

O man, thou thinkest that thou art alone, and actest as thou likest. Thou dost not perceive the Eternal Love that dwells within thy heart. Whatever is done by thee, It sees and notes it all. The Soul is Its own witness, and is Its own refuge. It is the supreme, eternal witness of man. Do not offend it.—*Mahābhārata and Manu.*

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HOW THE CHRIST-CHILD WAS BORN.

Carlo stood by the window making pictures. He made them by breathing upon the pane and drawing upon it with his fingers. His Papa was shut up in his study with all the nasty bottles and jars and things. His Mamma was where she always was now,—upstairs in bed, looking so white and tired. The servants were in the kitchen laughing over the very biggest turkey you ever saw, and Carlo was just here in the parlor, alone and cross and tired. He was tired of his play things; tired of the Christmas tree; tired of having a good time with his little cousins who had just gone home. He felt just like being a torment to somebody; that was what nurse called him when he began to fidget and ask questions.

When you are a little boy a great many questions come popping into your head, and you think grown people are put there to answer them.

Carlo supposed God put them there ; He seemed to do all that was done ; at least the grown people said so. But Carlo wondered why God did not make them tell things right ; some of their answers were certainly wrong because Carlo could not understand them. They made the world out to be quite another place from what Carlo saw. He had eyes ; he could see very well ; and he didn't see anywhere some of the things that grown people said were there. They were silly to suppose that he, a big boy of five years, would believe such stuff about babies, for instance. He never, never found one under the cabbages, though he had looked every day since his new little cousin had come to the world. Why should the grown people find all the babies ? They didn't get up so early as the children. And when people died ; that was another thing. They were put in holes in the ground. No grown person—fond as they were of puzzling children—had ever said they weren't. Except, indeed, Uncle Dick, who said sometimes they were burnt and sometimes they were roasted and eaten. That was in foreign countries, however, and Carlo didn't believe in foreign countries. He believed in what he saw, and his Papa, who was a very wise Professor, said that was the only wise way. But the sharp eyes of Carlo saw that his Mamma always looked sad at such words ; looked sad, indeed, at much that his Papa told him ; “ just like she looks when she wishes I wouldn't,” thought Carlo. And he had heard nurse say to cook that his Papa was “ a worse haythen than all thim Protestants.” He was sure this must be some dreadful thing, because nurse said it with the same voice in which she told Carlo what became of bad, bad boys when they died.

Altogether there were many questions Carlo wanted answered, if only the grown-ups would tell him the same things. They didn't ; they never did. When he asked his Papa what Christmas was, for instance, he said it was “ a fool's day,”—whatever that was. He said he wouldn't have a Christmas in his house if Carlo's Mamma were not so sentimental and so ill. And Santa Claus. His nurse had told him about Santa Claus, and had even shown him the real picture of the saint. But when he had said, “ Papa ! what is Santa Claus ?”, Papa had answered in his very gruffest voice, “ *A lie !*”. Only think ! But how could there be a picture of him if he wasn't alive somewhere ? Carlo asked his Mamma next, and she said, “ Santa Claus is a real spirit of love and kindness, who comes every Christmas to children whose parents love them.” As for nurse, she just held up her hands and exclaimed, “ Master Carlo ! Where do ye expect to go to whin ye die, if ye don't belave Santa Claus is a little, fat, rale, live gintleman, what will lave yees a bunch av sticks an' ye're a bad bye, Sor ?” It was so about everything. The grown-ups all told you different stories, and frowned at you if you didn't believe them all at once.

If they only knew how tired a child gets sometimes with all their mixed-up tales, and how many new questions come popping into his head then!

Now there was one, this very minute. It was a question that was an old friend of Carlo's. He had been asking it ever since he could remember, every once in a while. He wondered what "God" was, and why He let grown-up people be naughty, and not children. Nurse was always talking about Him, and how angry He would be for every fault. "The badder a boy is, the more God keeps coming around!" poor Carlo cried out. "I should think He'd hate to be so near, always getting children scolded. Why don't he never come when I'm *good*? Perhaps because being good is so dreadful stupid," thought poor Carlo. Down deep in his little heart was a thought he was afraid of; a thought which he knew would draw down upon him the frowns and anger of all his little world. It was a thought only to be whispered to a bird in a tree; or to the moon on bright nights; or perhaps to some trusted companion when you were both naughty and in punishment, two stubborn little rebels together. This was the thought,—if only you please won't be shocked at it. "Perhaps there isn't any God at all! Perhaps He's just an ogre made up by the big people, like the one in Jack-the-Giant-Killer, on purpose to make boys behave!" Some days Carlo felt sure this was true; and he knew, he *knew* his Papa would not scold him for saying so. What he feared was the sad, sad look in the eyes of his pretty Mamma. But he could *think*, and think he did, that if a boy was to behave like this God of theirs did; spying, meddling, killing people in Bible stories, and being different to every body; always on the side of the grown-ups and always hard on the children; Carlo was sure such a boy would be put into dark closets for life. "It just makes me mad," thought Carlo, "to have them say He loves me. He's nasty; I don't want Him to love me. He made His little boy grow up so unhappy and be *killed* for me. I'm glad I ain't God's little boy and I won't be, either." By this it may be seen that Carlo's Papa was partly right when he said the boy would get no good from Sunday School. But like Carlo himself, his Father dreaded the mournful look in the eyes of his dying young wife. "There are times in life," he groaned, "when a man has to choose between being a brute or a liar." Uncle Dick had suggested that there was a third way, a golden mean between the atheism of the Father and the strict theology of the Mother, but while she lay there dying, trying with her last breath, as it were, to bias the fresh young soul of her son, for whom she feared perdition if she could not set his mind in a fixed direction before leaving him;—while she so lay, it was impossible to wound her. Uncle Dick resigned himself and trusted to Carlo himself; to something that he was sure was in Carlo, and would some day speak to the boy. Meanwhile,

how sad to see the awful waste of energies directed to the thwarting of nature, to the attempts to alter the immutable Laws !

Carlo's last thought made him fling himself impatiently on the rug by the fire, the better to gaze up at the Christ-child on the Christmas tree. It had wings, and a star on its forehead. It was all gold and pink and white, like pretty Mamma, and Carlo loved it. He hated to think that such a lovely being had been nailed on an awful cross, had grown up to be a man, just like Papa's friends, only better, he supposed, and had been so good that people hated him and killed him. "It is stupid to be good, and people hate men for it out in the big world," mused Carlo. His little brain ached with all the contradictions about him. Unknown to himself, the child felt the strain of the contest which was killing his Mother ; which was rending the world all about him ; the contest between Science and Theology, and, still more, between Matter and Spirit. He looked up at the shining figure on the tree, and said in his clear young voice, "Christ-child, I do wish you would tell me the real, true Truth."

It was so still that Carlo heard all the clocks ticking. There was a pause. The child lay so still, with the fire shining on his curls, that you would have thought him asleep.

Then the Christ-child spoke in a voice like the chime of bells, and said ; "I will, Carlo ! What do you want to know ?"

You may be surprised, you big people. Carlo was not. He had always known that there are fairies, and that things can speak. He once talked with a squirrel in a tree, though neither of them made a sound. Children know well that all that you can think is possible. So he simply answered in a pleased little tone, "Then tell me, Christ-child, how you can be God if you were a man, and if you're up there on my Christmas-tree."

"I am not up on your tree," said the Christ-child.

"Oh ! Christ-child ! Do you tell stories too ? I hear you speaking up there."

"That is not myself," said the Christ-child. "That is my picture. You have known before now, Carlo, that pictures could speak."

"Yes ; all the pictures talk to children," the boy assented. "I hope I shan't forget it when I grow up. But where are you really, then ?"

"I am everywhere, Carlo. Everything is my picture, and all try to speak of me. I am in the stars and in the glowworms ; I am in the winds and in the mosses ; I am in the fruits, in the oceans, in the storms, and in the heart. I am All. I am God."

"But how can you be so big, if you are just the Christ-child ?"

"They call me that when I am young," the voice said. "But I am

not in one little body, like yours, Carlo. I am in all bodies, but they are not me. Listen! You will feel me in yours!"

Carlo started. Down in his heart he felt a stir, a strange sweet feeling that filled him so full of joy.

"Here I am," said the voice in his heart. "When you do wrong, it is I who speak to you and make you sorry."

"I thought that was Carlo's own self," cried the boy.

"It is yourself, but I am yourself, Carlo. I am the inner Voice in your heart. I live in the hearts of all men and all things. I am *the within* of all creatures and all beings. Long, long ago I slept in the Heavens. Then I woke, and I came into the world. I came because even God wants to feel and to know the great world which is himself. When I came I was a child, because I had not grown up in that world. You know what growing pains are, Carlo! When I entered into all these bodies, when I tried to make them speak of me, and tried to make them so pure and good that they should become myself, and when they would not, then they crucified me. The nails and the thorns are their evil deeds. And when men are entirely wicked, then they kill the voice in their hearts."

"But you are alive all the same, and I don't understand that."

"I am alive because I am the Christ-spirit."

"What's a spirit?", Carlo interrupted.

"I cannot tell you. But you may feel it. When you gave your lunch to the lame beggar yesterday, you felt a spirit in your heart. When you said you had been good, and mamma kissed you, but you knew you had told a story, you felt a spirit inside that reproached you and would not let you rest. When the storm howls outside and you lie listening to music stealing through the darkness and over the uproar of the storm, and you feel safe and happy without knowing why, then you feel a spirit. When you look up at the bright stars and one shines and shines till you can't look away, but you love it and something goes out of you to the star, and something comes from the star to your heart, then you feel your spirit and the star-spirit meeting."

"Then what I feel is a spirit?"

"No, Carlo. But that which causes all these things; that which is *behind* everything; that which you cannot see or hear, but only feel when you are very still; that is Spirit and *in it I am*. I ride in that feeling as your heart rides in you."

"And why do you take so much trouble for everything, Christ-child?"

"Ah, Carlo! My Carlo! I love men. They may be mine. They may grow up to be me. I cannot tell you how to-day. It is a long, long story. But I will tell it every day, if you will only listen. I will teach you better than any one can if you will only ask me in your heart."

“And what will you teach me first, Christ-child!”

“To love all beings, for all are mine, and I am speaking in the heart of all. Even the stones grow through the wonderful music of my Voice. If you kill the bird, you kill my picture, and you drive me out of that pretty form I loved. If you strike a child, you strike my image. No one can hurt *me*, or pain *me*, or kill *me*. For I am God. But these creatures which I came to help, to raise up to great Beings, they can be destroyed and scattered for a time. Even a little child can interrupt my work for a while. If you do not listen to me, Carlo; if you do not obey me when I speak in your heart, and believe my voice above all others, then I cannot join you to myself; then we cannot grow up to be one great, wise Being; then I cannot take you home to God where we are one, you and I. And thus you can prevent my work.”

“When I want to be bad, is it you who speak to me then?” said Carlo, puzzled.

“No. It is yourself, that thinks it does not know me. It is because you do not know that I am really Carlo; I am what Carlo may grow up to be, but what he is not yet.”

“How shall I know which Voice is you, then, Christ-child?”

“You may know by this. I shall never tell you to treat any person, or anything, any differently than you would me myself. I will only speak to you in gentle, quiet hours. And often you will make mistakes, for that is just what you are put into the world for, Carlo; you are put there to learn to know my Voice from all the rest. If you try, you will know. When people have puzzled you so much, it was I said down in your heart, ‘Never mind! Let us go play.’ For it was not time for you to think of those things. Often I whispered to you, ‘*Carlo! it is not true.*’ I am always speaking from your heart and from the hearts of all things. Listen for me. Try to know me when I speak from the lips of other people. For I love you! I am yourself. And you, little Carlo, you may grow to be everywhere in the great world. Wait, try, and you will understand.”

“I will try, Christ-child! I will try!” cried Carlo, springing to his feet. The room was quite still. The shining figure hung upon the tree. Everything seemed as usual. Yet down in his heart Carlo felt a strange warm feeling, a something bigger than himself. When he tried to tell his mamma, he could not make it real, and she said it was a dream; but whether or not, on that Christmas Day the Christ-child was born again.

J. CAMPBELL VER PLANCK.

LETTERS THAT HAVE HELPED ME.

(Continued from December.)

II.

My dear Brother ;

Your last long letter came duly to hand and has been read with much pleasure. It is quite rare to find one willing to enter this movement on the basis you have laid down for yourself, and my previous letter was written in order to see what your attitude really was, and also because I then felt from your writing that you were really in earnest. And before yours of to-day, I fell to thinking about you and wondering whether a future of power, a brilliancy of knowledge, was not your aspiration, and what effect certain occurrences would have upon that.

Judge, then, my pleasure in reading your present words exactly answering my mental inquiries of yesterday and placing you in the right position.

It is true, we must aspire ardently, and blessed is the one who, after the first aspiration, is wise enough to see the Truth.

Three qualities forever encompass us,—*Satwa* (truth and stability) ; *Raja* (action, war, aspiration, ambition) ; *Tamas* (indifference, ignorance, darkness). None may be ignored. So the path lies from *Tamas*, up through war, ambition, and aspiration, to *Satwa*, or truth and stability. We are now in *Rajasika* regions, sometimes lifting our fingers up to the hem of the garment of *Satwa*, ever aspiring, ever trying to purify our thoughts and free ourselves from the attachment to action and objects. So, of course, the ardent student naturally aspires for power. This is wise. But he must soon begin to see what he must do for real progress. For continual aspiration for power merely, is sure to sow for us the giant weed of self, which is the giant spoken of in *Light on the Path*.

As to the Theosophical Society, all should be admitted, for we can refuse *no one*. If this is a Universal Brotherhood, we can make no distinctions ; but we can put ourselves right in the beginning by seeing that people do not enter with mistaken notions of what we have. And yet with all our precautions, how often we find persons who are not really sincere themselves judging us by their standard, unbelieving in our sincerity. They enter, they find that each must study for himself and that no guides are told off to reach one ; then they are disgusted. They forget that “the kingdom of heaven must be taken by violence.” We have also had to suffer from our friends. People who have joined us in secret like Nicodemus ; they have stood idly by, waiting for the Cause to get strong or to get fashionable, and leaving all the hard fighting to be done by a few earnest men who defied the hosts of materialism and of conventionality. Had they spoken for their Cause, more earnest people would long ago have heard of the

movement, instead of being kept away until now, like yourself, for want of knowledge that it existed.

You will find that other members care for nothing but Theosophy, and are yet forced by circumstances to work in other fields as well. What moments they have left are devoted to the Cause, and in consequence they have no unoccupied hours; each moment, day and evening, is filled up, and therefore they are happy. Yet they are unhappy that they cannot give their entire working time to the Cause in which some have been from the beginning. They feel like Claude St. Martin, a burning desire within them to get these truths to the ears of all men. They are truths, and you are in the right path. In America it is as easy to find the Light of Lights as in India, but all around you are those who do not know these things, who never heard of them, and yet many of our fellow members are only anxious to study for their own benefit. Sometimes, if it were not for my reliance on those Great Beings who beckon me ever on, I would faint, and, leaving these people to themselves, rush off into the forest. So many people like Theosophy, and yet they at once wish to make it select and of high tone. It is for all men. It is for the common people, who are ever with us. Others, again, come in and wait like young birds for food to be put into them: they *will not think*, and ages must pass before they will progress.

You misunderstood a little the words "Do not think much of me." Underline "*much*," but not "think." You will please think all the thoughts you will of me, but do not place me on any pinnacle; that's all I meant.

A constant endeavor towards perfecting the mere mortal machine is folly. Thereby we sometimes fail to live up to our own intuitions. This habit goes on for some time, but will get weaker as other senses (inner ones) begin to appear. Yet know the new fully before being off with the old.

Inasmuch as we learn almost solely from each other—as we are all here for each other—the question of the effect of affinities upon our acts and thoughts is enormous and wide. It anon saves us, and anon damns. For we may meet in our lives a person who has a remarkable effect, either for good or ill, because of the affinities engendered in past lives. And now our eyes are open, we act to-day for the future.

That you may pass beyond the sea of darkness, I offer you my life and help.

Z.

III.

Say, Brother Jasper, are you tired? I am. Not tired of fate or of the great "Leaders of the World," but with all these people who gape and gape and are (excuse me) so Americanly "independent," as if men were ever independent of each other.

You ask about the "moment of choice." It is made up of all moments. It is not in space or time, but is the aggregation of those moments flying by us each instant. It is referred to in *Esoteric Buddhism* as a period not yet arrived for the race, when it will as a whole be compelled to make choice for good or evil. But any single individual can bring on the period for himself. When it will or has come, the uninstructed cannot tell. For the student of occultism it may come in the next instant, or it may come one hundred lives after. But it cannot come this instant unless all the previous lives have led up to it. Yet as regards the student, even if it be presented to him and he refuse, he will be brought to the choice in future existences, with the whole body of his race. Race influences are insidious and powerful. For instance, my race has its peculiarities deeply seated and inherited from an extraordinary past. I must be under their influence in this body as a necessary part of my experience. In another life I might have been a prosaic Hottentot, or an Englishman, and in a succeeding one I might be under the influence of other race peculiarities. Those influences are, then, guiding me every moment, and each thought I have adds to them now, for either my own future use or for some other person who will come under the power of part of the force generated now by me.

As to the sub-conscious mind. It is difficult to explain. I find constantly that I have ideas that internally I thoroughly understand, and yet can find no language for them. Call it sub-conscious if you like. It is there and can be affected: indeed, it is affected every moment. It is a nearness to the universal mind. So if I desire to influence—say your mind—I do not formulate your sub-conscious plane, but firmly and kindly think of you and think of the subject I wish you to think of. This must reach you. If I am selfish, then it has more difficulty to get there; but if it be brotherly, then it gets there more easily, being in harmony with the universal mind and the Law. The Psychological Society speaks of it, and says that the influence "emerges into the lower mind" by one or more of the channels. But they do not know what those "channels" are, or even if they do exist. In fact the whole subject of mind is only faintly understood in the West. They say "mind," meaning the vast range and departments of that which they call mind, whereas there must be a need for the names of those departments. When the true ideas are grasped, the names will follow. Meanwhile we must be satisfied with "mind" as including the whole thing. But it does not. Certainly it is not ordinary mental motion—ratiocination—to grasp in an instant a whole subject, premises and conclusions, without stopping to reason. It cannot be called a *picture*, for with some it comes as an idea, and not as a picture. Memory. What is that? Is it brain-impulsion; or similarity of vibration, recognized upon being repeated and

then producing a picture? If so, then the power to recognize the vibration as the same as before, is separate from the matter which vibrates. And if the power inhere in the brain cells, how is it possible, when we know they are constantly being changed? Yet memory is perfect, no matter what happens. That it is above brain is clear, because a man may be killed by having his brain blown to atoms, and yet his "shell" can give all the incidents of his life, and they are not taken from the brain, for that is dead. Where, then, is the sub-conscious mind? And where are the channels, and how are they connected? I think through the heart, and that the heart is the key to it all, and that the brain is only the servant of the heart,¹ for remember that there is in it the "small dwarf who sits at the centre." Think it out on that line now for yourself—or any other line that you may choose, but *think*. As ever, Z.

BE IT DONE UNTO THEE ACCORDING TO THY DESIRE.

Those whose attention has been but recently attracted to Theosophical studies often have considerable difficulty in taking their bearings. These are attracted by the mystery that attaches to Theosophy, and have equal difficulty in estimating their own motives and in understanding the new doctrines. There are, indeed, a few who do not come under this head, those who realise that they have at last found that for which they waited and sought; but these need little assistance, for the momentum gained by long and weary waiting will carry them a long way on the path. The great majority of students belong to the former class, and these are now for the first time brought face to face with themselves. If they mean only to have an amusing and interesting flirtation with occultism, get the reputation of being "a little fast" in the new fad, yet preserve through it all their reputation for virtuous intelligence, they ought to be made aware that they are trifling with very serious matters. It would not be difficult to imagine a man who had been out with boon companions engaged in drunken orgies, and who at midnight had come reeling home, leering and besotted, to find that home in flames, and all he had held most dear and that he had imagined safe being devoured by the cruel flames. Such a one would be sobered in a moment, and in that awful awakening self-reproach and horror would take possession of his soul. He would in that awful moment stand face to face with himself. His own conscience would be his Nemesis, though he might have had nothing directly to do with bringing on the calamity that had overtaken him. Suppose he had returned from a mission of mercy to find the same calamity awaiting him, the difference in the two cases can easily be imagined. He would now

¹ Not the physical heart, but the real centre of life in man.—J. N.

be face to face with his calamity, and in either case he would doubtless do his best to rescue his treasures. What makes the difference in these cases? Is it not all in the man's own soul? Every student of Theosophy will find the subject full of mystery, but that mystery will be but the reflection of his own nature.

If one were to inquire, What is Theosophy anyhow?, and what shall I find in it of interest or value?, it might be answered, What are you? and what do you seek in Theosophy? Are you satisfied with your present life and your past achievement? Does it give you zest and satisfaction? If it does, and if you are quite satisfied with things as they are, you had better let Theosophy alone, for it will break your repose and make you the most wretched of mortals; it will place you face to face with yourself, and you will not be pleased with the reflection in the mirror; nor will you ever again find that self-complacent satisfaction you have heretofore enjoyed when thinking of yourself. If you are involved in a round of pleasure, and are rushing from one sensual delight to another, discontented when left to yourself, yet still imagining you are happy if only you can keep up the dizzy dance of life, you will find nothing in Theosophy to compensate you for the lost pleasure; it will break the charm and destroy the illusion. Let it alone. The baby has first to learn that fire will burn its little fingers, before it will learn to avoid the fire. So also with the votary of pleasure; until he has learned the Cheat, and how utterly inadequate are all sensuous enjoyments to satisfy a living soul, he will seek these enjoyments as a child cries for the light or vainly reaches out its frail arms for the moon. You will find in Theosophy just what you desire and just what you find in yourself. It will not satisfy you if you still long for selfish enjoyment; it will repel you, and send you back from its cold embrace to the dizzy whirl of the maddening dance of life, glad that there is warmth *somewhere*.

If, on the other hand, your soul is already filled with a great *unrest*; if you have already discovered the cheat and lost the old zest of childhood, and yet been unable to find anything to take its place; and if you are almost ready to despair, and count life as a failure and hardly worth the living, then, my friend, my brother, Theosophy has a message for you. It will again show you yourself, and more, it will show you the meaning of life, and place you face to face with your priceless opportunities, and just in proportion to your present hopelessness and discouragement will it inspire you with zeal and with courage. It will show you the cause of failure, the cause of disease, and the cause of unhappiness, and it will give you the panacea for all these ills of life. It will banish that bane of life, *ennui*, forever. It will enable you to find within yourself the disease and its remedy, and it will put you in possession of a never-failing source of inspiration and of joy. If you desire all this, be it done unto you

according to your desire. But do you really desire it? Remember the issues are with your own soul. You are both priest and penitent, and absolution can come only to a clean conscience. There can be no deception practiced. You will be alone with your own soul, and will realize how utterly hopeless, how absurd; it would be to attempt any deception. *There can be none.* Are you afraid to stand face to face thus with yourself? and do you prefer to wait for the midnight hour and the great awakening! Then wait! no human being can say you Nay. Follow the cheat called pleasure! Raise high the orgies of self! Silence the voice within, and wait till all is ready or till death come and the account is closed.

The true Theosophists are not a legion, the ranks are by no means crowded. These are not measured by their occult lore, or by their mysterious power, nor yet by any worldly standard, but solely by their convictions. They are one and all *dead in earnest*, dead to all things else. They may not outwardly yet renounce, but they have inwardly relinquished, and will rejoice at the coming of the time when incidentals shall vanish and only essentials remain. These have lived in all ages, giving meaning and dignity to life. invincible and immortal.

Think of Epictetus, when tortured for a trifle, saying to his tormentor, his "master!", "If you twist my limb much farther, you will break it, and so deprive yourself of a servant," and, when the bone broke, replying only, "There, I told you you would break it." A poor crippled slave, yet all the masters among besotted kings could not touch his soul, more than a drop of water could reach the heart of volcanic fires. But this was so long ago, and the world is so much wiser and better now! and Epictetus was not only a slave but a heathen! Well, courts of law, masquerading in the name of Justice, at the command of Mammon can still imprison the greatest discoverer of the age, and when they have persecuted Mr. Keely to death they will doubtless ascertain the commercial value of his "secret." Whether power wears a crown, a mitre, a golden helmet, or a cap and bells, 'tis all the same. Power in the throne, in the holy Inquisition, in the seat of Justice, or in the service of mammon, will never comprehend and never master the silent power and invincible courage of one noble soul that knows and loves the simple truth.

Though we persecute truth daily,
 Though we plant with thorns her brow,
 Scourge her, spit upon, revile her,
 And crown error here and now :
 Through the cycles of the ages
 Truth comes uppermost at last,
 And the heroes of the present
 Were the martyrs of the past.

HARIJ.

THE SERPENT'S BLOOD.

It was an old and magic island. Many centuries before, the great good Adepts had landed on its shores from the West and established for a while the Truth. But even they could not stay the relentless tread of fate, and knew that this was only a halting place, a spot where should be concentrated spiritual power sufficiently strong to remain as a leaven for several cycles, and that should be a base upon which in long ages after ages might be erected again the spiritual temple of truth. These blessed beings remained there for centuries uncounted, and saw arise out of the adjoining seas other lands, first of soft mud that afterwards hardened into rocks and earth. They taught the people and found them apt students, and from their number drew many disciples who were full of zeal as well as patience and faith. Among the least of those I was, and toiled long and earnestly through successive lives upon the Island. And the Island came to be known as the Isle of Destiny, from mysterious future events foretold for it by the greatest of the Adepts and their seers.

Yet I succeeded not in reaching the point when I could hope to pass on from the Island with the teachers, who said that at a certain day they must travel away to other lands, leaving behind them their blessing to those who willingly remained of the disciples ; those who rebelled had still to remain, but without the aid and comfort of the benediction of the blessed ones.

At last the day of separation came and the kingly guides departed, leaving well established the true religion and practice. Yet we all knew that even that must have its decay, in which perhaps even some of us might have a hand, but the centre of power was not to depart from the Island until its destiny should be accomplished ; the power might be hidden, but it would remain latent until the time arrived.

Many years came and went ; still I found myself upon the Island again and again reincarnated. With sorrow I saw the ancient practices overlooked and different views prevailing. It was the power of the serpent.

On one well known mountain the Masters had placed a gem, and at the mountain's base a tower. These I have spoken of incidentally in a former tale. I knew that mountain well, and saw it every day from the tower at some distance away where my own duties lay. I was present when the wonderful gem was placed upon the mountain, and of all those who saw the grand event, I alone remembered. Since that day many centuries had rolled away, and the other disciples, reincarnated there also, had forgotten the event but knew of the gem. Some of them who in other lives had been my servants in the tower were now my earthly superiors because they had devoted their minds to formal outward power, which is only

the weak symbol of the reality that should exist within. And so the tradition alone remained, but the diamond now blazed less brilliantly than in the days when I first knew it. By night its rays shot up into the heavens, and the priests month after month tried ceremonies and prayers in vain, in order to cause it to burst forth in all the glory of its pristine days. They knew that such a blaze was a possibility—indeed an old prophecy—but that was all they could tell, and were ignorant of the remainder of it, which, if they had known, perhaps none of their ceremonies would have been performed. It was that the great and glorious blaze of light from the mountain diamond would only take place after the last drop of the serpent's blood was spilled upon the Island, and that then the diamond itself would never again be found upon the rock where it had rested for so many ages. And I alone of them all knew this; but I knew not where the serpent was to be found. His influence was felt and seen, for in the early days he alone was the sole reptile that eluded pursuit, as his birth was due to the evil thoughts of a wandering black magician who had landed for a week upon the Island so long before that the priests had no record of it. This serpent had to be killed and his blood spilled upon the ground to remove forever the last trace of the evil done by the magician, and for that event only was the diamond kept upon the mountain through the power of the good Adepts who had put it there. It preserved the germ of truth from the serpent's breath, and would not be needed when he was destroyed. Had the priests known this, no ceremonies for increasing its brilliancy would have been tried, as they would rather suffer the serpent's influence than lose the gem. Indeed, they believed that their tenure of power was in some way connected with the diamond mountain. They were right. I knew the fatal result for them when I succeeded in discovering the place of the serpent.

Day after day and long into the darkness of the night, I meditated and peered into every corner of the Island. At the full moon when the diamond grew a little clearer, I saw the slimy traces of the serpent upon the Island but could never find his lair. At last one night a fellow-student who had passed on before me with those by whom the diamond had been set, and who now and again returned through the aid to help his old friend, came to see me and, as he was going away, said, "Look at the foot of the mountain."

So near the sacred diamond I had never thought it possible the foul reptile could be found; and yet it was there, through the evil nature of the high-priest, he had taken up his secure retreat. I looked and saw him at the foot, breathing venom and black clouds of the soul's despair.

The great day of ceremonies for the diamond was again at hand, and I determined that then should witness the death of the serpent and the last bright shining of the diamond.

The morning broke clear and warm. Great throngs of people crowded about the mountain-temple, expectant of some great result from the ceremonies. It seemed as if these natural psychics felt within them that the diamond would burst forth with its ancient light, and yet every now and then a fear was expressed that in its greatest beauty it would be lost to them forever.

It was my turn to officiate at the ceremony after the high priest, and I alone was aware that the serpent had crawled even into the temple and was coiled up behind the shrine. I determined to seize him and, calling upon our ancient master, strangle him there and spill his blood upon the ground.

Even as I thought this, I saw my friend from other land enter the temple disguised as a wandering monk, and knew that my half-uttered aspiration even then was answered. Yet death stared me in the face. There, near the altar, was the sacred axe always ready to fell the man who in any way erred at the ceremony. This was one of the vile degenerations of the ancient law, and while it had been used before upon those who had only erred in the forms, I knew that the Priest himself would kill me as soon as the diamond's great flame had died away. The evening darkness would be upon us by the time that the moment in the performance permitted me to destroy the enemy of our race. So I cared not for death, for had I not faced it a thousand times as a blessed release and another chance.

At last the instant came. I stooped down, broke through the rule, and placing my hand behind the shrine caught the reptile by the neck. The High Priest saw me stoop and rushed to the axe. Another moment's delay, and all hope was gone. With superhuman power I grasped and squeezed. Through my skull shot a line of fire, and I could see my wandering monk wave his hand, and instantly the Priest stumbled and fell on his way to the axe. Another pressure, and the serpent was dead. My knife! It was in my girdle, and with it I slit his neck. His red and lively blood poured out upon the ground and—the axe fell upon my head, and the junior priest of the temple fell dead to the floor.

But only my body died. I rose upon the air and saw myself lying there. The people neither stirred nor spoke. The Priest bent over me. I saw my wandering monk smile. The serpent's blood spread slowly out beside my body, and then collected into little globes, each red and lively. The diamond on the mountain behind the temple slowly grew bright, then flashed and blazed. Its radiance penetrated the temple, while priests and people, except my wandering monk, prostrated themselves. Then sweet sounds and soft rustling filled the air, and voices in strange language spoke stranger words from the mountain. Yet still the people did not move. The light of the diamond seemed to gather around the serpent's blood. Slowly each globe of blood was eaten up by the light, except one more

malevolent than the others, and then that fateful sphere of life rose up into the air, suddenly transformed itself into a small and spiteful snake that with undulating motion flew across the air and off into the night to the distant Isles. Priest and people arose in fear, the voices from the mountain ceased, the sounds died out, the light retreated, and darkness covered all. A wild cry of despair rose up into the night, and the priest rushed outside to look up at the mountain.

The serpent's blood still stained the ground, and the diamond had disappeared.

BRYAN KINNAVAN.

THE TEST OF THEOSOPHIC INTEREST.

The test of Theosophic interest is precisely the test of every other kind of interest,—What one will do to promote it. And here, obviously, two considerations arise.

The first is that no act which is superficial, or perfunctory, or for personal benefit, can at all gauge devotion to a cause which is both impersonal and deep-reaching. It is easy to descant on the glory of a system so elevated as the Wisdom-Religion. It is as easy to proclaim one's own appreciation of its tenets. It is not difficult to attend punctiliously the meetings of a Theosophical Society, and to absorb with readiness, perhaps with profit, whatever of truth may be there disclosed. It may not be easy, but it is entirely possible, to read every Theosophical work of repute, to extract its main thought, and to digest well the learning acquired. And yet, very evidently, the first two are exercises only of the voice, the last two only of the mind. If Theosophy was a matter of the breath or the brains, this participation in it would not only be salutary but ample.

In truth, however, Theosophy gives but a light benediction to either the mere talker or the mere student. It by no means undervalues sincere homage or zealous inquiry, but it is so intent on the work of transferring interest from the lower to the higher levels of being, so eager to excite the unselfish enthusiasm for others' good which, subordinating its own advancement, shall be most thrilled at the chance to advance Humanity, that its ideal is the man who is exerting himself to help others, rather than the man who is exerting himself to get ahead. And, as it believes that the present most efficacious agency for extending truth, vivifying motive, and elevating the race is the Theosophical Society, Theosophy regards as its best expositors those who are working most for the Society it has founded.

Some man with more impetuosity than perception will at once cry, "But this is only the Church and its motive over again!" Not at all.

There is no question of doctrinal triumphs, of sect growth, of rival temples, of missionary comparisons. The elements of social distinction, of clerical rank, of legislative influence are all absent. There is not even the ambition to push the Society into the area of recognized religious organizations, for it not only disclaims competition with Churches, but is disqualified for such competition by its lack of creed, its slight coherency of organism, and its vigorous assertion of individualism in opinion and in training.

Moreover, before assuming the danger of possible ecclesiasticism, one must remember that the standard applied to the Theosophical Society is exactly the same as that applied to a Theosophist,—self-forgetfulness in work for others. If the individual member is held to the doctrine that he best realizes Theosophical aims through the obliteration of ambition and the substitution thereof of an altruistic life, similarly as to the Society. Self-aggrandizement, as a pursuit, might evolve a Black Magician; it might even evolve a Church; but it never could evolve a Theosophical Society.

Of the three objects contemplated in the establishment of the T. S., the first and greatest is the promotion of Universal Brotherhood. But this does not mean merely a sentimental recognition of a general human fraternity; it means an active beneficence towards the rest of the family. And if correct views, loftier ideals, richer motives, finer principles, healthier aspirations are more attainable through the Theosophic system than through other systems of faith or morals, the Theosophist is best serving the interests of his brother-men by giving that system all the publicity he can. And if, still further, he accepts the fact that the Masters have adopted the Society as their channel for conveying and distributing Truth to the human family, he reaches the conclusion that in laboring for the Society he is conforming most closely to their desires, benefiting most efficiently the race of which he is a part, using most hopefully the best agency for spiritual good. Practically, therefore, the truest Theosophist at the present day is he who is most interested in the Theosophical Society.

And now has been reached the point where the test of Theosophic interest may be applied to a Theosophist. *What is he doing to sustain the Society?* Not how many times does he place F. T. S. after his surname; not how loud his voice in benediction on the Founders; not how warm in praise his letters to active members; not how many meetings he attends, or books he reads, or intricate problems in Occultism he explores; not what food he eats, or clothes he wears, or opinions he proclaims; but *what is he doing to help?* He may be copious in phrases and efflorescent in gracious speech, or, as are some, mysteriously mournful over the faults of others which so impede their own progression; he may fold hands before the needs of the Cause, and piously avow trust in the interposition of Mahatmas, or he may point out that the time is unpropitious, or that a spir-

itual system has no claim for cash, or that it degrades Theosophy to make a collection; he may suggest that in giving his name he does better than give funds, or that there seems as yet no opening for the expression of his zeal, or that his sympathies are with us and his one aspiration is to be upon the path. And yet the inexorable test, inexorable because in the nature of things and therefore not amenable to cajolery or humbug, stands before him,—*What is he doing to help?*

The second consideration referred to at the outset is that the test of Theosophic interest is not the absolute amount of help given, but that amount as related to the capacity of the giver. Five cents, five hours, constitute a far larger proportion of one man's available means or time, than five thousand dollars or five months do of another's. Hence it is not the figures, but their fractional value, which determines the extent of the interest. Just so is it in every other human interest. How much one cares for a relation, for a friend, for a philanthropic cause, for a public object, is unerringly shown by the proportion of outlay he devotes thereto. And this does not mean a careless profusion with superfluous goods, but the cutting-off of personal indulgences, cherished but dispensable, for the better sustentation of a cause,—in other words, *self-sacrifice*. Nor does self-sacrifice mean the sacrifice of other people, as some think; the bearing with great fortitude privations one does not share, the consecration of money or time or effort which really belongs to one's family or entourage. It means the sacrifice of *yourself*, of your own habits and enjoyments and expenses, in order to build up a cause you profess to love. And the extent to which this is done gauges the proportion of your love for that cause to your love for yourself.

Now Theosophy is not unreasonable or captious. It does not advise any man to starve himself, or to wear rags, or to scout at the conditions of life in the civilization wherein he was born and which express the laws of sociology. It does not enjoin monasticism, or seclusion, or parsimony, or want of public spirit, or abnegation of social amenities, or one-sidedness, or bigotry, or folly under any name. We are to be men, rational men, civilized men, cultivated men, and we promote no noble cause, least of all the noblest, if we are unsocial, unpractical, or fantastic. But while all this is true, it is equally true that in one's own private affairs, in that sphere of personal belongings outside the claims of others and wherein absolute freedom is unquestioned, the test of Theosophic interest is directly applicable. It is, as has been shown, the proportion of time, money, literary or other effort, one is willing to give up for the Theosophical Society.

Not a few sincere readers may honestly ask, What is there for me to do? The answer to this is the showing what there is to be done, and

then each may inquire within himself how and to what extent he can aid. First, there is the support of the Theosophical Society itself, its organic action and work. Hardly any one is too poor to become a member-at-large and aid to the extent of \$1.00 a year. If able to contribute more, he can do so with the certainty that its growing needs in printing, postage circulation of documents, advertising, the occasional schemes for Theosophic advance for which direct help is asked, constitute an ample channel for any donation. Then there is Theosophic Literature. Its periodicals need to be sustained, sustained by the subscriptions of those who believe them useful, sustained by those who both take them for their own reading and order them sent to points where they may do good. Pamphlets, tracts, documents may be bought by the zealous and sent to individuals where budding interest is suspected, thus aiding to make possible new ones and giving circulation to those now printed. Theosophical books may be presented to Public Libraries, and, as current facts show, *with the certainty that they will be read*. In private conversations a Theosophical idea or phrase may be dropped, enough to provoke inquiry, possibly investigation. Openings for the impartation of truth may be judiciously used. Then there is the establishment of a Branch. Every member of the Society in a town without a Branch may well judge its foundation his special mission. In many ways and in many hearts the seed may be sown, confident that time, possibly short time, will bring that harvest. If a member of a Branch, he has before him work in strengthening it, enlarging its Library, enlivening its meetings, helping to feed and not merely feeding, thinking out schemes by which its existence may be known through the community and it be recognized as a distributing centre of light. If having access to the press, he can secure the insertion of brief items or clippings which will keep the topic before the public. If competent to write, he can present some truth he finds potent or correct some mistake he sees popular.

What is there for me to do? Everything that you *can* do. A word, a hint, a tract, a volume, a subscription. If it costs you nothing, your interest is nothing. If it costs you little, your interest is little. If it costs till you *feel* it, then it is that you feel your interest. And when you yourself, body, soul, and spirit, are devoted to the doing, when you thrill with that topic as with no other topic, when your pleasure is in self-sacrificing efforts for its promotion, when you forget yourself, have lost yourself, in it, then will you have become in measure what are the Founders,—may one not even say, what are the Masters Themselves.

THEO-SOPHIA.

A LETTER TO A TRUTH SEEKER.

Theo-Sophia, by Nemo, is a "Letter to a Seeker" which claims to proceed "from the Wisdom of the Wise," and it is my intention to examine this claim, so far as I am capable of doing so.

Wisdom is Truth. The evidence of Truth in a thing must be inherent in that thing, for Truth is her own witness and must be self evident. To establish the claim of this Letter, the Spirit of Truth and Wisdom must prevail in it.

The Letter is written for the express purpose of making "the grave charge of selfishness" against a great Himalayan Brotherhood. This purpose would in itself appear too prejudiced and too personal to be of the "Wisdom of the Wise." It prepares us at once to find error and ignorance, the companions of prejudice. We do find them. Ignorance is attested by mistakes which must be either (A) the outcome of ignorance of the subject, or (B) false statements deliberately made. We discard the second alternative (B), because, apart from this prejudice, Nemo appears to be a truth seeker, though one of contracted range. Also because of the various errors, literary and historical, which substantiate the charge of ignorance. For instance, *Aryarta* for Aryavarta; *Aryats* for Arhats; *Azichi* for Avitchi. Further, when Nemo calls the Himalayan Brotherhood "the Adepts of the Esoteric Buddhist cult," he ignores the historical, oft-repeated fact that this Brotherhood does not profess the Buddhist creed. In a recent article in *Lucifer*, Madam Blavatsky also stated this fact, and in the *Secret Doctrine* she repeats it continually. As Nemo states that *Isis Unveiled* is a production of these adepts, he cannot logically impugn Mme. Blavatsky's testimony there and elsewhere. In the report of the Second Annual Convention of the Theosophical Convention is found a letter signed by Mme. Blavatsky, bearing the seal and sign thereafter of an Adept of the Great Brotherhood. This letter says: "Let no man set up a popery instead of Theosophy.

"Orthodoxy in Theosophy is neither possible nor desirable. It is diversity of opinion * * which keeps the T. S. a living and healthy body. * * The Society would degenerate into a sect, in which a narrow and stereotyped creed would take the place of the living and breathing spirit of Truth and an ever growing knowledge." These Adepts have ever refused to set forth any creed, knowing as They do, that Truth develops continually as Life does, for they are one.

Again Nemo says: "The high esoteric culture of which Indian Rishis boast." Where is this "boast" recorded? Who ever heard or read it? He does not even know what "Rishis" are, or he would know that Their

constitution is composed of such principles as do not admit of "boasts" or earthly vanities. They are highly spiritual Beings; yet in the sacred books we find Them ever speaking with wisdom and humility.

The Brotherhood are next accused of holding their hand when "they might have shattered the deadly caste system of India like a glass bottle." Inferentially they are also referred to as supporters of the caste system. That they are not its supporters is shown; (A) By the reception in the Brotherhood of members of various castes and foreigners, (who under that system rank as low caste.) In *Isis Unveiled* it is stated that among other Adepts is a North American Indian. *The Secret Doctrine* speaks of Hungarian and South American Initiates. (B) The special work of the Theosophical Society (founded by the orders and under the direction of this Brotherhood) in India is the breaking down of the barriers of caste. A letter in *Lucifer* towards the close of Vol. I. is from a Japanese theosophist who visited Madras and describes the great and beneficial change worked in this respect by the T. S., so that persons of all castes mingled freely and children were being brought together for educational purposes. So much for the present. As to the past: does Nemo deny the working of Law? Or the free will of man under that Law? As the Adepts are the servants of Law, and not its selfish violators, as Nemo would have us believe, we may profitably read this statement of one of them.

"Imagine, then, that since we are all convinced that the degradation of India is largely due to the suffocation of her ancient spirituality, and that whatever helps to restore that higher standard of thought and morals must be regenerating in national force, every one of us would naturally and without urging be disposed to push forward the Society * * especially if it really is meant to become a Society untainted by selfish motive. * * But you know, as any man who has read history, that patriots may burst their hearts in vain if circumstances are against them. Sometimes it has happened that no human power, not even the fury and force of the loftiest patriotism, has been able to bend an iron destiny aside from its fixed course, and nations have gone out like torches dropped into the water in the engulfing blackness of ruin. Thus, we who have the sense of our country's fall, though not the power to lift her up at once, cannot do as we would, either as to general affairs or this particular one." (*Occult World*, p. 126.)

"We never pretended to be able to draw nations in the mass to this or that crisis in spite of the general drift of the world's cosmic relations. The cycles must run their rounds. Periods of mental and moral light and darkness succeed each other as day does night. The major and minor yugas must be accomplished according to the established order of things. And we, borne along the mighty tide, can only modify and direct some of its currents." (*Occult World* p., 135.)

In other words, the Brotherhood, like all else in the manifested universe, comes under the Law of Periodicity and cannot alter it. It provides the rise and fall of races, which give birth to the "rare efflorescence" known as an Adept, who, by virtue of his spiritual development, belongs to no one nation but to all.

The late lamented Annandabai Joshee, a Brahmin lady and F. T. S., came to America for the express purpose of taking a medical diploma, with a view to female education in India and a breaking down of caste prejudice. The late Govinda Row Sattay also urged the same idea, and was doing what he could to help it. Hence we see Teachers and followers working on the same lines. It is a point of honor among littérateurs to inform themselves of facts before making public conclusions upon them: why did not Nemo do so? And have we no caste feeling in Europe and England, no social and racial prejudice in America towards, say, the African and native Indian, or the Chinese, practically and politically, if not theoretically? We ask this question because Nemo states that, "the truth of life is not far from any high and earnest man, but *none will find it in the Orient.*" Is Truth, then, confined to a geographical section, and has all the teeming Orient no high and earnest men? Nemo answers: "In this age the true East is found *only* in the farthest West." Is Truth, then, no longer universal? Judging by the line of argument which Nemo deems sufficient, we might point to the effects of wild border and other extreme western life as an indictment against the altruism of the Adepts who, Nemo claims, are found there only. But we do not believe in this line of thought. We know the real Adept *is everywhere*, but as the ministrant of Law and not the arbiter.

We have then specific charges of selfishness made by Nemo. To these we oppose their constant teachings. An Adept writes: "He who does not practice altruism; he who is not prepared to share his last morsel with a weaker or poorer than himself; he who neglects to help his brother man, of whatever race, nation, or creed, whenever and wherever he meets suffering, and who turns a deaf ear to the cry of human misery; *he who hears an innocent person slandered*, whether a brother theosophist or not, and does not undertake his defence as he would undertake his own,—is no theosophist." (*Lucifer*, Nov. 1887).

"Perhaps you will better appreciate our meaning" (of the term "selfish") "when told that in our view the highest aspirations for the welfare of humanity become tainted with selfishness, if in the mind of the philanthropist there lurks the shadow of a desire for self-benefit, *or a tendency to do injustice, even where these exist unconsciously to himself*". (Letter from an Adept. *Occult World*, Page 104).

Judged by these standards, how does Nemo's letter appear? Is its informing spirit either wise, true, or just? Consider Pledge No. 5 of *

Section: "I pledge myself to abstain from condemning others." Evidently in the order Nemo praises no such charity is required, and we can hardly expect him to accept proofs which speak so loudly against his teaching and teachers.

The charge of selfishness is further based upon the seclusion of the Thibetan Adepts. What does either the charge or the seclusion of the mere body amount to? There is no complete seclusion, even of the body. Certain magnetic laws demand that these bodies, storehouses of magneto-electricity, should be invigorated by the pure atmosphere of high and isolated places. In the *Occult World*, we find an Adept demurring to the performance of certain phenomena on the ground that "Simla is 7,000 ft. higher than Allahabad, and the difficulties to be surmounted at the latter" (because lower) "are tremendous." Here we have a hint for the student. But that the Adepts do go bodily among Their fellow men to aid them, we know, for one visited Col. Olcott in this country, leaving His turban behind Him in proof of the actuality of the visit. In the *Occult World* we find another journeying on various errands of helpfulness, and History records many such instances. Moreover, the Adept does not need to take his outer body with him; he can also see and aid without moving either body from its place. The Brothers have all lived and suffered among men. One wrote: "We have passed through far worse places than those you now imagine yourselves to be in." The rules of the Lodge exact from chelas (disciples) devoted service with and for humanity, each in turn, and each Adept was once a chela.

The awful sacrifice made for Humanity by the Greatest of all, He Who Himself is named "*The Great Sacrifice*," is beyond the comprehension of ordinary men. Given a certain spiritual attainment, the Adept works with far higher, wider, and more rapid results upon the spiritual plane, and by spiritual methods, but these take effect upon all planes, the material, diurnal one included.

There is abundant evidence, special and general, private and public, that the Brotherhood works incessantly and upon every plane, to deliver Humanity from the terrible evils caused by ignorance and materiality. I challenge the production of one word of Theirs, or the quotation of one verified deed of Theirs, which will support the charge of selfishness. Their adherents often err, verbally and otherwise, despite the wise counsel of the Teachers, Who are then misjudged for our faults, a lesson we may all take to heart.

One proof more. Nemo admits the antiquity of this hierarchy. *If based upon selfish motives, it could not in the very nature of things exist so long as a Hierarchy.* Universality alone coheres. A society based upon selfish motive contains within itself the elements of its own destruction.

Each member is secretly for himself as against all. A selfish Adept is quite possible ; a black magician. An egotistic, yet age—enduring, Hierarchy is not possible. Nemo himself goes on to say so, and to state, as a Law, the obligation to serve Humanity. “He who isolates himself from this law isolates himself with its penalty and its fate.” He admits the duration of the Hierarchy. Does he then mean that it exists in defiance of the Law? No he is only illògical, unreasoning as those are *who are misled*, or who yield to their own prejudices.

This order is one of merit, of becoming. Men evolute to it and cannot then escape it, but enter by right of Being. Any man who perfects himself in devotion to the All may enter. Nemo himself expresses the idea : “He that is greatest among you, let him be the servant of the all.” They say ; “We are the servants of the Perfect Law.”

Nemo calls these adepts “eaters of the people.” It would not be safe to do so in India, where they are enshrined with fervid devotion in the hearts of the people, so often succored by them. He speaks of the miseries of their country. What can he tell us of Thibet, where the stranger is excluded, beyond what the statisticians say of there being neither prisons nor reformatories because none are needed, and that in the whole great country there were not so many crimes for the year 1887 as in the single State of New York for the year?

Even were these proofs less direct, we might ask if such fruits could come from organized selfishness. And we can at need multiply such incidents, such quotations, such teachings, and give deeds of devotion. We hope Vol. 4 of the *Secret Doctrine*, on the lives of the Great Adepts, will set such foolish questions at rest. There are other charges in the Letter, but these points suffice. So many proven errors of necessity impugn the other statements. But I wish to say that I do not see any evidence that Nemo has intentionally misjudged the case. His heart appears in the right place. His mind has been warped. And it would appear that this has not been done through any ordinary agency. There are beings of great spirituality, just as there are others of powerful materiality. Some of these never have been, others never will be, men. Their counsels are not wise, *for Mankind*. “Beware of the Star Rishis ; cling to our own human Teachers,” writes an Adept in a private letter. High as they are, they envy the diviner heritage of man. Wherever we find their teachings, there we find a discordant note. The deep full heart of *perfected man* does not beat there. It is my personal belief (of however little worth) that I see such traces upon this Letter. Those whom our Brother Nemo misjudges care not for misrepresentation. But we care ; the loyal heart must care, and cannot keep silence. Our teachers would be the first to welcome Nemo, could he carry out the spirit evinced in his beautiful de-

scriptions of what Brotherhood should be. We are all lacking in it; wherefore I wish that we may ignore all differences and work on in essentials in this true Brotherhood.

The Letter itself does not call for such extended notice, but being first published in a valued and useful contemporary, where many earnest thinkers may see it, I could not justly permit these reversed and misconceived facts to go unnoticed.

J. CAMPBELL VER PLANCK, F. T. S.

* In six weeks the author has three times written the *Esoteric*, asking to be heard on the other side and enclosing stamps, but has no reply. This seems to denote partiality and a bitter animus,—perhaps infection from the Letter.—J. C. V. P.

TEA TABLE TALK.

A Happy New Year! One year nearer the close of the cycle. One step of countless steps nearer the unknown goal!

A Happy New Year! How easy to wish it! To obtain it is another matter. Yet how vital it is that we should obtain this happiness which every man instinctively seeks from cradle to grave, because it is the only real requirement of the soul. Again and again the soul strives to quaff the waters of happiness, only to see them recede, or to taste a wave more bitter than that of death. This will be so as long as that soul holds mistaken ideals of happiness; as long as it misconceives its own nature; as long as it looks for happiness *without*, instead of *within*. For only *within* is the truth discovered. There only the soul realizes its own nature, and, finding itself to be universal and not personal, looks for happiness thereafter in the life of unity, and not in that of separation. Abiding then under the wings of the Law, the soul knows her own true Being, and is content because all that is, is wisely-ordered Law: entering into the life of all, she goes out toward all. A Happy New Year in the light of this hope, namely; that we may bring the warmth of love, the peace of truth, into the lives of men.

There are ever these higher consolations within reach. There are also other and minor ones, but very commendable ones for all that, to enliven this stern, work-a-day world. I do not know any more precious boon, for example, than a sense of humor. Why should we not begin the New Year with a theosophical jest or two? Here are some samples of the public mind; our Mental Science friends will please take notice—to the extent of laughing with us.

HOPE DEFERRED.

Mrs. DeWitt Rawlinson. My dear, you really must pardon me. I hear you're a Buddhist.

Mrs. Lawes (Brightening up). Oh, yes! Do you take an interest in—

Mrs. De W. R. (Interrupting). So I thought I would ask you where you buy your idols. It's so difficult to get reliable bric-a-brac!

“UNTO THE PURE.”

Bonton. What's the matter with that pretty Miss Joyce, that you fellows don't take her out?

Modes. Well—you see, my dear fellow, all the women are so down on her. She's a theosophist, and its not quite the thing, don't you know.

Bonton. Aw—Theosophist? What sort of a fad is it?

Modes. Takes all the men to be her brothers, don't you know.

Bonton. Good Lord, Modes! What's Society coming to? Who says the women aren't more promiscuous than the men?

IN THE LITANY.

(*Clara ; behind her prayer book*). Why did you cut Mrs. Charleston?
(*Maud ; ditto*). Hush-h-h! She's one of those horrid Buddhists. Never goes to church at all.

(*Clara*). Well, you really can't blame her. She makes her own bonnets.

(*Maud*). One would think she'd want to see ours. No! I draw the line at irreligion. I feel it my duty to cut her.

(*Clara*). Of course. Me too.

(*Both*). "We beseech thee to hear us, Good Lord."

AT THE CLUB.

(*Alfred*, to *Chollie*). Say, dear boy. There's my friend Rawlins, the orientalist. Dine him and show him about a bit.

(*Chollie*). Oh, I say now! He's shockin' bad form. So deuced enthusiastic.

(*Alfred*). We must make allowances for him. He has such a lot of ideas.

(*Chollie*, *mollified*). Ideas, has he? Poor devil! The girls shall ask him to their parish tea.

It seems, however, that it is not well to indulge in too much fiction, or Destiny will have us by the ear. For this a good Brother of ours vouches as follows.

"A young friend of mine, of very imaginative turn and some occult tendencies, told me recently that his habit of air-castle building had followed him into his business, and that for some time past he has become aware of its peculiar results. To the best of his memory, every single instance of this habit has, for a long time past, been followed by a complete failure of the plan or negotiation. He might act outwardly exactly the same, but if regarding that transaction he had allowed himself to wander on in thought to the possibilities—counting chickens before hatching—, the eggs were sure to be cracked every time. The evidence became so clear to him that he looked upon the two as simple cause and effect, so that he constantly endeavored at last to drive all speculation on results from his mind, as a simple expedient to prevent the failure of his plans. Of course this illustrates Levi's saying: 'The will accomplishes what it does not *desire*.' It is very interesting to me as a complete and independent illustration of the plane of Desire, and how moving in it acts as a drag."

It really does seem at times as if the intelligences behind occult laws attempted to illustrate their existence even through our most practical affairs,

in the hope of compelling our recognition. Another Brother writes: "I have a friend who is an engraver. She is of sceptical temperament, scouts at Theosophy, and only considers this incident '*curious*.' She had a dream last week, in which she went to a Magazine office, but instead of seeing the editor who had charge of the illustrations, and with whom she dealt, she was requested to walk into the inner sanctum and see a higher authority. This was a room she but slightly knew. The higher authority told her that he had asked to see her in order to get her to engrave for him a portrait of Wm. Lloyd Garrison, then hanging on the wall. He called attention to its age and the cracks in the varnish, and particularly enjoined that these should be reproduced,

Such was the dream. The next morning she went to the magazine office, and exactly this dream in every detail down to the cracks in the portrait, was enacted. She was of course astonished, and told the incident as very singular."

Precisely so. And it seems to me still more singular that such incidents do not make people think. There is, for the occult, an amount of evidence which would prove every other subject true, a million times over, to the hardest-headed audience in the world, but the very same people who accept every fact in—Chemistry, let us say—as absolutely true, without the least knowledge of the unseen combinations, will flout an occultist unmercifully if he presumes to hint at the real existence of the unseen. How many of us have any practical experience of the fact that water is composed of two special gases? Yet we regard a man who doubts the fact as an utter ignoramus. But if we are asked to accept the occultist's statement as a working hypothesis, we are at once far too well-balanced and judicious for any such rash proceeding, and demand a proof for which we will not seek ourselves. So we are made,—or have made ourselves. Kismet!

We hear a good deal of the correctness of occult powers; let us hear the other side. Quickly says: "I had long thought over a curious old mark on a foreign document. It puzzled me because I could not make it all out, and I had kept before me an erroneous recollection of it, always thinking of it as T. A. V. One day I met a clairvoyante at the house of a friend, and she proposed to tell me what 'the spirits' showed her about me. I consented; we sat together, and immediately she said; 'Oh! I see a name written all about you. It is that of your guardian spirit.'

'Yes?' said I, 'and what is it?'

'It is a queer name,' said she. 'Let me see—yes—it is Tar. And it is written all about.'

'Very interesting,' I rejoined. In this case, although a clairvoyante, she saw the deeply-impressed image—in itself an error—, but was not able to see the producing cause, and willingly accepted the dictum of 'the spirits.' Those same spirits were mischievous elementals."

Just one more, and then the Tea Table will excuse you, reader, for the month of January, '89. It is a sister who speaks this time.

"A friend of mine was going to London, and we were discussing

whether she should sail on the Cunard or the Inman line, and on a certain week or the week after. I urged her to sail on the Cunard, because they never lost a passenger. She replied laughingly that a man who had sailed on the Cunarders some sixty odd times told her that, when he asked for a clean napkin at dinner, the steward said, 'We cannot give one now, sir, but we never lost a passenger!' I parted from my friend, and was thinking intently of her intentions, while on the deck of a Jersey City ferry boat, crossing from New York. Suddenly I seemed to feel the shock of a collision, and a picture flashed through my mind of two vessels colliding. We were in mid-stream and there was no collision with the ferry boat; only an astral impression. I turned my head, and saw upon the fast approaching Jersey shore the signs of three Steamship lines. The middle one was the Inman, and it seemed to leap out across the water at me. Full of my preconceptions, I took this to mean that the Inman line would have a collision, but subsequent events showed that it was the one my friend should have taken. I wrote her, urging her to sail on the earlier week, and by Cunard. She replied that she could only go on the later week, but would go by Cunard line. The evening she sailed I tried to see her clairvoyantly, but could only see a small and deserted steamer sinking, stern foremost, in the mist, and felt a shock of collision. As no larger vessel was in sight (on my astral field), I concluded the vision had no reference to my friend. Next morning brought me a letter from her, in which she said a collision had occurred with just such a steamer as I saw; that her stern was stove in and she was fast sinking, while the Cunarder had lost her in the fog, and had been obliged to put back to New York. I had sent my friend on the wrong line! So much for untrained seership! But I was right in urging her to go the first week, and perhaps that covers all."

Yes; the ladies are always right in the end. At least they say so!

JULIUS.

LITERARY NOTES.

THE THEOSOPHIST for November gives a chapter from *The Secret Doctrine* as a sip to Indian readers, and publishes the Constitution, Rules, and Regulations of the "Lay Convent" in Switzerland, whereof Drs. Pioda, Thurman, and Hartmann are the promoters. *The Theosophist* points out some, not all, of the impediments to its success. Others are given in Dr. Hartmann's *Adventure among the Rosicrucians*, and we may name, among the remainder, that of long keeping the location secret.

THE NOVEMBER LUCIFER is peculiarly rich. The editorial "Is Theosophy a Religion?" has such manifold truths and such multiform bearings that it needs repeated re-readings. The poetry may perhaps not reach a very high level of intelligibility, and "The Nature of Man" shows rather that Princes sometimes think than that they always think to much purpose; but the deliciously-written "Was he mad?", the clear and cogent "Letters on Magic and Alchemy" (which, by the way, would have been even better if

without the remark that "there can be no other but a three-dimensional space"), and the article on "Attention" are most profitable for instruction. A letter from Mr. Sinnett, whose pen is ever the envy and the despair of other writers, states the points whereon he believes *The Secret Doctrine* to have ill-treated him, and these are answered by editorial foot-notes. The foolish charge of materialistic teaching in *Esoteric Buddhism* is demolished with a logic which loses no grace because of its thoroughness, and the brilliant paragraph ending the letter is followed by an editorial "Closing Remark", greeting the letter itself, exulting over the collapse of the materialistic boggy, and, with hearty good will, re-affirming the old cordiality towards the illustrious co-laborer.

This sentence from the letter should be engraved on every writing-table and reading-desk :

"The disposition to regard vagueness of exposition as equivalent to spirituality of thought is very widely spread; and multitudes of people are unaccustomed to respect any phraseology that they find themselves enabled to understand."

In a foot note on page 250, Madame Blavatsky uses a sentence which we should like to impress on the brain of every Theosophist who has one : "*Why should any of us—aye, even the most learned in occult lore among Theosophists—pose for infallibility?*" This is a distinct warning to all Theosophists who believe clear-headed discrimination irreverent, and that they must accept metaphysics because they accept spiritual philosophy, that they are off the track. We yield to no one in devoted loyalty to our Honored Head, and for that very reason re-emphasize her constant insistence that Theosophists are to think for themselves and not merely pocket the thinking of others. Not to do so was unwise even for Damodar (p 253, note). Let no one pick flaws in this perfectly lucid statement, or write us foolish letters which will not be printed.

Lucifer announces that Dr. Hartmann's "Speaking Image of Ooroor" is to appear therein as a serial, beginning in December. If this has not been lately modified, it will have much the same personal quality as *Karma*, and much the same teaching value as *Magic, White and Black*.

The number closes with full details of the organization of the British Section of the T. S., as sanctioned by the President-Founder.

THE ARTICLE on "The Regeneration of the Body," by Miss Annie Payson Call, an account of which in the September PATH attracted much attention as describing a simple form of "yoga practice" adapted by its natural method to the requirements of our western races, has been issued in the shape of a handsome pamphlet by the Massachusetts New Church Union, Boston, and may be obtained either from the Union, or from the author at 3 Somerset street, Boston.

A TREATISE ON THE YOGA PHILOSOPHY, by Dr. N. C. Paul. This title is quite misleading, *Physiology* being really what is meant. The book is a series of prescriptions for the physical side of Yoga practice, dealing with diet, respiration, posture, bodily exercises of the strangest kind. The attainment of hybernating power is the desideratum, and the tortoise seems to be the model, both as to methods and success. Pure air, salt, mustard, onions, etc. are prejudicial, it seems, to a religious, moral, intellectual, or hybernal life. The habitual use of asses' milk enables one to acquire the power of expiring and reviving at pleasure. Among the orthodox Hindus, the counting of the sacred beads leads to indigestion and costiveness. A state of perfect hybernation (Samadhi) requires a previous stay for long time in a cave, during which the tongue is developed in size and its muscle receives 24 incisions. The mystic syllable *Om* is then repeated 20,736,000 times, after

which the practitioner does not breathe for twelve days. Great stress is laid on the repetition of words, not necessarily those of deep significance, a Christian boy having attained sleep by pronouncing *cup* 450 times.

The book is written in all seriousness, and for those to whom the tortoise is an object of emulation, must have unspeakable value.

A COMPENDIUM OF THE RAJA YOGA PHILOSOPHY. This is a collection of 6 papers, 4 of them by the celebrated Sankaracharya: and gives in 160 pages what is probably both an accurate and an ample view of the Vedantic system. It is subject to the drawback that many Sanscrit words are used in the text, in Sanscrit characters and without translation. Probably the popularizing of any foreign system of abstruse philosophy is difficult, and, without imitating Dr. Johnson's phrase and wishing it was impossible, we may repeat the obvious fact that language, ideas, and modes of thought are rarely transplanted with much success. To flourish elsewhere they must be so little local, so informed with a universal quality, that they take root in any soil and are hardy under any clime. If these universal elements could be extracted, judiciously remoulded, and then presented clearly and practically, a great boon would be secured to those students who welcome Truth from any quarter, but do not like a too pronounced local color.

THE SECRET DOCTRINE.

Before the January PATH reaches our readers, it is probable that Vol. II of *The Secret Doctrine* will be in the hands of every subscriber. Various delays, notably that from the difficulty of a perfect Index, have put off its appearance much beyond the time announced. But a book which will require months to comprehend and years to digest may very well exact a little patience before, no less than after, its issue. For our preparation of even the hastiest description of it, much more for any just delineation of its contents, there has evidently been no adequate time. All that is possible at this date is to congratulate the Theosophical Society, the Theosophical world, and, indeed, the world beyond Theosophy, on the publication of this amazing exposition of hitherto-occult doctrine. Apart from any personal prepossessions or beliefs, we do not see how this work can be regarded as other than an epoch in scientific literature. To a Theosophist, the living at the time of its appearance is a privilege.

The writer of "Lonely Musings," which came out in PATH, has put his papers into a book by Redway (price hereafter) entitled *Problems of the Inner Life*, which PATH will have on sale.

THE POSSIBILITY OF NOT DYING, by H. C. Kirk, noticed in December PATH, and *When Age grows Young*, a novel by same author and founded on the preceding, are for sale by C. T. Dillingham, 720 Broadway, New York. Prices, respectively, 60 and 50 cents.

AS AN INDICATION OF DRIFT, we note that the Christmas number (December 16th) of the *New York Morning Journal* prints as one of its stories "All's Dross but Love, *The Strange Record of Two Reincarnated Souls*," by the poet-journalist, A. E. Lancaster. Its vivid painting of Pompeian scenes and life, its exquisite English and its thrilling emotionalism, make it a literary gem polished by a master hand, but its great interest Theosophically is in the fact that a metropolitan paper prints it and a metropolitan editor commends it.

THEOSOPHICAL ACTIVITIES.

AMERICA.

THE ADMISSIONS to the Theosophical Society, as recorded in the General Secretary's books, have been, since March last, as follows: April, 27; May, 14; June, 22; July, 6; August, 3; September, 19; October, 27; November, 23. The convenience of the General Secretary and the accuracy of his records would both be promoted if the Branch Secretaries would kindly forward the application and fee *immediately* upon the admission of a new member. Much improvement in this matter has been manifest of late. As each Branch President and Secretary has been furnished with the circular explaining points in the filling-out of applications, etc., an occasional reference to it will easily ensure entire regularity and system. It may not be known to all that every application is transmitted to the Headquarters in India and there permanently preserved. The building is not strictly fire-proof, but as no fire is ever made within it, the climate requiring none and the cooking being done in an outhouse at some distance, it is perfectly secure. This is one reason why the Library, the manuscripts, the two oil portraits of Mahatmas, the collection of precipitated letters, and the various objects phenomenally produced by Madame Blavatsky are so much safer there than they could be in this country.

IN THE MONTH of November, the Varuna T. S., Bridgeport, Conn., admitted 2 new members; the Golden Gate Lodge, East Oakland, Cal., 3; the Brahmana T. S., Milwaukee, Wis., 1; the Cincinnati T. S., 3.

THE ARYAN T. S. of New York has just re-elected as President Mr. Wm. Q. Judge, now absent in Europe upon family business, and conferred the Vice-Presidency upon a lady-member who always adorns the meeting-room and sometimes the reading-stand,—Miss Lydia Bell. The gracious faculty of educating all that is best and brightest in a circle of students is very rare, but when it is found, every Society delights to honor it.

ANOTHER KIND OFFERING has reached the Headquarters in Nassau st. This time it is a lantern of iron in the quaint old style lately revived. It comes from Hartford, Conn., a city which no General Secretary can contemplate without longings for the day when it shall have a Branch. And, indeed, there is not a little significance in this formerly Puritan stronghold's contributing a light-bearer—a little "Lucifer", as one may say—to the spot where light is so truly honored and so frankly sought. The General Secretary is expected to bring with him from Europe the photographs of a number of eminent Theosophists in the London, Blavatsky, and other Lodges, so that more than the few remaining spaces in the one Album already presented will be needed. This sounds like a hint,—and it is.

KRISHNA T. S. in Philadelphia has held no regular meeting for a year, but arrangements have been made for a series of fortnightly gatherings to be held throughout this winter and as much longer as may be deemed advisable. The first of these meetings was held on Sunday afternoon, December 16th, and was largely attended. These gatherings are not limited to members of the Branch or Society, but are open to any interested persons who may be invited by the members. Without any attempt at proselyting, these meetings are held mainly for the purpose of answering the many inquiries for information that have been received at the room of the Krishna Branch, and the nature and purposes of Theosophy are discussed in an eminently practical manner. Interest in Theosophy is being very widely developed in this conservative city.

THE MALDEN BRANCH has resumed its meetings, and has taken up the discussion of the works of C. H. Hinton, known to many Theosophists through his "Scientific Romances" as a thinker of remarkable character and originality. His latest work, *A New Era of Thought*, published by Swan Sonnenschein & Co., London, points out a practical way, for those who will carefully study upon the lines indicated, actually to realize in the mind certain attributes of a plane of existence higher than the physical. It is a philosophical work of striking power and ideality.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY has re-issued the circular, "How to join the T. S.," and a copy has gone to the President and Secretary of each Branch. As this has been found so useful and labor-saving in answering inquiries, it is at the disposition of the Branches, and a moderate order from any Branch official will be filled by the General Secretary without charge.

EUROPE.

IT IS YET TOO SOON for the practical working of the new British Section of the T. S., as established by the delegates from British Branches under the supervision of the President-Founder, to be tested, but there can hardly be a question that this organization, prompted, as we know it to have been, by an Authority whom Theosophists only name with the deepest reverence, will greatly stimulate the vigor and the missionary zeal of the Society in Britain. We hope in time to present some details of both work and growth.

The Theosophical movement cannot progress in England so well as in America, as less interest is felt by the people in philosophical and religious reforms. But a few days ago, *Piccadilly*, a magazine in London, devoted considerable space to H. P. Blavatsky, and the writer contrived to bring in something of the Theosophical doctrine.

MADAME H. P. BLAVATSKY is still living and working in London. She writes all day, and sometimes part of the night. In the evening she receives visitors. Her health, we rejoice to say, is greatly improved, so that she begins again to look like her old self. Her many years of hard work have not in the least lessened her energy in spreading Theosophy.

THE DEPARTURE FROM DUBLIN for India of Bro. Chas. Johnston, while a loss to the local T. S., has not disheartened its members. They are active and sincere. The General Secretary of the American Section, accompanied by that delightful Brother, Dr. A. Keightley, the General Secretary of the British Section, visited the Lodge in November and addressed a full meeting. This is one of the points especially hopeful for good work.

THE BUDDHIST CATECHISM. This well-known little book, by Col. Olcott, has just been translated into Swedish and issued in Sweden, thus adding another language to the list of those wherein it is now being circulated.

INDIA.

BRO. C. W. LEADBEATER, in charge of the Theosophical schools in Colombo, Ceylon, was summoned to Adyar to conduct the *Theosophist* during the President-Founder's visit to Europe, but now returns to his own field. He desires us to announce the establishment of a new monthly magazine, *The Buddhist*, devoted rather to exoteric than to esoteric Buddhism, and the price whereof will be \$1.75 a year.

MRS. VER PLANCK has received to date \$88.69 for the T. P. S. Fund.

"The first duty taught in Occultism is to do one's duty unflinchingly by every duty."—H. P. Blavatsky.