. All the interested parties were satisfied with this arrangement. Each of the three principals appeared before one of the altars and asked for a sign of success. One of the kinsmen asked for and was given what he thought was a favorable sign from Mars. Which meant that he would triumph over his adversary. The other supplicated Venus and got a favorable sign; which meant that he would be successful in winning the lady for his bride. The maid appeared before the altar of Diana and received assurance that she would be gathered; which she understood to mean that a husband would claim her. This was not remarkable in that there was no chance for her to lose. However, the

trial of strength took place, and after a long tussle the man who had supplicated Mars won. The victor took a ride on horseback to celebrate his victory, while the loser was taken to jail to be beheaded. The victor's horse stumbled and fell on its rider. In a dying state they took him into his kinsman's presence just as he was going to be beheaded. The dying man stopped the execution and turned his bride over to his kinsman. The oracles had kept faith with all of them.

Fortune-Telling.

What agency was behind these ancient oracles? Human agency. Hidden behind these altars was some person who was the ancient prototype of the modern fortune-teller. The oracle was most likely a priest of the temple who could see the supplicant and hear the supplication without being seen or heard, and being expert at the business he could easily produce manifestations in harmony with the desires of the supplicant. Witches, mediums, oracles and fortune-tellers are essentially the same thing; although, as a matter of course, each one has his or her individual characteristics. But it does not matter how honest a witch, medium, an oracle or a fortune-teller may be, we are seeking

knowledge through improper channels if we visit them. We must have faith in our own intuition and rely on our own psychic vision, or we shall be led astray in the same manner that Macbeth was.

Sleep.

Shakespeare constantly reminds us of the similarity between sleep and death. As a matter of fact, they are identical. When we go to sleep we die. The body is worn out and exhausted. But the disability is only temporary. The soul knows that by allowing the body a few hours rest it will be restored to a condition in which it can be used again. Like a battleship, it needs to be laid up periodically for repairs. And just as the Naval Board sends a battleship to the junk heap when it cannot be restored to a state of efficiency, so the soul discards the body when it can no longer make use of it—and we sleep the sleep of death. But it is only the body that sleeps; and it is only the body that dies.

Subconsciousness.

Sleep may be called the laboratory of the school of life in which we experiment with our soul forces. The student in chemistry experiments with the inanimate forces of nature. In our

dreams we are experimenting with living forces -- that is, the forces of our own souls. All experiments are confusing to the beginner. And when the subject in hand is part of our lives, the experiments become more and more complicated and confusing. But they are not unsolvable. It takes time, patience, and perseverance to learn cookery or carpentry, or to thoroughly understand any trade or vocation. How, then, can you expect to unravel the secrets of mind and soul without devoting your earnest efforts to intelligently understand them. This is the secret of your failure. Like children, you are constantly seeking by some roundabout method a knowledge of your inmost life which can be obtained only and directly through your own centers of intelligence.

Prescience.

The future is before us. And whatever you may think about it, your future has a great deal more influence on your life than you imagine it has. When you send your children to school or college, you do not expect them to remain there permanently. You expect them to advance, grade by grade, till they graduate. Neither do your children expect to stay in school or college permanently. They look forward to the day of gradua-

tion as a day of emancipation or triumph. The day of graduation or fear that they may not be prepared to graduate when the day comes spurs them on in their work and makes them work a good deal harder than they otherwise would. We are all now taking lessons in the school of life. And some time in the future we shall have to graduate. You may not realize it in just this form. But there is a feeling within you all that things are not right. The lessons of life are just as irksome to us as school lessons are to our children. But just as we know that our children will graduate when the time comes, so shall we graduate from the school of life when we have prepared ourselves for the event.

“By their fruits ye shall know them.”

Human nature was like an open book to Shakespeare. His characters are types, of which copies are to be found among all peoples and at all times. Hamlet and Macbeth and Richard III show us the futility of trying to succeed by removing other people from our path by unfair and unnatural methods. In “Romeo and Juliet” we see how the natural course of events is marred and botched by the senseless interference of those who ought to be the last to meddle with the hap-

piness of their own children. As the Prince puts it:—

Well may you mourn, my lords, now wise too late,
 These tragic issues of your mutual hate.
 From private feuds what dire misfortunes flow!
 Whate'er the cause, the sure effect is woe.

Shakespeare also shows us that by strict attention to our own affairs we can successfully work out our own destiny and triumph over the most adverse conditions of life. Philip Faulconbridge, in the play of "King John," shows us how sterling honesty of purpose without deceit or the least trace of false appearances will lift us out of the most menacing and seemingly hopeless circumstances in which it is possible for a man to be placed. The character of Bolingbroke was the antithesis of that of Macbeth. Both were great men, and both were psychists and received messages from the spirit world. But whereas Macbeth made use of his occult knowledge to further his own nefarious purposes, Bolingbroke appraised this knowledge at its true value—that is, as a beacon light or guide which may either point out the best path to follow, or warn us of dangers to avoid. These occult intuitions always leave us free to follow our own judgment. Then, if we go wrong the fault and the consequences are our

own. If we choose rightly, then success and happiness is ours. Macbeth chose the wrong path and went down to an ignominious death and the torments of hell. Bolingbroke chose the right path, and consequently he achieved success and glory here and entered into the regions of everlasting happiness after death. The indefiniteness and uncertainty which surround all psychic knowledge is well illustrated in Henry IV's dying remarks. He asks of Warwick:—

Henry IV—Doth any name particular belong unto the lodging where I first did swoon?

Warwick—'Tis called Jerusalem, my noble lord.

King Henry—Laud be to God! even there my life must end.

It hath been prophesied to me for many years,
I should not die but in Jerusalem;
Which vainly I supposed the Holy Land:
But bear me to that chamber; there I'll lie;
In that Jerusalem shall Harry die.

The New Thought Movement.

There is a flood of New Thought books and magazines floating about the world just now. And they are doing good by making people think about things they never thought of before. But thought is not a force. You cannot sit down in your kitchen and "think" your work done. You

may think of an easier way of doing it, but you must do the work or get somebody else to do it, or it will not be done. A prize fighter gets a trainer to show him some new punches so that he may overcome his adversary; but the prize-fighter has to do the punching. His trainer cannot do that for him. It is just the same with your higher powers. You must develop your own psychic powers. Life is a journey, and there are many rough places. There is no way of avoiding these rough places—they are in our path to develop our moral courage by overcoming them. Every obstacle in life that you overcome makes you stronger. Life is a battle, and every time you retreat before an enemy you paralyze your soul's efforts. No matter whether your enemy is in the body or out of it—for there is not so much difference as you may imagine. Behind every evil-minded man there is one of more evil-minded spirits; and your life's work is at a standstill till you have overcome this enemy. This is the lion in your path which, in a spiritual sense, every one has to meet and vanquish. The wind is tempered to the shorn lamb. Your trials will be no greater than your strength can bear; but you must take the initiative in working out your own salvation. Then, if

you need help, it will be forthcoming. But don't try to work out your schemes of ambition with the aid of spirits and fortune-tellers; because if you do, you will surely get left in the mire of defeat and disgrace, just as Macbeth was when he says: "I pull in resolution and begin to doubt the equivocation of the fiend that lies like the truth."

Inherited Powers.

Our souls inherited their developmental powers from our parents, which have been acquired little by little through an almost limitless line of ancestors, who have each advanced a step in the scale of intelligence. While we remain in the body we are still in an immature and undeveloped state. But the unfolding of our mental powers brings within our consciousness the first glimmerings of the real significance of life. And it is because our early inquiries in this direction are warped or smothered by our early religious teachings that we know so little about ourselves. We have not fallen from a higher state. Our ancestors were greater barbarians than we are. Our ancestors can teach us nothing of any great value, for whatever they achieved that was in any way valuable to mankind, they transmitted to their children, and it is, therefore, born in us. There-

fore, the loss of our great libraries, museums, art collections and architectural monuments is a sentimental calamity, not an irreparable one.

Seers and Prophets.

True poetry is the language of seers. The glimpses of the spirit world which all great souls sometimes get cannot be adequately described in ordinary language, hence the value of poetry as a porthole through which we look into the spirit world. Longfellow is a true seer, and describes many spiritual scenes; but Milton had no spiritual insight, and his word pictures are mere poetical chromos. Of course, we all see spirits, and the spirit world in our dreams, but as this is part of our every-day life we fail to place any value on it, and, like the rest of our surrounding circumstances, it ensnares and enslaves us because we supinely submit to its influences. This is fate. We must overcome these adverse circumstances by our own unaided efforts, because this is the only way we can reach the goal of life and enter paradise. The prophetic faculty, prescience, or prevision, has nothing in common with mere fortune-telling. It is a developmental effort of the soul, a kind of searchlight thrown ahead in the pathway of life that gives us a glimpse of the future as it

will be realized in the natural course of events. The time it takes to reach this foreshadowed stage of development depends entirely upon our own efforts.

Obstructions to Right Living.

Every person living is cognizant of the many worries and discouragements which we all meet with in our daily intercourse with one another. In fact, all systems of government, all social customs, all religious creeds and all industrial organizations have for their object the regulation or correction of these very evils. And all governments, religions and organizations fail because they are based on an almost total ignorance of human nature; that is, the real nature and significance of life. Every living thing, whether man, woman, dog or fish, has the inherent right to live its own life in its own way, without being interfered with by any other living thing.

The Real Nature of Life.

Every individual has within itself the germs of godhood. It is the purpose of life to develop these individual sovereign powers. Man is the only real personal God. The God of the universe is not a person, as we understand the term. He has neither mind nor will. He has no initiative

power. He cannot change his character. He must do as he is doing. Man has these personal attributes and the power of initiative, which God has not. Man can change and improve his own character, which God cannot do. Therefore, man is superior to God. We are not like God, and we are not the children of God in any true sense of the word; we are the children of our parents, and have acquired our personal attributes through the experiences of our ancestors. We have inherited from God the substance of our souls, which is indestructible and cannot cease to exist. Whether we want to live or not is nothing to the purpose; we cannot die. The real nature of life, then, is its self-development and self-control. We are creatures of circumstances only because we are immature and weak. No power outside of ourselves is as strong as the power within us. No man, no combination of men, not all the angels and devils and human beings in the universe, have the right or the power to make us do anything which our own intelligence does not approve.

