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THERE IS NO RELIGION HIGHER THAN TRUTH

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To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.

To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man.

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THE

THEOSOPHICAL REVIEW

VOL. XXX APRIL 15, 1902 No. 176

ON THE WATCH-TOWER

The Kali Yuga Date

IN our last issue we noticed the able contribution of Mr. Velandai Gopala Aiyer towards the unravelling of the tangled skein of Hindu chronology. The matter is of intense interest to those of us who are distrustful of round numbers and the "noughts in occultism," and who believe that the immense time periods of Paurânik tradition are as academical in their exaggeration as the 4,000 odd years Biblical date for the creation of the world are absurd in their niggardliness. As we could not find space in our March number to give the summary of Mr. V. Gopala Aiyer's arguments, we will now make good the omission by quoting them from pp. 85-87 of his *Chronology of Ancient India*. The conclusion reached is that the Kali Yuga began in 1177 B.C., and it is based on the following lines of evidence.

We were first enabled by the Vedanga Jyotisha to place the beginning of the Kali era approximately at about 1173 B.C.

Secondly: After enquiring into the date of Garga and of the Yavana invasion he spoke of, we noticed that he fixed "the end of the Yuga" for the retirement of the Greeks from Hindustan. From this statement we inferred

that the Yuga, which ended some time before 165 B.C., must have begun a few years before 1165 B.C.

Thirdly: In explaining the figures given by classical historians, we come to the conclusion that the Kali Yuga must have begun in 1177-76 B.C.

Fourthly: The Malabar era furnished us with another authority for fixing the commencement of the Kali era in 1176 B.C.

Fifthly: We found that if the Kali commenced at the winter solstice immediately preceding the year 1176 B.C., the details of the Mahâbhârata would lead us to place the war at the end of the year 1194 B.C.

Sixthly: The traditions recorded in the Rajatarangini enabled us to fix the date of the war at about 1190 B.C.

Seventhly: From a statement made by Aryabhata that the Rishis were in Magha in the year 1192 B.C., we inferred that the war might have taken place about 1193 B.C.

Eighthly: The average duration of the reigns of the monarchs of the five foremost Powers of our hemisphere served to assist us in fixing the date of the war at about the year 1193 B.C.

Ninthly: From a sloka of Garga quoted in the Brihat Samhita, we inferred that the war occurred in the year 1194-93 B.C.

Tenthly: We also found that the first year of the Brihaspati cycle of sixty years actually corresponds, as may naturally be expected, to the date of the war as given by Garga, *i.e.*, 1194-93 B.C.

Eleventhly and lastly: We applied the elements of the Vedanga Jyotisha to a sloka contained in the Mahâbhârata, which fixes the day of the winter solstice occurring soon after the war, and concluded that the war should have taken place in the latter part of the year 1194 B.C.

* * *

IT should be remembered that the beginning of the Kali Yuga and the "death" of Kṛishṇa are supposed, according to Indian tradition, to be coincident; hence our learned and laborious author concludes:

1177 B.C.

Thus we find all this cumulative evidence derived from different sources converging to the result that the Kali era began at the winter solstice occurring at the end of 1177 B.C., and that the Mahâbhârata war took place at about the end of 1194 B.C. In arriving at these conclusions we had the testimony of the only historian that India can boast of, who lived in the twelfth century A.D., of the greatest of the astronomers of India who flourished at the end of the fifth century A.D., of another brilliant astronomer who shone in the second century B.C., and of a versatile Greek historian who was also an ambassador at the court of the first great historic Emperor of India, who reigned in the fourth century B.C. We had also the authority of the oldest astronomical work of India which claims to be a supplement to the Vedas,

of the Kollam era which forms such a "splendid bridge from the old world to the new," and of the famous sixty-year cycle. We tested these conclusions by what we may call the common-sense process based on the lists of kings contained in the Puranas. During this long and tedious discussion we have also met and disposed of the arguments of those that give an earlier date.

* * *

WE have dealt somewhat at length with this subject and have insisted on its importance because there is a distinct tendency among many of our members to dispense with their critical faculties "east of Suez." It is remarkable that the same mind which will eagerly take the enormous jump of accepting the 100 B.C. date of Jesus on the authority of occult research, in spite of the apparently overwhelming weight of the traditional Christian chronology, finds no difficulty in instantly accepting the traditional Hindu chronology as a statement of scientific fact, and that too though scarcely any one in the West, in spite of the utmost scepticism of many critics, has ventured to adopt the 100 B.C. date of the birth of Jesus, whereas scarcely a single Western Orientalist has accepted the 3102 B.C. date for the "death" of Kṛishṇa and the beginning of the Kali Yuga. The traditional dates in both cases are plainly artificial and calculated for dogmatic purposes; not, however, that this is without interest from several points of view, or that even the Hindu and Jewish-Christian chronology is unrelated, for the 4004 B.C. of Ussher's chronology for the "creation of the world" if changed from solar into lunar years works out precisely at 4,320 years, the basic figures of the Indian system. What, however, we do insist on is that neither the actual date of the birth of the historical Jesus nor that of the death of the historical Kṛishṇa is coincident with either traditional era. Even from the traditional Christian data the birth of Jesus must be placed about 8-9 B.C., and Mr. V. Gopala Aiyer has clearly shown that the converging lines of tradition of East and West work out at about 1177 B.C. for the beginning of the Kali Yuga.

A Plea for Consistency of of Judgment

* * *

WE have not the faintest desire to limit the spread of the knowledge of the Bible, but we would gladly see the enormous energy

Bible Propaganda

devoted to the exclusive propaganda of one of the world-bibles at least equalled by a similar volume of effort for the making known of the other great scriptures of our humanity. On March 8th there took place in the Guildhall, London, the ninety-eighth anniversary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, when it was reported that during its existence no less than £13,500,000 had been spent in translating and distributing the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, the total number of copies issued reaching the stupendous total of 170,000,000 copies. The legend in the entrance hall of this famous Society stands inscribed in the words of the familiar text: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away"; and as far as the British and Foreign Bible Society is concerned, it is determined to make that prophecy at any rate come true. That the Master, if He really uttered the above words, desired them to be taken in a so grossly material sense, may be doubted; but our quarrel with this busy propagandist body is that it takes no trouble to circulate the "words" in the purest form reachable by critical industry, but prefers, for instance, to print exclusively an utterly corrupt text of the New Covenant documents—acknowledged to be corrupt by every scholar—and to reproduce by millions translations based upon this very imperfect original. That the "words" of Wisdom as they were originally spoken will not pass away is sure enough, but that the way adopted by the British and Foreign Bible Society for preserving these "words" is nothing but a solemn farce must be evident to everyone who possesses even an elementary knowledge of the history of the tradition of the text, and of the nature of the existing popular versions.

* * *

THAT humour and wit are gifts of Wisdom, and that an appreciation of the former may save the pious mind from many a heart-

The Unconscious "Higher Criticism" of the Rising Generation

ache, is well known to every student of human nature. We have hesitated for some two months whether we should publish the following two stories from fear of hurting the susceptibilities of the "weaker brethren"; as, however, we have little fear of any of our regular readers suspecting us of impiety

in the true sense of the word, we will share with them the pleasure of two of the most amusing theological stories we have chanced of late to meet with. They are taken from the *Daily Express* of January 27th, and run as follows:

Every undergraduate at Oxford has to pass an examination in Holy Scripture before he can proceed to his degree. Somehow Oxonians seem to regard this particular examination as an opportunity for displaying humour rather than knowledge, as the following stories may tend to show:

A brilliant scholar who had done very well in his written papers came up for the *vivâ voce* test. The examiner asked him to translate the passage from St. Matthew's Gospel which refers to St. Peter's attempt to walk on the water.

This passage the candidate proceeded to put into fluent and beautiful English; he had just reached the words which describe Peter's determination to walk on the sea when he was interrupted by the examiner: "That will do, thank you, that will do." "Excuse me," replied the undergraduate, "one moment! Pray let me continue; I wish to know if the gentleman was drowned."

Another undergraduate was asked in his papers to give an account of Stephen's speech in the Acts. This he did with great accuracy and at considerable length. He concluded, however, in this way: "At this point they stoned Stephen; it has been matter of unfailing astonishment to me why they did not do so before." That undergraduate was "ploughed."

* * *

OF all the vast range of psychic phenomena perhaps the fact which has more compelled the recognition of the purely "scientific" mind than any other is the art of the "dowser." Some of the members of the Society for Psychical Research have devoted much time and patience to the investigation of this curious art, and Professor Barrett has written a learned memoir on the subject. But the ambition of our modern Science has ever been to dispense with the personal equation and to place more reliance on mechanical instruments of its own fabrication than on the creature of the Great Artificer. Hence we have to chronicle another discovery in the shape of an electrical "divining-rod," for we read in "The Echoes of Science" of the *Globe* of January 30th that:

An Electrical "Divining Rod"

An electrical "divining rod" for localising ores of gold, silver, copper and lead underground has been tried with success in Idaho and Oregon

U.S.A., where it has discovered five gold-beds. As described in the *Western Electrician*, of Chicago, it consists of a portable "Wheatstone bridge," with steel rods or electrodes inserted into the ground at a considerable distance apart, and the electric resistance of the "earth" between the rods is measured. By moving over the country and measuring the resistance, the deposits of ore can be localised, even at a depth of several hundred feet.

Our hope is that a study of the phenomena connected with this new mechanical invention will aid in solving the problem of the nature of the factors at work in the "dowsing" art. But why have they not invented some new technical term for it, so that a new-born "Mesopotamia" may comfort the many believers in scientific biblical language?

* * *

Dr. Oliver Lodge's Presidential Address

WE have been waiting for the full report of Dr. Oliver Lodge's presidential address to the Society for Psychical Research, but as it has not yet appeared in the Proceedings of the Society we append a summary of its salient points as published in the *Morning Post* of February 1st. In many things the learned Professor is at one with our own standpoint, and it is remarkable what comparatively rapid strides are being made towards a frank admission of the undeniable evidence for many classes of psychic phenomena by the leading members of a Society whose scepticism has in the past been so pronounced.

In the course of his address Dr. Lodge, who was well received, made some general observations about certain aspects of the Society's work, dealing with the current explanation of trance lucidity and clairvoyance, the strange physical phenomena sometimes accompanying trance, and the views concerning those ultra-normal human faculties that most appealed to him. Until it was possible, he said, to determine whether telepathy was a physical or psychological medium it was barely possible to regard telepathy as an explanation of clairvoyance. The hypothesis which sought to explain the control of a medium's body in trance by the agency of discarnate spirits presumed that an elaborate machine like our bodies was capable of being occasionally used, not only by the mind or intelligence which manufactured it, so to speak, but temporarily and with difficulty by other minds or intelligences permitted to make use of it. The main assumption was that such other intelligences existed, and he found it impossible to deny the probability that there might be in space an immense range of life and intelligence of which at present we knew nothing. Granting the possibility of a far greater and more widespread prevalence of life or mind than we had been accustomed

to contemplate—a prevalence as extensive, perhaps as great, as that of matter—what was the probability that the different classes of life and mind interfered or inter-operated with each other? There was no *a priori* probability either way; it was purely a question for experience and observation. He regarded the case of matter through matter as unproved and impossible, but he found movements of untouched objects or materialisations easier of belief. Telepathy was a sufficient and satisfying explanation of these, and of this nature probably were the so-called visions of relatives at moments of their death or danger. But he did not think that this telepathic theory could be stretched to explain all apparent materialisations. At many séances the investigators were imposed on. There was no evidence that he was aware of for the hypnotic delusion of a crowd. After twenty years' familiarity with questions which concerned the Society he was convinced of the persistence of human existence beyond bodily death, and though he was unable to justify that belief in a full and complete manner yet it was a belief which had been produced by scientific evidence. He confessed that he did not see how the hypothesis of the continued existence of human personalities was any real help in explaining physical movements so long as they were disconnected with bodies and muscles; except that since the movements showed traces of what we ordinarily spoke of as free will and intelligence, they did suggest the agency of live things of some kind. But if it were necessary to go further in order to explain abnormal physical movements and to invoke other animated existences to account for them, he saw no reason for limiting the possibilities of existence—of inter-planetary or extra-spacial existence—to those friends who had recently inhabited this planet. Meanwhile, what had the members of the Society to do? To inquire, to criticise, to discover, but also to live—to live this life here and now, and not to spoil their few years here with constant grasping after something which in due time the future would reveal. Those who felt assured of a future existence might be thankful; but those who could not feel so assured, with them also it was well if they applied their energies to service on this earthly plane, and reaped the wholesome and natural joys accessible in their present state.

* * *

A Word of Criticism

WITH most of the above we are in complete agreement; we are, however, surprised that a man of Dr. Lodge's great ability and open-mindedness, and one so familiar with the infinite variety of the as yet fathomless ocean of psychic phenomena, should venture to assert in categorical fashion that "matter through matter" was "impossible." "Impossible" is a word which should be tabooed in a philosopher's vocabulary when dealing with only a very partially-surveyed field of human activity. From one point

of view the whole of nature (*physis*) is the passing of matter through matter. It is simply a question of degrees of a single stuff. Can, as Zöllner and a number of other competent observers have asserted, two continuous rings of different woods, for instance, be linked together by some process which sets at defiance the limitations of three-dimensional matter? Setting aside the possibilities of disintegration and reintegration, is it unscientific to believe that there may be methods of a so-called "four-dimensional" nature by which apparent "miracles" of interpenetration on this plane can be effected? We, for our part, hesitate to say: "No." Indeed, the evidence seems to require an emphatic "Yes," no matter how upsetting the affirmative may be to our normal experience. Again, we should have thought that, so far from there being no evidence for the "hypnotic delusion of a crowd," on the contrary it is one of the most general phenomena observable by a careful student of human nature. Indeed, if we may be permitted to say so, the general negative attitude of mind, nay, the heated denial of generations of so-called scientists, with regard to psychic phenomena, may very well be classed as the "hypnotic delusion of a crowd." But we have no wish to be over-critical with so sturdy a champion of the science of subtle nature as Professor Oliver Lodge, and most earnestly wish him strength and long life to carry on his invaluable work. It may be, however, that the above report somewhat misrepresents the Professor, and if so we withdraw our remarks unreservedly.

The editorial address of this REVIEW *and of Mr. and Mrs. G. R. S. Mead will in future be* 59, *Cheyne Court, Chelsea, S.W.*

THE MOTHER OF ALL TALES

On a certain barren island of the North, where dwelt but a few simple fisher folk and herdsmen, there lived a man of much learning and great wisdom, to whom came a band of those who had ears to hear his teaching. After a while each man returned to his home, when he had, as he thought, learned all his teacher could tell him. Now none of these men had learned more than a scanty measure of the wise man's wisdom, but each had learned all he had the power to perceive—which is a different matter altogether—so that for the most part they did not agree as to their doctrines.

The last to leave was a young man very near and dear to the heart of his teacher; he had, it was believed, learned more of the wise man than all the rest of the scholars. When this young man returned to his country he found one of the least learned of the wise man's pupils zealously preaching the doctrine he had learned, which he proclaimed with great power and authority.

Many followed him, but some, and these the most judicious of the land, mocked at and condemned him. When the latest comer from the northern isle heard his words, he declared that the doctrine preached was by no means that of the wise man; whereat the judicious mocked him also, and the followers of the zealous preacher were very wrath. "For," said they, "though you deny the doctrine we have received, yet you do not assert with authority that you know the whole truth. Now, this, our teacher, does so, proclaiming his knowledge with no uncertain voice; wherefore we shall follow him."

Then the young man went to his fellow pupil and told him he was to blame in his methods of dealing with the people. "Desist," he cried, "from your preaching and teaching; for I, who was nearest of all to our wise teacher, know that he taught me not thus. Truth is one and indivisible, and all besides is falsehood."

"True!" said the other. "Truth is one, and thus I teach the people."

Then the young man tried patiently to explain the truth in such measure as he had received it; but his speech failed him, and the more fluent of the twain mocked him.

"You speak a mere shifting maze of words," he cried. "The teaching I have received is clear and plain, simple, precise, and susceptible of no change. My poor friend, you are lost in a tangle of vague mysticism, small wonder is it that none will follow you, or very few."

"The wisest mock at your doctrine."

"And at yours also."

"That is because of your folly. Our great teacher is dishonoured in you."

"There you are wrong," cried the other. "For he sent me of late his blessing, and bade me work as heretofore for his sake."

"It cannot be. Either your brain is turned by your extravagant conduct, or you are wilfully deceiving me."

"Put my words to the proof," cried his opponent. "Ask of the wise man whether I shall cease to preach to the people."

This was done. After a few days a letter came from the wise man, sending loving greetings to both his pupils; and he bade the man who preached so zealously a simple doctrine persevere in the way wherein he trod.

The young man, his favourite pupil, was stunned with amazement; and a doubt of the wise man shot into his breast, and stung him like a serpent; for he was sure the doctrine he had learned from him was unlike that which his fellow pupil preached, and he did not perceive how both could be true. He went forth from the city in anguish, and roved alone through the darkening country. When the full moon was high in the sky, he was wandering through meadows gilt with buttercups and perfumed with meadow-sweet. He broke through a hedge, and standing on a high green bank he saw that he was on the summit of tall white cliffs where the gulls and jackdaws slept. Below the cliffs a quarter of a mile of jagged broken ground ran to the sea verge. Here in ancient times had been a great landslip; for two miles

east and two miles west of the spot where he stood stretched rent and rock-strewn land. Of a tempest's wreck the gods had made a garden of spicery, a sheltered lotus-land of delights. Far below the sheltering cliffs the winds were lulled, and all the torn ground was tree-planted, flower-strewn, bird and bee-haunted; every jagged rock was bound with climbing greenery, and the whole was bordered by a dream-sea of silver, the waves whereof were too drowsy to murmur upon the shore.

The bitter-sweet smell of the sea came towards the man; he beheld the range of cliffs, and the broken silent land below his feet, bleached "in a great moonlight, light as any day." He saw a night hawk, like a stone from the sling of a slinger, fling itself from the cliff into the silver-shining purple-blue of midnight space. It winged a silent way towards the sea, then it fell landwards through the perfumed air, and he heard the shriek of some small creature seized and rent by it. The shriek died; the little tragedy ended, idly noted by the cliff watcher, who was absorbed in his own tragedy, which was to him a matter so great that he marvelled the silent gods did not stoop from their unmoved course to witness it. Unnoted! Were they unnoted,—the swift death by the shore; the living agony on the cliff summit? From the depths below there floated to him a thin rill of sound, the eery shrilling of a pipe. He marvelled who played there by the moonlit shore. It was an old, old air that was played, a simple tune sung by the peasant folk; he had not heard it since it sounded long ago from his mother's lips. He remembered the simple silly words to which she strung the air:

O hidden in the dusky wood
  The little owls are hooting, hooting,
And in the sleepy silent fields
  The pipes of elf-land fluting, fluting.

It was a twilight song; and the tune had a patient wail in it, like the ghost of an unstilled cry of sorrow that would never be at peace. He was a child again, cradled in a hard narrow bed, in a poorly furnished room; he heard through the open door his mother's voice and foot-fall as she went to and fro. On the ceiling shone the round circle of the rush-light. He was

a child of many terrors, fearing the strange Things of the Dark that haunt the bed-time hour of nervous children. His mother, made wise by love in her dealings with her child, sang, so that he might hear her voice through the half-open door, and be thereby comforted and defended in strange perils of the shadow-world. But who piped the tune of his childhood below there by the shore?

He found a little steep path, and went to see; down the rough winding way he went, past ivy-girdled crags. Then he came to a tiny wood near the sea-verge; the path ran through it. He heard the leaves rustling over his head, stirred by a drowsy land-wind. He came out from the wood to a broken stretch of turfy rock-strewn ground, where wild thyme grew thickly, and fat sheep were feeding sleepily. By a winding sheep-path he went to the shore; there the tide lapped lazily at the grey rocks, and ran landwards over smooth white sand. And lo! who sat on the tallest moon-kissed rock at the water's verge, but the Mother of all Tales, herself.

Knowledge and learning sometimes bow the shoulders with their priceless, hardly-gathered burden, they mark the face with lines and furrows of thought; but Wisdom may be borne lightly, as a bunch of harebells on the breast of a young child. Thus it was that the wise Mother of all Tales was perceived by the young man as a slender maid with solemn eyes like the night sky, and a mouth that broke readily into laughter. Her bare feet were gilt with dust from the buttercup meadows he had crossed; her dark hair was wet with sea spray, and bound with meadow-sweet; in her hand was a rod of hazel, and in her lap a slender wheaten pipe.

"Was it you," he asked, "who played just now?"

"It was," she made answer. "I played—I—the Mother of all Tales, and of all Tunes."

"I have often heard of you," said he; "and that I meet you now is surely the mercy of the gods; for I am in great turmoil of soul. Never was any man till now placed in such straits as I."

"Hear the voice of the leaves, child," said she. "In yonder wood none are fashioned alike. In the autumn the land winds will sweep some of them seawards; and the sea winds drive

others landwards. Now, if the sea-blown leaf should say: 'None ever sank waterwards save I' he is deceived; for millions have thus sunk, and millions more shall do the like in time to come. But if he say: 'No leaf save I ever met the water's kiss as I meet it now,' it may be, child, he speaks truth, that each leaf greets wind and water after his own fashion, and no other. Herein, I think, lies the power of the leaf, but the water is alike to all. Nor in any perishing of a leaf can it be but that many another has perished by like means."

The young man, full of his woe, scarcely heeded her words; he threw himself on the wet sand, by that rock whereon the Mother of all Tales sat in the moonlight, and earnestly he poured forth to her all that was in his heart; and she listened with patience. When he ceased she said:

"Son, you have the power of speech; and I suppose, though of this I have no proof, that you have also the power to be silent."

At this he was troubled, fearing that she mocked him as a babbler; but this was not so, for the Mother of all Tales never mocks, because the babbler and the silent alike have their place in the tales she weaves and mothers.

"I can be silent when I like," he said hotly. Then, with dignity, he added: "I can be silent when it is not needful to speak."

"You have then a secret of much price, child," she answered. "It may also be that you can speak other tongues than that of your native land?"

"It is so, Mother," he replied wonderingly.

"So also can Truth, my son," said she. "Likewise hath she speech and silence. Look in my eyes, child."

He looked into her eyes, until his brain reeled, and he veiled his own.

"No more!" he cried, "O Mother, who garnerest all things, I can bear no more!"

"Tell me now, child," said she, "what thou hast read in my eyes."

"I cannot," he groaned, "O Mother of all Tales! That which thou knowest can never be told."

"Nay! not so, son," she answered, "for I know simple matters, and much of my speech is easy to be understood. It is my silence whereof no man can tell. Thy fellow-pupil, child, learned of his teacher of my speech; and thou hast learned of him of my silence. He who taught thee, son, knew both silence and speech, and also that which is neither the one nor the other; and he knows what now I tell thee, that neither could be, if the other were not also. Many follow thy fellow-pupil, and their hearts are cheered by his speech. As for you, child, to none can you tell that which you know, save when you meet one who, like yourself, has looked into my eyes; then thou and he shall link hand with hand for a space, and be at peace in a common knowledge."

"But—but—" said the young man, falteringly, "his words are untrue—surely they are untrue?"

"It may be so, child," replied the Mother of all Tales. "But truly I think it more likely that they are not so. In the ages that are gone I have met in many lands a certain goddess, veiled, sometimes wearing shining royal robes, and sometimes beggars' weeds; always her lips were singing through her veil, and men were following her. When I asked her name, she said: 'Untruth'; but it is in my mind that she was Truth herself, singing through Untruth's veil; for I caught the flashing of her veiled eyes, which none save I may see, and live."

The young man sighed, and the Mother of all Tales raised to her lips her wheaten pipe, and played that ancient tune dear to the people. Then she laid the pipe in her lap once more, and leaned upon the wet rock, while the incoming tide leaped around her.

"Three miles eastward of this place, my child," said she, "there is a sandy space by the shore. There a stream, seeking the sea, is lost in sand; and by this loss of a stream is fashioned a marsh where reeds rustle, and are by day a-chatter with the little warblers' voices. Hard by there is a small farm, and therein lies a woman, very old as you count age, son, bed-ridden and blind. As she lies wakeful she hears the tune I play singing through her tired old brain, for pain will not suffer her to sleep. She thinks of the day she heard that tune first, when she

was a young, rosy lass and met the man she wedded at a hay-making over yonder hill; and in the dusk among the hay-ricks he piped to her that tune. Her grandson, a shepherd lad, played it without her door at sunset, and that is why, she thinks, it haunts her now. But he played it, child, and she hears it, because I, the Mother of all Tales, play it, here by this moonlit sea."

"I know the farm," said the man. "I know the marsh."

"Once there stood a city in that place," said she. "It is gone. Ages ago it vanished, and the sand has hidden it. I alone remember where it stood; I know all that is past, and all that is present, for I am the Record Keeper, Mother of all Tales."

"And the future, O Mother?" said the young man, half fearfully.

"In my native country, my child," said she, "I know the Past in the Future, and the Future in the Past, for there are they linked in an Eternal Present. In that country I am known by another name. Here, my son, I am but the Mother of all Tales, and I shall tell you of that city which was on the sandy plain, where the reeds are now a-rustle in the moonlight."

"Many things indeed have you witnessed, O Mother!"

"Pay attention, child," said she, "for this is the tale. The city was the chief town of a little peaceable kingdom, ruled by a good and kindly king. The people were contented and not unlearned. They knew little of other lands besides their own; their women were wise and gentle, delicate, fair, and pure. Kindly and contented were they all; they grieved at evil and violence, and they desired to learn nothing save those things their learned men could teach them. Over the sea, son, not far away, was a restless warring tribe of savage fighting men; ignorant and uncouth were they. Their women were fierce and rough, fit mates for savages. Of beauty, of wisdom, of grace, of tenderness and purity, they knew naught. Their leader, with a few of his greatest fighters, was besieged in a little rudely-built town, and hard pressed. Help was coming to him, but it could not reach him for seven days, and there was scant supply of food and water. What, in your judgment, my son, could this man do?"

"He could but wait till food and drink were gone, O Mother, and then, perchance, die fighting."

"Child, the man did otherwise, for he slew all the women, all the aged men and children within the town, and such as were sick and feeble. Thus, with so few to feed, there was enough for him and for his warriors, till their comrades came to them, and together they fought and conquered."

"The man had neither heart nor conscience," cried her hearer.

"It is so, my child," replied she. "I, the Witness, I, whose work it is to record all things without adding aught, or taking aught away, beheld both grow through the ages. I saw the heart wrung with pain, and wild with joy; I saw the conscience tortured and puzzled in helpless pain; I heard the man cry aloud in his anguish, and with none, as he thought, to hear, or to help; until the heart waxed tender as the first tremble of dawn-wind on a field of flowering grass, and wider than the seas. And the conscience grew calm and wise as the eyes of Truth herself, and the man found his help and succour in the depths of his own soul, and therein the help and succour of all nations and peoples and tongues. But in the day whereof I speak, he had, as you say, neither heart nor conscience; but he had a strong arm, and an all-consuming greed and restlessness, and having neither remorse nor image-weaving fancy to torment him, he acted freely and boldly. He and his warriors extended their power; they crossed the sea and reached this land; they slew the gentle king who desired but to rule his people mercifully within the delicate city; all the gentle folks they slew, save a few young lads whom they took to train as slaves, the young and fair women whom they compelled to wed with them, and a few old men who had skill in the use of herbs and in architecture. Now was not this, son, a foul and evil thing in your eyes?"

"Most horrible and merciless," said the young man, shuddering.

"And yet, son," said the Mother of all Tales, "it came to pass that these savage fighters, mated with a gentler race, living in a fair country, heirs to the gentleness and delicacy they reft by the sword, built up at last a noble nation, as much nobler

than the race they so grievously maltreated, as that race was nobler than its conquerors. And of that noble race sprang the wise teacher whom you honour to-day."

The young man bent his head upon his knee, and his soul battled fiercely within him.

"Behold this wonder, child," said the Mother of all Tales. "The wise act by reason of their wisdom, beholding the needs of the hour. But it sometimes befalls that when a man hath no wisdom, nor even virtuous purpose, the gods make of him a weapon by which to slay where they will, or a tool by which to build where they list."

"Is it well then to be unwise, O Mother?"

"Not so," said she. "Therefore seek wisdom diligently, my son; thus it may be thou shalt reach it. And having reached it, thou shalt be born in the Hour of Wisdom that cometh. But it is in my mind, that when wisdom is not forthcoming, folly will serve the need of the hour; for verily, child, the need of the hour will be served. The man who serves it best is the Man of the Hour. Sometimes he is wise, if the hour be an hour of wisdom; and sometimes he is a fool, if, child, the hour be the hour of folly. Wisdom and folly I record alike; nor is the one, to me, before or after the other."

Then the gloom that is the human birthright, waxed in the young man's soul, and he sighed with dawning knowledge.

"O thou Mother of all Tales," he said, "is then this man the Man of the Hour?"

"Does he fit the needs of the Hour, my child?" she answered.

"It seems so," he replied, gloomily, "for they follow him."

"Let him therefore make straight the path of the Man of the Coming Hour, my son," she said. "Take comfort, O child, for thou also art minister to some unseen need hidden within the limits of the Hour. Of you both I shall take note, adding naught, nor taking aught away, and in silence shall I garner you among the tales that are told."

The moon set, the sky grew pale, a shiver of wind shook the surface of the sea. The young man perceived only the wet rock whereon the Mother of all Tales had sat and talked with him

beneath the midnight sky. He turned his face citywards, and at sunrise he passed the little farm on the sand-dune, where the blind old woman lay. By the side of the marsh the shepherd boy, her grandson, stood piping shrilly; the man knew that somewhere, unseen, the Mother of all Tales was piping the same tune.

MICHAEL WOOD.

THE DOMINION OF ADONAI

THE ASTROLOGY AND MORAL CODE OF THE GENZÂ*

And therefore I was weary of my life when I saw that all things under the sun are evil.—ECCLES. ii. 17.

THERE is only one false religion that has more adherents than all the ecclesiastical hierarchies. There is only one great association that draws its millions of votaries unceasingly without visible nuncios or Messiahs, and that is the religion of the world, the cult of the things that are done under the sun, under the burning orb of Time, past-master of illusion, and lord of visible space. He gives to his adorers riches, honours and delights, and he tempts them to satiate every longing of their hearts, to seek whatsoever their eyes desire, and to withhold not their hearts from enjoying every pleasure.

In somewhat this manner does the unknown hierophant strike the keynote of his moral teaching in the Genzâ or Treasure of the Mandæan Gnosis (Codex Nazaræus). The instruction of Adam regarding his purification begins with his perception that all things under the sun are evil, that all is vanity and vexation of spirit, and he is weary of his life.

Then the teaching of the true Light-world and the imperishable Light-king is given. It is explained to him that the stars are but imitation lights, lurid fires under whose murky glow

* See the article "Fragments of the Mandæan Mass for the Souls of the Dead" in the February number.

the mad dance of men in the pursuit of the delights of the flesh is ceaselessly enacted.

The whole drift and purpose of the astrology is the teaching of the necessity of liberation from the powerful enchantments that make physical life appear so desirable to men.

The moral code and the astrological lore of the Genzâ are as one. The second has no meaning apart from the first, and the first derives its support and authority from the (to them) indubitable truths of this ancient science. It is further taught to Adam that the reign of Adonai himself will cease. The sun and the moon will be rolled up and thrown away as old rags, and the true Sun will gather all things to itself. Man must see himself as the Mana (soul) of the Sovereign Sun and understand his ultimate and glorious destiny.

The Smâlâ, thus, with its suggestions of surpassing glories beyond death, is the key to the astrological moral code, as death is the key to the meaning of life.

The origin of the world, as will be seen in the extracts given below, was the seeing of Himself in the mirror of the dark waters by Abatur, and all the world-life is thus as a *camera obscura* full of inverted images from a fairer world, as trees and mountains appear standing upside down in a still pool. (It seems as if this theory of the Mandæan Genesis might be the reason for the curious and unique way in which the two parts are written, one always being upside down, however the book is held.)

"How difficult," therefore, as Julian the Philosopher wrote in his oration *On the Sovereign Sun*, "to imagine *that Sun* who is not visible to the senses, if our notion of Him is to be derived from that which is visible."

Men are moving to and fro in the world "through the looking glass"—a shadowy world, indefinite and imperfect and fleeting. This is "the mystery and the secret and the doctrine." This is the foundation of all the ethics of renunciation; renounce illusions, cease your shadow-acting, wake up like Alice from her dream that she had gone through the Looking-glass, and reassert the undying light-soul within that knows itself one with the Sovereign Life.

The body of man is a web of delusion and darkness, having been formed by these reflected lights, and this star-made body must be utterly abandoned by the purified soul, before it can escape from the dominion of Adonai.

Adonai is the Devil, the *Deus inversus*, the image by reflection of the living Logos.

The invisible Lord is Mandâ d'Hajjê, which literally translated means Gnosis of Life. And when He comes all shadows will flee away and all things under the sun, and all created beauty will appear as filthy rags. Thus the message of the Mandæan Genzâ is the message of the mediæval monk. The appeal is the same. Turn thee to Me, says the great Light-king, forsake all and find Me. Will you never cease from gazing like children into the mirror where you see but My image in a glass darkly. Soon it will pass suddenly away as if it had never been there and "the true Light will be all in all."

This is the wisdom of Solomon and the wisdom of the Indian Yogin. It is the Gnosis of life everlasting, and it is still a vision and a dream as it was ages back in the history of man, and the spirit of the Genzâ wisdom is as alien and unacceptable to our modern culture, as is the spirit of the Cross.

But to the solitary and unknown dreamer who could not forget the glories of the living Light whence he came, the sight of the earth weltering under the glowing embrace of Adonai and of men glutted with the works of the flesh seemed like a blazing festival of hell. Therefore he wrote down these teachings of the Light in order that he "that hath his spirit may find therein a hidden manna."

EXTRACTS

From the Light-king's Teaching as to Morals

(Right-hand Genzâ) (First Tractate)

He delights himself with a joy that knows not sorrow, and all who are with Him rejoice with the same rejoicing throughout His whole Kingdom.

A Glory that changes not and a Light that shall not set.

A Beauty and a Glory and a Splendour that cannot be marred.

Life that is over all life!

Glory above all glory, Light above all light in which is neither lack nor blemish!

Light in which is no darkness!

Living One with whom is no death!

Good in which is no evil!

Mercy that knows no anger!

And the King rejoices in the Sons of Light.

They hunger not, nor do they thirst.

There are no beasts of prey upon their earth and no poisonous fruits in their dwelling-places.

Their flowers never wither and the leaves do not fall from their trees.

Moth and rust are not in their cities and their dwelling-places pass not away.

And these Light-kings consist of many Rays.

And their forms shine and glitter, and the manner of their appearance is pure and sparkling as a clear beryl-stone. And every day there is given unto them power and speech and word and purity from the King of all the Light-beings.

* * * *

I say it to you my chosen and I teach it to you my faithful.

Dress yourselves in white and cover yourselves in white, after the manner of the robes of glory and the vestments of light, and wrap ye your heads in white after the image of the glistening crowns, and gird yourselves with white girdles after the image of the River of Life.

* * * *

Give bread and water and shelter to the miserable and to the persecuted to whom has come persecution.

And walk in honourable ways and let not the hire of the day-labourer remain over-night in your hands.

Rob not your companions and make no evil designs against friends.

He who robs his neighbour and his companions, his eyes shall not see the Light.

Give another his due and break not the plighted troth.

O ye chosen and ye perfect, be modest and humble and be called the well tried, the true and the faithful.

Love one another truly and let your love find a perfect sequel.

Be gentle and humble towards the real teachers who teach you the wisdom.

Rise not up against them, so that there shall be no stain upon your souls.

And go not to the soothsayers and to the astrologers who live in the darkness.

* * * *

I, the pure Messenger, unto me hath my Lord called and given me commandments and said:

To you my chosen I say it, to you my faithful I teach it. Fast ye the great fast! Fast not as the fasting from the meats of this earth, but fast ye with your eyes that they look not to lust. Fast ye with your ears that they do not listen at strange doors. Fast ye with your mouths that they do not speak malice and lying things. Fast with your hearts, that ye meditate not upon corruption nor yearn after perishing things.

Fast ye with this great fasting and maintain ye yourselves in it until ye have laid aside the body.

* * * *

THE MISERERE

(Right-hand Genzâ) (Third Tractate)

In the Name of the Great Life!

Praise be to the Glory and the great first Light.

Lord of Glory, look upon us and condemn us not.

High Light-king, hear our voices and condemn us not.

Glorious One, whose glory is great, send down of Thy Glory upon us!

Great Light, that passeth not away, send down of Thy Light upon us!

Thou who givest Thine hand to the perfect, give us Thy hand that we may not fall.

* * * *

[In the rules for a devout life meditation is enjoined "three

times in the day and twice in the night." This is also a practice of devout Mohammedans. "And watch thou part of the night as a voluntary service; it may be that thy Lord will raise thee to a place of praise" (Speeches of Muhammad). We have many parallels in Europe. The Carthusians, Cistercians and other Christian orders, rise every night to pray. "He that goeth on a pilgrimage will do well to do so when others do not, though it be *at an unusual season*" (St. John of the Cross). "For the night-fowl flieth by night and it seeks its food in the darkness. The heart is more sincere in the still night" (Ancren Riwle—Camden Society, 1853).

We now come to the accounts of the creation of the world and the genesis of life. There is some confusion between Gabriel and Ptahil (or Fetahil), so that the name will here be given as Gabriel throughout.

FROM THE LIGHT-KING'S TEACHING AS TO GENESIS

(Right-hand Genzâ) (Second Tractate)

In the name of the Great Life! Of the Stranger from the Light-world, of the rich one who is over all works.

I am the pure Messenger. He said (to me): Go thou and overthrow the darkness and the inhabitants which are made of it.

Span thou the firmament and set the stars therein. And call up the Spirits of the Fire and give to the sun, for it is one of them, his brilliancy, and to the moon her purity, and their shimmering light to the stars. Thou shalt raise them up to be spheres in heaven.

* * * *

But give no worship to the seven and the twelve chiefs of this world who preside day and night. For their splendour does not belong to them, but it has been given them to light up their sombre domain.

Neither adore the sun, whose name is Adonai. For he is the author of all impurity. . . .

There will be those who will give a divine cult to the angels of fire—the stars—who, however, being stupid creatures and with-

out reason have only their light for days and nights and to lead men to another cult and another adoration.

* * * *

(Right-hand Genzâ) (Fourth Tractate)

In the Name of the Great Life!

When I came, I the Messenger of Light, the King, for I came out of the Light, thus I came with wisdom and glory in my hands; light and adoration were with me.

Splendour was round me.

Teaching and voice and speech were with me, the sign with me and the baptism.

And I bring light to the darkened hearts with my voice and with my speech.

* * * *

(Right-hand Genzâ) (Sixth Tractate)

. . . And the Gnosis that the Spirit had mused upon and wished to establish upon earth shall remain as a vision and as a dream.

But there shall be the gnosis of the seven planets and the gnosis of the twelve stars (which are the signs of the Zodiac) and the gnosis of the five stars.

I indeed have received from my fathers the interpretation of each of these and I say it from them.

Nevertheless, these teachings will never rule upon earth, but there shall come a last Gnosis which shall interpret them.

There shall come a Logos, which shall be the fulfilment of every logos.

A well-beloved Son adorned with resplendent wings and in a form of imperishable beauty.

A Gnosis shall come which is the sacred Gnosis of Life, given by this well-beloved Son by command of His Father.

I see Him approaching the earth as a living Fire with a religion of the Great Life and teaching the sacred Gnosis.

* * * *

. . . And now I shall speak to you of the twelve stars.

The Ram shall rule for 12,000 years, the Bull for 11,000 years, the Twins for 10,000, and the Crab for 9,000, and the

Lion for 8,000, and the Virgin for 7,000, and the Scales for 6,000, and the Scorpion for 5,000, and the Archer for 4,000, and the Goat for 3,000, and the Water-bearer 2,000, and the Fish 1,000.

And they shall produce and reign over the animals of their own kind.

And the Ram shall speak and behold there shall appear all the animals with rough voices which are like him.

[And so on through all the departments of nature. Then in Part lxii. we are told that the days of the seven planets are also fixed, for the twelve enchanters influence these as these in their turn influence the twelve.]

(Right-hand Genzâ) (Eighth Tractate)

And Abatur had seen His own face in the dark water. And His image and His Son were formed for Him out of the dark water.

[The Spirit moves on the face of the waters and the whole world of illusion results from the reflection of the World Spirit's face in the watery mirror,]

And Abatur arose and opened the Door and gazed into the dark water, and in that same hour was fashioned His image. And Gabriel was formed and arose to the place of the boundaries.

And Abatur became conscious of Gabriel (literally: Abatur distinguished his consciousness from Gabriel's).

And Abatur said to His son Gabriel: Come, come unto me, Gabriel, thou whom I have seen in the dark water.

And when He saw him in his own form that he was dressed in seven raiments of every kind and colour, He drew them off from him and took them away from him.

And He clothed him in Glory and enveloped him with Light.

[Then follows a description of Gabriel's attempt to make the world by steeping his many-coloured coats in the black water to "thicken" it. And Abatur rebukes him as a fool for the uselessness of the operation, and explains to him that if he wants "to make a thickening" he must plunge in one of the "radiant vestures" which Abatur himself gave him. He did so, and lo! the whole world appeared and stood there at once. Compare with

this "that wonderful and glorious vitality which developes the various planes when electrified with it," described by Mr. Leadbeater in *The Christian Creed*, p. 29.]

And the black water surrounded the world on all sides. Then I (the Light-king) sent my voice to Gabriel.

And he was afraid and my discourse frightened him and he laid himself down on the thickening that he had made and said: Woe is me that this Hibil [Genius] is sending his voice to me!

But when I perceived that he was so grievously afraid, I sent him help and was friendly to him and said: Finish making and set up your works and let them rise up before your Father and before the Life that is so far from you.

And when I had said this to him, I surrounded the thickening which he had put there, with seven walls. And there is no one living who has power to break down these walls.

* * * *

[This most interesting Eighth Tractate opens with the following mystical invocation.]

In the Name of the great Life, of the strange one from the Light-world of the rich one above all works.

Salvation and purity and power and stedfastness and discourse and hearing and a redeemer of sinners shall be with me. . . . . And may His name be exalted in the house of the Life!

In the Name of the strange Life from the Light-world of the rich one over all works!

This is the Mystery and the Book and the Secret Law which the Life had hidden for (the sake of) the discourse of Mandâ d'Hajjê when he made the revelation before the Mana and his image and before the Life. . .

* * * *

[The heading (in Migne) is "The Word worthy of Me." It contains one of the many descriptions of Gabriel's creation of the sun.]

And I called Sames (the Sun) by its name and Sin (the Moon) and Kewan (Saturn), etc.

And I said to them: I will give you carriages and put you in them.

And I will dress you with a wonderful robe, and I give you a glory that you may light this world.

[According to Mandæan cosmogony the stars travel in vehicles of some sort, or ships, and are dark and evil in themselves. Each star is preceded by a guiding angel, who carries a little diamond cross to show the way.

It is these crosses we see in the sky, and the size depends upon the distance of the angel from us.

And I set the Seven (planets) in their carriages and they lighted the world for 360,000 years in the wilderness.

And I called to the Seven and said to them: Make the bodily form (of man). And they made it.

* * * *

This star-made body, however, when finished could not stand upright and no one was able to make it do so.

"For their light was not the living light." And Gabriel is forced to appeal to Mandâ d'Hajjê, who brings the soul "from the Treasure of the Great Life which is hidden in the House of Nitufta"—and throws it into the star-made body, so that even Gabriel does not know the secret of the soul's origin.

The continual reference to the star-made body suggests that there is a connection between the beings of the stars and the moral nature of man, that is, his astral body. It suggests that the seven layers of the astral self are like seven walls imprisoning the soul within its passional nature and tying it down to the various works of the flesh. These seven departments of a man's life are guarded by Seven Watchers, from which the soul escapes in succession if its works have been pure on earth.

Without going into the root of the matter, *i.e.*, whether there is any connection between the passional nature and the various magnetic influences pouring down upon the earth from the celestial bodies, we may consider the following facts as possible connections between the Genzâ and our modern ideas.

The sun is the source of what is called the zodiacal light, in which the earth and the other planets are steeped day and night, and in which they each and all shine with a borrowed light, which light varies in each according to its constitution. But we know little or nothing as to the reciprocal relations existing

between the solar system and the zodiacal constellations. We only know that the latter are fixed stars and self-luminous.

Yet we are not in a position to deny that the sun is sensitive to those huge powers and centres of magnetic influence, light and heat, which we call fixed stars, and of which we know little more than that they differ each from the other and so may be said to have distinguishing characteristics.

The source of all life and therefore of the human race on this earth is the sun; but why this *one* cause should produce such almost infinite varieties is not known. The Mandæan genesis, quaint and grotesque as it seems to us, simply asserts that there is a constant interplay between all the celestial bodies, and that the planets (of our solar system) though dark in themselves are so many receivers or store-houses or batteries of the modifying influences of the twelve signs, and that these latter in combination with the sun and the planets produce twelve great departments of natural life—twelve types of men (thus twelve tribes, twelve disciples, twelve hours, etc.).

If we imagine a system of lights stationed in definite positions on orbits and a system of reflectors of varying powers which are continually moving in relation to the lights and to each other, as well as to the earth, we shall see how varied the quality of the light would be that would be brought to bear on the development of some particular germ of life exposed to it at different moments.

Thus though every man is born under the sun each is slightly different from the other. Further than this it is hard to unravel Mandæan ideas, though much more is suggested.

A complete translation of the Genzâ does not at present exist, and even if it did, we probably should not obtain from it a clear view of the mighty science of astrology, which was *the* science of the soul and is still hidden from us, perhaps because of its value.

A. L. B. HARDCASTLE.

A VISION OF BEGINNINGS

IN one of the Hindu scriptures the outbreathing of Life from its Eternal Source is spoken of as the *awakening* of Îshvara (the Logos): "To-day Thou hast awakened, and art most joyfully desirous of again throwing out the universe in mighty gradations."

Trying one day to picture to myself this joyful "throwing out," the following scene unrolled itself before my inner vision.

I seem to be standing in the midst of an immense tract of land just before daybreak. It is a region strange and unfamiliar, without form and void, and darkness is over the face of the waters of space. A solemn, awful hush is upon everything: everything is asleep in a sleep deep and impenetrable. Faint echoes of an ancient saying sound voicelessly within my ears: "The Eternal Parent, wrapped in her ever-invisible Robes, had slumbered once again for Seven Eternities. Time was not, for it lay asleep in the infinite Bosom of Duration. . . . Darkness alone filled the boundless All. . . . Alone the One Form of Existence stretched boundless, infinite, causeless, in Dreamless Sleep."

As I stand awed, in the darkness and the silence, the utter silence, suddenly a sort of faint vibrating thrill runs through all the seemingly inert undifferentiated matter around, the first faint premonition of the glorious awakening. Thrill after thrill is repeated, and then in the eastern sky a faint, golden, rosy glow is visible, herald of the day that is dawning. An inexpressible feeling of freshness, of newness of life, pervades the air, the freshness of morning, and such a morning!

Brighter and brighter grows the golden glow, and then onward in glorious majesty, in awful splendour, come the great waves of light, the force, the energy, of the Light.

As I seek to gaze, awestruck, into that from which the light proceeds, for one brief instant my dazzled eyes seem to catch a glimpse of the perfection of the world which is to be, existing archetypically, as a world of ideas, in the creative Mind. The

reflection of this, I perceive, is carried outward, or downward, or around, by the waves of light, and impressed on the strange matter around me.

In seven great successive waves, the light floods the sleeping space; the first two call into activity matter far and away beyond my view. I can only vaguely sense it. The third wave (the first which is manifest to my consciousness) sweeps along in a wondrous volume of mystical musical sound, the result of the vibrations playing on the âkâshic realms of nature, the keynote of that Song of Life which has been ringing ever since, ringing on as an undertone of mystical melody, bringing to the hearing ear all the discords of life into harmony. For sound underlies all manifested forms, sound is the producer of form, sound the preserver of form, sound the destroyer of form. "God *said*, Let there be light"—first the spoken word, then the manifestation.

As in my vision I stand watching in awestruck silence this mighty re-awakening, another wave from the Great Light Breath rolls grandly on, this time producing fire, light, that fire of life which burns in every atom of the world. "God *said*, Let there be *light*, and there was light."

Then in unhastening majesty, following on, wave after wave pours forth, each successive wave enveloping and interpenetrating the one previous; the atoms in air, water, earth, are thus quickened into glorious vitality, until every atom of every plane of our world is a whirling vortex of energy, a centre of force, the playground, or shall we rather say the workshop, of this sevenfold life from the first great outpouring of the Divine.

And so, in my vision, the morning dawns, the day breaks, the "great day" of manifestation, and the hidden yet absolutely essential work of the Light has once again begun, to be carried on with the infinite patience of eternity—the patience which moulds and unfolds, and perfects with wisest skill those building bricks of the world which we call the atoms—right through the "great day" of the Lord, until such time, unthinkable to us, as the "night" shall once more close in, and all, perfected, enriched, shall be drawn inwards to rest in the Bosom of the Eternal.

ELIZABETH W. BELL.

ST. COLUMBA

"A SAINT, a warrior, a soldier of Christ, a great abbot, a dauntless explorer and militant prince of the Church. A student, a man of great learning, a poet, an artist, a visionary, an architect, administrator, law-maker, judge, arbiter. A prince of royal blood; in his youth beautiful as an angel. In mature manhood unequalled in stature, strength and beauty, with a voice deep and powerful as a bell," such is the picture of Columba drawn for us by Fiona Macleod.

It is strange how clearly we can see the figure of the great Culdee, though centuries of time divide him from us; though the days in which he lived and founded the great monastery on the lonely northern island were, in many respects, so different from our own. We know the colouring of his hair, we hear of the clear grey of his eyes, of his comeliness and strength, of the colouring, white and ruddy, of his complexion. We learn of the unfailing vigour of his physique, so that he, living on the scanty fare of an ascetic Culdee, nay, living on a diet of "nettle broth," had the aspect of one "nice and delicate" in his fare. We know his dislike of ostentatious austerities, of his simplicity, of his geniality, of his willingness to set aside his dignity and grind corn like the latest joined of his novices. We hear of his learning, of his fluent pen, his poetry, his powerful voice, his love of music, his "unique art of clericalism." Nay! we even catch glimpses of his playfulness, his quaint and kindly humour, his fondness for animals; his broad-minded tolerance towards all men, whether pagans, heretics, troublesome subordinates, or marauders who took the goods of the monastery. We may view him as the great abbot, the peacemaker, the counsellor of princes, the protector of learning, the fellow servant of angels, the great seer, the climber of heavenly heights, the viewer of "things unspeakable." A many-sided nature, surely, was that of the great

founder of Iona. His very names also indicate the almost fierce strength and valour which were wedded with tenderness in him, —for Crimthan means the Wolf; and Colum, the Dove.

Columba was descended on his mother's side from the kings of Leinster; on his father's from the kings of Donegal. Through his paternal grandfather he was linked with Scotland, connected with the kings of Argyle. Miracles are said to have preceded the birth of the Saint of Iona; Aithne, his mother, had a vision concerning her unborn child. He was born in A.D. 521. It is said that Maveth, a disciple of Patrick, predicted his birth and greatness, while some legends say the prediction fell from the lips of Patrick himself.

Legend reports Columba to have been "holy from birth," instructing his tutors; when but a child the brilliancy of his aura as he slept was perceived by the priest Cruithnechan. His mental gifts were great, but never, even in youth, did he employ them for selfish ends, nor for his own advantage. Being of royal birth he was carefully tended and educated; he was sent for instruction to the monastery at Moville, and also to that at Clanard; his education was confided to several tutors—two bishops, a presbyter, and also to Gemman, a bard. He was instructed in theology, letters, agriculture, and penmanship, in poetry, music, medicine, polished manners and heraldry. It is said that he knew four languages besides Greek; his passion for knowledge and study was intense. Although of a royal house, and conspicuously possessed of the qualities which make a successful ruler, Columba adopted the religious life, a life which certainly afforded great scope for one with a governing capacity and a power of influencing and leading men. He entered the monastery of Glasnevin as a monk; but at the age of twenty-three he issued from the cloister to undertake public work as a religious teacher. He travelled a great deal, and founded many religious houses; it is said that he established one in Italy. It was not till middle life, when he was over forty years of age, that he founded Iona in the year 562.

It is very unfortunate, and somewhat remarkable, that so few of the writings of Columba have been preserved. Magnus Odenellus, prince of Tirconnell, says that the founder of Iona was

a most prolific writer. This prince of Tirconnell, Odonellus, quotes five or six *Lives* of Columba which are lost to us; only two of them are extant, those of Cumin and Adamnàn. I confess I have speculated as to whether these lost *Lives* may not have been of a more pronouncedly Culdee and unorthodox character than those left to us; and I base this speculation upon the nature of the statements concerning Columba in the *Amra Choluimb Chille*. It is said by St. Evin that Columba wrote a *Life* of St. Patrick, which is lost. He wrote a monastic *Rule*, and also hymns to be committed to memory after the Bardic custom; he wrote in the rhythm of Irish poetry, presumably taught him by Gemman, and this fact, combined with others, disposes me to differ somewhat from Mr. Standish O'Grady, when he asserts that Columba despised the Bards. In one of Columba's hymns he speaks of the earth as though he knew it to be a globe hanging in space. Hymns and measured rhythms seem to be a conspicuous feature among the writings of the early British Church, and this is interesting because the same feature is so conspicuous in Gnostic and allied writings. Take, for example, the hymns sung by the Therapeuts*, the tradition of hymns written by Basilides and Valentinus, the *Hymn of the Robe of Glory*, and the fragments attributed to Bardesanes and quoted by Mr. Mead on p. 396 of his recently published work. The reference to the "young maiden" in the last of these fragments may be compared with the mystical hymn addressed by Columba to "the blossoming tree," the "Mother of Christ," St. Bride. That Patrick also in his hymns preached a mystic Christ is witnessed by the lines:

> Christ in every eye that sees me,
> Christ in every ear that hears me.

Let us, however, leave this fascinating speculation as to the connection of the mystics of the Gnosis with the Culdee communities, and return to the learned works of Columba. He was a great copyist of MSS., and Odonellus says that his zeal for acquiring documents led to his banishment and excommunication. This excommunication, however, was subsequently revoked; nor was Columba in truth banished, for he returned to

* See *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, p. 81.

Ireland, as is narrated in the *Amra*, to be judge and arbiter between kings; nor was he during his absence held in other than high esteem, for Bishop Maelán and Fedammair Cainche, two dignitaries of the Church, sent the sons of the king Lugaid Red-hands to Iona in order that they might have certain disputes settled by the "prophet judge" Columba; and, moreover, we see these princes obeying and abiding by the decision of the "banished" Abbot of Iona. Nevertheless, however soon the sentence may have been revoked, it is a fact that Columba was once excommunicated, and the cause was a MS. It may perhaps be of interest to tell the story, and first of all to place before the reader some account of this famous MS. which indirectly led to the founding of Iona. St. Finnian of Moville (500-588), who studied at the Culdee monastery of Candida Casa in Scotland, was one of Columba's teachers. St. Finnian brought back from Italy a wonderful copy of the Gospels (St. Jerome's translation, *it is claimed*) of such innate virtue, in other words of such magical power, that all who swore falsely by it died or went mad within the year. Finnian guarded it carefully, and when Fintan, pupil of St. Comgall of Bangor, asked to have the loan of it, Finnian refused. It was evidently a secret and precious document. Fintan complained to Comgall, who told him he should probably have the MS. he desired. Now it happened that Moville, Finnian's monastery, was plundered by pirates, who took the precious MS. Fintan, praying on the shore, heard the men propose to plunder Comgall's abbey too. Thereupon a storm arose; it is not directly stated that it was owing to Comgall, but it looks as though it were implied, and if so it imputes to the Christian Saint a Druidic power over the elements. The storm destroyed the ships, drowned the pirates, and left the book on the shore. It was this MS. which Finnian permitted Columba to see; Columba copied it, and wished to keep the copy. Finnian refused; so that it could not have been the unique power of that MS., but the power of the rhythm, and the knowledge contained in it, which he wished to preserve exclusively for his own community. A dispute arose between the saints; Finnian appealed to King Dermit as arbitrator. Dermit decided against Columba, saying: "To every cow its calf, and to every MS. its copy."

Shortly afterwards (in 561) Dermit went to war with Connaught, and was worsted; thereupon he complained that his defeat was due to Columba's prayers against him. Columba was therefore excommunicated, presumably as a suspected practiser of "black magic," for it would be strange if he were cast out of the Church because the Supreme granted his prayers. It is perhaps instructive to note, that apparently the early Church regarded prayers for the defeat of an enemy as an offence requiring that the supplicant should be excluded from the Christian communion.

Columba's sentence, however, was revoked, because Abbot Brendan, whose mystic voyage I hope one day to compare with the voyages of the pre-Christian Irish heroes, had a vision in which he saw Columba with a fire going before him, and an angel on either side. When Brendan proclaimed his vision, Columba was bidden to go forth from Ireland, not excommunicate, but a son of the Church, "to win as many souls to eternal life as he had destroyed men in battle." On this the author of *Peculiarities of Culdeeism* accuses Columba of being a stirrer up of strife and a heretic; but it is not stated that he provoked the war, only that he used his power to gratify a personal animosity. In any case, there was evidently some friction between Columba and his brethren of the Church.

He was now of middle age, and had already founded many monasteries; some accounts say that he founded no less than a hundred. He now set forth with twelve followers and went to Iona. This circle of twelve and their leader was a peculiarity of the Culdees; it was also, as we know, a symbolic grouping in frequent use among the Gnostics, see, for example, the mystic dance and hymn in the *Acts of John*, an additional point of interest when it is remembered that it was John to whom the Culdees of Iona referred the origin of their doctrine. In all the Culdee communities, then, there appears to have been this inner organisation of the twelve and their founder; it was so with the original community of Iona, with the community of Columban in Burgundy, and, I believe, with the community of Ninian at Candida Casa.

Columba and his twelve founded the monastery in Iona,

A.D. 562; and there Columba died on the 9th of June, 597, in the seventy-seventh year of his age.

We now pass to the contemplation of the traditional Columba; to the legends of him which permeate the mental atmosphere of his adopted home, to the innumerable touches that seem to set the long dead Culdee before us, "in his habit as he lived." The Abbot's cell at Iona faced the rising sun, and in that cell, where he was reputed to be visited and instructed by mighty Presences, Columba studied and prayed. He slept on the bare ground, a stone for his pillow; his food was of the scantiest, nevertheless he was ever, as we have said before, "comely in dress, florid and cheerful like one who lived in a nice and delicate manner."

Very charming is the picture drawn of his relations with his followers; he "greeted all, hoping to help them," he was gentle to children, and to his monks, "easy of access, affable, humble, willing to do humble duties," no stickler for his personal consideration and consequence. Great, learned, a ruler and organiser both by right of birth and right of inward power, he would yet do simple tasks among his monks.

There are, of course, many legends of his psychic powers and celestial visions. It was reported that when he prayed a light shone round him; several instances are recorded of the brilliancy of his aura having been observed, especially when he was celebrating the Holy Feast of the Eucharist. "Even in sleep," it is said, "his mind, all awake, continued its prayers" —an interesting statement to theosophists who are prepared to accept the truth of the activity of the real man during the sleep of the body; interesting also, perhaps, to those who take an interest in the comparatively recent experiments in "suggestion" in sleep, especially those of moral suggestions addressed to young children with a view of eradicating faults shown in waking consciousness.

Colomba had also the gift of prescience, and he seems to have been clairvoyant at all times, a fact which surely indicates that he was a trained psychic with full command of his subtle senses. He spoke frequently of the visible presence of angels, to whom he referred as his "fellow servants"; nay! he seems to

have had authority over certain orders of these visitants, for he is said to have issued a command to an angelic being to succour a distant brother who was falling from a height. His order being obeyed, the saint, reassured as to the monk's safety, remarked: "Very admirable . . . is the quickness of the angelical motion." It seems by this speech that Columba was not only aware of other states of matter than physical, but of other than physical laws which governed them.

On one occasion the great Abbot secluded himself for three days, during which time the Holy Ghost descended upon him; two beams of great brightness shone from his cell, and he was heard to sing "sweet and ineffable verses"; also "many secrets that were hidden from men since the beginning of the world were manifested to him." Virgnous, one of his monks, perceiving the splendour issuing from the cell of the saint, cast down his eyes that he might not pry into mysteries and behold a glory for which he was unfit. Thereat Columba, calling to him affectionately and addressing him as "little child,"* commended his conduct, for otherwise he would have lost his sight, unable to support the force flowing from the cell of the illuminated one. Virgnous was bound to secrecy as to what he had beheld so long as Columba remained in the body.

On another occasion Brochanus, one of the brethren, was forbidden on a certain night to approach the cell of Columba, who was apparently aware that he was about to receive an illumination, or a visit from some divine Presence. Brochanus disobeyed, but as he approached the cell he was unable to endure the light that shone from it, and therefore fled. Columba sent for him the next day; he told him his action had been perceived, and he had been saved from death.† Columba prophesied that in Ireland Brochanus should incur shame for evil life. This shame, said the Abbot, should endure, but he, for love of his disciple, had obtained grace from the Lord that Brochanus

* The technical use of the phrase must be remembered; signifying an "initiate," or one who desired to be "new born" and as a "little child." Compare with these stories of Columba the extracts from the *Acts of John* in *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*.

† Apparently it is implied that had not the celestial power been mercifully moderated, the death of the body of Brochanus would have ensued. Compare this also with the *Acts of John*.

should do bitter penance in this life, and thus not be pursued in the distant future by the evil result of his disobedience and dishonourable behaviour. And all this, says the chronicler, befell even as the saint had foretold.

Columba was apparently very gentle to his followers, though the element of needful sternness was not lacking in him. His beloved disciple was Diarmitius; but indeed Columba seems to have been mostly Columcille (the Dove of the Church) rather than Crimtham (the Wolf) in his dealings with all men. His last words to his monks were: "Have peace and true charity among yourselves. The Lord, the Comforter of the good, will be your Keeper; and I, abiding with Him, will pray for you, that He may provide for you all good things, both temporal and eternal."

Columba is said to have disliked women, but he permitted nuns to dwell on the island, and is reported to have greatly loved St. Bride, whom he is said to have educated, though how this could be if Bride was a contemporary of St. Patrick's I do not see. Columba is represented by Herbert in the character of a fierce, sour-natured fanatic; but I, for my part, cannot see the saint in this light. Indeed, though he was an ascetic and a celibate, there is a tale in the *Amra* which does not exhibit him as one entirely unconversant with the emotions which sway the bulk of humanity.

In the *Book of Lismore* Columba is represented as offering himself to the "Lord of the Elements" and praying of Him chastity, wisdom, and pilgrimage. Now in Adamnàn's *Vision*, the "Lord of the Elements" is the First Person of the Trinity, God the Father, corresponding to Shiva, the First Person of the Trimûrti, the Patron of Yogins. Hence we find Columba represented as a wonder-worker, as are indeed all the Saints of the Church; he is said to have reconciled a husband and wife by what we should now call "hypnotic suggestion"; he healed diseases, destroyed pain, vanquished magicians by his superior power, and raised the dead. Some of the stories touching his clairvoyance sound like actual occurrences rather than monkish legends to enhance the glory of their dead Abbot.

Some of them are half humorous; they are stories of a man to whom the possession of "the sight" was perfectly normal,

and in no way astonishing. One can almost perceive the gleam of humour in the Abbot's eyes as he gravely tells his astonished followers that the man now approaching the monastery will upset the inkhorn, in his zeal to prostrate himself at the feet of the saint; or as he solemnly warns his young novice that he is about to drop a MS. into a pail of water, which the unfortunate novice did ten minutes later in his anxiety to rise quickly to obey an order of the Abbot. But other of the tales of his clairvoyance show his charity, consideration, mercy and patience.

Joscelinus tells how on a certain occasion Columba was seen to weep; when his monks asked for an explanation of his grief, he said: "I weep seeing how Lanfranus toyleth my monks, already weary in the building of a great house, which disgusteth me much." Lanfranus was at the Oaken Field in Ireland, but as Columba spoke thus in Iona, he felt mentally urged to give the monks food and rest while the cold weather lasted. Columba, seeing this, ceased to weep and blessed him. On another occasion he warned his monks that "the thief Ertus" was stealing their goods; and his kindliness is shown by his generous and gentle dealing with another marauder who stole from the monastery under pressure of want. He was once warned in a vision of the approaching death of an old Pict, who had "lived well according to the light of nature" (*i.e.*, was not a Christian); Columba hastened to him, and told his monks that he perceived angels round the death-bed of the old man. This tale does more than illustrate Columba's clairvoyance, it shows that he did not think orthodox belief necessary to salvation.

His tenderness to animals is illustrated by two charming legends, one of which also shows his powers of pre-vision. He one day bade certain of his monks go shorewards and wait till they saw the arrival of a crane, distressed by the gales and driven from Ireland towards Iona; they were to succour the bird and care for it till it was strong again; and "do this," said he, "out of love and courtesy, because it cometh from our fatherland." There is a very human ring about this story of the great Churchman, his thoughts clinging still lovingly about the country of his birth; it strikes the note, too, of that true catholicity of sentiment, that clear-eyed and most loving wisdom which

sees the same life in all beings, is not blind to the pains and needs of the humblest form in which that life is hidden. Indeed, the great Culdee seems to have clearly seen that which has been voiced by one of the most "modern" of our latter-day poets:

> It is enough that by Thy grace
> I saw naught common on Thy earth.

But I, for my part, think Columba saw wider vistas than can be glimpsed on earth alone, and this makes his care and pitifulness in the little things, the "common things," the better worth noting.

The second tale is the story of an old white pony, and links the great saint and mystic to all gentle-hearted lovers of our younger brethren. When Columba was aged and the time of his death drew near, he sat without the monastery which he had founded and sustained by the power of his life. There came to him the old white pony that carried grain from the mill; it put its nose into the Abbot's lap, lamenting because he was so soon to depart. Those who stood by would have driven the beast away, but Columba rebuked them, saying: "Let him alone! As he loves me so, let him alone; that into this my bosom he may pour out the tears of his most bitter lamentation. Behold, thou, a man that hast a soul, yet in no way hast thou knowledge of my end save what I have myself shown thee—but to this brute animal the Master Himself hath revealed that his master is about to go away from him." And so saying, he blessed his sorrowing servant the horse.

There are numberless stories of his powers of clear-seeing; they differ by innumerable small touches from the usual pious legends of the "supernormal" gifts of saints. "What the saint could not see with his corporeal eye," says Joscelinus, "he saw with his interior and mental eyes." After one of his more important visions one of his monks entreated him to explain the means whereby he saw; the reply of the saint is of great import and interest to students of Theosophy. After causing the monk to swear "never to speak of this obscure sacrament all the dayes of my life," Columba told him: "There are some, albeit they are few in number, that by God's special grace clearly contemplate with one single aspect and in one moment the compass of the

whole world, the heavens, the sea and land, by reason of the marvellous dilation of their mind."

It seems to me that we have here an indication of something far beyond ordinary untrained clairvoyance; compare, for instance, much of the instruction of Lîlâ by the Goddess Sarasvatî* with the statements concerning consciousness made by Columba to his monk.

It is said that Columba foretold the day of his death, and when the hour of midnight drew nigh upon that day he rose and went to the chapel. A monk who followed him saw that the place was filled with light, but as he entered the light faded, and he beheld the Abbot lying before the altar alone. There his mourning disciples surrounded him; one of their number, some say the beloved Diarmitius, supported the dying saint, who raised his hand, and, blessing them, departed. There is a further legend, however, to the effect that in response to the needs of the monks and their prayers, the physical body of Columba was preserved for his use three years longer than the hour at which it would naturally have failed him.

Many were the signs and wonders which marked the death hour of Columba of Iona. The denizens of other planes of being gathered to the spot where the great soul of Columba was drawing itself free from the prison house of the physical body; his "fellow servants" came to minister to him, as did the "blessed Shee" to the hero Cuchulain. A monk in Ireland heard voices chanting in the air, and "saw in the spirit the whole of the Iona island, to which I have never come in the body, irradiated by the brightness of angels." Other brethren in Ireland, that land of the invisible, the home of the hosts of faery, were fishing by night, and saw a pillar of fire rise from the water on the night of Columba's death. The name of this "Dove of the Church" is honoured still in the sacred isles of the north; his protection upon man and beast is invoked in the Uist Herding Chant:

"The protection of God and Columba encompass your going and coming; and about you be the milkmaid of the smooth white palms, Bridget of the clustering hair, golden brown."

I. HOOPER.

* "The Story of Lîlâ," THEOSOPHICAL REVIEW, May, June, July, 1900.

SOME EXPERIENCES OF A SOUL

A WOMAN knelt by her bedside, not praying, though in the attitude of prayer, but struggling with despair. Her face was pale and drawn and stained with tears, her shoulders occasionally shook with a subdued sob, carefully restrained lest any should hear. It was a hot summer night in London, the jingle of passing hansoms, the noise of rushing trains, were very audible in the dark room, but she took no heed of noise or time. Hour after hour slipped away, and she knelt, her head pillowed on her arms, agonised, communing with herself, looking back on her past life, forecasting with shrinking the future, conscious of no help or guidance, not seeking, not expecting help, human or divine.

Discontented with herself, and with the circumstances surrounding her, conscious always of a secret rebellion at bearing the burden of existence at all, yet devout by temperament, she had sought in religion an anodyne for her discontent, and had flung herself with fervour into all the observances and exercises her Church laid stress upon as affording help and nourishment for the soul. Seeking instinctively to crush out thought, to give herself no time for reflection on the problems which life on every side afforded her, she steeped herself in Church services, took part in practical good works for others, and for a time succeeded partially in lulling her discontent, in suppressing her natural tendency to inquire into the "why" of things, physical and spiritual alike. After a time, however, the anodyne lost its effect; difficulties in the matter of faith, doubts, questions, presented themselves, at first occasionally and then persistently, to her mind. From these she had at first turned with horror, regarding them as direct promptings of Evil, and endeavouring to crush them by the sledge hammer of the "divine authority" of her Church. She recalled the many learned, devout and faithful men who through the ages had believed implicitly in the creeds and dogmas she was now conscious of doubting, and asked

what she was doing in disbelieving where they believed; she shuddered to think she was even guilty of questioning the existence of a God of love and justice. She did not deny the existence of some Being who originated the system under which she lived, nor His power, but those attributes commonly assigned to Him she could not but doubt. For months she had been growing more and more uneasy, more dissatisfied; she had been compelled to abandon many of her religious observances, feeling them a mockery in her present state of mind, and those services she still attended had lost all soothing power; in fact, they were special opportunities, it appeared to her, for the spirit of unrest and criticism which possessed her to cause increased mental torture.

It was significant, however, of her state of mind that she made no effort to obtain counsel and comfort of anyone in authority in her Church. Once she had wondered if she should find help in the Sacrament of Confession; a friend to whom she had mentioned some of her difficulties having strongly recommended that course, speaking much of the comfort she had herself obtained from that source. She had even borrowed a manual from her and studied it carefully with a view to preparing herself for the ordeal. The book, however, revolted her naturally strong sense of reserve; she felt she could never feel her soul completely her own again if she unveiled it as thoroughly to another as she was directed to do, and she doubted the efficiency of the practices suggested in it to bring about the desired results of renewed faith and of increased love of God. Some of these practices she had followed in her private devotions, but had now abandoned as useless for her, striking her as insufficient, as paltry and petty. "It is cowardly to seek comfort by throwing the responsibility of your soul on another," she reflected. "After all I had better fight out the matter for myself." The book, however, brought strongly to her mind the fact that for all practical purposes she had lost all faith in her religion, and she felt lonely, desolate, conscious of a void in life.

Her health, too, never strong, suffered under the strain; life in itself had no attractions for her, nothing to offer. Dark suggestions of suicide began to haunt her; at first turned from in

horror, then dwelt upon and welcomed as a possible refuge from suffering. This night the crisis had come and she realised it, knew that she must face the demons she herself had raised, that she was in their grip. She wished, too, to come to some decision for the future, to see clearly her position—what, if anything, she retained, what she had lost; but on attempting it she had been seized with such an excess of despair, wrapped round in such a feeling of desolation, of dark loneliness, that intellectual thought of any kind was an impossibility. She abandoned herself to the forces rioting within her, giving herself up to despair, to defiance, to planning the means for suicide, welcoming any escape from life and suffering. The life that lay ahead of her looked hideous in its loneliness. Faith in man had long ago, in childhood even, deserted her; marriage and motherhood, seen in the light of that distrust, were impossibilities. Faith in God, too, had vanished. Why live on, cumbering the ground? Rebellion at the terrible sufferings endured by man and animal alike possessed her; her imagination was haunted by the horrors she knew existed all round her; these, too, helped to drive her on towards self-destruction. Death in itself she could never remember fearing; it held no terrors for her, and the idea of herself lying stiff and cold, free at last from the burden of the flesh, allured her imagination.

For her soul, if she had one, she scarcely in this moment of upheaval thought herself responsible. If there should be a God who required an account of her acts, she had not asked for life at His hands; it had been thrust unasked upon her, and she would throw the detested gift back to Him, holding Him as Creator responsible for her misery. She reasoned out the method of her contemplated suicide, aware she could not carry it out that night, as the necessary means were wanting; planning how it might appear accidental, as she could easily manage, so as to avoid any scandal and as much unpleasantness as possible for her family. Even in this extremity her pride, which was intense, rose in revolt from an act which was in itself a confession of failure, of cowardice; she hated to confess even to herself, if no one else knew, that she was a failure. Feeling rather soothed at the prospect of escape, she lay still and thought of her life in the world she was contemplating leaving, of her childhood as a plain, reserved, shy girl,

remarkably unattractive, a fact of which she was early aware and bitterly grieved over. She thought of the tortures of fear she endured at night in those early days, fear of unseen presences, unseen but heard, she fancied, softly sweeping about her room; of her terror that she should awake suddenly, and see some ghastly face grinning at her over the rail of her bed, or worse still, squatting beside her,—terrors only alleviated by frenzied repeatings of prayers and hymns until, exhausted, she fell asleep. Then, when her education began—though the nightly terrors haunted her till she was nearly grown up—tears and pains over her lessons, gusts of passion sweeping over her and round her. Then, later, came memories of happier school-days. Under wiser management she developed into a thoughtful, intellectual girl, distinguishing herself among her companions, though never popular on account of her reserve and stillness. But, unhappily, the knowledge of the hidden side of life—hidden at least from most young girls of her class—was, by force of circumstances, early pressed upon her, and weighed heavily upon her, perverting and twisting her views of human life, filling her with distrust of her fellow-men, making her turn in horror from all men as men. So by reason of her surroundings and circumstances, so far as she could see, she grew up reserved, pessimistic, and above all, distrustful. Reading was one of her chief pleasures, lifting her out of herself and from the fret of daily life, uncongenial as she found it. Her imagination, too, which was vivid, now served her well. Sometimes she would dwell for weeks in an ideal land of her own construction, looking forward to bed-time, when she could revel undisturbed in her fairy realm, knowing that there alone rest and peace and joy awaited her.

Over all these things she thought this night; scenes, speeches, facts of the past coming vividly before her, until she was utterly exhausted, and creeping into bed fell into a deep dreamless slumber. Her last conscious thoughts were of thankfulness that one way of escape was open to her, one weapon lay ready to her hand, God Himself not having been so cruel as to make man immortal, on this earth at least; and in the craving for rest she fell asleep, wrapped in that temporary oblivion from all care, which is the greatest boon God has given His world.

Next morning she felt very weary, shattered by the storm of emotion she had passed through on the previous night; the reaction had set in and she felt inert, indifferent to all, nothing seemed to matter much, to be of any consequence. She dragged herself wearily through the routine of the day, until in a paper she accidently happened to pick up and glance at, she noticed an announcement that a celebrated speaker and lecturer, of whose eloquence she had often heard, while her views were much condemned, was to speak that Sunday evening at a hall easily accessible to her. The advertisement stirred the first spark of interest in anything she had felt that day, for she had long wished to hear this particular speaker, attracted by an article she had once read about her, and by what she had heard of her courage in asserting her own freedom of belief and in defying public opinion fearlessly when she thought she had right on her side. The subject she was lecturing on that evening sounded interesting to her—"Esoteric Christianity"—though what it meant exactly, seemed difficult to define. The woman was glad of something to occupy some hours of what appeared to her an endless day, deprived as she was of the services and occupations that had formerly made Sunday the busiest day in the week to her. So, with a decided feeling of expectancy, shortly before seven o'clock she found herself in a well-known hall, somewhat revelling, too, in a sense of defiance as she reflected how shocked many of her former friends and co-workers would have felt to see her there, waiting to hear this particular speaker. The hall was exceedingly full, and she looked about her with some interest, noticing that many of the people round her were exchanging greetings and evidently knew each other well, and she wondered if they were friends and followers of the lecturer.

Punctually as the clock struck seven from a neighbouring steeple, a door opened at the back of the platform and a tall figure dressed in white, hanging in classic folds, walked swiftly forward, and facing her audience began at once to speak. She gazed at her intently, surprised at her appearance, which was a vivid contrast to the rather unkempt new woman style she had vaguely expected to see. This woman—with her gray hair springing crisply from her brow, her face marked by deep lines

telling of thought and suffering, eyes that gazed straight at her audience, and yet looked as if they saw beyond, eyes that held unknown depths in them—astonished, fascinated, finally charmed her. This white-clad figure appealed vividly to her imagination, reminding her of classic priestesses of old, performing weird acts of worship to the half-forgotten gods of the ancient religions. Soon, too, she became aware of a wonderful atmosphere of peace, calm and strength that pervaded the speaker, and spread from her to her hearers, who speedily, she noticed, felt the spell of her presence, settling down into concentrated attention as the orator began to explain the object of her lectures and the title she had given them, and soon hanging openly on her words, moved as she chose to move them. One member of her audience felt attracted and fascinated to a degree that surprised herself; soon, however, she forgot herself in her interest in the ideas put before her. The lecturer spoke in a rather deep, musical voice, her words flowing forth with no pauses or hesitations into well-arranged sentences, beautifully expressed in well-chosen English, setting forth deep spiritual truths. She put her arguments tersely and forcibly, substantiating her statements with a wealth of quotations. "No wonder," thought her fascinated hearer, "she is famous, world wide, for her eloquence." As the orator proceeded with her arguments the listener began to feel bewildered by a curious sense of familiarity, as if she were picking up an old thread, as if she had found something she had been vainly looking for all her life, and that this something lacking had been largely the cause of her morbid discontent, of her wild unhappiness. She felt as if something heavy and oppressive were lifted straight off her and replaced by a feeling of peace and security. The ideas the lecturer was engaged in putting forward were perfectly strange to her—such a wide view of religion and of life, embracing all faiths in its catholicity, she had never encountered before, and the religious element so strong in her answered at once to this wider view and was strongly attracted. She felt bewildered to account for both the unfamiliarity and the familiarity of the arguments; at least, she felt so afterwards, when she was trying to sort into coherence the impressions received on that memorable evening, an evening she never forgot,

for it marked a new era in her life, introducing her to an entirely new mental attitude, which completely changed all her views of herself, the life that encompassed her, and the life that lay ahead of her. At the time she sat transfixed, entranced, with her eyes fixed on the speaker, fearing to lose a word. The breadth with which the subject was treated struck her more and more, all details of dogmas and creed being disregarded as unessential, all religions being looked upon as coming from one source with the common object of aiding the spiritual life of humanity, of hastening the evolution of man into the Divine, the Ideal Man. The lecturer explained that, speaking to an audience in a Christian country, she clothed the truths she taught in the form most familiar to her hearers; so she took one doctrine after another of Christianity, explaining the mystical and spiritual truths enshrouded by these doctrines, truths too often forgotten by their present teachers, but truths definitely taught by the Christ Himself, the same truths couched in different forms and symbols being the fundamental background of all religions. The lecturer finished by asserting that the inner teaching, which she had shown existed at one time in the Church, by many quotations from the Scriptures and the early Christian Fathers, had vanished, and that only by regaining it would Christianity regain its former strength. Again and again, she pointed out, through the ages had attempts been made to reassert the ancient teaching, attempts frustrated by a Church wedded to forms and dogmas, martyring all mystics and teachers who attempted to pour fresh life into their doctrines; but now another attempt for the same purpose and from the same source was being made—whether successful or not only time would show.

Her listener's very soul leapt forward in recognition of the truth of her arguments, instantly aware that this view of religion would do away with many of her difficulties, freeing the Divinity from the injustice and partiality ascribed to Him in the books generally looked upon as inspired, a partiality and injustice seen to be the reflection of man himself and of his own limitations, materialising and misunderstanding the original teachings of the Great Founders of religions. She left the hall excited, fascinated, her intellect stimulated, but most stirred by the

intense feeling of attraction with which the lecturer had inspired her. That night no thought of misery and despair haunted her, but phrases heard an hour or two previously rang through her brain, and an intense desire to know more of these welcome ideas took possession of her. She felt comforted by the very presence in the same world of such an extraordinary, stimulating, fascinating personality. "How strange life is," she pondered. "A woman I have never seen before, whom certainly I did not expect to help me in the least, whom I went to hear and see as I might go to the theatre to see a well-known actress; yet she has helped, comforted, stimulated me more than anyone I have ever met. It makes me think of the old stories of conversion, of awakening; it must be on the same lines, only she appealed more to the reason than to the emotions. Anyway I am grateful to the Fate or the Chance that took me to hear her to-night." After her excitement had calmed down she slept peacefully, for her the burden of life had that night been lifted, and in the dark vistas of the life seen before her the light of a dimly-seen hope had appeared.

* * * * *

Next Sunday she again occupied a seat in the hall to hear again the woman who had so impressed her. She had been much happier during the past week, more peaceful and contented; the wild revolt at Fate had ceased temporarily, at least, and she had put on one side all present thought of suicide, though still feeling the consolation of having a means of escape in her power. The horrors that usually haunted her, the vivid impression of the ceaseless pain that possesses all mankind and even includes the harmless lower creatures, had vanished; other impressions had filled her mind. The wide strange view of religion and of life, with the spiritual heights to which man may attain, had appealed so strongly to her naturally religious temperament, that it had completely engrossed her to the exclusion of all other thought. During the week she had spoken occasionally of the impression the lecturer's eloquence and views had made on her; but meeting with but scant sympathy had let the subject drop, rather relieved at keeping her cherished ideal to herself. She had long ago learnt and accepted the lesson of the loneliness of the human soul, of the utter isolation in which each mortal lives, those nearest and

dearest to him perhaps incapable of sympathising or entering into the difficulties and struggles which are to him so real, until each in self-defence learns to live two lives, one the outer, which he tries to conform more or less successfully to the mode of life in which his circumstances place him; and the real, the inner, which for weal or woe he hugs jealously to himself, sometimes living joyously in a world of his own imagining, welcoming solitude for the treasures the hours bring him, and at other times descending into the valley of the shadow of death for the soul, hardly able to endure himself—both states of mind utterly unknown and unsuspected by those about him.

Now she was waiting, feeling happily expectant, longing to see again that strong serene face, to be enveloped in an atmosphere of peace and truth, to hear again the beautiful voice which appealed to and affected the best, the highest within her. She quaked slightly as she sat, fearing lest during the week her imagination had played her false, embellishing, building up an impossible ideal instead of presenting her with an accurate portrait. She strained her eyes to see the door opening to admit the white figure, and her heart bounded within her with a throb of pleasure so intense as to melt into pain as again she watched her advance; and then, surrendering her misgivings, pushing them for ever from her, she gave herself up to eager attention, to fascinated study.

The lecture proceeded on the same lines as on the Sunday before, different Christian doctrines being taken, the universal and occult truths concealed by them being disinterred, and the resemblance between them and other religions being emphasised. The sense of familiarity increased, the fascination of the woman addressing the audience again worked its former spell, and she went away conscious anew of invigoration, of stimulated mental power, grateful tenfold to the one who united a sensible, practical view of the value of all religions as revealing some aspect of the Divine, with a mysticism of the widest range, covering man's entire spiritual life from the ages that lay behind to the ages to come.

Week after week she attended these lectures, until they were finished and she was left, wondering what to do next. Too shy

and reserved to attempt to make the personal acquaintance of the woman who had so attracted her, she resolved to make a careful study of the philosophy she taught. For that purpose she procured the books the lecturer had written, understanding that in what she had heard of the views, it had been carefully stated they were adapted to the Christian form. Now she resolved to study them at first hand; she found the books difficult and puzzling, but the pursuit attracted her, and she persevered with it. It was the first time she had encountered the study of re-incarnation—a corner-stone, she found, of the philosophy—seriously considered as a factor in human life; and the reasonableness of the idea, and the explanation it afforded of the many injustices and inequalities of man's fate, appealed strongly to her love of justice and fair-play, though at first filling her with rebellion at the notion of repeated numerous physical lives when she had found one too much and too long for her. However, realising that if it were the plan on which human evolution was carried out, her liking or disliking the arrangement would not alter it, and that at any rate the physical brain and body she lived in at present would never reincarnate, but that her thoughts and desires would build themselves bodies suitable to work through and express themselves in for the future, she resolved to give up fighting the inevitable. She gathered, too, from her reading, that in all probability, her former mad discontent and rebellion against her lot, nearly driving her to despair and suicide, as she was certain it would have if this new philosophy had not come her way, was the result of ill-spent former existences. She left off blaming God for her existence, for her sorrows and limitations, realising she had made them for herself; she became much more contented, seeing that justice and law did, spite of all appearances to the contrary, govern the world, and would in time bring order from disorder, love and unity from hatred and competition, long though the process may be. She saw dimly the happiness that is found in living the spiritual life, and in throwing aside as indifferent all that is against the Divine Will guiding the world towards the Life that is Divine, with the hope of becoming one day united to that Life. The creeds and dogmas of all religions, of all Churches, lost all significance for her. She saw them as

trivialities, separating men from one another, obscuring the noble figures of their Founders, obstructing and darkening the teachings they came to deliver to humanity. She left behind, escaped from, with a joyous feeling of freedom, the forms of one religion to hold fast the Spirit that giveth Life to all religions.

She had found the Path, "sharp as a razor's edge," after looking for it unconsciously for years; now what remained, the task that lies before all mankind, was to fit herself to walk in it. She knew the qualities she had to possess before she could make any progress on that Path, what she had to free herself from, what she had painfully and with many falls by the way to gain, qualities valuable in the everyday life of the world, making for the happiness of others as well as for her own progress in the spiritual life. Though her heart often sank within her at the magnitude of the task, she was yet resolved to attempt it, was fixed in her determination to put it before her as her object in life, to let nothing interfere between herself and this quest. She would not now feel lonely and deserted; others, she by this time knew personally, had the same experiences as herself, were attempting to reach the goal in the same way. Many others, too, in every country, in every religion, nay men outside all religions who yet devoted themselves to following the highest they saw, were consciously or unconsciously doing the same. What she longed to do, however, was to join a select band of men and women who devote themselves body and soul to this one object, to treading the Path for the advancement not merely of themselves but for the lifting of all humanity with them; who conquer their lower nature, and develope the higher with all its wonderful possibilities for the sake of service to all. They live, these men and women, in the world, working for the world, not recognised by it as its future saviours and present helpers, but scoffed at often and mocked as fanatics, self-deluded impostors, as is indeed the case with all would-be saviours; but calm and unruffled they pursue with untiring feet their self-appointed road. She had found the knowledge of the Path, fortunate woman that she was and that she felt herself to be! She looked back at her previous discontent and wild rebellion now with gratitude for what it had

brought her, conscious that only through the pain then endured, had she reached the point at which she now stood, and that by no other road could the goal have been found. She had found herself; she had found helpers, sympathisers, teachers; she had found the entrance to the Path; some day in this life or another she would tread that Path herself. To that end would she devote herself, all her energies, all her aspirations, to reaching the Goal where Life, Love and Light, supreme beyond our present powers of comprehension, await us; with which Life one day far off in the distant ages she would be one, as in truth some day all mankind shall be one.

S. E. J.

AFTER-DEATH STATES IN DANTE'S "DIVINE COMEDY"

ONE of the first subjects that awaken interest in those attracted by theosophical ideas, is the instruction given on after-death states. As this question does not only affect leisured and cultured people, but concerns the whole of humanity, it is natural that interest in it should be widely felt. It is a well-known fact that information about death and what comes afterwards is grasped with avidity by enquirers.

In the Middle Ages little doubt was felt as to the condition of souls after death, and their fate was pretty clearly marked out by the current beliefs of the time. This certainty was somewhat lessened by the great changes in life and thought produced by the Renaissance, and still more affected by the Reformation, which shook the religious belief of Europe to its foundations, casting doubt on much that had till then been accepted as a matter of course, and in some cases destroying all faith of any sort. The weaker order of minds can seldom bear any upset in their accredited creeds, and if one point goes, all will go too. Browning's Bishop Blougram points out how hard it is to stop

half way. Defending certain Romish doctrines especially inexplicable to the Protestant mind, he cites the famous miracle at Naples, when the blood of St. Januarius liquefies on the feast-day of the saint, and emphasises the danger of the slightest doubt, in these words:

> First cut the Liquefaction, what comes last
> But Fichte's clever cut at God himself?

In the general *bouleversement* of thought and faith at the end of the fifteenth century, it would seem that one thing only remained an undoubted fact, namely, that all must die. Death at all events could not be explained away by the new learning or the new doctrines. In Germany, where the influence of the Reformation was most directly felt, a morbid interest in death in all its phases pervades the art of such men as Dürer, Burckmair, and Holbein. Death is here indeed the King of Terrors. He is pictured as a wild man of fearful aspect, a ghastly corpse in a shroud carrying off a beautiful young girl, or in the more orthodox guise of a skeleton who lies in wait for every rank and age. Holbein's famous "Dance of Death," for instance, shows vivid contrasts: the little child torn from its mother, the hardy soldier, or the luxurious queen, all alike seized by Death's ruthless grasp. The paraphernalia of the grave was constantly dwelt upon, and skeletons, tombs and corruption seem to have been favourite subjects for contemplation. This consideration of death from the purely physical point of view may be accounted for by the great prominence given to physical life in its various forms in those days, probably owing to the revival of classical views. Mediæval art, on the other hand, had chiefly depicted the condition of the soul *after* death, little interest being taken in the life that soul had left behind it.

Something analogous to this change of attitude may be noticed in the works of the deepest thinkers of the subsequent age. Shakespeare speaks of death as "the undiscovered country," or in such words as "to die, to sleep—no more; perchance to dream." All is vague and uncertain, and no definite information about a future state, or even whether there is one at all, can possibly be gathered from these lines. In Spenser's *Faerie Queene* death is thus described:

Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas,
Ease after warre, death after life doth greatly please.

No reference is made here to anything after death, nor to any other emotion but the relief of escaping from the sorrows of life.

This vagueness of thought has since increased rather than lessened, and the mental condition of many in these days might well be expressed in the desperate uncertainty of such words as Omar Khayyam's:

I sent my Soul through the Invisible,
Some letter of that After-life to spell,
And by and by my Soul return'd to me,
And answer'd, "I myself am Heaven and Hell"—

though they were written at a remote period, on another continent, and by one holding an alien creed. The increased respect paid to physical science in modern Europe has produced a decided reserve in making statements that cannot be demonstrated by the five senses, and one of the chief apostles of science, Huxley, stated that in his opinion the most sacred act of a man's life is to say and feel "I believe such and such to be true." He held that the universe was one and the same throughout, and if the condition of success in unravelling some little difficulty of anatomy or physiology is rigorously to refuse to put faith in that which does not rest on sufficient evidence, he could not believe that the great mysteries of existence could be laid open on other terms. Measured by such a standard as his conviction concerning the law of the inverse square, anything less conclusive than which he found himself unable to accept, what becomes of the doctrine of immortality? Can any equally satisfying evidence be found for that and similar theses?

In sharp contrast to this phase of thought is a considerable amount of teaching chiefly emanating from Eastern sources, recently given to the world respecting after-death states. The information received under these new auspices is expressed in quite as authoritative a manner as religious statements on the same subject. It is also very circumstantial, and contains a surprisingly complete account of the condition of the man whose body has been taken from him by death. We learn that his real existence is quite independent of his body and that when he leaves it he will

be drawn to the condition most appropriate to him; for the character and spiritual condition which are the result of the man's past life or lives must find the necessary environment that they need. Each one makes his own fate and all receive exactly what they have worked for, though they may not always realise that this is the case. No one can escape the results of the causes they have set in motion, and they find themselves obliged to work them out to the very end and to pay every debt they have incurred, whether the process be a pleasant one or the reverse. The very different conditions of the inhabitants of the various planes of being are the result of this universal law; for there are a great many states and places in the unseen worlds, some of which at least must be experienced by the pilgrim who is fulfilling his appointed destiny. The denser and less agreeable planes or states are naturally the abode of those whose gross and material lives have made them unfit for any other habitation; while the lighter and happier regions receive those who are in harmony with them. Another great law appears in this teaching —that of progressive evolution. All travel on their long journey and are to rise to higher states as they become fit for them. There is no standing still; each must be continually moving on and adapting himself to new surroundings.

Now it is very remarkable that the conceptions of after-death states in Dante's great masterpiece resemble this teaching in many particulars, and one is led to think that Dante had some definite information on these subjects. If this knowledge has always been possessed by an inner circle of humanity, and has filtered thence into the religions of the world in more or less correct forms, there may be nothing so very special about his knowledge. Still it is curious how much he seems to know and how his genius has fixed the traditional representation of these after-death states for hundreds of years after his own time.

Information, though probably of an unreliable character, might also have been obtained by him from those possessing untrained psychic powers; and persons who had seen and remembered something of the other worlds would be more likely to bring back a correct account, if the received belief of the day corresponded to a certain extent with the real facts of the case.

The believing attitude of mind that facilitates the transmission of such memories would naturally not be uncommon at a time when the sea of faith was at its full, and had not withdrawn from the dreary shingles of the world.

There were records in Dante's time of many who had such powers, and who claimed to have brought back some memory of what they had seen in vision. Frate Alberico of Monte Cassino, St. Brandan, the Monk of Evesham and others had told the tales of their experiences in the unseen; and Dante must have been familiar with some at least of these stories, as well as with the classical accounts of the descent to the lower world in the *Æneid*, even if he had not the opportunity of reading the *Odyssey*.

The Divine Comedy is not merely an account of the state of the dead, seen in vision, like the contemporary chronicles. In these we find simply a series of terrible or delightful events related without any apparent sequence or meaning, if the obvious advisability of living such a life in this world as may ensure a happy hereafter is excepted. They appear very childish to modern readers and often take the most grossly material forms. Though Dante's imagery may also appear somewhat material at first sight, a closer examination will show that this materiality is deliberately put into the poem for special purposes. For instance, the *Inferno* is characterised by a great density, which typifies the moral condition of its inhabitants. This diminishes as higher states are attained in the *Purgatorio*, and eventually the intensely light and bright realm of the *Paradiso* well expresses the life of the Blessed. The localities seem to reflect the nature of the actors in this great drama.

A clue to the philosophy of *The Divine Comedy* is found in Dante's letter of explanation to his friend and patron, Can Grande della Scala. Here he says that though "the subject of the whole work, taken *literally*, is the fate of souls after death, regarded as a matter of fact, for the action of the whole work deals with this and is about this," yet taken *allegorically*, it represents "man in so far as, by merit or demerit in the exercise of free-will, he is exposed to the rewards or punishments of justice." This is the interpretation of the book, given by the

author himself. There is the outer or exoteric description of the after-death states, in which Hell, Purgatory and Heaven are described, united with the inner or esoteric delineation of the action of justice on the soul of man.

This complicated purpose is seen through the wonderful symbols in which the life out of the body is described. Here we see vice in its true horror, as it would always look had we eyes to see; for sin and its necessary results have taken visible form. In fact, Dante's hell shows people as they really are, and with the states they have made for themselves. Every possible illustration of this terrible working out of fate is put in the concrete form that best appeals to the imagination.

In his description of what follows after death, Dante's penetrative genius realises and shows forth the great truth, that as a man sows so must he reap. Corresponding effects must follow whatever causes have been started in the past, and retribution cannot be avoided. The details through which the great scheme of Divine Justice is worked out seem at times almost grotesque. Especially is this so in the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*, where the consequences of sin are shown and the penalties often literally follow the nature of the act, such as starvation to the greedy,* or exertion to the lazy.† The whole working out of this great law is placed in visible forms, and an eye of flesh is allowed to get a glimpse of things as they really are, ghastly though the sight may be.

But the poem is not only confined to descriptions of horrors; for as we slowly climb up the Mountain of Purgatory, all that is painful and distressing gradually lessens, and in Browning's words ("Sordello"): it melts

Into a darkness quieted by Hope.

For though the inhabitants of Purgatory must also suffer, they bear their troubles in a spirit of peace and hope.‡ They will not have them diminished or relieved in any way, and the souls who are expiating past sins in the flames of the uppermost round, are careful not to step out of the fire for one moment for fear of lengthening their time of waiting.‖ They know that as soon

* *Purg.*, xxii. 23. † *Purg.*, xviii.
‡ *Inf.*, i. 115. ‖ *Purg.*, xxvi. 15.

as they are fit they must rise to Paradise.* The liberated souls cannot even remain at the top of the mountain, when at last they arrive there; but each must go to its own place† in Heaven, whether higher or lower. For the consequences of virtue work out as surely and as inevitably as those of sin; and the higher the soul rises, the less can chance or accident affect it. Thus explains St. Bernard in the *Paradiso*:‡

> From this realm excluded, chance no entrance here may find
> No more than hunger, thirst or sorrow can.
> A law immutable hath established all,
> Nor is there aught thou seest, that does not fit
> Exactly as the finger to the ring.
> It is not, therefore, without cause that these
> Are different in their shares of excellence.

The universe appears throughout *The Divine Comedy* as a vast machine, where each part finds its own place and its own work,§ death or life as we understand them being apparently quite unimportant. All this complicated machinery is under one unchanging law‖ which exacts the payment of every debt to the full,¶ and which Dante saw as the law of God, visibly expressed in the Catholic Church on earth—** that earth which looked so mean and pitiful to him, when seen from higher spheres.†† It is curious how little difference death makes in Dante's scheme; indeed, it is explained in the *Purgatorio* that all the individualities concerned are completely alive, whether in a fleshly body or not.‡‡ The "Primal Mover" breathes new spirit into the infant, which gathers substance round it as it develops until the day

> When Lachesis hath spun the thread, the soul
> Takes with her both the human and divine,
> Memory, intelligence and will, in act
> Far keener than before; the other powers
> Inactive all and mute. No pause allow'd,
> In wondrous sort self-moving, to one strand
> Of those, where the departed roam, she falls:
> Here learns her destined path.

* *Purg.*, xxi. 72. † *Par.*, iii. 70. ‡ *Par.*, xxxii. 53 (Cary's Translation).
§ *Par.*, iii. 82. ‖ *Inf.*, iii. 4, xix. 119, xxix. 56. ¶ *Purg.* xi. 125, xviii. 15.
** *Purg.*, xx. 97. †† *Par.*, xxii. 134. ‡‡ *Purg.*, xxv. 79.

It is interesting to see from this that the mental faculties become more powerful when delivered from the chains of the body. The soul then draws sufficient materials out of the surrounding atmosphere, which it imprints with its own influence, to obtain a material existence through which it can express itself.

> The obedient shadow fails not to present,
> Whatever varying passion moves within us.

In this manner the inhabitants of Purgatory have distinct, though limited powers, which greatly increase as Paradise is neared. The poet finds himself rising thither through the spheres of air and fire without any apparent difficulty, and his guide to the higher life, Beatrice, discusses these new conditions at some length. She tells him that this is not really more surprising than that a stream should run down hill on earth, as there is nothing now to resist the strong impulse that draws him upwards. He must expect to find many differences, for "Much is allowed us there, that here exceeds our power."* She further elucidates the matter by explaining that all things have order among themselves, and this order is the form that shows that the universe is made in the likeness of God. Those on high are able to see the traces of the Divine pattern,† and how the fate of each one impels him to divers ports in the great sea of being. This is the same force that bears fire upwards to the moon, it is the motive power in the hearts of men and binds the earth together, making it one. It draws those who have intelligence and love to that central heaven, which is for ever at rest. Only vain desires or false pleasures can turn aside this strong impulse, as a hopelessly dense material cannot respond to the form in which it should be shaped. The marvel would, therefore, be if those who are freed from impediment did *not* rise, but remained below, for each is drawn to the Source of all, to whom all, when unhindered, must turn.‡

One special feature in Dante's treatment of the after-death states is his power of discerning inner meanings in popular beliefs and traditions. With this he was able to combine a conception of a universal law, of which the scope extended far

* *Par.*, i. 92, 140. † *Par.*, ii. 130 and vii. 109. ‡ *Purg.*, xviii. 32.

beyond the most exact definitions of modern science, comprehending, as it did, worlds visible and invisible. It must be remembered that our poet had the advantage of looking on the unseen worlds as natural facts, whose existence he never doubted, thereby gaining a strength and power that he could not have possessed if his energies had been exhausted in an endless considering of whether there were any or not. Many old traditions, afterwards forgotten or ignored by the educated, played an important part in the mental equipment of the men of his time, and we find some of these revived in a very remarkable manner in recent Theosophical expositions. It may, therefore, be of service to students to obtain some notions of these mediæval traditions and beliefs, and this can be done very effectively by means of the interpretation given by Dante's genius in his longest and incomparably greatest work, *The Divine Comedy*.

CAROLINE CUST.

BLACK MAGIC IN CEYLON

V.

ONE of the greatest demons is Maha Cola Sauri Yakseya, the demon of diseases. His origin was this. A certain king of Sanka Pala Nuwera made a journey in order to find some *dolladuk** for his queen. On his return he was told that his wife had been unfaithful. He gave orders that she should be put to death. Her body was to be cut in two, the one half to be hung up on a *ukberiya* tree, the other to be thrown to the pariah dogs. In bitter wrath at such indignity, she had fiercely protested her innocence of the charge, and at the last moment of her life had invoked the demons to avenge her, by making wholesale destruction of the city and its unjust king. The executioner's sword did its work. Instantly the two halves of her body rejoined, and a terrifying demon sprang forth from the corpse, first sucking his mother's breast, then her

* *Dolladuk* is the something for which women have a strong desire during certain months of their pregnancy. It usually takes the form of a piece of newly-baked clay to nibble.

blood, then devouring both flesh and bones. After his ghastly meal, the demon withdrew to the *sohona* (graveyard). Shortly after, with a company of *confrères*, he repaired to the city, and the king was forthwith laid low with a fell disease. *Balli* offerings were made, but availed not; the whole city was nigh to be consumed by the pestilence. The gods (*dewo*) Iswarra and Sekkra thereupon came down from Kâma Loca to intervene. Disguised as mendicants, they came and tried to oust the demon, but had to be content with a compromise which granted him *wurran*, that is, permission to inflict disease on mankind, but not of a mortal character, for the sake of the offerings (*dolla*) which could thus be obtained from human beings. So he exists and thrives, Maha Cola Sauri Yakseya, and many an important *rôle* I have witnessed him or his *distria* play at devil-dances. At one I remember him as a satyr mounted on a ferocious lion with eighteen personal attendants.

Another very evil demon is Calu Yakseya. He is said to have been born of the ashes of the burnt corpse of Basma, one of the Asuras, and is represented as black as ebony. Calu Yakseya had lived before, that is, he had had a previous incarnation, but the karma he accumulated was so evil that he had perforce to work it out in another demon-existence.* In the pre-existence he was known as Neela Maha Yodaya, a giant in the bodyguard of King Gaja Bahu. With the king he journeyed into Istree-Pura, a country inhabited by Amazons, all of whom fell in love with him. One and all laid siege and claim to the Calu Yakseya, and amongst them all he was torn to pieces and killed. As a demon he gave himself up to wreaking vengeance on the whole fair sex, and the misery he caused built up for him his awful karma.

Outbreaks of disasters too abominable to relate occurred at intervals in all the villages in that particular *korale*. Women, old and young, the most virtuous, the best beloved, fell victims to his machinations. His influence for evil was insuperable. All the *kattadiyas* (devil priests and charmers) knew the symptoms of his malign influence only too well. Most of them had had a hard fight with him, that fascinating giant-demon,

* In time evil demons will be raised to dewo (lower gods).

gigantic in ill-doing as in stature. I was present at a *doladina* to rid a woman—young, healthy, virtuous up to a certain sudden time—of his obsessing influence. It may be superstition only, but it accords with what is related in the New Testament concerning spiritual possession. Some living creature must always be supplied into which the demon when exorcised can enter; after which sacrifice of the beast or bird, or whatever it may be, is made. "Hypnotism" and "suggestion" enter largely into these rites. The greatest sceptic must at least be impressed by the totally different personalities a simple native woman will manifest on such occasions. Everyone has a dread of becoming the victim of *taincama*, and the demons I have particularised are those specially employed in its practices. No village girl or woman goes about her occupation without an areca-nut cutter in her waistband. Though hidden, it serves as an amulet for demons, and those I have mentioned especially have a strong antipathy to iron. When passing a *sohona* the Sinhalese woman by instinct grasps this tool, for mere propinquity is sufficient in some instances for becoming obsessed. One or other of the demons lurking about may, for his own pleasure and gratification, attach himself to one, who, by natural susceptibility, or it may be predisposition to evil, latent though it be, may prove vulnerable and become his victim, his prey. Women are, in consequence of their greater impressionability, more frequently victims of *taincama;* but I have seen and known men, steady, reliable—for the oriental very exceptionally so—and watched their career, once under *pisaca* possession, undoubted victims of evil "suggestions" under "hypnotic" control, or, in other words, *taincama.*

CAROLINE CORNER-OHLMÜS.

CORRUPTED freemen are the worst of slaves.—DAVID GARRICK, *Prologue to the Gamesters.*

ÂDI-SHEṢHA—THE GREAT SERPENT OF COSMOS

OF all the cosmic pictures presented for contemplation in the Purâṇas, that of Nârâyana sleeping on Sheṣha, the cosmic serpent, in the Kshîrâbdhi, the Ocean of Milk, is the grandest. Many Paurâṇik pictures are seen to be literally true if only a little thought is expended in understanding them; and it is proposed to explain in this article one point of view from which the picture of Sheṣhanârâyana can be seen. To begin with, it must be remembered that Sheṣhanârâyana floating in the Kshîrâbdhi is a complete picture of the Macrocosmos. The Ocean of Milk is the ocean of space, space being conceived as a plenum and not a vacuum. Milk is the favourite oriental symbol of matter in Pralaya, *i.e.*, matter as it exists before manifestation in —before it becomes visible to sense-organs fitted for—any particular plane of perception. In his Bhâshya on *Kshîravaddhi*, "just as milk (transforms itself into curds)" (*Ved. Sûtras* II., i. 24), Shaṅkara explains milk to symbolise "the peculiar constitution of the Causal Substance." As milk contains in itself butter, butter-milk, etc., so the substance that fills our space contains matter that can develop into substances which are capable of affecting our organs of perception and thus becoming *our* matter. The use of milk as a symbol of substance in the earlier stages of its evolution or differentiation towards the matter of our earth, is warranted by the fact that it does look actually milky or curdled. Thus as the photosphere, or luminous envelope of the sun, is of relatively high temperature, its constituent matter must be nearer the primary state than matter on our cold earth; and the photosphere is noted for its "peculiar curdy appearance." Robert Hunt (quoted in *Secret Doctrine*, i. 578), says: "By the elder Herschel, the surface of this photosphere is compared to mother-of-pearl. . . . It re-

sembles the ocean on a tranquil summer day when its surface is slightly crisped by a gentle breeze." In the Milky Way, or Galaxy, still higher temperature conditions and matter still more removed from matter on our earth and nearer the "causal" state, can be observed. It has been recently proved by means of spectroscopical investigations that the milkiness of the Milky Way, "the curdled appearance which is visible in different regions of it," either to the naked eye or in photographs, is actually due to the great predominance in this part of the heavens of planetary and other nebulæ, "which are undoubtedly masses of gas," and of the so-called "bright line stars," which are no stars but "stars involved in nebulæ," or better, nebulæ with "central condensations, not perhaps very far advanced beyond the stage of the planetary nebulæ themselves." The substance of these bodies is but the next remove to the "causal" matter that fills all space, the hypothetical ether of science. Hence this latter substance can best be described as milky in appearance; milkiness also suggests the homogeneity of structure of ether, which has already been arrived at from theoretical considerations, and which is implied in the ordinary description of ether as jelly-like.

Floating in this ocean of space lies the grand Cosmic Serpent. He is the Âdi-Sheṣha as Nârâyana is the Âdi-Puruṣha, and uses him as his Bhoga-Paryaṇka, the bed on which the Lord lies during manifestation, when the Bhokta and Bhogya are differentiated, the Lord himself being the Bhokta (the Experiencer), the subject, and Prakṛiti (which is one with him), appearing as the Bhogya—the object of experience. He is the Âdi-Puruṣha, the Eternal Spirit, invisible if viewed as an object of perception, but visible as Pratyagâtman, the Self that shines in each one of us when he is Âvṛittachakshuḥ, of in-directed vision. Âdi-Sheṣha, literally the Eternal Remainder (from Macrocosmos when the Purusha is deducted from it), is the whole of the cosmos objectively viewed, the universe of suns and stars, that we can see all round us floating in space. This universe, it is taught in the Purâṇas, is of the shape of a grand serpent of three and a half folds. Can we trace the outlines of this serpent in the sky? Ever since Sir William Herschel began his "star-gaugings" in the depths of space in order to construct the shape of the total universe of suns and stars,

it has been recognised that the Milky Way represents the main bulk of our system of globes. The Milky Way is a great circle (of innumerable stars and nebulæ) inclined at an angle of about sixty-two degrees to the earth's equator or the equatorial plane, extending to the stars. When we come to look at the Milky Way a little more closely, we find that *from two points in it branches are thrown out,* so that over some parts of its orbit, so to speak, it is *double.* The great rift that separates these two parts of it begins near a star in the Southern Hemisphere called *α Centauri* (believed to be the star nearest to us, being only three and a half light years distant from us), and it continues for more than six hours in right ascension until the two branches meet again in the constellation *Cygnus* (Lockyer's *Inorganic Evolution,* chap. xv.). This appearance of the Milky Way led Herschel to imagine at first that the whole mass of stars was of the shape of a millstone split along one edge; he later on revised this notion, and thought that the stellar system was of the form of an exaggerated star-fish with numerous deep openings. Proctor also expended all his wonderful ingenuity in solving the riddle of the Milky Way, and his final opinion on the subject was that it was a *spiral* stream, thus explaining one of the most perplexing features of the Milky Way "to be the gap between the loops of the galactic spiral." Lockyer is of opinion that "there are sundry indications that the whole phenomena of the Milky Way may become simplified by treating it as the result of two super-imposed galaxies." The simplest conception, the one that explains all the difficulties, is that the Milky Way is two of the spiral folds of Âdi-Sheṣha, the serpent in whose body all the worlds already formed and in process of formation, *i.e.,* all stars and all nebulæ, are situated; as our sun is *in* and not *outside* this system, we see the two spirals in perspective, and hence the appearance of the Milky Way above described. If we could go outside the system, or see it with a vision that is correlated to other states of matter, we could see the two spiral folds fully. Where then is the third fold of Âdi-Sheṣha? Recent astronomical investigation indicates where and how it must be sought for in the heavens.

"Although the Milky Way dominates the distribution of stars, and especially of the fainter stars, it does not appear to be

the only ring of stars with which we have to do. Sir John Herschel traced a zone of bright stars in the Southern Hemisphere, which he thought to be the projection of a subordinate shoot or stratum. That was the first glimpse of a new discovery, which was subsequently established by Dr. Gould in his work in the Southern Hemisphere at Cordova. He found that there was a stream of bright stars to be traced through the entire circuit of the heavens, forming a great circle as well defined as that of the galaxy itself, which it crossed at an angle of about 25°. Gould while in the Southern Hemisphere had no difficulty in observing that along this circle, which we may call the Star Way, in opposition to the Milky Way, most of the brighter stars in the southern heavens lie.

"When he subsequently came home he made it a point of study to see whether he could continue this line of bright stars completely through the Northern Hemisphere, and he found no difficulty. So that we may now say that the existence of this supplementary Star Way, indicated by the line of extremely bright stars, is beyond all question. I quote the following from what Gould has written on this subject:

"'Few celestial phenomena are more palpable there than the existence of a stream or belt of bright stars, including *Canopus*, *Sirius*, and *Aldebaran*, together with the most brilliant ones in *Carina*, *Puppis*, *Columba*, *Canis Major*, *Orion*, etc., and skirting the Milky Way on its *preceding* side. When the opposite half of the galaxy came into view, it was almost equally manifest that the same is true there also, the bright stars likewise fringing it on the preceding side and forming a stream which, diverging from the Milky Way at the stars α and β *Centauri*, comprises the constellation *Lupus*, and a great part of *Scorpio*, and extends onwards through *Ophiuchus*, towards *Lyra*. Thus a great circle or zone of bright stars seems to gird the sky, intersecting with the Milky Way at the Southern Cross, and manifest at all seasons, although more conspicuous upon the *Orion* side than on the other. Upon my return to the north, I sought immediately for the northern place of intersection; and although the phenomenon is by far less clearly perceptible in this hemisphere, I found no difficulty in recognising the node in the constellation *Cassiopeia*,

which is diametrically opposite to *Crux*. Indeed it is easy to fix the right ascension of the northern node at about ohr. 50mins., the declination in each case about 60°; so that these nodes are very close to the points at which the Milky Way approaches most nearly to the poles. The inclination of this stream to the Milky Way is about 25°; the *Pleiades* occupying a position midway between the nodes.'" (Lockyer's *Inorganic Evolution*, chap. xv.)

It is not difficult to recognise in this line of stars, which Lockyer proposes to call the Star Way, the two remaining (southern and northern) half folds of Âdi-Sheṣha. It only remains to add that the few out-standing stars that do not form a part of the two systems we have considered above, form the head and the tail of the Cosmic Serpent, according as they are near the north or south celestial pole. And we are thus startled to find that the Shesha is not a mere allegory as we once imagined it was, but a literal fact, and we have only to open our eyes to see him in all his beauty. And Nârâyana, the unmanifested Logos, sleeps ever invisible in this Bhoga Paryaṇka, this wonderful pleasure-bed of His, extending Himself in all His majesty all through it for all this Mahâ Kalpa.

P. T. SRINIVASA IYENGAR.

THOSE obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts before which our mortal Nature,
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised.

WORDSWORTH, *Intimations of Immortality*.

say, according to science. And as he was not a scientist but a priest, having charge of souls and care of their moral life, he felt most keenly the contrast which reveals itself between this "natural" being of man and the God-seeing, which arises naturally and within nature, but as spirituality; and in that contrast or opposition the meaning of life presented itself to his gaze.

Tauler knows that he who will think God, in his sense, no longer thinks thought-content, as does one who has grasped nature in thought. Therefore, Tauler seeks not to think God but to think divinely, to think as God thinks. The knowledge of nature is not enriched by the knowledge of God, but *transformed*. The knower of God does not know a *different thing* from the knower of nature, but he *knows in a different way*. Not a single letter can the knower of God add to the knowledge of nature; but through his whole knowing of nature there shines a new light.

What root feelings will take possession of a man's soul who contemplates the world from this point of view, will depend upon how he regards the experience which has brought about his spiritual rebirth. Within the limits of this experience, man is wholly a natural being, when he considers himself in his interaction with the rest of nature; and he is wholly a spiritual being when he considers the condition into which this rebirth has brought him. Thus we can say with equal truth: the inmost depth of the soul is still natural; as also, it is already divine. Now Tauler was most keenly conscious of the former, and said to himself: However far we penetrate into our souls, we are still separated individual human beings; and we cannot altogether free ourselves from separateness or purify ourselves entirely from it. And so, because his attention was chiefly turned to the natural man, he was much less anxious to describe and dwell upon what happens, when the higher self of man enters into the natural man, than to find the way which the lower energies of the personality must follow if they are to be transmuted into the higher life. He has an absolute faith and trust that the All-being shines forth in man, if man will so order his life that there shall be in him a shrine for the Divine. But this cannot

happen so long as the man shuts himself up within his mere, natural, separated personality. Hence he says: "If man is in reality to become one with God, then all the energies and powers even of the inner (mental and emotional) man must die and become silent; and the Will must turn away even from the Good and from all willing whatever and become as it were void of will."

Thus in Tauler's mind the central problem of his mental life came to be this: How can man conquer and kill out in himself the separateness of his existence, so that he can live with the All-life in perfect unison? And so while the direction in which he had to turn his steps was perfectly clear and definite to his consciousness, it was to him equally clear that he could never speak of a goal; for a new goal is only the beginning of a new path. Through such a goal man reaches a certain *level of evolution*, but evolution itself continues illimitably.* For him there is no possibility of *knowing* the final goal; there can be only a *trusting* in the Path, in the evolution.

Tauler's mind seems to have been filled with these ideas, and he seems to have looked at life and religion from this standpoint, without however in a certain sense having *realised* in actual consciousness their inmost significance and meaning *in practice*. At this point, there stepped into his life one who is known to us only from Tauler's own record and who is called the "Friend of God from the Mountains" (der Gottes freund vom Oberland), an illuminated layman—Tauler being a priest. He wrought in Tauler a wonderful transformation. While hitherto these truths had been for Tauler matters only of the understanding, they were for the Friend of God the actual living power and essence of his life. And under his influence they were similarly transformed for Tauler from matters which he could and did study and preach about into living realities, actual powers and forces within him, so that he came to *live* them, instead of talking *about* them. They became to him Life as well as Knowledge, and thus Tauler

* The student of Indian thought will note the relation between these ideas of Tauler and the Hindu doctrine that Liberation (Mukti) can *never* be attained by "Action" (Karma); which amounts to saying in other words that evolution being endless and infinite, it is unthinkable that the soul can ever attain to Liberation, which implies Freedom from the wheel of evolution, by any process of evolution, however long or exalted.

became transformed from one who merely contemplated the being of God into one who was truly "alive in the spirit," and not merely contemplated and looked at things, but actually lived and moved and had his being in this higher sense.

Of Heinrich Suso and Johannes Ruysbrœck it will not be necessary to speak at any length. They seem to have lived the life of feeling rather than that of thought, and to have been drawn by something of the nature of instinctive feeling in the same direction into which Eckhart and Tauler's feelings had been guided by their higher life of thought and intellect. And naturally from the standpoint from which we are now considering mysticism—that of the intellect—the records they have left behind them are less instructive and interesting in this special connection than those of the mystics we have been studying. So that we need not dwell upon them, but can devote a few words in conclusion to speaking of a book, whose authorship is absolutely unknown, but which forms a very remarkable commentary upon this whole movement, and embodies in a very striking form almost a systematic guide to that higher life which Eckhart and Tauler expressed. Curiously enough it was first printed by Luther—no very earnest friend of mysticism as one generally supposes—and it is dominated throughout by the same thought which we should now express in the phrase "the elimination and dissolution of the personality is the key to the higher life." Some of its phrases are very striking; for instance: "When the 'I' knows itself aright, it is already no longer 'I' at all"; and a sentence that must be quoted in the original, since no rendering can do it justice: "Denn Gottes Eigenschaff ist ohne 'dies' und ohne 'das' und ohne Selbstheit und Ichheit: aber der Kreatur Natur und Eigen ist, dass sie sich selber und das Ihre, und das 'dies' und 'das' sucht und will; und in all dem, was sie thut oder lässt, will sie ihren Frommen und Nutzen empfangen. Wo nun die Kreatur oder der Mensch sein Eigen und seine Selbstheit und sich selbst verliert, und von sich selbst ausgeht, da geht Gott ein mit seinem Eigen, das ist mit seiner Selbstheit."

The striking analogies between the above and some of the teachings in *Light on the Path* cannot fail to strike the student, and perhaps it might be of interest to compare them in more

detail. But that would take us too far from our present lines, and must be left to some one else who, knowing German well, can give the time needed to make a really good rendering and comparison. A good edition with a rendering into modern German has been published by Franz Pfeiffer from a manuscript dated 1497, but I do not know the publisher's name or the place and date of publication.

BERTRAM KEIGHTLEY.

THE TWO SIDES OF THE SHIELD

IF there is anything on which we are all agreed—anything which might be represented as that Theosophical Creed which we so energetically repudiate—it must be that we thank God that we are not as other men are, even as this Materialist. Perhaps we are not all quite clear as to what this means; perhaps (on the other hand) some of us may have already put to ourselves the question which Balzac long ago raised—whether, in truth, Idealism and Realism are anything more than the two faces of the one Truth. At all events we are clear which side of the shield we prefer; and we count our success in its study by the degree in which we can raise ourselves above the circumstances of the world around us, and look upon everything with that wide and gracious toleration which is only possible to those who believe that good and evil alike will ultimately work out the great purposes for which the world exists. But we are not Masters; and this attempt to take the point of view which they must of necessity hold, knowing as they do precisely what those purposes are and how they are actually being worked out at the present moment, is one not without peril for us, who are so far below. The danger is that we may thus fritter away all the small power we possess to *help* the world's movement into a merely negative appreciation of it; may find our sole pleasure

> To sit as gods, holding no form of creed
> But contemplating all;

and (lost in this premature Nirvâṇa) miss the whole purpose of our life on earth. I have thought that it might prove of interest to set side by side a few passages from Emerson's glorification of the ideal life with F. Nietzsche's trenchant denunciations of the seamy side of the same life; *both* true, and *both* much needed.

If there be any of my readers to whom the essay of Emerson entitled " The Transcendentalist," his very finest work, is yet unknown, I must recommend them to study it carefully; for here I can only give a few passages, to recall it to those who know it. His general statement of his case is as follows (I omit, here and there, for shortness, but in doing so I do no injustice to his peculiar style, in which the separate thoughts come out one after the other, round, hard, and disconnected, like peas from a pea-shooter, and not unfrequently with almost as disturbing an effect on the recipient). He says:

" In the order of thought, the materialist takes his departure from the external world, and esteems a man as one product of that. The idealist takes his departure from his consciousness, and reckons the world an appearance. Mind is the only reality, of which men and all other natures are better or worse reflectors. Although in his action overpowered by the laws of action, and so, warmly co-operating with men, even preferring them to himself, yet when he speaks scientifically, he is constrained to degrade persons into the representatives of truths. He does not respect labour, or the products of labour, namely, property, otherwise than as a manifold symbol, illustrating the laws of being; he does not respect government, except as far as it reiterates the law of his mind; nor the church; nor charities; nor arts, for themselves; but hears as at a vast distance, what they say, as if his consciousness would speak to him through a pantomimic scene. His thought—that is the Universe.

" From this transfer of the world into the consciousness, this beholding of all things in the mind, follow easily his whole ethics. All that you call the world is the shadow of that substance which you are, the perpetual creation of the powers of thought, of those that are dependent and of those that are independent of your will. Do not cumber yourself with fruit-

less pains to mend and remedy remote effects; let the soul be erect, and all things will go well. You think me the child of my circumstances; I make my circumstances. I—this thought which is called I—is the mould into which the world is poured like melted wax. The mould is invisible, but the world betrays the shape of the mould. You call it the power of circumstance, but it is the power of Me!"

Having thus laid down the principle of Idealism, Emerson proceeds to draw out its workings on the practical life with a very evident, though unacknowledged, intention of self-defence. Here, then, is the golden side of the shield. He says: "It is a sign of our times that many intelligent and religious persons withdraw themselves from the common labours of the market and the caucus, and betake themselves to a certain solitary and critical way of living, from which no solid fruit has yet appeared to justify their separation. They hold themselves aloof; they feel the disproportion between their faculties and the work offered them; and they prefer to ramble in the country and perish of *ennui*, to the degradation of such charities and such ambitions as the city can propose to them. . . . . They are lonely; the spirit of their writing and conversation is lonely; they repel influences; they shun general society; they incline to shut themselves in their chamber in the house, to live in the country rather than in the town, and to find their tasks and amusements in solitude. If anyone will take pains to talk with them, he will find that this part is chosen with some unwillingness, and as a choice of the less of two evils; for these persons are not by nature melancholy, sour and unsocial—but joyous, susceptible, affectionate; they have even more than others a great wish to be loved. Nay, if they tell you their whole thought they will own that love seems to them the last and highest gift of nature; that there are persons whom in their hearts they daily thank for existing—persons whose faces are perhaps unknown to them, but whose fame and spirit have penetrated their solitude—and for whose sake they wish to exist. To behold the beauty of another character, which inspires a new interest in our own; to behold the beauty lodged in a human being, with such vivacity of apprehension, that I am instantly forced home to inquire if I am not

deformity itself; to behold in another the expression of a love so high that it assures itself—assures itself also to me against every possible casualty except my unworthiness:—these are degrees on the scale of human happiness to which they have ascended; and it is a fidelity to this sentiment which has made common association distasteful to them. . . . And yet it seems as if this loneliness, and not this love, would prevail in their circumstances, because of the extravagant demand they make on human nature. That indeed constitutes a new feature in their portrait, that they are the most exacting and extortionate critics. Their quarrel with every man they meet is not with his *kind;* but with his *degree. There is not enough of him*—that is the only fault. These exacting children advertise us of our wants. There is no compliment, no smooth speech with them; they pay you only this one compliment, of insatiable expectation; they aspire, they severely exact, and if they only stand fast in this watch-tower, and persist in demanding unto the end, and without end, then are they terrible friends, whereof poet and priest cannot choose but stand in awe; and what if they eat clouds and drink wind, they have not been without service to the race of man."

Well—somewhere I must stop my extracts from this magnificent "*Apologia pro Familia Sua*" and it may as well be here, so that I may impress the point of the words I have set in italics. The most delicate test of a man's belonging to the Idealist family—of its life being his life—is just this point of criticism. As long as a man, in judging of another's life or writings, takes up ever so little of the attitude of the Grand Inquisitor, carping at errors, looking for heresies, instead of appreciating the good and noble truths they contain, so long is he "yet in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." To the Idealist the one question is, "What manner of *man* is this? Is he looking the right way—aspiring to that which is above—trying to help the world higher?" And if he is found to stand this test, his mistakes, his faults, are nothing—they will fall away of themselves as he rises. But the one thing which *does* try our patience, the weakness which needs all our philosophy to excuse, is just, in Emerson's words, that there is not enough of him! It is not his fault; but, oh the pity, that there was not

just a little more power in him, and how different would have been the result! It is no injustice, no irreverence, to think thus even of our best and wisest; for they know it better and feel it more sensitively than we do. It is just as the Scripture says: it is "when we have done all" that we are most ready to cry, with profoundest conviction, that "we are unprofitable servants." We have to be comforted that our work is so poor simply because there *was* no more in us—that, poor as it seems, it *is* our best—being such as we are, or we should despair utterly.

I have already said that the Idealist view of life is the Master's view. And in saying this I have also implicitly expressed its danger, as well as its value. For a Master is one who is full of Power, power which overflows from him on everybody and everything around; a Being (as in *Zanoni*) with whom to associate is, of itself, to know more, or to live better, or rather to do both. Such an one, were his power not guided by the Wisdom—were he sensitive to the attractions of the sense-world of the materialist—would be a power of evil instead of good. But in the most of us the Fire is not kindled; *our* danger is, not that we should do mischief, but that we should do nothing at all; and (except in comparatively rare cases) we need, and shall need for lives to come, the stimulus of the desires of the outer world to spur us forwards to the far-distant height where something nobler shall take their place. We have to live in the world, to work upon the world; and the world has its own opinion of those who profess to stand aloof and apart from it, not to dance to its piping, to be careless of its pleasures and rewards. I am not thinking of the vulgar herd, who can only picture to themselves an Idealist as either hypocrite or fool; they are not worth notice. But when a bold and independent thinker like F. Nietzsche draws out for us the impression which the Idealist of common life makes upon *him*, we may be sure that there will be something worth our study. Being a German, he must needs call him the "objective" man; and of him he speaks thus:

"However thankful we may feel to these objective spirits—and who would not, considering how utterly tired we are of everything subjective and the accursed egotism which attends it—we must learn to set bounds to our gratitude, and to check the ex-

aggeration with which at the present time absolute unselfishness and Altruism are lauded as our final end, at once as redemption and glorification. The Objective Man, whom nothing excites to interest or indignation, is indeed one of the most precious tools possible, but he is only a tool for the hand of a stronger man; a mirror, we may say, not a separate and independent existence. He is, in truth, a mirror only; accustomed to bow down before everything which is to be observed, knowing no pleasure but that which observation—the literal 'reflection'—gives, he waits until something appears and then spreads himself carefully before it, that not even the lightest footstep or the gliding by of ghostly presences may pass without leaving their mark upon his surface. What individuality yet remains to him he feels as something incidental, often merely fanciful, often as actually disturbing; so completely has he accustomed himself to be simply the thoroughfare and reflection of external figures and events. He studies his own nature, but his conclusions are attained with difficulty and are frequently wrong; he often mistakes himself and his own needs and defects, and here alone shows himself clumsy and unsympathetic. Perhaps his health troubles him, or the petty details of his house and family, or he can 'find no one who understands him' and the like; he does his best to make out the rights of it, but in vain! Instantly his attention wanders away into generalities; and next day he knows no more how to set things straight than he did the day before. *He has lost the power to take himself seriously;* he is cheerful, not for want of troubles, but for want of power to grasp what his troubles are. His habitual quickness of response to everything and everyone, the sunny and unrestrained hospitality with which he receives everything that comes across him, his inconsiderate good nature, his dangerous carelessness as to Yes and No; these are his virtues, of which, alas, he must often pay the penalty! And at last he becomes too often simply their *caput mortuum.* Would one have Love or Hate from him (I mean Love and Hate as God, woman and beast understand them!), he will do what he can, and give what he can. But you must not be astonished if that is not much. His love is calculated, his hate artificial, a kind of *tour de force,* a small vanity and exaggeration. He is only true so

far as he can be 'objective.' His soul, ever smoothing itself out to reflect the external, has lost the power for a vigorous Yes or No; he cannot command, he cannot even destroy. He says with Leibnitz '*I despise almost nothing*'—do not pass by or undervalue that *almost!* He is no Model; he leads no one forwards—nor backwards; he sets himself too far away to care to take part, either with the good or the evil. It has been too long the habit to confuse him with the Philosopher, with the Cæsarian Ruler and Leader of culture; this is to do him too much honour; to overlook the most essential point—he is but a tool, a slave, though of the sublimest kind—in himself he is nothing—'*almost nothing*'; in one word, a Selfless man!"

"These be bitter words"; but I doubt much if any of us will feel that we are *quite* beyond the possibility of their having some application to ourselves; they express in German fashion, bluntly and rudely, the danger of those who, like Adam and nearly all his children, have eaten of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil without first making sure of the Tree of Life. Nietzsche is right, as far as he sees. To him the "Cæsarian Ruler" and the "Objective Man" are two fixed classes, standing before his tribunal as the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. *Our* answer to him is not to try to prove (as do the Philistines) that his Ruler is in fact a highly immoral personage, and his Objective Man, on the contrary, a most estimable member of society. *That,* in our view, has nothing to do with the matter. Reincarnation is, as usual, the key to the difficulty; in time we shall all come, sooner or later, to the possession of the Power so reverenced by Nietzsche and his school; unless indeed (which may the gods avert!) we are before then swept away as total failures, with the other rubbish. The question for us is the one so familiar to Christians as the difference of the Active and Contemplative Life—whether the exceptional natures so finely described by Emerson may hope to find in the contemplative life their own way to the heights to which all alike aspire. And on this point Emerson's position is unassailable. His Idealist is born so, and no other life is *possible* to him. The Catholic ascetic writers have fully discussed the situation. On the one side you have the majority of mankind, whose road to

holiness is through unselfish devotion to good works, and whose means of advance is by Meditation—the provision by the mind of ever nobler motives for more energetic work for others. Through this they may rise to the higher Contemplation—beyond works. But the other and smaller class begin where these leave off; the essential point with them is not what they *do*, but what they *are*. Like the angels, "ever beholding the face of their Father in Heaven," when work comes before them they do it, because the power is in them and must flow out wherever needed —not for any result of holiness or merit to be gained for themselves, nor even (strange to say) for any "success" of the work itself, for that also is of the lower world. If we add to this a full measure of the Divine Wisdom, Power and Love, we have the true Adept. But for us, who are not yet Adepts, there is warning in the harsh words of our German friend; we must watch ourselves carefully and constantly, lest in our isolation we leave the world to perish. The Contemplative can, and does, work for the world, on a higher plane and with greater, though unseen, results than those of any outward teaching or preaching on the physical plane; but to have the right thus to release ourselves from the obvious work of the world, means that we have a control over mind and heart, and a steady devotion and concentration of all our powers upon that higher work, unbroken and undisturbed in sleeping or waking, in life and in death, which is as yet beyond the range of most members of our Society.

ARTHUR A. WELLS.

EVERYONE is the son of his own works.—MIGUEL DE CERVANTES.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Religion of the Future

Chez nos Ancêtres. Par Jean Revel. (Paris: G. Charpentier et Cie.; 1888. Price 3*fr.* 50.)

It would appear that Jean Revel's works are now attracting a good deal of attention in France, and he is said to have his seat in the Academy securely in reserve if he can be persuaded to leave the "scented orchards" of Normandy and to reveal his identity. Jean Revel is a *nom de plume;* it is said that not thirty people in his own town know anything at all about him.

The book here noticed is one of the earliest of his works; it was recommended to me lately by a Frenchman with the warning that it was likely to shake any faith in the Roman Church or in Christianity which was not deliberately fortified in advance. It is of course, *à l'Index*, for it is not only an attack upon all forms of religions, or rather on forms *in* religions in general, but upon the Roman religion and its priestcraft in particular. It is the result of a serious, if not very profound, comparative study of religions, from which study Revel emerges convinced, among other things:

(1) That one single truth incarnated in every past century; that if there is one truth or one characteristic feature of our time it is the dissolution and general re-arrangement of all ancient groupings, the setting at liberty of elements.

(2) That Christianity, which as a system is only a synthesis of all former ideas, is dying, as Paganism was dying at the time of the Baptist; and that in dying it denies that which will succeed it just as Paganism denied Christianity. He contends further that Protestantism and Judaism appear to be the nearest approach to any religious formulæ possible to the modern enlightened man.

(3) That the antagonism between past and present is only apparent, succession would be a better word; that Jesus in reality only followed Moses.

The evolution of religions is an undeniable fact, and as our vision enlarges so do the boundaries withdraw—withdraw to what? What will be the formula of the new religion?

There will be none, if we are to arrive at an ideal in religion and philosophy which will bring about the fusion of peoples through love. We must abolish all cults, which with their eternal dissensions and arguments are nothing but hot-beds of hatred and intolerance.

The new religion, according to Revel, will be shorn of all idolatry, miracle, tradition, and form. It is already in being, though it is recognised by few; it has no marvellous legends to back it, nor will it be received for a long time to come by a superficial world which will find in it none of the characteristics for which it is accustomed to look. It will take from Christianity only its belief in God and a love of humanity; it will be a pure and noble socialism. It will demand obedience to the imperious call from man's centre, "*son ego*," which is "his maximum point of consciousness," that "*état solide*" of the soul, separated from which no salvation is possible.

"De cette nouvelle religion qui remettra dans la paix les âmes présentement bouleversées, ce sera *le culte de l'espèce* . . . Ce sera un culte vraiment grandiose et supérieur. L'espèce, n'est-elle pas inaltérable, en état de perpétuelle résurrection? On a fait remarquer que le dogme de la résurrection et celui de l'incarnation de la divinité s'appliquent excellemment à l'espèce—pure de souillures, des défaillances individuelles, et vraiment immortelle."

For himself he sums it up thus: "Quant à nous personnellement, nous tenons pour les belles surexcitations de l'espérance, et nous formulons ici notre pensée avec la dernière énergie: Si notre vie n'est qu'apparance, nos croyances que decéptions; eh bien, illusion pour illusion, erreur pour erreur, folie pour folie, nous aimons mieux les cîmes que les marécages, mille fois mieux l'exaltation vers le pur éther de l'idealité que l'affaissement vers l'inconscience . . . . Meilleur est le vertige d'en haut que l'étouffement d'en bas. C'est dans le sens de sursum qu'il nous plaît d'orienter la tension de notre esprit. Car, toute notre philosophie tient dans ces mots '*Chaque être va là où il tend.*'"

So far this is an imperfect summary of Revel's own conclusions. His remarks and criticisms on many subjects are always interesting, painfully so at times to Englishmen, who will regret to find that his philosophy has as yet no room for them. He has not a single good word for us. Let us hope that the generous toleration and apprecia-

tion of Buddhist, Brâhman, Mahommedan, Japanese, Chinese, Jew, and, last not least, Theosophist, may one day be found to include the race he at present so dislikes and distrusts.

Students of Theosophy and Buddhism will read with interest the section which our author devotes to a presentment of the philosophy put into the mouths of two men with whom he professes to be travelling, and with whom he eventually goes to Adyar to attend his first Convention of our Society in 1888, "Dr. T., vieux philosophe St. Simonaien" and his friend Djaïpour, a Hindu colleague from the Theosophical Society at Adyar. Of the Society Revel says: "It has growing resources, and an immense library at Adyar, it is spread over the universe, and if the evangelisation continues and succeeds it will be the greatest movement of souls that has ever existed." As far as he understands he tries to be fair and serious, and to our philosophy he is moderately sympathetic. It is of course a judgment given entirely from outside by a man who is quick to mark a weakness. The lash of the French writer's wit falls with a sting on what he deems extravagance, for he is neither mystic nor ascetic, nor does he believe in the existence or legitimacy of any knowledge which may not be immediately given to the whole world or be understood by it. The importance of this part of the book lies in the fact that Revel tries to describe Theosophy as he understands it, and that he thinks it worth while to try.

From the general impression that he is in earnest comes also the particular one that he has assimilated more of ancient philosophy than he perhaps knows or would admit. At any rate the man who writes as he does must affect his public, and his own thought is often very fine, as for instance when he writes:

"Notre contemplation élargie embrassera l'univers. Notre amour sera aussi puissant que notre intelligence sera lumineux.

"Alors on verra comment l'idéal des premiers âges avait lui-même sa part de divinité. Tout sera compris dans cet auguste reliement, tout s'y trouvera justifié depuis l'humble pensée du fétichiste, depuis la vie obscure et souffrante de l'animal, jusqu'à l'étincelante vision de la fin. . . .

"L'humanité aura tout accompli—tout consommé. Elle sera près de Dieu."

C. M.

India's Poverty and British Rule

Poverty and Un-British Rule in India. By Dadabhai Naoroji. (London: Swan Sonnenschein and Co.; 1901. Price 10s. 6*d*.)

No one who is acquainted with India and the men she brings forth will for a moment question the sincerity of Mr. Naoroji, or doubt his earnestness and devoted patriotism; nor will any well-informed critic be disposed to deny that very many changes for the better are possible in the system, magnificent as it is, of British rule in India. But it may be doubted whether Mr. Naoroji's views as to the *causes* which are at work in the growing impoverishment of India, or the *means* which he suggests for their removal, are even substantially true or adequate.

To take the last first. His main remedy, I gather from a perusal of the bulky volume in which he has collected together a mass of undeniably useful and striking information, would appear to be—an increase in the amount of Government employment given to natives of India! And he seems to consider that the *main* cause of India's growing poverty is the undoubtedly large sum drawn from its revenues and spent outside the country in various ways. Now while not for a moment overlooking this factor or minimising the importance of reducing it as much as possible, it certainly appears to me to be one of the most minor causes at work, while the remedy he suggests is as inadequate as it is possible to be, even if it be not positively harmful.

For what are the facts? Any such changes as Mr. Naoroji advocates, even granting to the full all that he asserts, would amount merely to a saving, and would result only in the spending *in* India of money now spent elsewhere; *but they would not add one single rupee to the wealth of the country*. And this is the *real* problem, the true root of the difficulty. How shall India grow in wealth so as to be able to support in even tolerable comfort her ever-growing population? By a process of saving and hoarding? All experience goes to prove the uselessness and ridiculous inadequacy of such a method. Indeed, to-day there are enormous, almost incredible, amounts of wealth stored up and hoarded all over India. But they *are* hoarded, not allowed to circulate, not applied to *productive* purposes, and hence remain unfertile and barren, practically useless, like huge reservoirs of water which is *not* used to irrigate and fertilise the soil.

Moreover, simply to open wider the door of Government service and State employment would, it seems to me, tend if anything to en-

courage and strengthen the already most regrettably dominant tendency of the best intelligence, capacity and culture of India to seek its outlet in those already overcrowded professions which are essentially non-productive, nay in a sense parasitic, in that those who live by them add little or nothing to the wealth of the nation, but draw their sustenance from the wealth produced by others—the Law, Government service, Medicine, and so on. Not that these professions are not most honourable and useful, vitally necessary for the welfare of the nation, but they are essentially unproductive, and it is only by increased *production* of wealth that India's poverty can be remedied.

At the present moment, there is much the same feeling permeating the upper and more intelligent classes in India as prevailed in England about the beginning of last century. The idea is dominant that only certain professions, the Law, Medicine, Government service, the Army, the Navy, and the like, are fitting careers for a "gentleman," and hence a very, very large proportion of the brains and life of India tends to seek entry into them. But in England that notion has long been exploded in practice, and every year demonstrates more and more its utter futility and falseness. Hence, if India's poverty is to be cured, her thinking, her able, her active sons must learn this same lesson and turn their brains and powers to *productive* work.

Therefore, I cannot imagine any true lover of India advocating remedies for her present poverty, which could only tend to aggravate and intensify the very causes which now make and keep her poor. For India is not *naturally* poor. Her resources and capabilities are immense; her labour-force, that real producer of *all* wealth, is enormous, her people are sober and industrious. But they have none or but very few of their own kith and kin to lead and direct them, to develope and open up the resources of their country, to start and develope new industries, and so turn this vast potential labour capacity into concrete wealth, into food and means of livelihood. And this seems to me to be one of the really *vital* causes of India's poverty, and a far more potent one than all those on which Mr. Naoroji dwells at such length. My own conviction is profound that not till Hindus learn to control and guide labour, to manage and utilise the great forces of modern industry, to make themselves capable and efficient officers, lieutenants, captains, generals in the great army of labour, will they be ready and able to govern and rule their native land. And when they have done so, its rule will be theirs already by decree of nature, by the working of inevitable forces, needing no formal legisla-

tion, no action of any Government, for the essentials of power will be already in their hands.

But apart from this, there is much that I sympathise with in Mr. Naoroji's book; and though I cannot but regret that he has, as it seems to me, trailed the proverbial red herring across the track and so led the mind of India away from what is really vital, yet as a lover of India I must record my sincere gratitude for his earnestness and devotion as well as express the thanks that are due to him for his able work and endeavours to obtain justice for India on many a point where it has been dealt out to her with but scanty measure.

X.

The God of Modern Philosophers

Typical Modern Conceptions of God; or the Absolute of German Romantic Idealism and of English Evolutionary Agnosticism, with a Constructive Essay. By Joseph Alexander Leighton, Professor of Philosophy in Hobart College. (London: Longmans, Green and Co. Price 3*s*. 6*d*. net.)

This little book, a small 8vo of some 200 pp., forms one of the best and most interesting contributions of its size and scope to the literature of Modern Philosophy which has seen the light for a good many years. It is most clearly and lucidly written and equally well thought out, while the author, by avoiding needless technicalities of language and by expressing himself simply and clearly, has brought the very important philosophical standpoints with which he deals well within the power of any well-educated person to appreciate. It is not often that in modern English work on these subjects one finds so intelligible a treatment, or so careful and successful an effort to think lucidly and express the conclusions arrived at in language which the non-specialist can understand. And I am the more disposed to welcome such a treatment of the subject, because it seems to me that the greatest, the most pressing need of English thought to-day is a real active re-awakening of interest in the actual, and not merely in the academic problems of philosophy. We have indeed enough and more than enough of what Schopenhauer so bitterly satirised as the work of *Brod-philosophen*, in other words of non-vital, academic, class-room philosophising; but Mr. Leighton's book awakens a hope that the coming generation may produce some men who will take to philosophising in earnest, and apply their powers to the task of pro-

ducing a philosophy which shall be both adequate to the needs of the scientist and the social thinker, as well as to the most stringent requirements of an awakened metaphysical insight. And though Mr. Leighton's present book is in the main expository and critical, yet there is a straightforwardness of treatment and a clear, frank facing of the problems which have really to be dealt with, that is exceedingly refreshing and encouraging.

The first three chapters deal in a very interesting and lucid manner with the fundamental conceptions in regard to God as the Absolute of Philosophy, which so permeated and determined the philosophising of three of those great thinkers whom Germany produced in the Augustan age of her philosophical period: Fichte, Hegel and Schleiermacher. The fourth chapter treats in like manner of Mr. Herbert Spencer, as representing that English evolutionary Agnosticism which has been so predominant during the last half of the century from which we have just emerged.

A quotation from Mr. Leighton's Introduction will best serve to strike the keynote of his treatment of these several standpoints. Speaking of the characteristics which mark the Absolute as viewed by these four men, he says: "So we have four Absolutes—that of Will, finding its completion in the intuition of perfect attainment (Fichte); that of Reason, comprehending itself as the eternal process of the world and finding that all is good (Hegel); that of Feeling, which apprehends the unity of things in a single and immediate act of consciousness (Schleiermacher); and finally that of Blind Energy, which seems in a cross-section of time and as viewed by the average spectator, to have a definite direction, but which in reality has neither whence nor whither, and no other goal than the meaningless eternal oscillation between states of motion and states of rest (Herbert Spencer)."

In noticing this book one is sorely tempted to dwell at length upon the many interesting points which emerge in Mr. Leighton's excellent treatment of these four thinkers. But to do so would make it impossible to devote any space to the author's contributions, or rather suggestions, towards a further genuine and really vital development of philosophical thinking. And any attempts in that direction are so much more important at the present time than expositions, however clear and helpful, of the standpoints of past workers, that I must content myself with most warmly recommending these four chapters to the careful study of all who take an interest in philosophy, with the assurance that they will find themselves amply repaid. And

this applies more especially to those whom want of time or other causes have prevented from familiarising themselves with the thinkers in question at first hand or even in the more extended treatment which has been devoted to them by other authors. Indeed, one may almost say that a careful study of Mr. Leighton's chapters will prove an invaluable assistance to anyone who is desirous of at least knowing in general outline what contributions these four thinkers have made towards the elucidation of the fundamental problems of philosophy.

The fifth and concluding chapter of the book contains the author's contributions, or rather suggestions, towards a constructive philosophy of experience, and to these we must now turn our attention. Mr. Leighton opens with the exceedingly important remark that philosophical construction must begin with the fact of conscious experience in general and proceed by a consideration of its implications—"experience" being the total product of the activity of consciousness, and "consciousness" being a name for the self-revealing light of experience. This is obviously, as a matter of course, the ultimate datum behind which *we* cannot penetrate, except by means of reflection on experience itself. The first point he brings out is that *all* experience is the experience of *individuals;* and the second is that "my" experience is part of a social and historical organisation of experience in which other selves have membership. Practically, this amounts to a new and very fertile recognition of the status and significance of the *individual as such* in systematic philosophising, and is of the greatest importance. Indeed, I am inclined to think that we have here the germ of what will grow into the most important *positive* advance which western philosophy has ever made, and that it will prove the starting-point of a new philosophical departure. Our author then brings out the significant fact that *a unity and continuity of experience* exists, as somehow holding together, and hence is led to infer that experience as we know it, since it is *individual* essentially, but also social, historical, unitary, and continuous, must therefore *imply* an *absolute unity and continuity of experience*, in and by which it is supported. Starting from this basis, our author is led by further analysis and consideration, which it would take too long to summarise, to the conclusion, that the structure of experience as we know it implies an Absolute in the form of the Absolute Individual—or as we might put it a Logos. There is a great deal that is extremely suggestive in his treatment, and many vital and important points are brought out with quite exceptional clearness and pertinency; but space forbid our

entering into detail, beyond adding that he comes to the conclusion that the Absolute must be *self-conscious* as well as absolutely Individual. But, of course, in a treatment which is merely suggestive, and as I understand only preliminary to a fuller exposition, many of the problems involved are but lightly touched upon. Some of these, as well as the author's general affiliations, are very well brought out in a letter from an old friend with whom I have had some correspondence about this book. As it may be of interest to some of our readers I shall quote this letter, remarking only that the writer is himself a very close student of philosophy and no mean thinker in point of original power and insight in the field of metaphysic. He writes:

"The Absolute of the author is essentially that of the group of thinkers who constitute, or are allied to, the Hegelian Right. It is a theism which finds the One or Ultimate Reality in a self-intuiting Individual Intelligence upholding and interpenetrating all finite individuals, the *concrete identity* of all possible differences, the *Idea*, in short, of Hegel. This Absolute, as the harmony of all possible experiences, is spiritual; time and space are forms of the experience of finite spirits or selves; forms in ultimate ground illusory, being resolved in the One Reality, *i.e.*, the completed unitary whole of experience. All 'appearance,' of course, belongs (and must belong) to this Absolute—you cannot ostracise any given phase of experience from the Whole—but 'appearances' are in greater or less degree real according as they stand in a more or less complete context. The author has not read Mr. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* for nothing, and his last chapter reveals many sympathies with that acute thinker.

"Incidentally he touches on the problem of the standing of those appearances classed as 'evil'—all alike, of course, necessarily manifestations of the Absolute—but offers no solution of moment. The problem is much wider and more difficult than he seems to realise; but, in so far as concerns this objection, it may unhesitatingly be stated that no system whatever which has been submitted to public criticism has even approximately solved—or, perhaps, even faced—this wider problem. It is of no use to say that 'what is in man an evil impulse, becomes transformed into an element in the good will which has membership in the absolute system of wills. In so doing it loses its evil character' (p. 183). If 'evil' could be viewed as limited merely to doings in the domain of conduct, our task would indeed be enormously facilitated. But the restriction is grotesque.

'Evil' embraces the entire system of pain and obstruction, and the world presents us here with a truly tremendous riddle; a riddle, by the way, which remains essentially the same, whatever theory of the process of soul-evolution is adopted.

"Is the Absolute happy? Readers of Bradley's book will recall the interesting conclusion that, while there is *probably* a surplus of happiness over pain in the Absolute, there is no *certitude* that this surplus obtains at all. In other words, for all that rational metaphysics can say, the Absolute may include more pain than happiness in its all-embracing unity. I mention this merely to suggest that it is not enough to rejoice over a 'timeless living' Absolute. Pessimism of the idealistic type rests equally on the same bed-rock. More to the point (if obtainable) would be experience of the profounder depths of conscious life, from which some sort of guiding inference might possibly be drawn. But what, after all, is the utmost which the most advanced mystic may attain as compared with the depths which he has to leave unplumbed?

"The author alludes to the question (also put by Bradley) as to whether the content of the Absolute contains elements *which are not individuals;* something answering in a way to the Nature or Matter of the ordinary man, or the 'Hyle' of the imperfectly developed idealists who formed the Platonic School. This very difficult issue cannot now be discussed at length, but it deserves note. Of course the 'individuals' in question may stand for hosts untold, both above and below the human and animal levels. But do they wholly exhaust the content of the Absolute? Could we run a metaphysic solely on the basis of centres of consciousness, actual or possible? Here lies a useful discussion which has often tasked the paladin of Western philosophy, and which may still be considered unsolved. Of course the popular and scientific ideas of 'matter,' 'law,' 'force,' etc., belong to low—nay, very uncritical and 'untrue'—categories of thinking, but their dismissal as useless for metaphysic by no means decides the issue in favour of the 'individuals' above referred to."

We shall look forward with considerable eagerness to the larger constructive work or works in which Mr. Leighton proposes to devote adequate space and attention to the full discussion of these and many other most interesting points upon which he barely touches in the little book under consideration. Meanwhile we welcome most heartily his present contribution to the rational study of modern philosophy.

B. K.

ESOTERIC HINDUISM AND "THE SECRET DOCTRINE"

A Study of the Bhâgavata Purâṇa, or Esoteric Hinduism. By Purnendu Narayan Sinha, M.A., B.L. (Benares; 1901.)

THIS volume of nearly 450 very large octave pages from the pen of one of our most earnest colleagues in India, is devoted to an attempt to understand and explain the esotericism of *The Bhâgavata Purâṇa* in the light of *The Secret Doctrine*, and with the help of clues gathered from an extensive acquaintance with Theosophical literature.

Now *The Bhâgavata* is almost unquestionably the most popular and widely current of the Purâṇas in India to-day, and is specially held in the highest esteem by the Vaishnavas of all parts. Moreover it was regarded as in a high degree an authoritative scripture by such great and truly spiritual teachers as Chaitanya. Hence such an attempt as the present was well worth making, and even a small measure of success would amply justify the effort. But on the whole I incline to think that the author has succeeded beyond what might have been anticipated, at any rate in throwing much suggestive light upon so difficult a work.

Personally, I feel myself to be wholly incompetent to enter upon any detailed consideration of its contents in a way which could possibly be useful to our readers. That is a task which I sincerely hope may be undertaken hereafter in these pages by some one whose inner knowledge and illuminated vision give them the means of really judging of the value of our devoted brother's contribution towards bringing to light the deeper esotericism of this scripture. Here I must content myself with simply thanking him for his work, and expressing the hope that his book will find many readers, especially in India, who will derive from it that help and stimulus towards understanding and entering upon the inner life, which I am sure it is the author's greatest desire that they should find in it.

B. K.

MAGAZINES AND PAMPHLETS

Theosophist, February. In "Old Diary Leaves" the Colonel tells us of his journey to Burma, collecting for the Mahâ Bodhi Society. In this instalment we have his visit to Calcutta, where in the Museum he found an image of Durgâ skilfully "adapted" for Buddhist use by carving a small figure of Buddha in her royal tiara. Thence he, with Dharmapala, moved on to Darjiling to meet the Ambassador of

the Dalai Lama of Lhassa. They duly met and exchanged presents, and many kind words. On his return to Calcutta the Colonel did his best in a public lecture to allay the not unnatural apprehension the Hindus there felt that the Society was to be used as a Buddhist propaganda —an apprehension which it is to be hoped Mrs. Besant has now set at rest for ever. His claim is that all the denunciations of the Hindu sacred books refer, not to the Buddhists at all, but to the Jaina ascetics, with whom the orthodox Hindu priests were at bitter war long before Buddha's time. Mr. Fullerton concluded his study of "The Heaven of Theosophy." His reply to the argument as to the "illusion" of Devachan boldly takes the bull by the horns. He lays down, first, that a large part of the happiness of men *in earth life* is of necessity illusory; and second, that the happiness of Devachan *cannot be otherwise* than illusory. W. A. Mayers discusses "Jesus, called the Christ." W. A. Krishnamachariar gives a brief but thoughtful and well expressed view of "Karma and the Forgiveness of Sins." The other articles are "Magnetic Massage and Mental Science," by J. H. Taylor; "Will," by R. F. Sibbold; "Pythagoras," by M. Scholl; and "The Symbolism of Hindu Caste Marks," by Kalki Dass. An extract from a speech of Sir Lepel Griffin is too good to be missed. He says: "The Hindu creed is a monotheistic creed, and a creed of a very high ethical value; and when I look back upon my life in India, and the thousands of good friends I have left there amongst all classes of the native community, when I remember those honourable, industrious, orderly, law-abiding, sober, manly men, I look over England, and wonder whether there is anything in Christianity which could give a higher ethical creed than that which is now professed by the very large majority of the people of India. I do not see it in London society; I do not see it in the slums of the East End; and I do not see it on the London Stock Exchange. I think the morality of India compares very favourably with the morality of any country in Western Europe."

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broken down by her exertions at the Convention. "It is hoped," we are told, "that if she can be kept from work and allow herself complete rest for even a couple of weeks, she may be able to resume activity thereafter with safety." But the hope of her allowing herself a fortnight's complete rest is evidently a faint one. The literary contents are some pleasant stories and the continuation of the life of Guru Nânak.

Theosophic Gleaner, February. Here N. D. K. vigorously defends his position as to the uselessness of paid devotions for the dead. But surely his definition of a Mantra will not commend itself to Indian thinkers. He says: "The first essential of a Mantra is that it should suit the occasion, that it be fully understood by the reciter, and the sense contained therein should appeal to the heart of the reciter." But all this is a Protestant mode of thought, very far from religious orthodoxy. Some reprints and more of Shrî Kṛishṇa complete the number.

Brahmavâdin, December, continues its notes of the very important Gifford Lectures of Professor James. An interesting lecture by Vivekananda on the Science of Râja Yoga is concluded. He says the work is two-fold; first to gain control over the unconscious actions of the body—this is absolutely necessary for our social well-being; then to free the soul; and this leads to liberation.

Also from India, *Siddhanta Deepika; Awakener of India; The Âryа;* and *Indian Review.*

The Vâhan for March announces the formation of a Federation of London Branches after the model of the very successful Federation of the Northern Lodges. "The Enquirer" continues the discussion of how to reconcile the statement that a Muni "neither loves nor hates," with the ordinary view of our human duties; A. A. W. gives a long answer to the somewhat amusing query why the astral drunkard cannot get drunk on astral whisky; and the long and much-missed initials C. W. L. are attached to answers to six questions bearing upon work during sleep upon the astral plane.

Revue Théosophique Française, February, opens with Mrs. Besant's "The Christ, Historical, Mythical, and Mystic." Then we have the conclusion of L. Revel's important article on "The Mechanism of Thought," and a portion of Leadbeater's "Peru."

Theosophia for March gives H. P. B.'s paper on the Holmes' Controversy, Mrs. Besant's *Path of Discipleship*, C. W. L.'s "Ancient Peru," and Sinnett's "The System to which we Belong." An

autobiographical sketch entitled "A Human Soul in 1893," is begun.

In *Théosophie*, March, A. S. discourses upon Orpheus, and concludes that "The Theosophical Society is, so to speak, the reincarnation of the School of Pythagoras"; a kinship we are not inclined to disclaim.

Teosofia comes out in enlarged form and with a new cover in right of its dignity as the official organ of the new Italian Section; long may it flourish! We have the account of the first Convention, with Mr. Leadbeater's lecture on the Mission of the Theosophical Society. Sra. Calvari furnishes a study of "Transmigration, Metempsychosis and Reincarnation," whilst XXX. discusses "Dilettantism and Technicality," with special reference to Maeterlinck.

Teosofisk Tidskrift. In connection with this magazine we have pleasure in publishing the following communication:

"The T. T. has from January become a real *Scandinavian* Theosophical magazine, being printed half in Swedish and the other half in Norwegian or Danish. At the same time the Norwegian-Danish magazine *Balder* ceases to appear, and its editor, Mr. Richard Eriksen has taken over the editorship of *Teosofisk Tidskrift*, which is now issued in Christiana. Editor for the Swedish text is Dr. Emil Zander, Stockholm. The January and February numbers contain 'Theosophy in the Teachings of Tolstoï,' by Pekka Ervast; translations from Mrs. Besant's *Thought Power;* 'No Religion Higher than Truth,' by A. Fullerton; and a short article entitled 'Theosophy,' by R. E. It is hoped that the new arrangement will make the magazine a real bond of union between the Scandinavian Theosophists."

Theosophy in Australasia, January. The Section accounts for the year show that the attempt to raise the subscription for unattached members to £1 has not been an unmixed success; as, though twenty-six have joined Branches, thirty-one have dropped away altogether. Looked at from the unattached member's point of view, it can hardly be wondered at; it's human nature. In a paper entitled "Is there a National Soul," Mr. H. A. Wilson presses the view that National Karma is something distinct from, and more than, the mere aggregate of the Karmas of the separate individuals. It is a view which has much to commend it, though it is not yet (I believe) accepted as part of "Theosophic Orthodoxy." "Behind that Veil," and "What of the Harvest," are pleasant short studies.

New Zealand Theosophical Magazine, February, well keeps up its

character as an entertaining monthly. Its more serious matter is furnished by H. Horne, "The Story of The Cross," and "How can we work for Theosophy" by M. Judson.

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