

THE
THEOSOPHICAL
REVIEW

VOL. XL

MAY, 1907

No. 237

RETURNING THE GIFT

“ A THIEF verily is he who enjoyeth what is given him without returning the gift.”—*The Voice of the Silence*.

HAS it, I wonder, ever occurred to us of the household, so to speak—to us of the Theosophical Society—that we may be enjoying what has been given us without adequately returning the gift? By which, in plain language, I mean the doubt has crossed my mind as to whether the majority of those who are members of the Society and who have received the teachings of Theosophy either realise the magnitude of these teachings, or in accepting them, realise the obligation to pass them on, in (if need be) more simplified form, to “him who knows still less,” and who “sits starving for the bread of wisdom.”

At this point no doubt this paper will, from the average reader, be met with the same objection that the writer's remarks have received when urged personally, that is, in effect: “Theosophy is not for the ignorant, it is too subtle”; or, “It is not wise to ‘cast pearls before swine’”; or, “What would you have us do, ram Theosophy down people's throats whether they want it or not?”

Now as a matter of fact neither I nor any other Theosophist in his senses would have Theosophy "rammed down people's throats." That, in the first place, is quite an impossible thing to do, since Theosophy is *not* a creed or a dogma, but rather a point of view, an attitude of mind, a state of mental receptivity, which implies change and growth on the part of the member after coming into the Society, rather than a sudden "conversion" to Theosophy, as if it were a fixed and crystallised belief or set of beliefs. If I believed it to be the latter I should certainly have little hope for its future usefulness or, indeed, little interest in its present activity. Granted, then, that it is neither wise nor at all desired by any sane member that an attempt should be made to "ram Theosophy down people's throats," does that justify us in an attitude of apathy and indifference? Is it not too often made an excuse for selfishness, which can be of things spiritual quite as much as of things material?

We frequently hear the expression: "Most people are not yet ready for Theosophy"; and true enough this is if we mean that they are not yet ready for subtle and abstract metaphysics. But we are narrow if we do not remember that there is more than one side to this great philosophy of ours, that it contains "shallows in which the child may wade," as well as "deeps in which the giant must swim," and that there are many to-day whom we perhaps may regard as children intellectually, who nevertheless are very perplexed and spiritually hungry children, to whom the shallows, so to speak, of Theosophy would offer that which they have long been seeking and prove a practical solution of ethical problems in their daily lives—narrow and petty and sordid as in many respects these lives may be.

Nor am I speaking from mere theory when I venture such an assertion. I have before me as I write copies of letters from inmates of jails and other penal institutions, some well expressed (for the man of education as well as the proletarian finds his way behind bars occasionally), others crudely worded, but all breathing the same spirit of understanding and of earnest appreciation of the fundamental, underlying principles of that philosophy which the majority of us accept, namely, reincarnation and karma.

In one of these letters, the writer says: "Your talks have

aroused more attention to these matters, and more discussion among the men, than any I have heard since I have been in these quarters. Christianity without explanation and elucidation is not enough; I want something that appeals to my reason, and I believe that the majority of men who are weak enough to get behind prison bars are in need of the same thing."

Another writes: "I have undergone a metamorphosis of thought since you began your [Theosophical] instruction here, and have learned so much that what heretofore seemed blank and dark is now illumined, and what in my past seemed bitter and unjust becomes clear, as lessons needed to be learned."

These letters were not written to me personally, but to one whose present most successful work in the prisons of California was inspired by a remark which was made to her by another member when both were passing a jail in Oakland a few months ago. "I wonder," the other remarked, "if any Theosophical work is being done in prisons anywhere." The suggestion was as seed sown in fertile soil. The results of Miss J——'s work prove conclusively that it is erroneous to suppose that—at least behind prison bars—the average man is "not ready for Theosophy"; for while of course some are indifferent, some cursorily interested for the moment only, yet it would be safe to say that the majority have not only shown keen and more than temporary interest in the ideas presented, but have shown an eagerness to fit the theories to their own lives and—prospectively at least—to the shaping of their future conduct.¹

Of this prison experiment I have spoken somewhat in detail for two reasons: in the first place because that which has been accomplished in the prisons of California may be accomplished in prisons elsewhere, and in the second place to show that if the so-called criminal is "ready" for Theosophy, the average man (or woman) outside of prison, whose mind is not hopelessly paralysed either by apathy or by terror of the now fast dying monstrosity of orthodox hell, is ready for it, *provided* it be presented in a plain, straightforward, easily-assimilable manner. In this, as in everything else, the benefit of the use of that which an

¹ Since writing the above I have come into personal contact with ex-prisoners "converted," so to speak, to Theosophy during their incarceration, whose lives since their release have been a living exemplification of theosophical principles.

American Bishop is said to have called "the redeeming virtue of common-sense" cannot be over-estimated. One certainly would not recommend giving the man of little education and little training in reasoning or in consecutive thinking *The Secret Doctrine* or *Pedigree of Man*, or *A Study in Consciousness*. Such a course or anything similar or even approximating to it, would not only obviously be predestined to failure, but, by impressing the tyro with the hopelessness of ever understanding anything of the occult, would—the chances are—tend to retard his evolution not only for the remainder of this incarnation but for several incarnations to come.

Plainly and simply, very simply presented, however, I have found there are few from whom the ideas of reincarnation and karma do not bring a sympathetic response. It is the justice of this hypothesis—the doctrines can scarcely be spoken of separately, one is correlative of the other—that appeals, especially to the man who has felt the lash of human injustice. My observation has been that the aspect of the Self most untiringly sought by the separated selves on this plane is that of Justice. Before man recognises in the abstract—still less in practice—the beauty of truth or of purity or of compassion, he recognises the beauty of justice, and blindly strives to reach his ideal. True his striving after that which in the abstract is a virtue frequently (probably could we trace the history of each individual back through many incarnations, we should be justified in saying invariably) leads the man at a certain stage of evolution into crime.

He has not—as to his eyes it seems—a fair share of this world's goods, while another man whose deserts are no greater has far more than his share. "It is not fair!" How often and under what pitiful conditions do we hear that cry! What wonder that brooding over that which seems so flagrant a wrong leads to robbery or other violence! By force, if he cannot otherwise, he will get what he regards as his right. Or one man wins from another the woman whom he regards as his rightful possession, actual or prospective. What more natural than that he should feel himself "justified" (the word itself is significant) in "righting the wrong." When bloodshed does not follow it is, with the class of which I am speaking, rather fear of legal punishment

to follow than any ethical consideration which restrains. With primitive man, whether collective or individual, justice means "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth"; but nevertheless it is justice he is seeking, ever justice. From behind prison bars and elsewhere how frequently have we—those of us who know the world as it is—heard the cry: "I've never had a square deal all my life," or the sullen whisper: "The world's done me all the harm it could, now I'm going to do what I can to get even."

I have, in various ways, both before and since coming into the Theosophical Society, seen something of the life and the heart of that class upon which society shuts its doors, and I think I am right when I say that in nine cases out of ten the man of that class is what he is to-day—sneak-thief, robber, murderer, anarchist, hater of his kind—largely from the sense that every man's hand is against him, that he is the victim of injustice, whether personal, or that of a social or political system. Since that is the case is it surprising that he frequently is willing—in some instances greedily eager—to accept a doctrine which shows that the seething injustice which he sees about him is not, after all, actual injustice, but is rather the fruit of past sowing and—much more important and practical as regards the present regulation of conduct—that according to the sowing to-day will be the harvest in the next life. The idea of reincarnation when once grasped by a man of this type is comfort unspeakable. To feel that he who has "been up against it" in this life will have another chance, that after all he will have a "fair show," means more than those who have seen nothing, therefore can imagine little, of the "seamy side" of life are apt to realise.

Much, too, might be said of the courage and the fortitude that Theosophy, in its broadest outline and simplest aspects, brings into the lives of women among the poor whose burdens seem literally "greater than they can bear." Oh, if you did but know, you of the "respectable" and well-dressed and well-fed classes, whose knowledge of Theosophy and work in Theosophy does not go beyond intellectual discussion at study-classes or Sunday lectures—if you did but know, I say, of the flood of understanding, consequently of courage and comfort and

strength, that Theosophy, presented with simplicity enough to be intelligible, brings into darkened lives and suffering souls of such women as I have known, you would know that Theosophy is a bigger and broader thing than a Society for intellectual discussion merely, or for "hastening one's evolution," by giving up meat, and wine, and tobacco—and sitting in judgment on those who have not done so. (Parenthetically I may remark that I happen to be a vegetarian, so do not speak from personal bias in the matter.)

The point that I would make is to utter a word of warning—and that not in a spirit of criticism, but rather because the Theosophical Society happens to be to me the chief interest in life, and Theosophy, in my eyes, a thing of too great magnitude to be cramped into a narrow mould—that we, in our eager grasping and desperate hold upon form, do not let the spirit escape us, that we do not mistake non-essentials for essentials, and, reaching for shadows, pass the substance by unheeding. Certainly, the substance, so to speak, of the Theosophical Society, is Universal Brotherhood, and brotherhood means something more than the mere proclaiming it; it means the realisation, the putting ourselves in the place of those brothers whom we assert are one with us. And this realisation cannot be gained by mere reading or study; only by actual contact can we get to know that brother whose walk in life is on a different social level from our own, and whose thoughts, and feelings, and ideas, whose loves and hates, are not as ours.

Thus, only by coming into actual touch, are we able to see the world through his eyes, and understand something of his temptations as well as his limitations; thus only able, in some small measure, to carry out the injunction to "live and breathe in all—to feel thyself abiding in all beings"; and then, and only then, able to repay some small fraction of the debt which we have incurred, by passing on a ray of that light which we have in such abundance received.

To me that verse in *The Voice of the Silence* has always seemed significant which says:

"To live to benefit mankind is the first step. To practise the six glorious virtues is the second."

Above the practising of the virtues is put the benefiting of mankind. Would that that, in letters of fire—as that other sentence from the same marvellous book of occult fragments, which declares: “The selfish devotee lives in vain”—might be placed before the eyes of those members who sanctimoniously pride themselves on “living the life,” because so many hours a day are devoted by them to study or to meditation (both of which certainly have their place and are not to be neglected), or because they are abstemious in matters of food and drink, yet through whose efforts no single life is benefited, no perplexed mind enlightened, no struggling, tempted soul comforted or strengthened.

Are such worthy followers of her who gave up her saloon passage and crossed the ocean in the steerage (a thing the exceeding unpleasantness of which, particularly in those days, but few realise), in order that a peasant woman—a perfect stranger to herself—might not be left stranded in a foreign country, and one whose entire life practically was devoted, not to the accumulation of knowledge, but to its dissemination? Can we, who know so much less, afford to be so much more selfish with what we do know?

It has been said that the message of Theosophy to Christian orthodoxy of to-day is the old trumpet-call: “Rouse, ye that sleep.” But let us beware that we do not ourselves nod, that through apathy and indifference (the *tamas* element, latent in varying degrees in all of us), we do not fall away from the early ideals of the Society, as the latter-day “orthodox” have done from the ideals of the early followers of the Master Christ. Let us, above all things, beware of Theosophical pharisaism, and keep awake to the realisation of the responsibility devolving upon us as members of the Theosophical Society—a responsibility which means the living of lives of compassion, of practical helpfulness, intellectual as well as material, of actual—not cant—brotherhood, and not merely the indulging among ourselves in the intellectual gratification of what has not inaptly been termed “metaphysical gymnastics.”

It has sometimes been urged in extenuation of intellectual indolence and indifference, that the hardest part of the work

which was the especial "*dharma*" of the Theosophical Society has been accomplished, *viz.*, the overthrow of materialism. It is true enough that materialism as taught by science, and as accepted by the intellectual mind of thirty years ago, is a thing of the past, nor can intellectual materialism as it was once proclaimed by the ablest men of Europe ever become a serious possibility of the future, for the reason that science itself is to-day reaffirming statements made by occultism—and of course at that time ridiculed—when the latter was first introduced to the western world. It would not be wise, however, on the strength of one victory gained to sink into apathy or to be so taken up with self-gratulation over what has been accomplished as to lose sight of present-day dangers and to fail to recognise that the worst foe of spirituality is not always materialism. An enemy more dangerous, because more subtle and less willing, so to speak, to meet in a fair fight in the open, is pseudo-occultism, and with that the western world is rife to-day,—both as taught by those born in the West, and by Orientals of the class with whom the "almighty dollar" is the chief aim of existence.

Much of this is merely vapid and inane, a silly waste of time and of money (for the latter is always an important factor with such "teachers"), and tends towards selfishness, for, generally speaking, such "development" has for its goal material prosperity, the "overcoming of poverty, disease and drudgery," as some of the advertisements proclaim. On the other hand, much of it is distinctly vicious—and I do not make such a statement without knowledge, or without being able to produce proof, should such be demanded—turning as it does on the perversion of the sex function; and many most estimable people, thoroughly virtuous in intention and desire, are lured into the practice of such teachings through their own ignorance (and regarding such matters the average man or woman of whatever age is lamentably ignorant), and through reverence for the supposedly vast knowledge—imparted in "inner circles"—of these "teachers."

In an article intended for members of the Theosophical Society it is not necessary to point out that wherever there has been a revival of interest in true occultism there has always been an equal revival in the spurious—that black magic has always been

contemporary with white—or to make reference to recurring periods in the world's history to substantiate this. My reason for speaking of this phenomenon, recognised by all students, is to show that here, perhaps more than anywhere else, is an opportunity for "returning the gift." But to do this—to win men and women from the left-hand path to the right, do not let us imagine that we can accomplish it by selfish isolation, by proudly drawing, as it were, our skirts about our feet, declaring that "Theosophy has nothing in common with New Thought, with Spiritualism, with Christian Science, etc.," and in smug self-righteousness felicitate ourselves that *we* have been wise and pure enough to choose the right-hand path. The very fact that there is such a widespread interest in the cruder forms of occultism to-day shows that many are ready for the mystic truths if, even in their barest outline, they can be brought to the level of the understanding of the simple and the little educated. Tact and kindness and sympathy win where antagonism will fail, and if many members of the Society but kept this in mind (perhaps it were better to say in "heart") many men and women, now engrossed in some of the various forms of "New Thought," might be brought to see that "New Thought" is not new at all, but one of the many phases of that ancient Wisdom-Religion, which now we call Theosophy, which instead of being in conflict, is in perfect harmony with "New Thought" in its higher and purer aspects, only recognising it as a part rather than as a whole.

Far more important still, such people who recognise, under whatever form, the actuality of the occult, would be brought to recognise the universality of Law, to see that an evil engendered on the invisible planes (by desire or will), the results only of which are visible on the material, brings to its perpetrator direful consequences just as surely as if cause and effect both had been visible to the eyes of men. By going out into the highways and byways and meeting halfway the stumbling and the groping, far more practical usefulness will be accomplished than by haughty aloofness. Let us, who recognise as one of the great Masters Him who was not ashamed to be seen with publicans and sinners, be less afraid of soiling our own garments by contact

with those less enlightened than ourselves. As we attempt to put ourselves on the Path temptation comes in various and subtle forms, and not the least frequent of these is that of the "great dire heresy of separateness."

To those of us who go about with eyes open, rather than with them too constantly turned inward upon our own "development," opportunities are not lacking for returning this gift of the Gods, Divine Wisdom, which we have received, by passing on some fragment of it to those whose darkness is greater than our own; only tact and discrimination must be shown in the particular fragment that is used with the particular individual on the particular occasion. By lack of these qualifications the feelings of an orthodox friend may be outraged, and he be made a life-long enemy of Theosophy, who sees in it nothing that is not antagonistic to Christianity; while, on the other hand, if common-sense be used, that aspect of Divine Wisdom will be brought to the attention of the devoutly orthodox, which will not antagonise, but will make him seek within the depths of his own faith for those truths which will make his religion more spiritual, more divine, more sublimely satisfying to himself.

That education offers one of the most adequate channels by which some of the fundamental essentials of Divine Wisdom may be disseminated, whether it be ours to play the *rôle* of parent or school-teacher, seems self-evident, and I regret that limitations, both of space in THE THEOSOPHICAL REVIEW and of my own time, make it impossible to speak here in detail of experiments made in moulding the mind-body, while still young enough in the present incarnation to be plastic, along the line of "no religion higher than Truth"—truth in every detail, even regarding those matters about which lying, rather than truth-telling, is conventional.

Again, are we worthy of that which we have received, if we make no effort of our own to add to that store of knowledge—or, rather, to elucidate, to amplify some fragment of it, by individual study (which does not mean mere committing to memory), and, as far as time and capacity allow, by experiment on our own part? Is there not too much of a tendency on the part of some of us, to sink into mere parrot-like repetition of truisms and of

statements made by earlier, or by more advanced, students and investigators? I yield to none in reverent love or in profound gratitude to those further on the Path than we, nearer to the Mighty Ones, whose greater intellects and more advanced occult development have made possible for our understanding the knowledge which we now hold, but because we realise our own inferiority to those in advance of us, is that any excuse for stagnation on our own part? Have we not been warned by one whose vision is clear, whose life is devoted to Theosophy, and to whose heart the good of the Theosophical Society lies nearer than it does to those of many of the members, of the danger of becoming "crystallised," of making a dogma of Theosophy, of accepting any statement "on authority," rather than because it appeals to us individually as an aspect of truth, and have we not been told, not once but many times, that if Theosophy lives but to become another sect it will have failed of its mission?

Let us then be up and doing, "doers of the word, not hearers only," those of us in the Theosophical Society, who, up to this time, have been but receivers intellectually and not givers; let us exert our own minds, exercise our own brains, that we may serve as channels, and not unworthy ones, for the wider and more far-reaching outpouring of the Divine Wisdom; let us apply the principles of Theosophy to the practical solution of vexatious present-day problems. In other words, let us be transmitters and not mere accepters of Truth; and let us transmit in the form that will be of widest reaching and most practical benefit.

"Knowest thou of Self the powers, O thou perceiver of external shadows?"—how often one is tempted to cry. If we of the Theosophical Society, both collectively and as individuals, did but realise the possibilities of service, practical service, which lie before us—rather the certainty of practical service—if we but realise our responsibilities and exert ourselves to fulfil them, ever bearing in mind that to whom much has been given of him much will be expected! But little will ever be accomplished if with folded hands, metaphorically speaking, we sit idle, by inertia or inharmony among ourselves repel rather than attract strangers to Theosophy, and cry it is "karma," the karma of the Branch or the karma of the Society. Let us

beware of the supine attitude of the ignorant Mahomedan with his cry of "kismet," his belief in blind fatalism which he is powerless to control or avert. Let us never forget that we are beings of absolute free-will, the creators, not the slaves of karma, and that if the Theosophical Society fail of its mission, or if any of its Branches so fail, it is because we, its members, have failed in our duties and our responsibilities, it is the karma that we have brought upon ourselves by wrongly directed effort or by lack of effort, by sloth, by indolence, by indifference—by forgetting that "inaction in a deed of mercy is action in a deadly sin."

It may be said that in coming into the Theosophical Society we assume no obligations, are required to make no promises in regard to shouldering any responsibility or undertaking any "propaganda work." Is this quite true? What is the First Object of the Society, to which in coming into the Society we all pledge ourselves? What does Brotherhood imply, if not the sharing with our Brothers that which we ourselves have received. The life of the recluse is to one of scholarly bent frequently the most congenial, but is it at the present stage of evolution of the generality of us, the most brotherly?

How often, too, we are tempted to cry out in despair, even the most earnest of us, when we think of our own small numbers, and realise something of the heavy karma of the world—the ignorance, and the sin, and the misery—of which we fain would lift a little, and against which we seem so powerless! Are we not too prone to judge as the unenlightened, to measure possibilities and potentiality for good by numbers rather than by the power on invisible planes possible for a small minority to wield? Despondency and fear are tempters to be unflinchingly grappled with and overcome, for "Fear kills the will and stays all action. . . . The path that leadeth on is lighted by one fire—the light of daring burning in the heart. The more one dares the more he shall obtain. The more he fears, the more that light shall pale—and that alone can guide." How often are we adjured to be "of dauntless heart"; yet how many dauntless hearts are there in the Society to-day?

It is often claimed by those "outside" that Theosophy is not practical. It is practical, the most practical thing in the

world, for it gives us the keenest and the clearest vision concerning all problems, those dealing with social and political conditions in earth-life, as well as with purely spiritual matters or with existence after death; and it better than anything else enables us to view these problems in perspective, and see them, not distorted by bias or personal prejudice, but in due proportion, and by benefit of knowledge of the almost illimitable past gain guidance for the present. Still, notwithstanding all this, it is only as we realise our obligation, only as by our living as well as our teaching we "set it forth and show it accordingly"—which is another way of saying that only as we realise the divinity, consequently the power, which is striving and crying out to manifest itself through us,—will the Theosophical Society become the instrument for practical good in the world that it was intended to be. And the splendid fulfilment of the intention of the Great Ones each one of us is either hindering or helping. There is no middle course.

The Theosophical Society is no place for weaklings or for the easily discouraged. For us there can be no shirking, no evading of responsibility, however fair the pretext, for it is not only our own karma that we are making or marring, but the karma of the Society, and as regards sins (or weaknesses) of omission or commission, not only do we bring down the condemnation of the world upon our own heads, but—let us always remember—upon the organisation of which we are units. Literally :

By all we will or whisper,
By all we leave or do,

as individuals, will the Society of which we are members be weighed, and will its influence for good wax or wane. Only when our lives become living sermons can we expect these sermons to carry conviction; or in the words of Mazzini :

"When the faith shall be not only on our lips but in our hearts; when our acts shall correspond to our words; when we appear before men as seekers after Good, and they say of us amongst themselves these men are a living religion—thinkest thou our appeal to the people will not meet with a ready response"—and thinkest thou then that we will be regarded by

Those who know as ungrateful debtors, unworthy of being entrusted with what we have been able to assimilate of the Divine Wisdom ?

JANET B. MCGOVERN.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES IN THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY¹

It is the fashion now-a-days in the Theosophical Society to be iconoclastic. Some four or five years ago a panic seized some of the older members of the Society, who began to fear that the teaching they had made their own, and had been doing their best to popularise, had been appropriated and sucked in with almost too great avidity, by a hungry section of the Public. They saw the ideas, that they with pain and labour had worked out, become the common property of many who could never have arrived at these ideas unaided, and who often failed to grasp their full significance, and used some of the great truths as shibboleths of what was in danger of developing into a sect. And some of those who had been long working in the movement saw that there was a danger, and hoisted a flag of warning. They began to urge upon their fellow members, at every opportunity, the danger of allowing dogmas to grow up in the Theosophical Society. In season and out of season the cry was heard: "We are not a sect, we have no dogmas; we are not theosophists, but members of the Theosophical Society, and no member can assume that a single one of his own beliefs is shared by another member." So lustily and unremittingly were these negative *dogmas* thrust upon the members, in some quarters, that newly joined members never ventured to arrogate to themselves any shorter title than "a member of the Theosophical Society" (often arousing thereby the mirth of the non-member), and lecturers spoke apologetically of "planes" and "principles" when need

¹ Miss Mallet wishes it to be stated that her article was sent in before the issue of the April number and is therefore not written in answer to the "attacks" made in that number.—ED.

arose, and vainly cast about for words that should not commit them to an endorsement of any technical terms used in our popular literature.

During the last eighteen months, however, a new phase has come over the face of things. Whereas formerly the note of warning was sounded, lugubrious and long, the phase of frank iconoclasm now prevails. Formerly we were repeatedly told that there is danger of crystallisation into dogmas where much attention is paid to details, and that because to one seer surroundings and events upon subtle planes appear in a particular form, it is not to be taken as axiomatic that these are the only shapes, the only results produced. But nowadays, instead of this warning voice, the tone of harsh denial is adopted, or the more dangerous, because less unpleasing, vein of flippant banter. In many articles in this REVIEW during the last year, and in many lectures, the position has been adopted that *no* trustworthy information of any kind is to be obtained from those whose psychic powers are in excess of their fellows. And not only this, but the diagrammatic method of figuring forth ideas has come likewise under the ban, such methods being stigmatised as "grossly material."

It seems to me the time has come for members of the Theosophical Society to ask themselves if they are going to submit to have what has helped them in the past, and what may help thousands in the future, decried as dangerous and unfit. Let us examine into this matter a little more closely, for surely we may find a middle path, which avoids the dangers of credulity on the one hand, and of destructive criticism on the other.

Is it really the fact that we are more attached to forms, and less plastic to the moulding of the Life, than was the Society in the early days? I, for one, cannot see it. In the Lansdowne Road days, and in the early times at Avenue Road, we are told that all the teaching came through H. P. B. herself. Apart from *Isis Unveiled* and *Esoteric Buddhism* there was little in those days for the student of Theosophy to work at. If we turn to articles written by members at this time we find them characterised by a close adherence to Sanskrit terminology, and by an absence of that broad-mindedness and tolerance for which most of our

literature to-day is conspicuous. And what were the first elementary books of study published? The *Manuals*—which, whilst giving us a scaffolding to build upon, for which many of us to-day feel that we owe them a deep debt of gratitude, were nevertheless compressed and technical text-books, containing hard and fast classifications of principles and planes, much more conducive to dogma than the books of later years!

Moreover, that most valuable branch of Theosophical activity, the study of comparative religions, and the synthesising of common thoughts from widely separated areas, had hardly been entered upon. Members relied for their information upon the *ipse dixit* of H. P. B., or on messages from the great Masters received through one or other of the recognised channels. The Society was then little, if at all, beyond a sect, and the great work of unearthing Theosophy from the religions and philosophies, the arts and sciences of the world—a task in which so many are engaged to-day—had hardly been thought of. Let us by all means hold ever before our eyes the danger of crystallisation, and of becoming a sect, but do not let us fall meanwhile into the opposite error of denying relative truths, and obscuring what to many seems clear, because we believe that deeper truths and profounder depths lie behind.

In a Society like ours there cannot but be many grades of intelligence, and we cannot expect that truths, discovered after years of laborious and wisely-directed search, can appeal fully to those who are only starting on the quest for Wisdom. Surely one thing our studies should have taught us is that there are countless stages in evolution. But even those who stand intellectually in the van of the Society found illumination at one time, in the perhaps crude representation of teachings about planes and principles. There must be hundreds amongst us who feel that a new light of comprehension has been shed for them by the diagrammatic representation of five or seven planes upon the blackboard, or by the representation of interlaced circles suggesting the interpenetration of matter of the planes. And because at a later stage they may come to feel the ludicrous inadequacy of such representations to convey the facts of Nature, is that any reason why they should destroy the rungs of the

ladder by which they climbed, and so prevent others from making use of them? This were, indeed, no true brotherliness. Rather let them strain every nerve to pass into the cruder teachings, that helped them in the past, and that are to-day helping many to whom theosophic thought is new and unfamiliar, any fuller light they may have gained, that thus their brothers may climb more swiftly than they were able to climb, to the mountain tops—where the brilliant sunshine makes all the lower stages seem but darkness.

Have we not heard that in the Mysteries of old there were several stages? For men of the world unversed in thought and meditation the great Truths were shadowed forth in material representations, that they could see and hear, thereby learning something of the inner meanings. And as they progressed, the teaching became more spiritual, and they were taught through their developed inner senses. But those who had reached this higher stage of development did not turn and seek to destroy by criticism the earlier stage that had led them to their present position!

There is, however, a still more serious evil rampant among us, which threatens the disruption of our Society unless it can be checked. For besides attacks upon the form of much of our theosophical teaching, thrusts are frequently made at those who have been the channels of that teaching, and in such unfriendly criticisms there lurks indeed a dangerous element. For it means that basest of things, *ingratitude* to the teachers and writers who give their lives to the movement, and whose whole energies are devoted to the effort to put at the disposal of all who seek, the priceless teaching they have gained with so much effort and so arduous a personal training.

We know that a prophet is seldom recognised by those of his own household, and it may be that it is wellnigh impossible for us mortals, when we have worked side by side with fellow-students, and drunk at the same fountain of knowledge, to recognise the fact that one or other of our brethren has climbed beyond us, and far outstripped us in his knowledge and power. But for those who are the heirs of such teachings, and to whom such an one brings light and help, there is no excuse if they turn upon the giver, and try to pick to pieces the gift he brings them. No one

in the Theosophical Society is asked to accept teaching that does not appeal to him as true—indeed the writers and lecturers of the Society reiterate at every opportunity the warning that they have no gospel to force upon people, but that they lay before thinking men and women the results of their own work and thought, offering it freely as a gift for them to modify, reject, or accept, according to whether it fits in, or not, with their own thought. And can there be baser ingratitude than to meet such generous giving with a spirit of carping criticism, which refuses to be beholden to another for fear lest error mingle with the truth thus offered ?

Mankind in every age has stoned the prophets, and rejected the truths they ever offered to the world. Shall we in the Theosophical Society allow ourselves to fall into this despicable sin ? If we do, then, indeed, will the disintegrating forces bring our Society to an end, and rightly so.

But may it not be that the great majority of those who are proud to call themselves members of the Theosophical Society, will rouse themselves and rally to the high ideals so often set before them, refusing to allow the voice of criticism to sully or abuse them ? Nor will they fear to be called hero-worshippers, knowing that it is ever a sign that the spirit is awake in a man, when he can see and appreciate the greatness in others.

In such a spirit we may work in the unity of true brotherliness, ready to think differently from one another on many points, meeting with courtesy and friendliness differences of opinion and differences of appreciation ; but speaking slightly of none, and regarding at least with reverent gratitude, if not with affection, those who labour unceasingly, with thought, and voice, and pen, for the welfare of our beloved Society, and of Humanity.

ETHEL M. MALLET.

A PROPER secrecy is the only mystery of able men ; mystery is the only secrecy of weak and cunning ones.—CHESTERFIELD.

THE SEVEN COMMANDMENTS

IN the sacred book of Christianity, the Faith in which we were all educated, there are two moral codes. The first contains ten commandments; the second contains only two. The ten go into some necessary details of morality; and though we could assuredly not infringe any of them and yet be "held guiltless," we might carefully observe all of them and yet be the most undesirable men and women. These ten old rules, when placed by the side of modern life, show up as crude, archaic, and incomplete. The other commandments (the two of the New Testament) being fundamental laws, are as applicable to-day as they will be when our world has grown cold. Moreover, these few words are all-embracing in their extent. On them hang "all the Law and the Prophets," and we see vaguely, as the goal of our Being, that time when we can fulfil their requirements, loving the Lord our God with all our heart . . . and our neighbour as ourself.

There is thus an effete code, and one (as yet) unattainable; but a working set of laws of universal application lying between the two and suitable for modern needs, has yet to be transcribed: and in the meantime we have to construct temporary codes for ourselves.

The following is a student's rough-and-ready outline sketch for such a set of laws, based upon a fair elementary knowledge of history, natural history, and human nature. (Of course, this code should be based upon universal knowledge, but we each have to build with the available material.) This Essay or Memo was not originally intended for publication, but has, I think, become apposite with regard to the discussion on Dogma *versus* Agnosticism, lately going on in these pages.

The answer to "Which?" is generally "Both." It seems to be so again in the case of [this controversy. The agnosticism of A. R. O. is founded on right reason, for "we are all agnos-

tics, inasmuch as we realise our own ignorance"; and, further, such doctrines as Fundamental Unity, Personal Immortality, Reincarnation, etc., are quite beyond proof (*i.e.*, personal experience and knowledge) to most of us. But the plea of M. L. for the necessity and actuality of dogma is equally cogent, for "there are some things of the which one is quite sure" (to quote M. Beaucaire), and one of those things is the existence of a set or series of laws (or dogmas) and many of these laws are verifiable by study, observation, and personal experience. I give the seven commandments that I have evolved so far, on these lines of personal study and experience. These are to me the things-knowable, the nucleus of wisdom—God's wisdom, Theo-sophia—about which dogmatism is reasonable, and agnosticism impossible.

* * * *

A certain amount of study in any direction, brings the unalterable conviction that the worlds, natural, social, moral, and spiritual, are ruled by unswerving law. And comparison between the rules of each realm at last brings out the fact that the laws in each are really the same, somewhat differently coloured by the varying environments.

Law in the natural world is too obvious to need comment. Law in the world of human life has been demonstrated by all the later historians, beginning from Buckle and running through the alphabet. Law in the spiritual world can only be got at by parallel and parable by the ordinary person, and this oblique method of approach is rather well brought out in a now somewhat obsolete book of Drummond's, *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. Some of the writer's arguments and parallels have been proved to rest upon insecure foundations, but the general principle holds good. Great laws, like lines of latitude and longitude, encircle the sphere of our being.

We are told that there is Love as well as Law. "The Heart of things is love." This is probably quite true, but it is not so obvious. I remember, a great many years ago now, seeing a picture-placard taken about by the sandwich-men in London, throwing doubt upon the divine loving-kindness. It represented the Crucifixion, and was perhaps an advertisement for some

picture on show, but the man on the cross had not the usual resigned smile and composed limbs. The head was strained forward at a dreadful angle, the eyes were starting from their sockets, the hands dragged at the agonising nails. . . . One remembers that sort of thing rather too well! Underneath was written, "God is Love." It was suppressed, of course. Whether wisely I am not sure. It is much better to look fact in the face, and to acknowledge at once that the world is a very cruel school, if an efficacious one. The contemplation of so much pain, then, leads one on to wonder why there is all this suffering, and we end with the discovery that suffering is caused (as far as we can see, invariably caused) by the infraction of Law. This is an all-important point. If disobedience produces suffering, obedience will bring about a millennium.

The next step after the realisation of the benefits of obedience is the desire for knowledge of the Law, so that we may obey and be freed from pain. With this begins our study of the unwritten commandments of life, and the first thing to strike us is the fact that, however invariable natural Law may be, the laws social and religious seem to change from epoch to epoch; and this is baffling. We can, of course, easily rank as days of imperfect knowledge those times when plunder was rated as a higher occupation than work, when to lend one of your wives to a passing guest was the acme of good form, and so on. We can say that this was a primitive age, and Law as yet not fully understood; and that the concrete laws of a little later date, such as "thou shalt not steal," and the institutions such as monogamy, have not changed; that on them our social structure is built, and that they are as relatively permanent as other granite foundations. But there is no denying that we have round us unnumbered virtues and vices which are only such locally or temporarily. The virtues of one epoch of civilisation are the vices of the next. Closer than that, the virtue of my neighbour might in me be sin. . . . We study a hundred concrete cases without evolving light from darkness, and do not indeed come to anything like daylight till we leave the kaleidoscopic mist-haunted regions of the concrete, and rise to the cold clear sunlight of the abstract world. The customs of the lower mental

kingdoms change from month to month, like women's fashions ; the laws of the Land of the Abstract are like the Laws of the Medes and Persians, in that "they alter not." They inform a thousand fluctuating shapes, but their essence is one. Now, to my mind, there would seem to be seven great commandments in this Land of the Abstract, which lie behind the many human rules. They are as follows :

I. Work (and Play).—The first great law of life seems to be that every single adult creature shall earn its own living. Each law carries its compensation for obedience, its penalty for disobedience. The prize in this case is increased possessions. "To him that hath (earned) shall be given" and "Whatsoever a man soweth . . ." (karma). This is a law, the working out of which we can watch from start to finish in the vegetable and animal world ; and it is a good argument for pre-natal and post-death life for humanity that the rule does not seem to hold good for us individually. For humanity, as a whole, the harvest is the true result of seed and weather, as every student of history knows. The work and pay balance in this account. And if the wages for obedience are liberal, the results of disobedience are appalling. Drummond gives as his animal example the *Sacculina*, a living bag with two small suckers, something lower even than an invertebrate, which yet began its career as a swimming organism, with proper internal organs and six jointed legs. It took to the parasitic life, and that is Nature's comment upon idlers.

A comparatively recent historical parallel is supplied by the spectacle of the change in the great Roman Empire when it took to a life of idle pleasure, and allowed its tributary states to do the feeding and the fighting. From a highly developed organism it sank into a limp, inert, amorphous sucking-bag ; and our forefathers divided the carcass. "From him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath."¹

II. Warfare.—The second law of life is that each individual shall, when occasion requires, be willing and able to fight. (If anyone imagines that women are exempt from this law, let him try and touch their young.) And the individual may be certain

¹ In connection with the law of work, is the law of play ; the two together making the law of periodicity. Nature has so much term-time and so much holiday for all her subjects.

that, as his possessions increase, the occasion for a fight *will* arise. If the possessions are things, outsiders will wish to steal. If the possessions are mental treasures, outsiders will wish to hide or destroy; for "the crown of the innovator is the crown of thorns." And if the possessions are spiritual riches, all the evil powers of the universe will assemble in hostile array. The necessity for conflict, in the sense of self-defence, cannot cease till the coming of Pralaya. As to the continued necessity for the practice of the arts of aggression, I do not know enough to speak, but should imagine that the militant type of character would always find sufficient work in the service of the Highest. St. George and the Dragon would be the symbol for the devotees of this commandment. The prizes for obedience to this law are room to progress; freedom of position; a growing courage; self-respect; the respect of others; and finally an increasing usefulness as a shelterer of growing things. The penalties of disobedience are a cramped space and a sinking position; a growing cowardice; the contempt of others; subjection; decay; death; and more suffering in the process than if the victim had gone gladly to fight it out. Judging by what one sees in life there are few things the gods dislike so much as a coward.

III. Fitness (for existing conditions).—Another fundamental law is that the creature shall harmonise with its surroundings. The result of obedience is well-being. The penalty is suffering, and ultimately death. This seems an unusually "hard saying," for often the creature is above the circumstances which environ him. Or some, without being actually above their circumstances, may be merely unsuitable to them. The case of the proverbial round man in the square hole, is the case of a perfectly well-ordered organism, out of its natural element. Theosophy offers us a theory (not a fact, to those who have no memory of previous lives), a belief—that of reincarnation—which explains this apparent injustice or mistake in the lives of individuals. The victim of an inferior environment is atoning for past sin or sloth. The sufferer from an unsuitable environment—the round man—is merely a soul in front of a fresh chapter in the lesson-book of Life. He has learnt the qualities of a curve, and must now study angles, and then will be set to study other

and other positions, till, with the Saint, he can cry out : " And I have learnt in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." It is only the individual life (as in the case of Law I.) that requires explanation, since we see that for life as a whole this Law works perfectly. Each epoch has asked for a definite type for a definite reason ; and though the modern meanings may evade us, looking back to dead forms we see them as necessary links.

IV. Adaptability (for coming conditions).—Fitness was our duty to the present. Adaptability is our duty to the future.

At all times there are before us examples of better specimens of our race ; and besides the activity of our normal self striving towards fitness, there is the reaching forward of our Higher Self to that better example (perhaps a class higher) which has been perceived. But there are some epochs in life when Destiny, as it were, holds up a new model, and says : " The majority of you must conform to this. The prize for obedience will be a life fuller and freer and more beautiful than anything which it has entered into your brains to imagine. The penalty for failure will be to ' remain where you are.' " This does not sound a very serious punishment, until we reflect that to remain where we are when the bulk of the current is moving onwards is to stay behind ; and ultimately, no doubt, to drift into a backwater and be no more heard of. Nature's backwaters are apt to be very uncomfortable places.

Such an epoch as this was the time when the sea-creatures first developed a backbone. And again, when the dry land appeared and the foremost took possession of it, passing by way of the heavy reptile-form to the fuller, freer life of the mammal. Some such epoch as this there may be at present with regard to the spiritual type. If so, it is a time of overwhelming responsibilities, possibilities—and dangers.

Now these are the four lower laws. They might be summed up as the rules for the control of Action, in contradistinction to the three greater commandments which follow, and are for the regulation of Energy.

Energy seems to move in three directions or dimensions. It is hard to express exactly what one means in words, but the

stream can flow inwards, outwards, or upwards (allwards would be a better term). I have called these three movements Inspiration, Expiration, and Aspiration.

V. Inspiration.—By this I mean in-breathing. All that which refers to the principle of self-preservation, from the lowest greed and selfishness up to the wise and noble egoism of great souls. Seeing that specialisation (or the creation of individualities) is evidently one of the purposes of evolution, the sage will not seek to blur himself, or mar the fine edges of his personality, by seeking to become something or someone else. He will nourish this unique soul that he is developing, with the best of all that he can lawfully grasp, and he will cherish and defend it against intrusion or fundamental alteration.

VI. Expiration,—meaning by this, the law of the out-breathing, or the forthgiving of the self. In familiar words, “Let brotherly love continue.” It is sometimes called the Law of Sacrifice, but the idea of sacrifice is so inextricably mixed up with the idea of pain, that it is difficult to shake the word free of entanglements and set it before the reader in a pure condition; and the forth-giving of a girl to her lover, of a mother to her child, of a teacher to his pupil, or of a Master of Compassion to a suffering world, would have at its root nothing of reluctance or of pain. Under what name you like, this impulse of forth-giving is one of the strongest forces of life. It comes into play, too, much earlier in the world’s history than one would have imagined, for I read the other day that parental affection begins to be noticeable with the starfish. It is a far cry from the radiates to ourselves. The result of compliance with this law is a contradiction in terms. You limit yourself to give, and the result is expansion. The more you give, the more you have, and are! The penalty for ignoring this law is greater than any we have yet seen. The self-centred soul begins with atrophy, and ends with isolation—which is hell.

VII. Aspiration,—the seventh great law, the one indeed which includes all the others, and is yet as common to ordinary experience as any of them. Inseparable from human experience you might almost say, since the two alleged examples of tribes so low as to have no god, are very doubtful cases. Practically one

may assert that to touch the human level is to touch the beginning of aspiration. Whether the force is to be found below our level, is an open question. Personally, I think it may exist in domestic animals, to whom we would play the part of gods.

One man has measured the power of this law. "Enduring aspiration," says Goethe, "—it is a quality that conquers all the worlds."

Here ends my nucleus of Theo-sophia, and it seems to stand on a firm foundation, for we are told that the laws of Nature are the thoughts of God. Further than this—since I represent the quite ordinary person—I cannot go. Mrs. Besant speaks, in her article on Religion, in the February REVIEW, of reaching a certain depth of consciousness in which she *knows* that all the separate selves are One. Such direct knowledge is the property of the Mystic, it is inalienable, cannot be transferred. The ordinary man *may* be a Believer, but he *must* be an Agnostic (literally a non-knower) with regard to all such depths; *nevertheless he can form, by the aid of study, observation, and experience, a heptalogue of personally cognised dogmas such as the above.*

M. CHARLES.

THE PRAYER WHEEL

THE pilgrim twirls his wheel ; his sacred code
 Revolves within ; its graven characters
 Reiterating prayer, whose motion stirs
 Vibrations winged to reach the gods' abode.

Apart from thee, I tread the pilgrim road ;
 A living wheel within my being whirrs,
 At every turn thy name in prayer recurs,
 Protect, deliver, comfort, lift the load !

But near to thee, the anxious tumult stills,
 The wind of dread the wheel no longer drives ;
 We pass beyond the hurt of mortal ills
 To heights where nothing built of dust survives ;
 Together walk the everlasting hills ;
 Together taste the Life beneath our lives.

ETHEL ROLT WHEELER.

IS MATTER ELECTRICITY?

It is not so very long ago since there appeared the first signs of evidence that ordinary matter was really nothing more than a collection of electrical charges. From that time there grew with amazing rapidity an array of experiments all tending in the same direction—all suggesting that matter might be the objective appearance of bodiless charges of electricity. Professor J. J. Thomson was responsible for the most developed stages of this theory as well as for the original demonstration of the existence of electrons, on which the theory was founded.

No new theory in science was more surprising than his explanation of the "periodic law" of the elements by the way in which electrons or negative corpuscles would naturally group themselves if enclosed in a sphere of positive electricity. And now it appears that the electron is to be dethroned by Professor Thomson himself! In *The Philosophical Magazine* for June last he puts forward three separate kinds of evidence which combine to show that an atom contains only a few electrons—hydrogen one and so on in proportion to the atomic weights—instead of the thousands required by the earlier view. It is by no means easy to follow the argument on which this is based and at best the results are only approximate, but Professor Thomson himself holds that three independent lines of investigation converging in this way form a very strong basis for the theory.

It may be worth while to consider very briefly how much of the recent theories of matter is founded on real evidence and how much on daring excursions into the unknown.

In the first place it may be taken as certain that a charge of electricity has a mass of its own which is analogous to ordinary mass, and moreover that the same charge shows a mass increasing directly as the diameter of the space it envelopes decreases, and increasing also with increase of speed. Thus a charge on a

sphere of one foot diameter has only one-twelfth of the mass it has when condensed on an inch sphere. The existence of electrical mass was demonstrated mathematically by Thomson and Heaviside independently in the early eighties, but then it was of purely academic interest, as no artificial charge was great enough or condensed enough to give any experimental evidence of mass. It was not until the discovery of the negative corpuscles and their curious behaviour that the old idea had any application. When radium provided further material for investigation by not only emitting an ample supply of corpuscles but also discharging them at speeds hitherto undreamt of, then the theory found a most astonishing confirmation. The mass of an electron or corpuscle, already measured with fair accuracy for smaller speeds, was found to increase when the speed approached that of light. The rate of increase with speed was found to be about that expected on the assumption that the mass was entirely electrical. Thus it appeared probable that the electron was a bodiless electrical charge having no mass independent of that charge. This, however, has never been a generally recognised fact, and the theory due to Lorenz is that the mass of an electron is partly material in the ordinary sense and partly electrical.

Broadly, then, we may conclude that negative corpuscles or electrons are real things, that their mass is at least partly electrical, and that they form part of ordinary matter. But their size is quite another problem. On the assumption that their mass is wholly electrical, their diameter comes out at about the one-hundredth-thousandth part of that of an atom, but this depends on that assumption, and in fact, on more than one. The diameter is, however, extremely small on any view. That their mass is identical (except for the variation in speed) is, however, contradicted by the Zeeman effect—the splitting or multiplying of the lines of a gas spectrum by a strong magnetic field. It was this phenomenon which suggested the electron theory some time before the actual discovery or demonstration of free electrons by Professor Thomson. The splitting of the lines originally observed was explained by regarding the light as emitted by rotating charged corpuscles in the atom, and it has been found that the corpuscles must be negatively charged, and the charge and mass

were about those found for the free electrons. However, later work has added greatly to the difficulty of the problem by providing lines which split up into quite complicated groups, and according to Zeeman, the electrons, even in the simpler cases where they explain the phenomena, must be of widely differing mass. The nature of the electron is thus itself a matter of considerable doubt, and all we can say is that it probably has a real existence, a definite electrical charge, is either more or less free or rotates in an atom of ordinary matter, and has a very minute but appreciable mass (possibly differing in different classes of electrons) due, partly at least, to the charge itself.

So far only the negative corpuscles or electrons have been dealt with. When we come to the positive charges we enter at once into the deepest obscurity. One of the most surprising facts of recent science is the apparently profound gulf between positive and negative electricity. Most of us were brought up on the idea that the only difference lay in a displacement of something in opposite ways, or a polarisation of some vague description. Certainly no such surprising distinctions as have been recently found were ever dreamt of. In the first place, negative charges appear entirely independently of ordinary matter, as apparently disembodied entities, or at least as associated with particles far smaller than molecules or atoms. But a positive charge has never been so separated. It appears indissolubly bound up with the atom itself. Light seems to be due to the movement of the negative corpuscles, so far at least as the spectrum lines of gases give us information. What part the positive charge plays in the scheme of things is almost entirely a matter of speculation and the brilliant suggestions which have formed such a large part of recent theories are based on very little evidence of a direct kind. Their authors for the most part have never put them forward as anything more than hints of the direction in which we may expect to see more light, but the advance in theory has been so enormous that the ordinary student is very likely to jump over the obstacles that are patent to the clearer vision of the founders themselves.

Like every other theory dealing with the ultimate nature of matter the electrical one lands us in a blind alley if we go far

enough. The special form of the electrical theory which has been most generally acceptable is that which regards the atom as a small spherical space occupied by an evenly distributed charge of positive electricity and a large number of very much smaller charges of negative electricity (corpuscles or electrons) rotating in rings inside the sphere and held by the attractions of the positive charge, which equals or approximately equals the total of the negative charges. On this view Professor J. J. Thomson developed a very remarkable scheme of the arrangement of the electrons, showing that they must, to be stable, group themselves in such a manner that as the numbers increase there are periodic rearrangements which suggest the "periodic law" of the chemical elements in a most astonishing way. This is, I think, the only evidence, if it can fairly be called evidence at all, of the very fascinating theory, and now its chief exponent, Professor Thomson himself, has apparently dropped it without the slightest sign of paternal regret, for in *The Philosophical Magazine* of June last he brings evidence entirely opposed to the view that the electron is the chief basis of ordinary matter. Before referring to this in greater detail, it may be mentioned that a prominent feature of the electrical theory—we may soon be calling it the *old* theory!—is that the actual mass of the atom is the total mass of the electrons inside the positive sphere. The mass of the latter is almost negligible on account of its large size and therefore diffused charge. Thus a hydrogen atom would need to have about a thousand electrons to make up its mass and other elements vastly more, in proportion to their atomic weight. There appears to be a strong probability that atoms really do contain many electrons from the fact that the spectrum of most elements contains a large number of separate lines, but except on the assumption mentioned there is no means as yet of estimating the actual number of these little particles.

The latest contribution of note to the problem is the paper of Professor Thomson mentioned above, and in that he brings three separate lines of evidence which converge in a remarkable way to show that atoms do *not* contain the enormous numbers of corpuscles previously assumed. If these new lines of evidence—not very conclusive individually but strong in their combina-

tion—lead in the right direction there will have to be some very radical change in the electrical theory of matter if it is to maintain its position. Everyone interested in scientific speculation would feel it a sore wrench if the whole theory were to be torn out of the scientific body. It would be almost as though returning to the dark ages of the mid-Victorian era. But, however great the mourning, it is no use clinging to the most picturesque of scientific skirts if it does not cover a real living body. Moreover, the amazing array of experiments, showing the mysterious relations of electrical phenomena to other forms of energy, make it certain that whatever the next theory may be it will not be less fascinating than the electrical one still predominant. We can never return to the old kingdom, where mechanics sat enthroned as absolute monarch and matter was matter, and there was an end of it.

To return to the destructive suggestions of Professor Thomson, the first line of evidence is due to a consideration of the dispersion of light by gases. This is the most easily understood of the three methods, but its details are very difficult to follow. Suppose an atom to be composed of a positive and a negative charge bound together by mutual attraction. On placing such a body into an electrical field the positive charge will move in one direction and the negative in another. If the negative is, as on the usual assumption, inside a positive sphere, the relative displacement is limited, and varies with the strength of the field. Light is due to a very rapidly varying field, and therefore there is a continuous adjustment of the two charges to the changing force. If either of these charges has absolutely no mass associated with it then the relative adjustment is complete, no matter how rapid the change. But if both have mass time is necessary to make the full movement, and hence the readjustment is less complete the more rapid the change—that is, is less complete for violet light than for red. The readjustment will also depend upon the number of negative particles inside the positive sphere, and Professor Thomson applies a formula, derived from a theory of dispersion based on electrical principles, to the very few known measurements of dispersion in gases. The result of applying the experimental data to this

formula is to give the positive charge the greater part of the mass—apparently almost the whole—and to make the number of negative corpuscles in a hydrogen atom about unity—a great fall from the thousand or so given by the usual hypothesis.

The two other methods are based on the absorption of the β rays (free negative corpuscles) by gases and the scattering of X-rays, and in both cases formulæ already developed and supported by evidence are applied to the problem of the number of electrons in an atom. The result gives in each case a number about equal to the atomic weight of the substances, taking hydrogen as unity.

It is surprising that the paper containing such important developments has not attracted more general attention. The amount of discussion it has received in scientific journals is as yet quite insignificant. No doubt before long there will be further work on the same lines published and we shall be better able to form an idea of the standing of the electrical theory of matter when it has been subjected to more searching criticism. The question as to whether matter really is just an appearance assumed by electricity—whatever that may be in itself—or whether ordinary mass is actually a fundamental fact behind which we cannot get, is one still obscure and doubtful, and there is room for many warring speculations in that vast and unexplored territory of science. If the material world is but a collection of electrical charges, all kinds of speculations as to its beginning, its progress and its ending are rendered possible. If the electron is the basis and its mass depends upon its smallness, is its size an everlastingly fixed thing or may it vary? If it does, matter increases or decreases, and might be continuously increasing by the mere operation of some power squeezing the electrons, or the universe might dissipate itself by the relaxation of whatever force may be operating to bind the negative charge in its minute sphere. And if positive and negative electricity really neutralise each other, as they appear to do in ordinary work, matter would absolutely disappear were the negative and the positive charges to merge into one another. What should we have then? Well, that is not very easy to say, but it would be very peaceful!

A. M. GLASS.

THE SISTER LANDS

A FEW words perhaps are necessary to explain what follows, for the "vision," using the word in its most extended sense, was not as it were a chance seeing, but came in answer to long years of questioning. Fate has led me to spend the greater part of my life first in one and then in another of the sister lands, and in the third also I have lived long enough to understand its modes of thought and to love its people.

As I grew to know and love each nation in turn, to study the jars and frets that separated them, and yet to feel that under all lay an indissoluble unity, these questions constantly made themselves heard: Why should not these peoples live together in harmony? Why should there be hatred and mental war between at least two of them? What is the strength of the tie that binds them, and in what lies its weakness? What is the ideal relationship that each bears to each, according to the eternal pattern of things? What, in short, is their destiny, and how is it to be fulfilled?

These questions were insistent and ever recurring, till at last sight came, not all at once; only the broad outline was seen at first; then gradually, and often when least expected, details were added. Yet it is only a personal vision, written down for what it is worth, necessarily limited and perhaps misconstrued.

I was conscious of being in the presence of Spiritual Entities Sisters, unseen, impalpable, and yet to some part of my being they translated themselves as robed in white, and stood together arm linked in arm. I knew also that Virgin, Wife and Mother stood before me, the Spirits of the Sister Isles. And as I wondered, I seemed to be carried into the hearts of the peoples that they represented. It was in Ireland that I first awoke and saw that the Virgin stood as a mighty figure behind the land, and I was told that virginity of necessity carries with it ignorance and

limitation. Then I was shown the women of the land. There were those who Diana-like stood for fearless youth, hardly women, with a strange cold, clear, element of boyishness in their mien; and there were those who, half in curiosity, half in dawning maidenhood, stretched out timid hands towards the apple; but were they wife or maid was all one, the essential essence of their being was virgin. And I saw the manhood of the nation as a knight in armour, with sword drawn in readiness to shield and guard; for womanhood was to him as the Holy Grail. This too I saw, that the religion raised as an ensign for the people, was the worship of the Virgin and Child.

* * * *

For a moment there was a pause and I became conscious next in the heart of England. Verdure and plenty seemed to surround me, sunshine filled the air and on the physical plane under all lay a great peace. Then I understood that I was in the land where spirit had joyfully wedded matter. The wife, the home, the law of perfection in daily life was the great ideal; the "new earth" as the reflection of the "new heaven" had already begun, and the manhood stood by in glad pride, as husband and lord. I was carried too into the darker side of things, where in the centres of life luxury was heaped on luxury, where matter ruled as king, where satiety had birth; and I was told that only through satiety could the soul learn to discern between the real and the unreal; that for all, at some time, must be the descent into hell. Even as I stood watching, souls seemed to separate themselves from the pain and the struggle. They were battered and weary, but I saw that they were shining with an inward light and I knew that hope had risen in their hearts and that they had seen the end. Next I turned and looked for the Ideal behind the religion of this people, but as a "whole" I could not see it, for each man had his own ideal and there were many creeds and many churches; but I knew it was all part of the great plan and that through the Crucifixion in Matter, Life would be won.

* * * *

Again there was pause, and when I came to myself there was consciousness far more vivid than words can express, for I

was in my own land, and for the moment I was one with that great Mother Presence that stood behind. The pains of labour were upon me, and I knew that I was a woman in travail whose hour had not yet come, and I saw with startling clearness *that* which should be born, and it was called the Son of Mind. Then the history of the people unrolled itself before me, its struggles and its privations joyfully borne; its victories and its failures; and I understood why the mothers of Scotland live for their sons, die for their sons, sacrifice all for their sons. An echo of words once heard came back to me: "The Scottish race are a re-embodiment of the Spartan people." If this indeed were so, already far back in the ages preparation was being made for the fitting birth of this Child. Then the manhood of the race stood forward, all else sunk in the great ideal of fatherhood, and for religion, through the wilderness, God, as Father, led His people. There was a great hush and expectancy everywhere, for the birth-hour seemed not far distant, and unseen Presences filled the air with waiting stillness.

Then suddenly the words were uttered: "Ireland cannot fulfil her destiny till the Child is born!" and round me on every side seemed to be thousands upon thousands of the elemental hosts set to guard the Virgin Kingdom. The laws of right and wrong as man knows them did not rule among them; all means seemed justifiable to keep the Virgin inviolate; and the passions of men were used for her shield; and the hatred of men for their fellows became a means of girdling her round; and there was war, and discord, and misunderstanding for the time, for the Unity was not yet come. But within the girdle of symbolic smoke and flame, a tremor seemed to be passing through the length and breadth of Erin, an answering vibration to the birth throes of the sister land.

Many smaller details were shown, too fleeting, too flashing to be recorded here. I have written down what I could for others to find the interpretation, but it may be that the answer will only come when the Child is born.

M. E. G.

THE CHARACTER OF GIORDANO BRUNO

WE are so accustomed to the "whitewashing" of historical personages of "shady" character and to the discovery of virtues in men previously regarded as altogether evil, that when the reverse process is attempted and the tar-brush requisitioned we are apt to be taken aback. Such was our condition when, in turning over the pages of *Gleanings from Venetian History*, by F. Marion Crawford, we came across a scathing attack on the moral and intellectual character of one we had been always in the habit of regarding with admiration and respect.

As a rule one is not disposed to take very seriously works of the superior guide-book variety, written to interest and instruct the superficial tourist. When, however, writers of note engage in the production of such works their vagaries require more than silence. The authors themselves, probably, do not regard them otherwise than as material to keep the family pot boiling, but an undiscerning public is likely to be misled.

Most writers of fiction are accustomed to manipulate their puppets to suit their plot. Their minds thus become unfitted for the more deliberate work of the critical reviewer and historian. Unused to consider the question of their moral responsibility for the characters with which they endow the children of their fancy, still less to hesitate before making their fancy's offspring trespass on the decalogue, they lack the training needed for dealing with the world of things that are. Even the historical novelist usually allows himself considerable latitude in the use he makes of the characters he impresses into his service; nor is anyone seriously inclined to find fault with him provided he exercise his power within reasonable limits.

There is, however, all the difference in the world between the historical novel which is openly and avowedly such, and historical fiction which professes to be sober history. We do

not for one moment suppose that the writers we have in mind (there are more than one) would deliberately give a false impression; but we seriously think that the habit of mind which is acquired naturally by them as writers of fiction incapacitates them for the judicial work required of the historian. Let the cobbler stick to his last.

With Mr. Crawford's work as a whole we are not concerned at the moment, but with one only of his historical characters, Giordano Bruno. Mr. Crawford depicts this celebrated philosopher in a guise so outrageous that the strongest condemnation is called for.

There are, indeed, only three or four pages in all which profess to treat of Bruno, but for inexcusable misrepresentation they will be hard to equal anywhere. Bruno is described (ii. 26) as "the renegade monk, dear to Englishmen who have never read the very scarce volume of his insane and filthy writings," and we learn "that in course of time he came to London, where his coarseness and loose life made him many enemies."

The only impression that an ordinary reader would get from this is that Bruno was simply a writer of obscene literature, a man of depraved habits. That Mr. Crawford actually means this is certain, for he concludes his remarks by asserting that "he was in reality a degenerate and a lunatic who should have ended his days in an asylum" (ii. 28).

What, however, are the facts of the case? Far from being the writer of only one scarce volume Bruno was most prolific in his literary output, his writings in Italian and Latin forming many volumes. It is true that one Comedy, and one only, is not of the kind that would be put into the hands of children now-a-days; but with that exception we believe his writings are such that the strictest puritan need not fear to read them. As to the Comedy, it should be judged not by the standard of the present day but by that of its own. It was considered suitable to be produced on the stage in Paris, and is neither better nor worse than the literature common at the time. The Comedy itself, it may be noted, holds up to ridicule Vice, Pride, and Hypocrisy, and its moral tone is correct enough. Its fault, if it was a fault in such an age, lies in an occasional coarseness of expression

which, if indulged in to-day, would be universally condemned for its obscenity.

If Bruno is to be condemned for writing *Il Candelaio* then must Shakespeare also, and almost every dramatist of the times, for similar writings. It is, however, noteworthy that this particular work is in striking contrast to all his others. It was perhaps the earliest of his writings, and in all probability was written when he was still in a convent. It was then safe for a monk to write a Comedy, even if obscene, but most dangerous to write on Philosophy, no matter how pure might be the subject. The moment Bruno was free to pursue his own inclinations we find him writing on Philosophy pure and simple.

Such is the flimsy foundation for part of Mr. Crawford's charge; and now as to that of impure living. For this latter there is practically no evidence. As a matter of fact, all that is known of the life of Bruno is contained either in the records of his trial at Venice or in his works. Mr. Crawford tells us (ii. 28) that "Mocenigo, the man who denounced him (Bruno) to the Inquisition, discovered him to be a debauchee and a blasphemer." On turning up the records of this trial what do we find? We find that Bruno was denounced to the Inquisition by a young patrician named Mocenigo, who charged him among other things with blasphemy, false teaching, and an intention of forming a new religion. In his first charge there is not a single word against the moral character of Bruno; nor in a second document, two days later, purporting to give fuller details, is there anything of an immoral nature alleged; but, incidentally, we learn that the real motive for the denunciation was Bruno's refusal to teach Mocenigo his secret science. Finally, after the trial had begun, Mocenigo, on being pressed by the Inquisitors to report all that he had heard Bruno say, declares that on one occasion he had told him "that women were pleasing to him, but that he had not yet arrived at the number of those of Solomon; that the Church greatly erred in making a fault of what was in accordance with nature, and that he held it to be most meritable."

What the Judges thought of this may be surmised from the fact that whilst pages are devoted to questions and answers on

matters of faith and doctrine, there is less than a page given to this particular assertion. Bruno, in reply, emphatically denies the charge, although he admits that he might have passed some jocular remark on the subject for the amusement of the company. So the matter drops and no more is heard of it. Yet upon such material does Mr. Crawford make his astounding assertions! Other evidence there is none; no document or record exists to substantiate so foul a charge.

What Bruno's real character was, can be inferred only from his writings. It was indeed the very opposite of that with which he is so unjustly credited. His views are well summarised by Lewes, who tells us that :

“ Bruno, avowing himself a disciple of Petrarch, proclaims a Donna more exalted than Laura, more adorable than all earthly beauty; that Donna is the imperishable image of Divine Perfection. It is unworthy of a man, he says, to languish for a woman; to sacrifice to her all those energies and faculties of a great soul which might be devoted to the pursuit of the Divine Wisdom which is truth and beauty in one, is the idol adored by the genuine hero. Love woman if you will but remember you are also a lover of the Infinite. Truth is the food of every heroic soul; hunting for Truth the only occupation worthy of a hero.”

We may, I think, safely place this noble declaration against all the guesses and imaginings of prejudiced minds. If this be lunacy, if this degeneracy, we desire no better company.

The charge of coarseness and looseness of life in London has no other foundation than that in one of his sonnets Bruno praises the beauty of the women of England.¹ That he did offend the scholars of England by his outspoken language is probably true, for in no measured words he denounces them for their pedantry and bigotry. No one pretends that Bruno was a mild, patient, or jejune individual. On the contrary, like most men of genius, he must have been a terror to his friends, no less than to his opponents.

After the amazing statements made by our novelist-historian we are not surprised to be told that one of Bruno's finest works, “ *Eroici Furori*, contains some astrological calculations and some

This, by Englishmen at least, is not likely to be considered a crime.

hints on mnemonics" (ii. 28). Probably this is a slip of the pen and some other work is meant, for Bruno did write on astronomy (not astrology) and on mnemonics. The work named, however, consists of sonnets, of great beauty, with prose illustrations. In form it is similar to Dante's *Vita Nuova*, and its theme is the transmutation of earthly love into divine ecstasy. It is impossible to imagine that our "historian" has ever even glanced over this work, still less that he can have read it, otherwise he could never have penned that part of his "Gleanings" which refers to Bruno.

It is not easy to understand how it came about that Mr. Crawford should so misrepresent the real Bruno. It is true that the Italian Philosopher was held to be a renegade and a heretic by the same Church of Rome of which we understand Mr. Crawford is also a member, but in his fiction, at least, our talented novelist betrays no sign of narrow religious prejudice. The most charitable conclusion we can arrive at is that he has not got his information at first hand, but has been the victim of some religious bigot who thinks to advance the cause of his Church by blackening the character of her supposed enemy.

Since writing the foregoing we find that Mr. Crawford has taken Previti (*Giordano Bruno, e i suoi Tempi*) for his authority. We are not now surprised that he has been misled, for that worthy member of the Society of Jesus has done his vile work in so masterful a fashion that the most careful reader, if he had not seen the original works, would be deceived. Previti, however, does not use a tar-brush to effect his purpose, but through nearly 500 pages he washes in shade after shade of greys which transform almost imperceptibly what was once white into a sombre black. Previti is an artist, but Mr. Crawford a bungling copyist.

W. H. THOMAS.

PHILOSOPHY is a modest profession, it is all reality and plain dealing ;
I hate solemnity and pretence, with nothing but pride at the bottom.

PLINY.

GEORGE BORROW'S RELATION TO OCCULTISM

THE face of the eccentric wanderer, the friend of the gypsies, George Borrow, as shown in a portrait prefacing his works, seems to bear a family likeness to Robert Louis Stevenson. Different as they were in many ways, both were wanderers by choice. Lank of feature and dark of skin, they both present a strikingly romantic type.

In that most fascinating and—shall I say?—truthful romance, *Lavengro*, Borrow, in the guise of his hero, tells several curious anecdotes of his youth and childhood which seem to me to be of special interest to students of occultism.

It was natural and in no wise wonderful that the book which first attracted him should be the world-wide epic of *Robinson Crusoe*, for it has opened the world of romance to many a child, not foredoomed to or after induced to choose such a wandering life as *Lavengro* adopted. But he declares that as a child, before he first saw the inside of this book, the mere sight of the parcel containing it, filled him with a thrill of prescience. He writes :

“I looked upon the packet as it lay on the table ; all at once a strange sensation came over me, a singular blending of curiosity and pleasure, the remembrance of which even at this distance of time produces a remarkable effect upon my nervous system. What strange things are the nerves, I mean those more secret and mysterious ones in which I have some notion that the mind or soul, call it which you will, has its habitation ; how they occasionally tingle and vibrate before any coming event closely connected with the weal or woe of the human being ! Such a feeling was now within me, certainly independent of what the eye had seen, or the ear had heard. A book had been brought me, what cared I for books ! yet something within me told me

that my fate was connected with the book which had been last brought—I opened it, and as I did so another strange thrill of pleasure shot through my frame.”

This prescience and the sight of an illustration, Crusoe in the boat, fired him with a desire to read,—the first such desire he had experienced.

Before he was three years old he seized a viper in his hand, and fate willed that he should be uninjured. Although we are not tempted to compare him to Hercules, nor to work out a symbol which would delight our colleagues possessing the thirst for humour, yet we may venture to note that children have frequently a natural shrinking from dangerous creatures, and this child is remarkable in that he had not. In those days men went about the country catching vipers, as in my young days there were professional mole and weasel-catchers, who were objects of reverential regard to the youth of the country. Such a useful member of the community, a master in the art of catching vipers, presented young “Lavengro” with a tame viper, and he carried the pet snake about with him in his bosom. This was the means of his favourable introduction to the gypsies, for whom he felt so much interest and regard all his life after.

It seems that he once came upon a group of gypsies by chance, and saw them plaiting straw, which material was, at the time, contraband. The gypsies, fearing to be betrayed, threatened the little boy; but he, half afraid, answers them boldly in romantic-heroic phrase: “I tell you what, my chap, you had better put down that thing of yours; my father lies concealed within my tepid breast, and if to me you offer any harm or wrong I’ll call him forth to help me with his forked tongue.”

The viper rising from the child’s breast quite impressed the gypsies; abashed, they treated him with superstitious awe and respect, asking him if he were “one of them there”—meaning fairies. As he denied being anything but a boy, they named him master of snakes, *sapengro* in their language.

Thus he comes early into contact with the belief in the nature spirits, and hears of one Jerry Grant, who was a “fairy man” possessing strange powers. He hears a “word of power” used by an Irish blacksmith, and feels a strange thrill at the sound;

this word drives a cob that has come to be shod nearly mad with fear and excitement, but another uttered word soothes the beast with a magic as complete as the former. "Lavengro" tells this story but makes no comment.

As a little child he was shy and averse to talking. He tells us how he was playing on the ground outside his home, drawing lines in the dust with his fingers instead of making the more ordinary mud pies, when once a Jew pedlar came along and spoke to him. He did not answer; then the Jew said that the child showed his sense by silence, and asked who he was, for he looked like "a prophet's child" (*sic*).

"How intelligent! he can write already! He then leaned forward to inspect the lines I had traced. All of a sudden he started back, grew as white as a sheet; then taking off his hat he made strange gestures at me, cringing, chattering and showing his teeth, and shortly departed muttering something about 'holy letters,' and talking to himself in a strange tongue. The words of the Jew were in due course reported to my mother, who treasured them in her heart."

We gather that "Lavengro" does not remember what lines he traced in the dust. Some one will here object: "*Lavengro* is a romance; George Borrow invented all this."

Well, if he invented it, he must have known more of occultism than anything he ever tells us could lead us to think. In studying Hebrew, he must have come across the Kabala, or learned about it, or he could not know that "holy letters" existed for Jews learned in the occult teaching that lies at the back of their Law. If he did not invent it—and it seems easier to think it true, as the whole book is an embroidered and poetised autobiography of Borrow himself—then the Jew pedlar was the one that knew. And who was the "prophet's child" that wrote the sacred characters without knowing what he did? Was it memory of a life when he had studied the Kabala as well as the Bible?

Reading George Borrow's works one feels all through expectant that something will presently be said. The "something" never comes; the key to the strange character is wanting. When, in *The Romany Rye*, he tells us of months of life in the open, sleeping alone under the stars, the primitive life in which

men fight out the rage of rivalry, of the road, of business, life and the woman ; when, aided by the amazon Bell, he overcomes the bully of the road, the amazon elects to follow the victor, and he, instead of appropriating the victor's right, treats her as a comrade, gives her a brotherly affection, wants her to study languages, and ends by finding her a weight on his hands, despite her kindly service and helpful devotion to such comfort as their wandering-tinker life allowed of ; when for a moment, or even more than a moment, feeling the unrest that indicates desire to change his mode of living, he concludes to throw off the suggestion of home and family, that such is not his desire, that his choice of a wandering celibate life is made once for all ;—then, time after time, it seems to me he shows us the curious vision of a militant ascetic, fleeing modern conditions of life whilst unconscious of his past lives and reasons for solitude.

In the past had he been already a wanderer ? had he attained to partial liberation in a former life ? Have we in this signs of the old scars on the psychic consciousness, if I may so express it, that show at times and ache with the memory of former battles ?

I am induced to speculate thus, not idly, but as striving to learn and to feel one's way in the mazes of Karma, from these various allusions to emotion in connection with science and prescience, and by two statements in *Lavengro* (pp. 110 and 426).

First, after an illness in youth, he writes : " I had become convalescent it is true, but my state of feebleness was pitiable. I believe it is in that state that the most remarkable feature of human physiology frequently exhibits itself. Oh, how dare I mention the dark feeling of mysterious dread which comes over the mind, and which the lamp of reason, though burning bright the while, is unable to dispel ; art thou, as leeches say, the concomitant of disease, the result of shattered nerves ? Nay, rather the principle of woe itself, the fountain-head of all sorrow co-existent with man, whose influence he feels when yet unborn. A dreadful fear is upon me ; mine is a dread I know not what."

He evidently considered the tendency to melancholy, as it would ordinarily be called, born in him. Would not the occultist say it was a consciousness of the dark side, of the pressure of the

“dark powers” upon the personality, whilst the subject was ignorant of their existence as such ?

Then, again, he writes in later life : “ The inscrutable horror which I had felt in my boyhood had once more taken possession of me ; when least thought of it seized me again. I resisted,—of no use fighting—too great to be borne—what should I do ? Run to the nearest town—request assistance of my fellow men ? No ; that I was ashamed to do, I knew they would consider me a maniac. I knew I was not a maniac, for I possessed all my reasoning powers, only the horror was upon me. Praying seemed to have no effect upon the horror—fear appeared to increase.”

In his despair he pressed against a thorn bush that physical pain might counteract the mental (? emotional).

“ Presently I felt them (the thorns) no longer ; the power of the mental agony was so great that it was impossible with that upon me to feel any pains from thorns.”

He restrained himself from rushing wildly away anywhere ; he reasoned that he could not escape from himself ; that he was as well there as anywhere until it became—“ not so strong upon me—relaxing its grasp, releasing its prey. I looked up to heaven, clasped my hands and said, ‘ Our Father ! ’ I said no more ; I was too agitated ; and now I was almost sure that the horror had done its worst ! ”

Poor “ Lavengro,” having wrestled with the power of darkness, stumbled exhausted to where his horse lay, and with a craving for sympathy embraced the creature, and at last slept with his head on his pony’s neck. He read the story of Saul, and sympathised with that ancient king, and the next day again feared the fear !

He says there came upon him “ a cramping of the breast, a tingling of the soles of the feet ; they were what I had felt on the preceding day, they were the forerunners of the fear. I sat motionless on the stone, the sensations passed away and the fear came not.” And later : “ I awoke on my own calculations about midnight ; it was pitch dark and there was much fear upon me.”

This is the last mention of his curious experience which, in a man less strong physically and mentally, might have resulted in

madness or temporary derangement of the mind. His expression, "the principle of woe itself, the fountain-head of all sorrow—co-existent with man," seems to me more than a poetic phrasing, it is an inspiration. It describes that state of apparent reversal of the law of right and life, the dark side of the mirror, the seeming arrest of progress by retro-action, the balance of negative against positive. All the terms of correspondence and reversion by which we characterise the illusion commonly called evil,—the darkness by means of which we perceive light.

Was "Lavengro" a knower deprived of consciousness of other states for a time, some of his powers in abeyance, because he had made some false step, but with a purity of intention that had earned this protective unconsciousness until such time as a life of personal purity, freedom from ambitions, and voluntary seclusion should readjust the lost balance?

A. SNAVE.

IN SUPPORT OF THE ARGUMENTATIVE

HE who spendeth time in argument and hearing arguments doth shadow fight; for God the Father and the Good is not to be obtained by speech or hearing.—THRICE-GREATEST HERMES.

WHY begin the fight with the most crushing argument of the opposer? Because it is not a question of exalting the argumentative man above his opponent, but of trying to show that he, like everyone else, has his part to play, and because he alone can fight to any purpose who has himself used his enemy's weapons, and knows their worth.

Without doubt, this wondrous saying is a great and mighty truth. Who has not at some time or other felt its power, and yet it is *a* truth, not Truth itself. That cannot be revealed to mortal mind even by so great a Master as the Thrice-Greatest one, yet some aspect of it, such as the above, may become manifest to those who are ready. It appeals to man at a certain stage of his pilgrimage with great force, and also to a lesser degree at minor stages, which are but the reflections of the greater.

What is the meaning of this? It seems as if these stages in the individual life are but reflections of that state of consciousness which, in the Logos, leads to Pralaya. Then a Consciousness far beyond our highest imaginings turns from the contemplation of separate details to that of a great Whole, which, though no longer seen in detail, stands forth all the more clearly because of the microscopic investigations of the Great Day. For what is the very essence of manifestation and also of argument? Is it not separateness? If so, they stand or fall together.

Doubtless there are many who say that manifestation is a mistake, a delusion, something to be escaped from, which should never have been. Manifestation is to them the arch-enemy and so consequently is argument. They are at the stage when Unity is to triumph over Diversity, when sleep is the one thing desirable, the activities of the day being all "vanity and vexation of spirit." And they are quite right from their point of view. Who with a healthy mind in a healthy body wants to argue after midnight?

But for those for whom the Great Day is a delight and the Great Night a terror, argument is one of the chief joys of life, and in proportion as the glamour of activity is upon them, will they ride forth as champions of some special truth and fight for it to the death. By emphasising out of proportion some one point, are they not serving as finer and finer lenses, by means of which minute detail is observed by a greater consciousness? As the part, they may suffer; as the whole, they gain. To those absorbed in more important details, or in vague dreams of the great Whole, their attempts seem ridiculous and their conclusions hopeless. How can such childish quarrels, such vain attempts to solve the "Riddle of the Universe," be other than useless, they say, and the remark of the Thrice-Greatest one is quoted in support of this conclusion. Those who speak thus are satisfied with the details they have already examined; they want peace to fit them into what they think will be a perfect whole, and object to the throwing in of tiny scraps to complicate the puzzle. Who has not met with people perfectly satisfied with the truth as presented by Mrs. A. or Mr. B. *plus* their own opinions, and who utterly

refuse to hear anything further? Perhaps as often we meet those who combat every opinion, whether of those wiser or of those more foolish than themselves.

Is there not a third class?—those who do not forget the day during the night, nor the night during the day, who, observant of the many, strive to keep ever before their eyes some outline, however dim, of a Unity—a Whole, in comparison with which the details are verily but shadows; who eagerly respond to the truth of the great saying of Hermes and also to that other great utterance: “That willed: I will multiply”; who see that every shadow is only one for him who sees it alone or its immediate companions only, but that each is a reality to the seer of the whole. Where would the whole be without its parts, the picture without its details? He who endeavours as far as possible to have some dim perception of both, seems to be for the moment reflecting a higher state of consciousness than he who is merged in either one or the other. He who welcomes every argument, every new aspect of truth, who argues with himself not with others only for the mere sake of opposition, for that is a lower stage; who, as soon as he delights in one aspect of truth, strives to see beauty in its opposite, is surely the lover of Truth. Such a man is never satisfied with a part, with relative truth only; and if, like A. R. O., he has found no truth and no comfort, it is because it could be neither truth nor comfort, if he could have found it at this stage, at any rate. He knows if the sleep of satisfaction should come to him, that it will be followed by the restless day, and is no more deluded by a temporary Nirvāna, a shadow of the great cosmic rest, than the man who, laying aside his occupations and pleasures, yields to “tired nature’s sweet restorer,” fully intending to continue to add to his activities when daylight comes once more. He will equally defend the arguer and the non-arguer, and, though the mind may rebel, will rejoice in his inmost soul if some argumentative individual will tread on his pet theories, and show them to be but shadows. Who objects to being told what he has already guessed, and who should more readily respond to criticism than the counsel for the defence, in the case of that much maligned individual—the argumentative man?

A. LL. LEECH.

THE COMMUNICATIONS FROM ADYAR AND THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

I HAD thought of criticising a number of important points in the more recent communications from Adyar and in the general correspondence, but have decided that it is wiser to abstain, for such points become daily [more numerous. Answering back is endless, and the joy of having the last word an empty satisfaction.

I would have given much to have avoided the publication of the "Two Communications from Adyar" and "The Basis of the Theosophical Society" in the REVIEW, but that was not possible. Once published, it was inevitable that protests and their opposites would be made. Last month I put in all documents just as they were sent spontaneously, according to the order of events. This month I have withheld everything in a contrary sense and filled the whole available space with contributions in favour of Mrs. Besant's positions. I now think I am justified in closing the REVIEW to anything bearing directly on the present discussions, with the exception of severely official documents, and of course Mrs. Besant's reply.

In future the questions of principle involved must be treated from a purely detached and philosophical standpoint, without reference to individuals, if the writers wish to avail themselves of the hospitality of the REVIEW.

As to what I have myself done and suffered in resisting pressure, I thank my colleagues for their criticisms and will try to profit by them. For criticism, whether just or unjust, whether based on reality or appearance, is, I hold, a great teacher to the one who is criticised, a more potent purifier of the soul than praise. If I have inadvertently fallen into any real error of fact in any detail, or into any fault of manner of statement, I regret it, and I unreservedly withdraw from my letter the phrase, "Mrs. Besant forgot her intention." I have most carefully read and reread all the documents, and after giving them every consideration and well weighing everything, I remain where I was in my general position with regard to the main arguments.

Distressing as all this is, I think it is better that it should have come to the surface than have been hidden underneath. I hope we have all gained by our common experience, and that after this Kurukshetra we may grow together in wisdom. The Theosophical Society is in travail and anguish; may it bring forth a fair child that will truly benefit humanity. I would, in conclusion, remind my colleagues of the old mystery-logos :

“And God laughed seven times. . . . At the third peal through the Bitterness Mind appeared.”¹

G. R. S. MEAD.

THE publication of his views by the General Secretary of the Indian Section on one of the manifestations at Adyar, has given rise to a good deal of discussion. Some think that the condemnation of one phenomenon by the General Secretary of a Section, writing in his official character, is as much a violation of T.S. neutrality as is the assertion of another phenomenon by the President. Many have asked me to give an opinion on the state of things caused by the Colonel's assertion of the one and the General Secretary's denial of the other, and it may be that some further thought on the subject may conduce to peace.

In the very temperate, and, with two or three exceptions, impersonal and useful remarks of the General Secretary, it is said that “if I am not mistaken, this is the first time since the organisation of the Theosophical Society, that our revered President-Founder has issued any official edict in the name of the Master.” This is here a double error in fact, first the letter is not an “official edict,” as will be presently shown; secondly, official edicts have been issued, endorsed by appeals to the Master, as may be seen by referring to the back-issues of *The Theosophist*. Brother K. Narayana Swamy Iyer, on another page,² draws attention to an Executive Order, issued in consequence of “a letter phenomenally given me on board my steamer.” Neither the President nor H. P. B. had the smallest hesitation in referring to, and appealing to the opinion of, the Masters in various matters, great and small. And as the opinion of a wise friend is valuable, why should those who are fortunate enough to have such a Friend be deprived of the aid of His counsel? It binds and coerces

¹ Since the above was set up I have seen the copy of a lengthy pamphlet by Mrs. Besant, addressed to the members of the British Section. I have, however, nothing to add.—G.R.S.M.

² This and the following documents from India are evidently *tirages à part* from *The Theosophist* for April.

none. As H. P. B. says, we lose much when we regard the Masters as "cold far-off stars" instead of as "living men." And how far the Society has gone from the ideal of its Founders is shown by the uproar caused by Their most benignant aid at an important crisis.

On the other hand, it is most useful that the General Secretary—while not denying the reality of the manifestations, and while expressing, as may be seen in the Kâshi Tattva Sabha Theosophical Society notice on another page, his "complete confidence in" my "leadership"—should have warned members to use their own judgment in their votes, and to consider all the circumstances of the case. Only by such calm judgment and consideration, not by blind obedience, can members make it safe for the Holy Ones to give Their gracious counsel. They do not wish to command us as children, but to advise us as Elder Brothers advise their youngers, and if Their speech paralyses intelligence and conscience, They remain silent. So let all carefully ponder over the General Secretary's wise warning, and act as their individual reason and conscience commands.

The General Secretary, in a note to my letter, says that he does not think that the Lovers of Truth and Humanity will desert members who vote honestly. Nor do I. The note does not appear to refer to anything I said in this letter, and personally I do not believe that the Holy Ones ever desert *anyone*—however sinful. Much less then could I suppose that They would desert a well-meaning, honest person. If, by any confusion of thought, the note is intended to rebut my statement that members may "reject them as Masters and Guides," then, while agreeing with the General Secretary's statement, I repeat my own. A member who does not believe in Their existence, obviously rejects Them as Masters and Guides. A member who, believing in the Masters, rejects the two Beings who manifested at Adyar as the Masters Whom we speak of as the True Founders, obviously also rejects those Beings as the Masters and Guides spoken of. The General Secretary would probably agree with me in this.

I may, perhaps, add here—though I did not say so publicly before—that a man, or a Society, may render himself, or itself, unfit to be—incapable of being—a vehicle of spiritual life to the world, and in such a case, the Masters might be said, not to "desert" but to "reject" such a man or Society, *temporarily*, as such a vehicle.

How natural to us the appeal for the aid of the Masters is—when excited partisan feelings do not give to it a disproportionate weight—is shown by the beautiful closing words of the General

Secretary's last official report to the President: "That the Lords of Wisdom may shed their gracious light on you in every crisis, and help you to steer the holy bark safely to its haven"; how natural also, before the excitement of an election had begun, was the President's glad response, that the prayer had been answered, and the help given. There was clearly no idea in the mind of either of committing an unconstitutional act in their respective statements.

The letter of the President, as before said, was not an "Official Notice," or "Executive Order." It was not addressed to the General Secretaries by the President, but "To the Theosophical Society, its Officers and Members," and is a long letter of friendly information. It was written, with all the warmth of the Colonel's heart, in the joy of his Master's coming, to friends whom he thought would trust his statement and share in his delight. That the General Secretary of the Indian Section did not regard it as an official document is clear from his non-publication of it in the Sectional organ. He inserted only the "Official Notice" from the President to the General Secretaries, which is as formal and as constitutional as any Executive Order can be, and which contains no allusion to the Masters. He thus acted perfectly constitutionally—though I think that the President's letter might have been printed, as interesting information, especially as the attacks on it are unintelligible in its absence—giving the Executive Order, and preparing to act upon it, till stopped by the cable of the Acting President, which, with constitutional loyalty, he obeyed.

The Executive Committee of the British Section has taken an extraordinary course, probably due to the extreme sensitiveness of its democratic spirit, alarmed by the terrible word "appoint" instead of "nominate." It seems that its Members thought that the President wished to trample on the constitution he had created, and to deprive them of their undoubted right of voting. Under this wonderful *māyā*—shared in by no other Section—they rejected as invalid "the Presidential Notice of 1907." People who are such sticklers for verbal accuracy that they reject with contumely the wish of the dying President, because, according to his wont, he used the word "appoint" in an informal letter, telling him cavalierly that they will receive "with becoming respect" a nomination otherwise made, should surely themselves be accurate.

The President's friendly letter of information was not a Presidential Notice in name or form, but was addressed to the Theosophical Society in general. To reject it, therefore, as invalid is

neither courteous nor accurate. Perhaps the Executive realised its mistake when it received a real Official Notice, dated January 21st (printed here last month). So far, however, from receiving this Constitutional order "with becoming respect," they have absolutely ignored it, have asked Mr. Sinnett to "regularise" the perfectly regular nomination and have taken the extraordinary step of circulating, with the nomination, other papers which have nothing to do with it, but can only confuse the issues, *leaving out*, according to the British General Secretary's list, as sent to me, the Colonel's *Official Notice*. The democratic indignation roused by the word "appoint" seems to have bewildered the Executive, and to have made it suppose that the President wished to impose on them a President without their consent! Fortunately the Society possessed, on the spot, in its Vice-President, Mr. Sinnett, a man of calm and balanced judgment, and he poured oil on the troubled waters, yielded to the excited Executive so far as to nominally "regularise" the nomination, while saving the Section from the consequences of rejecting an Executive Order before it was received!

Our General Secretary thinks I should not have published my letter, affirming my belief in the manifestation of the Master. That may be so. But it seems to me that it would not be right that all the voices heard should be on the side of denial. It is no more "coercion" for me to express my belief than for others to express their disbelief. I did not speak till others had spoken. Mr. Keightley's private letters to Europe, and others in India between leading members, causing much misunderstanding, were written before mine, and the Theosophical Society would rightly blame me if I suffered the denials to pass unchallenged, and thus tacitly supported them.

I turn to the General Secretary's notes on the "Conversation."

I cordially endorse views 1, 2 and 3, remarking only on 2, that I have not heard anyone say that rejection of the "Conversation" means absence of faith in the Masters. No. 4. My experience of many years has shown me that the inner impulse is as likely to be mistaken as the outer manifestation! Pre-conceived ideas, prejudices, bias, desires, and a host of other elements sway the "still small voice."

With regard to No. 5, I would suggest that the physical weakness is so thoroughly recognised as favourable to "manifestations," that religions deliberately bring about physical depression by fastings and vigils, in order to prepare devotees for seeing heavenly beings

with their physical eyes. As to mental depression, I refer the reader to the account of the Colonel's presence at the Convention, as published in this magazine for January. Moreover, the Colonel dictated long letters on business long after the date of the manifestations, and Mr. Fullerton, in answering one of them, remarks on its mental vigour as a hopeful sign of prolonged life. His doctor says: "A circular recently published by Mr. Keightley has come into my hands which says:

"I am bound to say that ever since last Christmas Colonel Olcott has been in no condition of mind or body, either to think clearly or to take any important decision whatever."

"I, N. C. Nanjunda Rao, do hereby declare to be untrue this statement or any other to the effect that Colonel Olcott's weak condition of bodily health (owing to heart disease) had affected his mind, thus making him incapable of carrying on properly the duties of his office.

"I attended him as physician from the 10th of December, 1906, until he passed away, and saw no sign of senile decay until the second week of February. After the middle of January he seldom slept, so I sometimes gave drugs to induce sleep, and during the time that the effect of the drug was upon him, his mind often wandered, but that is quite a different thing, and happens in persons of the strongest mentality when narcotics are given.

"On many occasions when visiting Colonel Olcott, I discussed with him matters of importance, and found him keen in argument, and level-headed on all points. At one time in January several persons in my presence consulted him about a certain matter, not concerning the Theosophical Society, but one in which he was interested. His views differed from theirs, and even though they argued for some time, he remained obdurate, and refused to coincide with their views, as he considered them unwise. I state this to show that he was not easily influenced.

"It is rare to find one of Colonel Olcott's age with faculties so well conserved. He was cheerful, witty, and entertaining as always, until about ten days before his death, and I have seldom witnessed such patience, unselfishness, consideration for others; or such courage in one facing death:

"M. C. NANJUNDA RAO."

6. I endorse it, rejecting the idea implied that anyone is seeking to impose on anyone else any such belief.

7. "The answers . . . do not touch the point at issue, but are quite wide of the mark." This is not so. There are three questions and three answers. "Did certain persons work together under the Masters' guidance?" "Most emphatically, yes." That seems fairly direct. "Were either mistaken or under glamour?" "Decidedly not." That also seems fairly direct. How can these categorical answers be said to be wide of the mark? "Was Mrs. Besant right in thinking that certain objectionable teachings barred Mr. Leadbeater as an instrument?" "No, where can you find us perfect instruments," etc. This again seems fairly categorical. The question in the General Secretary's mind was not that in Colonel Olcott's, and the Master was answering Colonel Olcott's questions, not those of the General Secretary. His answers were naturally wide of questions not asked. But they answered exactly what Colonel Olcott wanted to know.

It will thus be seen that the difference of opinion between myself and the General Secretary is really small. It turns chiefly on the different values we severally attach to phenomena, and that is too large a question to discuss here.

Mr. Keightley's address differs wholly in spirit from that of the General Secretary, and is regrettably personal and discourteous; also it applies to both the manifestations, and not only to one. I say nothing on the remarks affecting my personal honour; if my life does not answer for me, words are idle, and I decline to be drawn into a personal squabble.

Mr. Keightley's letter, so far as arguments go, is drawn, sometimes even verbally, from that of the General Secretary, and from the resolutions of the British Executive, and I have dealt with these above. I take it for granted that Mr. Keightley had not observed the word "appoint" until his attention was drawn to it by the British proceedings, since, had he observed it earlier, he would, as a member of the General Council, have drawn the Colonel's attention to it before he passed away. Mr. Keightley says that the communications from the Masters contain "various errors of fact and statement," and show an imperfect acquaintance with the history of the Society. It would be helpful if Mr. Keightley would point out these errors, so that the members may judge for themselves as to the accuracy of his statement. The Colonel was at least as well acquainted with the history of the Society as is Mr. Keightley, and it seems strange that he should have allowed his august visitors to fall into such errors, or at least

that he should not have corrected them before sending out to the world a statement which, by containing errors, would discredit Their authority. In the three brief answers in the "Conversation" it is difficult to discover any error of fact.

It would also be enlightening to have the "ample evidence" which satisfied Mr. Keightley that the Colonel was at the mercy of any suggestion coming from those around him. Mr. K. Nārāyana-svāmi has told how completely I failed to move him from his determination not to appoint Mr. Keightley as his successor. Mr. Keightley scarcely saw the Colonel during his brief stay at Adyar, his view has little weight as against that of those who saw him constantly. Mr. Keightley makes this "painful statement" because of its importance. He wishes to lessen the force of the Colonel's testimony. I traverse it, from my experience of the Colonel's mental state.

I will not discuss the question of the "tone" or "style" of the Masters. I do not feel that my experience is sufficiently large to enable me to speak with such certainty as Mr. Keightley ventures to use.

It appears to me that Mr. Keightley dictates to members in a manner far more pontifical than anyone else has ventured to employ, and that he is really seeking to coerce and override the members by violence of language, and vehement unsupported assertions. Let me, however, join in the wish that each member may use his own judgment and common sense, and refuse to be coerced by—anyone.

I trust that, as I am old enough to be his mother, Mr. Keightley will not consider me impertinent if I appeal to him to use his great talents and his wide reading to work for the Society which he sincerely loves rather than to waste his life in constant depreciation of other workers and in stirring up strife.

ANNIE BESANT.

The circumstances bearing upon the question of election of a successor to the President-Founder, Col. H. S. Olcott, make it the duty of all interested in the welfare of this great Society, to endeavour to induce those who have to vote, to form as soon as possible a clear conclusion unaffected by side issues. What the voters should decide is: Is the candidate-nominate, to the best of their judgment, a fit and proper person to be voted for, without reference to incidental matters which attended the publication of the nomination by the

Colonel? That it was the Colonel's right to nominate a successor to him in office, nobody denies or can deny. The suggestion that the Colonel lacked mental competence to make the selection he made, is to the best of my knowledge utterly unfounded. My belief is that in his long career as President, he brought on no question which came for determination more consideration and reflection than he brought to bear with reference to the nomination he made.

I am equally satisfied that in selecting Mrs. Annie Besant, none of those who were about him in the Headquarters, at and about the time, exercised over him the slightest influence for or against the selection. As I was in the habit of visiting Adyar, almost every day, at, before and after the time the selection was made, I can say with confidence that the selection was the result of the Colonel's own free choice.

Turning now to Mrs. Besant's attitude in the matter, it is known for a certainty that she was absolutely unwilling to accept the office of President, until she, for reasons stated by her, felt it to be her imperative duty to accept the nomination to it. I can bear testimony to it having myself more than once spoken to her about it, on all which occasions she invariably declined to take up the responsibility attached to the position of the President. Among the reasons given by her was the departure which her acceptance of the office would seem to introduce in the original plan of having two persons occupying more or less leading positions in the Society and discharging different kinds of duties in connection with its work. Such being the case, and knowing her so intimately as we all do, can anyone believe for a moment that, in issuing her circular, the thought of influencing the voters by its contents had ever crossed her mind?

Why then, it may be asked, did she say what she stated in her circular with reference to her Master's communications to her in the matter? The answer to my mind is perfectly clear—*viz.*, she did so only by way of explanation as to why and how she came to accept the nomination, having regard to her previous pronounced unwillingness to accept it. I hope that this view will commend itself to every Theosophist and that he will not allow his judgment to be influenced by the recent attempts which have been made to give the matter an entirely uncharitable turn.

I think I should not fail to add a few words with reference to the introduction into this question of the Masters. It is quite true that a belief in Their existence or in Their connection with the Society,

is not a condition to membership in the Society. On the other hand I am sure such a belief is, by no means, a disqualification thereto, and certainly it ought not by anyone to be treated as a reproach to those who entertain it. If it were otherwise, it would be absolutely inconsistent with the toleration which is one of the basic principles of this Society. The objections to the references in regard to the communications from the Master, in the circulars issued by the Colonel and Mrs. Annie Besant, would seem to be two-fold. The one has reference to, if I may say so, supposed prudential considerations and may be thus put. As belief in the existence of the Masters and Their connection with the Society is confined to a narrow circle of members and the attitude of the majority is one of scepticism, if not of utter disbelief, so prominent an allusion to Their wishes in the nomination of the executive head of the Society is in their opinion calculated to introduce a creed and authority into the Society which must alienate the sympathies of the bulk of the members. Whatever might have been the force of this objection some years back, it seems to me that this view implies a certain amount of insincerity, at least in those who, while protesting their belief in the existence of the Masters and Their intimate connection with the Society, seem to show such exceeding tenderness for the susceptibilities of the unbelievers. So much has now appeared in the published Theosophical literature about the Masters, as to make any hesitation in making allusions to Them in communications intended for the members of the Society almost incompatible with a true belief in some of the essential teachings of Theosophy. For such a belief, I am sure, when cherished within the limits approved of by sound reason, is more likely to prove conducive, not only to the attainment of spiritual progress of individual members, but also to the Theosophical Society as a whole exerting the influence it was intended to exercise upon humanity at large. The other objection to the allusion is, if I may say so, even more questionable. In connection with psychic phenomena, no member is bound to accept any testimony other than that of his own senses. To decline to act upon any such occurrences, whoever might be the witness thereto, is no disrespect to him; no misgivings can arise in the mind at least of a Hindu with reference to such an attitude, as our own Scriptures refer to instances in which devotees have declined to accept boons even at the hands of their Ishtâ-Devatâs when They chose not to appear in the forms meditated upon by the devotees. Consequently it would be quite legitimate on the part of

any member to say: "I am not going to pay the slightest attention to the messages referred to in the circulars." Mrs. Annie Besant herself claims nothing more; and the straightforward course on the part of those who have written against these circulars would have been to content themselves with saying that and no more. But I cannot understand how members, while admitting they were not present when the messages were stated to have been given, proceed to discredit them in the way they do. Their reasoning in regard to this point implies that the Great Ones have no business to act in the matter according to Their own judgment, but must conform to the notions of these critics, and that no messages supposed to come from Them should be accepted as bearing the impress of Truth, unless it satisfies the standard of propriety and reasonableness which these critics lay down. I trust I may be excused when I say this is the height of presumption.

Having myself never had the privilege of personal acquaintance with the Masters, or actual knowledge of Their connection with the Society, no member need suspect that I am endeavouring to influence him in the way the circulars were, it is insinuated, intended to do.

On the contrary, I beseech every member to record his vote without any reference to the question of the existence of the Masters or of Their connection with the Society.

In conclusion, I would say: Bear in mind the splendid services the nominee has done for the cause of Theosophy for over a decade and a half and the fact that she of all persons in the world would be the last to seek either this office or any other office whatsoever in or outside the Society, except as she believes it is her duty to take it up, if called upon to do so.

S. SABRAMANIA IYER,
Recording Secretary T.S.

ADYAR.

We are taught that "he who hears his brother reviled and keeping a smooth face leaving the abuse unnoticed, tacitly agrees with the enemy as if he admitted the same to be proper and just," therefore I feel it my duty to make public certain facts, a thing I should have refrained from doing, had it not been for the unkind remarks about Colonel Olcott, Mrs. Besant, and the visit of the Mahâtmas to the former, that [are being publicly made by some of our members in articles, circular letters, etc. These statements tend to mislead and to cause inharmony in the Theosophical Society, and since I have

been at the sick-bed of Colonel Olcott since October, I think I can throw some light upon the disputed questions, and by so doing help if possible to correct the wrong impression that is being created by these statements. I believe that they have been made in all honesty and good faith, but I also think these brothers were wrong in judging a matter before they were in full possession of the facts concerning it. Since they knew on December 29th that the Mahâtmâs had visited Colonel Olcott, would it not have been more worthy of Theosophists of such a high standing, if they had discussed their doubts with him when they visited him, or had written him about the matter later, thus giving him the opportunity to place the full facts before them (facts that he did not make public), and to defend himself and Mrs. Besant, before death had closed his lips several weeks later? Further, if these brothers had confined themselves to stating that they did not accept the President-Founder's messages, and did not believe the visits of the Mahâtmâs to be genuine, no one could have made the slightest objection; but there is a great difference between stating or defending one's own beliefs, and attacking or casting doubt upon another's in so doing, and I am surprised to see old members and teachers ignoring ideals that they have been holding up to us younger members for years, thus establishing a precedent that is far from being in harmony with true Brotherhood.

When the doctors at Colombo told Colonel Olcott that his life was nearing its close, he spoke to me and others of his successor in office. He was of the opinion that Mrs. Besant was best fitted for the office, and the only thing that made him hesitate to nominate her was that her hands were already full of absorbing work, how then could she attend to the arduous duties of his office besides? He said he earnestly hoped that the Masters would help him at such a critical time. A few hours after Mrs. Besant's arrival at Adyar for the Convention, he told me he had decided to ask her to accept the office, but he should make the condition that she renounce the offices she filled at present. When she came to visit him later he asked her to accept the office, but she refused, saying that on no condition should she accept unless her Master requested her to do so. She then suggested the name of a gentleman, whom she said her friends at Benares and London wished nominated, but Colonel Olcott objected, and later, when she had left the room, he said again that he objected to the gentleman mentioned, and since Mrs. Besant had refused, he certainly did not know whom to choose. In the evening when she returned to

the room he asked her to join him in an appeal to the Masters for guidance and she consented. The rest you know from her letter of February 6th, and I will only add that when he told her the next day he had had his impression to choose her confirmed, and stated his condition, she again refused unless he should *omit* the conditions. Colonel Olcott was not willing to do so and they discussed the matter at some length, but with no result. That the Masters came to him that night you also know from her letter above mentioned. They not only told him she was Their choice but also that his conditions were unwise. I have mentioned these details to refute the statement that Mrs. Besant took advantage of Colonel Olcott's weak state of health to impose her influence upon him, and also to show that this alone was a good and sufficient reason in itself for the visit of the Mahâtmas, for Colonel Olcott told me *he should not of himself have given her the nomination if she had not consented to the conditions.*

As regards the statement that Mrs. Besant sent out her letter of February 6th to influence votes in her favour, it is entirely wrong. When she knew that the objections to the phenomena were being made and that certain people were writing against them, she discussed the matter with me and said she *must* make a statement of what she knew to be true. She was fully aware that her statement might be misunderstood, but a blow had been cast at Truth, and doubt was being thrown upon things that her own Master had corroborated to her, and rather than it should go undefended she fearlessly sacrificed personal feelings and pride and sent out the letter, at the same time urging that the phenomena should not affect votes.

Let me now mention a few facts that will defend our beloved President-Founder against the statement that the Presence of the Mahâtmas was a vision, and throwing doubt upon Their being tangibly present. This is such a sacred subject, and one so personal to Colonel Olcott, that I hesitate to speak of it, but under the circumstances there is no other alternative, since he is not here to speak himself. He was usually too weak to rise from his bed unassisted, but when he saw his Master, he sprang from his bed, knelt before Him, and clasping his arms around His feet, kissed them. A moment later he would have fallen on his side from weakness, but the Blessed One tenderly put His arms around him and placed him once more upon his bed. Later, when the doctor came, he was much distressed to find Colonel Olcott's heart badly dilated, which condition had not existed earlier, and insisted that his patient must have

been out of bed, for he showed signs of great physical exertion, and was in a cold perspiration from weakness. Comment is useless.

The statement that Colonel Olcott's state of health prevented him from properly discharging his official duties is wrong. Those who were constantly with him are the only ones who are able to testify with authority, and his physician told me the first week of February that there was yet no sign of senile decay. On February 1st, when a consultation of three doctors was held, he entertained them with stories and reminiscences, and when the consultation was finished asked me to take them through the Library, enumerating the articles of special interest that he wished me to show to them. The doctors at Colombo and here found he was troubled with aphasia, due to the heart failure, which interfered with finding the right word now and then, but it did not affect the intellect or will. His mind wandered only after the middle of January, because he was fatigued from loss of sleep, also from the effect of the powerful drugs that were given to induce sleep; but when the effect of these had worn off, and during the middle of the day, his mind was clear and alert, as always, until a few days before his death. The last week of January he assisted at the translation into French of his *Old Diary Leaves*, wrote a letter in which he quoted some passages of American law, and dictated in the presence of another the letter to Mrs. Besant published in this month's *Theosophist*. On February 2nd he dictated (also in the presence of others) seven pages of closely written matter without a mistake, and on February 4th repeated to three of us a comic poem of some length, recited in school when he was twelve years old. When he wrote the letter to Mrs. Besant on January 7th, "appointing" her, he had no idea or intention of violating the constitution of the Society, for he calculated as to how long the voting was likely to take, and expressed the desire to live long enough to know the result. He issued his official letter of January 21st in order, as he said, "to hurry up the voting." May I ask why the objectors to the letter of January 7th (because it "appointed" Mrs. Besant instead of nominating her), ignored the *official* letter of January 21st, stating he had nominated her, and calling for votes?

In regard to the criticism that the answers of the Mahâtmas were not to the point, Mrs. Besant had suffered much sorrow over the doubt as to whether or no she had been in the presence of the Mahâtmas with C. W. L. Colonel Olcott (to me) expressed much sympathy for her in the matter, and said that if ever the Masters

came to him again, he should, for her sake, ask Them about it. Therefore, Their answers were direct replies to Colonel Olcott's questions, and *were* to the point at issue, since, according to her own statement, she had not words to express her satisfaction at having had her doubts set at rest, and it was for *her alone* the questions were asked. On a subsequent occasion Colonel Olcott asked another question of Them about the matter, and Their answer was so satisfying that he regretted he could not add it to his article as it was already in print. Since he wished it known I will state it here. He asked why C. W. L.'s Master could not have warned him of the danger of his teachings, and so have avoided the disastrous consequences, and They replied: "The Ego must lead and *feel first* that it is doing wrong, then we may help it to overcome. We cannot interfere with Karma individually or collectively."

Referring to the statement that Colonel Olcott wished to establish a sort of Popedom, and to force his beliefs upon others—happily I am able to refute this too. A few days after the first visit of the Mahâtmas, to which Colonel Olcott referred in his Convention Address, a gentleman at Headquarters with whom he was having some difficulties, sent word to him that he did not believe the Masters had visited him. Colonel Olcott requested me to tell him that he did not wish him to believe it if he did not desire to do so, as he had always urged freedom of speech and belief; but that there were a sufficient number of the Theosophical Society who believed in the Masters, and had confidence enough in him to know that he would not give out such a message unless he was sure of its source, that he had been enough in Their presence to know Them when They came, and further, They had used words which only his Master could employ as pass-words, and spoken of events known only to H. P. B. and himself. He rejoiced to make it known that The Masters were still watching over the Society as They had done since its birth.

MARIE BARNARD RUSSAK.

ADYAR.

Mr. Mead's circular of March, 1907, entitled "The Coming Election to the Presidency" in which he disputes the nomination of Annie Besant as candidate, and urges the members also to vote against it, certainly throws more light on the situation and is the logical sequence of that which preceded it.

To arrive at the conclusions which Mr. Mead forms we must deny the truth of the interview with the Masters through which the

nomination was established. The denial of the truth of these interviews is maintained even after the receipt of a letter from Mrs. Besant in which she completely corroborates the genuineness of the interviews and manifestations, on the ground of her personal observations, and stakes her word of honour for the truth of it. *This letter has been sent for publication to all the Sections of the Theosophical Society.*

And now Mr. Mead comes with an open attack on the nomination of Mrs. Besant ; a personal attack which in all its force is based on the unreliability of the above mentioned facts.

Before the interview took place, writes Mr. Mead, Colonel Olcott did not consider Mrs. Besant to be the most suitable person. She herself also did not think of herself as a candidate, which is proved by her sayings in confidential letters addressed to Mr. Mead and his wife (whether it be desirable to use private correspondence against anyone we leave to the judgment of every man).

In her open letter Mrs. Besant says : "When friends had mooted the question of my becoming President previously, I had said that only my own Master's command, addressed to me personally, would induce me to accept it."

"On reaching Adyar, however," continued Mr. Mead, "Mrs. Besant forgot her intention."

And justly so, for when she reached Adyar she herself received the command of her Master to accept the nomination, and, though contrary to her own wish, she did not hesitate to take the burden upon her.

"Hallucinations and influences from a wrong quarter," say her opponents.

And here we come to an important point.

On one side we have the testimony of the late Colonel Olcott and Annie Besant, and on the other side the suppositions and conjectures of Mr. Mead.

Colonel Olcott has, in the long course of years that he ruled the Society, always been in contact with the Masters, by whose orders he, with H. P. B., founded the Society.

In different paragraphs of his *Old Diary Leaves* one finds this fact mentioned, and never has any doubt arisen as to the truth of these statements.

Mrs. Besant has through her life, works and writings proved to be in possession of first-hand knowledge about superphysical things.

In opposition to them we find Mr. Mead, a highly respectable, nay, learned man, an old member of the Society, who, however, has never shown any possession of higher faculties, and never was in contact with the Masters, so far as I know, and who now on his own authority wishes to impress us with the idea that both Mrs. Besant and Colonel Olcott have lost their power of discrimination and are no longer capable to distinguish between their own Master and an "apparition" or an instrument of dark powers.

And is it not rational that the Masters, who founded and guided the Society, should appear and act at an important crisis?

It is not for me to defend Mrs. Besant against the attack of Mr. Mead on her character, where he accuses her, *vis.*, "that we have no guarantee, with her as President, that she will not at any moment force other similar pronouncements upon us and hold them *in terrorem* over the heads of the unknowing and timorous," and at the end of his circular, that by ratifying her nomination "the Society will be handed over to the mercy of an irresponsible psychic tyranny."

Annie Besant need not be defended.

Her whole life lies before us as an open book, that life of truth, honesty, and uprightness, on which all efforts to throw suspicion on her will rebound as on solid armour. It is useless to defend her on this point. Whoever has not been convinced of this by Mrs. Besant's life, will certainly not be convinced by my words.

Furthermore Mr. Mead tries all through his circular to belittle Mrs. Besant. For he mentions a number of posts which Mrs. Besant occupies at this moment and argues that every one of these posts would occupy "the full time of most of us." But is not exactly this fact that she has occupied all these posts and fulfilled all their obligations in a way far above our praise, that she is not like "the most of us," but stands far above us all, and does it not follow from this that we can safely leave it to her judgment whether she can also take upon herself the burden of Presidentship of the Society—*besides* these or *in the place* of these, for who told Mr. Mead that she will occupy all the posts mentioned in the future also? And have not all, who believe in the command of the Master, given to her to accept this post, the feeling of certainty that she will also get the strength to fulfil the obligations of the post as it should be?

Perhaps the reader may think it a little preposterous that I should write all this, but it must not be forgotten that in the Dutch Section the Theosophical life has run a quieter course than for

instance in England and America ; that also the preparations for the presidential nomination, which, according to Mr. Mead's letter, has filled for a long time both the heads and hearts of the leaders in England, has passed unnoticed in our section ; therefore an opinion of one who has the honour to stand at the head of that Section, has more claim to be unprejudiced than the opinion of one of those who had already long beforehand formed a fixed opinion as to the election of the President.

Therefore I have thought it necessary to make my voice heard in this matter, the more so, as I am fully convinced of the truth of the words with which Annie Besant ends up her letter to the members of the Society : " That the members, in their vote, will decide the future fate of the Society, whether it shall continue to be the Servant of its true Founders, who stood behind H. P. B. and Colonel Olcott, or shall reject Them as its Masters and Guides."

If the nomination of Mrs. Besant be rejected, the Society will enter upon a new course, a course of intellect only ; then it may perhaps flourish as so many other Societies in the world, but then it will die off spiritually, and the object for which it was founded will be lost ; then all of that, for which H. P. B. and Colonel Olcott gave their life, will be undone.

It is against this that I deem it my duty to protest thus strongly.

W. B. FRICKE,

General Secretary, Dutch Section, T.S.

The discussion now proceeding in most of our Theosophical periodicals *re* the Election of President, raises so many side issues as to "The True Basis of the Theosophical Society," "Expulsion of Members," "Real and Ideal Morality," "Irresponsible Psychic Influences," "The Danger to the Freedom and Sanity of the Theosophical Society," that the real issue is becoming totally obscured.

Will you, therefore, allow me to state this real issue concisely, plainly, and clearly, as follows :

"Has Mrs. Besant sufficiently shown in the past, by her wide mental grasp, depth of sympathy, and untiring activity, by her unselfishness, sincerity and organising ability, that she is the fittest person we can find to occupy the position of President of the Theosophical Society ?"

I think most members who are at all acquainted with her past record must admit that she has sufficiently shown her fitness in every way.

Even those who are opposed to the ratification of her nomination have not called in question in any slightest particular these superlative qualities of hers.

We are asked to vote against the ratification of the nomination :

1st. Because that nomination was given under psychic "orders," and was not according to Colonel Olcott's normal best judgment as expressed to Mr. Mead and others when he was last in Europe.

2nd. Because Mrs. Besant by her unqualified endorsement of the aforesaid psychic "orders" warns us that we have no guarantee with her as President, that she will not at any moment force other similar psychic "orders" upon us.

3rd. Because Mrs. Besant is, in this, acting contrary to her own declared normal better judgment, in that she had previously favoured someone else's nomination.

4th. Because Mrs. Besant is already far too much overburdened with grave responsibilities, and we require someone for President who can give undivided attention to the onerous duties of that high post.

5th. Because Mrs. Besant is already Head of the E.S., and it is inadvisable that the two offices should be held by the same person.

6th. Because the Rules of the Society being absurdly drawn, there is no provision for the nomination of other candidates.

7th. Because the ratification of the nomination by a two-thirds' majority vote means the death of our Constitution, and the handing over of the Society to the mercy of an irresponsible psychic tyranny.

With regard to reasons one, two and three, I think far too much has been made of the psychic "orders." They can have no weight except with those who receive them, and they seem to have been made public only to explain Colonel Olcott's and Mrs. Besant's changes of mind.

The Theosophical Society as a whole, and its members individually, already owe so much to Mrs. Besant that, in the light of reasons four and five, they would not have been justified in asking her to assume the thankless burden of being President of the Theosophical Society also, but knowing how whole-heartedly she throws herself into everything she undertakes, whether they believe in the possibility or reliability of psychic "orders" or not, they should rejoice that *something* could induce her to do what they had neither

the right nor the power to do, and may rest assured the best interests of the Society will not suffer from any inattention on her part.

If the Constitution and Rules mentioned in reasons six and seven are not already sufficiently safeguarded from arbitrary interference and irresponsible psychic tyranny they can be altered in a legitimate manner and need not be brought forward as an electioneering cry.

Finally is it not absurd to hesitate even in the slightest when we are getting for nothing services which, if our Society were a commercial undertaking, would be underpaid if they received the whole yearly income of all our branches, sections, headquarters, and allied institutions ?

H. ARTHUR WILSON,

Late Gen. Sec. Australian Section, T.S.

Do those who reject Mrs. Besant's evidence as to recent happenings at Adyar quite realise what their rejection implies ? It means nothing less than this, that after all these years, Mrs. Besant cannot be trusted to recognise her own Master (to say nothing of other Masters and of H. P. B.) when she sees Him. If this is true of her, why should it not also be true of others who have functioned on inner planes since the Society was founded, H. P. B. included, and who have given out a multitude of teachings based directly or indirectly upon such experiences ? The acceptance of this proposition would cause such a mass of confusion and fog that any apparent difficulties arising out of the events of January and February last seem to be small in comparison.

The Society was founded in the midst of psychic experiences, would never have existed without them, and has always been more or less surrounded by them. They seem to me an essential factor in the kind of " nucleus " the Society is in process of evolving, if it is not to end in a vague and nebulous mysticism on the one hand, or a kind of religious materialism on the other. That untrained psychics and mediums are constantly in error most of us know by personal evidence ; but the idea that an occultist of training and experience is likely to blunder on an elementary matter of personal recognition, which blunder can be detected at once by those who have themselves had no personal training by a Master at all, seems to me unlikely, and to need better argument than has yet been adduced in support of it.

H. S. GREEN.

One is strangely puzzled on reading many of the letters already

put forward, by the confusion and obscuration of the real point at issue—*i.e.*, shall we or shall we not elect Mrs. Besant to the Presidency?

Surely we have nothing to do with the motives impelling her nomination? Our late President had the right to nominate his successor, and has done so. The only legal reason for upsetting his nomination would be the proof that he was not in his right mind when he made it. This proof is not forthcoming and therefore the nomination stands. All that the Society is now concerned about is Mrs. Besant's fitness for the post in question. On this point alone are members required to record their acceptance or rejection of her candidature.

The position at the moment then, so far as I can see it, is this. Mrs. Besant has accepted her nomination in accordance with the direct order of her Master, *but* she has issued instructions to members exhorting them not to elect her merely on this count, inasmuch as they owe no obedience to those they have not personally cognised, and cannot therefore accept as authorities in this matter. They are told to use their unbiassed individual judgment, and not to hesitate to reject her should this be the better way in their opinion. But as though this truly impersonal and theosophic appeal had never been made, the Society organs are flooded with letters and articles written presumably with the idea that members need protection against Mrs. Besant's "autocracy." They are implored not to be "coerced" by threats of penalties hanging over those who wilfully disobey the mandates of Masters; assured that should they in their blindness accept Mrs. Besant they will be the victims of a new "poppedom" and of a "psychic tyranny"; also that they will be under the direct despotism of a leader of "shaky morals." In short, every art of persuasion and even of counter threat is used in the effort to persuade members to allow themselves to be both biassed and shepherded by each and all of those in turn who conceive that they have the best interests of the Society at heart in this crisis. I am not impugning for a moment the motives that have actuated many of these warnings. I am sure they have been written with a full sense of responsibility, but I honestly believe these fears rest on no true foundation of fact. When we look closer into these charges and forebodings of "shaky morality" and "psychic tyranny," upon what do they rest?

Mrs. Besant has told us on her word of honour that she received direct orders from her Master to accept the burden of the Presidency and to carry it.

Well—what then? Does the Theosophical Society believe in the guidance of Masters or does it not? If it does, and we have been assured again and again it does, why in this particular case are we to doubt Their guidance or term it “psychic tyranny”; and not only this, why are we asked to believe that They have even permitted the powers of the Dark to masquerade so successfully in Their guise that our most accredited and responsible leaders have been misled, and have done their utmost to wreck the Society they have lived and laboured for?

If the last supposition is correct—as some appear to think—our very teachers are turned against us, our torch-bearers are labouring under a glamour, and we are cast leaderless and hopeless upon a sea of doubts. Under such circumstances one is driven to wonder why our Society was founded at all, and how its objects are to be assisted by the discredit both of its Co-founder and its most prominent leader? Incidentally one is also driven to reflect that if the powers of Darkness are making a peculiar effort to destroy our Society at this juncture they can scarcely better succeed; since some of those we have a right to turn to for wise counsel and calm discrimination appear to be so lost in a whirlwind of doubt and accusation, heated controversy and hasty conclusion, that we seek in vain that still small voice of love and wisdom and balanced judgment which could alone unite our forces in their search for truth, and lead them to the victory of a just decision.

The second charge of a shaky morality appears to rest upon an article by Mrs. Besant, “The Basis of the Theosophical Society,” in the March REVIEW. At the risk of being labelled a person of shaky morals, I must here express my unqualified admiration of that article, and also my unbounded astonishment at the interpretations which have been read into it. To me it seems alight with a fine and exalted morality; out of reach under present limitations perhaps, but none the less a “counsel of perfection,” at which we should surely aim? For do not all systems of ethics and all religions aim at an *ideal* perfection far beyond any attainable perfection commensurate with our present short views? “Utopian,” I hear a murmur—well, yes, Utopia; an ideal city—but we *must* keep our banner floating high above the sphere of “practical politics” of the day, if we would encourage growth and ensure progress.

A man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for?

And I do not think that any are quite justified in assuming that the whole trend of Mrs. Besant's article points to a recent and now unhappily notorious case, which has caused much heart-burning in the Society. This view of a specific case in Mrs. Besant's mind when writing is not supported, I would suggest, by the terms of the telegram sent in answer to a question put by the Blavatsky Council ; and surely it is beside the mark for Dr. Wells to dismiss it as a “burlesque” ? Mrs. Besant is the last person in the Society to burlesque such a subject—or any subject.

I look in vain among all Mrs. Besant's recent pronouncements for any signs of that “autocracy” and “popedom” so freely commented upon of late. In their place I find a constant spirit of humility and gentleness; an earnest desire to sway the judgment of none; an utter selflessness that should, one would think, disarm the criticism of even her sincerest “friend and well-wisher,” and turn it to praise. If, then, the coming election be unfortunately marked by bitterness and dissension, the *onus* will not rest on Mrs. Besant. In every possible way she, by her splendid sincerity and calm, has endeavoured to make plain the path of the voter, and to lead him to a firm reliance on his own judgment, unbiassed by outside influence or one-sided considerations. May truth prevail.

K. DOUGLAS FOX.

“ THE BASIS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY ”

ONE can only rub one's eyes with astonishment as one reads the letters and articles which appeared in the April number of the REVIEW and say “How are the mighty fallen !” Never again can the Theosophical Society decry any religious or any other body for intolerance, and a desire to persecute. Both are conspicuous in its own borders. In a Society professing no creed, no dogmas, whose watchwords are tolerance, sympathy, brotherhood, a marked display of ill-feeling and animus, intolerance, want of balance, prejudice, a most regrettable absence of the principles of fair-play and honourable dealing, an illogical jumping at conclusions, a frequent drawing of false assumptions,—these seem to me the characteristics of many of the articles and letters

published, and written, I grieve to note, not only by the rank and file but by some leaders in the Society.

A serious danger, I may point out, awaits members in the future in the extraordinary change that has come over the spirit of so many (among whom may be a future President). A danger which is not imaginary as one member has already suffered its penalty in America, and others have been threatened with expulsion from their Branch. Under Rule 35 of the Theosophical Society: "All certificates of membership derive their authority from the President, acting as Executive Officer of the General Council of the Society, and may be cancelled by the same authority"; and against this authority, even if unjustly expelled, no legal redress could be obtained. From what has happened in America this danger of expulsion for holding an unpopular opinion merely, has been shown to be real, and affords a clue as to why Mrs. Besant, with her strong sense of justice and her innate desire to help the oppressed, wrote her article "The Basis of the Theosophical Society." Mr. Thomas allows that a member, *i.e.*, Mr. Jinarajadasa, "has recently been expelled in America on inadequate grounds. . . . There was no moral breach either publicly or privately." He does not add, and very likely he was ignorant of the fact, that unless Mrs. Besant had taken up his case and presented a petition praying for a reconsideration of the sentence on specific grounds, that it was very unlikely, taking into consideration the excited state of feeling prevailing in the American Section on anything touching on the recent resignation (an excitement repeated I am sorry to note in the British Section), that Mr. Jinarajadasa's case had been reconsidered at all. Owing to the President's death the decree of expulsion has not yet been annulled, it depends very largely on who is elected President if a palpable injustice is rectified. And to Mr. Jinarajadasa membership in the Society is of paramount importance, as it has literally been his nursing mother.

From this case it appears that in the future members who do not agree with the majority or champion unpopular causes may suffer (if Mrs. Besant's help is not obtainable) unjust expulsion. In a word it appears as if liberty of thought and speech would be banished from the Society in future for fear of possible penalties. I think all members had better ponder the question of expulsion in this light, the light of facts, before deciding too hastily against the Presidency of one who shows a desire to be lenient in the matter of expulsions and forced resignations.

It is not all either who care to express themselves at the risk of being dubbed as holding immoral opinions because they advocate tolerance, or because they describe spiritual experiences are liable to be accused of being possessed by evil spirits, devices resorted to by many a priest and ecclesiastical body in the past, from the time of Jesus downwards, to stifle *unwelcome* inspiration.

Mr. Mead's attitude towards all psychic experiences is now apparently that of the priest rather than the prophet. A very curious frame of mind in one who was once H. P. B.'s Secretary (she who founded the Society and lived her life under the inspiration of such psychic experiences as her former pupil now denounces), and, as he tells us every White Lotus Day, he is still her fervent admirer. It is an attitude of mind still more curious when one remembers that Mr. Mead is also a profound admirer and interpreter to us of the Gnostic tradition in Christianity. For in the Society he seems anxious to repeat the policy of the Church who persecuted and denied the inspiration of Gnostics, and on much the same grounds, the denial of the value and veracity of *present* inspiration as compared to the value and veracity of the past.

It is impossible for Mrs. Besant to force any opinion, either in her private or possible future capacity as President, on any member. No one would ever assert such a possibility, unless they were so carried away by prejudice that they were unable to realise to what absurdities they are committing themselves. Mrs. Besant had a perfect right, as President-Elect, to explain why she accepted the nomination. One prominent member at once endeavoured to force his private opinion against Mrs. Besant's election as President upon the Society, by circularising the British Section, a step which naturally and inevitably called forth rejoinders. The future President can exercise no autocratic powers in the matter of dispensing with expulsions, there is a rule providing for this painful necessity, and the repealing of the rule would have to be carried by a majority vote of the Executive Council of the Theosophical Society. So much for the bugbear of a future Presidential autocracy.

It appears to me that, under the very peculiar circumstances, Mr. Keightley would have shown better taste if he had refrained from entering into the controversy altogether. Surely, in any case, the testimony of those who saw and heard the appearances at Adyar is of more value than those who conjecture only. His and many other of the criticisms evoked by these occurrences, which were nothing very

remarkable when one reflects on the past history of the Society, and you cannot dislocate its past from its present, as so many are now trying to do, remind me of the criticism passed by a hostile public on *The Occult World*, when that remarkable book appeared. I am glad to hear that some of the Indian Branches have repudiated the right of Bâbu Upendranâth Basu, the General Secretary for India, to speak for the Indian Section, and have passed resolutions expressing their confidence in "the honour, integrity, and sound judgment of the late Colonel Olcott and Mrs. Annie Besant," and "hail with complete satisfaction her nomination to the Presidency of the Theosophical Society."

I do not consider that Dr. Wells is justified in the deduction he draws that "the price we are asked to pay for having Mrs. Besant for our President is that Mr. Leadbeater is to be restored to his place as a recognised Teacher of the Society with his 'moral lapse' (they are her own words) not only unrepented of but glorified as the act of one who 'rises so much above the accepted morality of the place and time as to be unintelligible, and, therefore, hated and suspected by the masses of the people.'" If Mrs. Besant had a recent case of resignation in her mind at all, it is much more probable that she would apply to it her alternative words, referring to "members who would discredit the Society in the eyes of the ordinary man of the world by falling below the accepted morality of the time and place." I have no doubt the disciples of Jesus found the situation very difficult when their Teacher kept company with Publicans and Sinners, and received the repentant Magdalen as His disciple. Dr. Wells carries prejudice and obstinacy so far as to flatly refuse to believe the words of Mrs. Besant's own telegram, which make it plain that only in the case of repentance is an offender to be restored to the Society, and his readmission backed into the bargain by a favourable vote of a large majority of members—a very just and fair course of action.

Mrs. Besant has made it quite clear in the letter headed "A Further Declaration by Mrs. Besant," that members are to exercise their own judgment, uninfluenced by recent phenomena, in their vote for the Presidency. In the light of the present letters and articles of the April number of the REVIEW, one wonders how the words of that very plain statement will be distorted or disbelieved.

May I recommend to Mr. Scott-Elliot the study of *Old Diary Leaves*, *Incidents in the Life of Mme. Blavatsky*, and *The Occult World*. From these volumes he will see that the recent appearances

at Adyar are in accordance with the past of the Society “as originally constituted,” and that if such occurrences mark the Society in his mind as “a spiritualistic sect” it cannot sink below its original level, for the record of the Society is studded with such occurrences.

If to express the opinions Mrs. Besant has put forward in her article, “The Basis of the Theosophical Society,” is to hold “utterly immoral views,” many amongst us are tainted with such immorality, for I have heard them frequently expressed by people of undoubted morality of life in the last year. It is of course, as every one is perfectly aware in the Society, quite safe to attack Mrs. Besant, either by fair or foul methods, as she on principle never replies to personal attacks on herself. In any case it will be impossible for her to reply to the attacks made upon her views before the election takes place, owing to her distance from England, and postal exigencies.

I have been endeavouring ever since I read Mrs. Scott-Elliot's letter, to ascertain how she discovered in the “Second Communication from Adyar,” that the Masters are “capable of upholding vice, . . . or of ordering members of the Theosophical Society to ‘refrain’ from doing all in their power to protect the victims of vice.” Finally I concluded that either she or I was “glamoured,” for this is what I read in the “Second Communication from Adyar”:

“The Mahâtma wished me to state . . . that it was right to judge the teachings to which we objected as wrong, and that it was right to accept his (C. W. L.'s) resignation. . . . He said it was the sacred duty of every Theosophist, if he finds a brother guilty of a wrong, to try to prevent that brother from continuing in his wrongdoing, and to protect others from being contaminated by that wrong so far as it is possible.”

As for “bribing and threatening,” it appears to me that, asked a plain question, They replied simply and directly.

For want of space and consideration for the claims of others further comments (their possible number is almost numberless) on the letters and articles in the April number of the REVIEW must be omitted.

ELISABETH SEVERS.

No one can deprecate more strongly than myself the introduction of ordinary electioneering tactics into the business at present before the Theosophical Society, and no one can more regret the various factors that render anything of the kind necessary. Personally, it

seems to me that the whole question has been greatly complicated, and the issues much confused, by a misapprehension (caused as I cannot but think in some cases by the difficulty of postal communication with so distant a country as India) of Mrs. Besant's attitude with regard to two points which, while they cannot be ignored in the present question, yet certainly should have been treated in a very different spirit to that in which they have been dealt with hitherto.

I will take these two points under the headings (a) and (b).

(a) Referring to the question whether or not the nomination of Mrs. Besant for the office of President was endorsed by those whom we have been accustomed to speak of as "the Masters," Mr. Mead says: "The ratification of it (the nomination) by a two-thirds' majority vote means the death of the constitution and the handing over of the Society to the mercy of an irresponsible psychic tyranny." Many entirely unjustifiable and wholly unsubstantiated inferences have been drawn from Mrs. Besant's statement that she personally *does* accept the endorsement by the Masters of her nomination; but that there is no fear whatever of her imposing her view on others, and that the accusation of tyranny is altogether baseless, may be shown by quoting her own words taken from the *Theosophist* for March, 1907:

"It should be remembered that while I personally regard myself as the nominee of my Master as well as of our President-Founder, no member of the Society is bound to take that view, nor to base his vote on any authority save that of his own private judgment," etc.

Can anything be less like "tyranny," psychic or otherwise? Could any Society desire a basis more eclectic than one from which *any* member is at liberty to doubt *anything*—even the existence of beings who would seem to be a logical necessity in a scheme of evolution that begins with the clod and ends with the Christ! I do not personally fear for the liberty of the subject under Mrs. Besant's leadership, but the point is not what any one member feels or knows about her, but what she herself has *said*—and here we have her refutation of the accusation of lending herself to tyranny and autocracy. The question has resolved itself into one which our members have no right to shirk, *viz.*, do we, or do we not, believe what she says? Is her word to be trusted even to the same extent as we should trust the word of any man or woman we know in everyday life? It would surely seem strange to the casual observer that the answer to this question appears to be in the negative, in a Society

which lays no small stress on truth, even among its obscurest members! But let us ask ourselves, with her own words before us, do we, or do we not, believe her when she says we have entire liberty to use our private judgment to the utmost limits of its capacity? If we do, then point (a) is disposed of, and we may vote for or against Mrs. Besant "on her own merits" (if we are able to discern them!) and exercise our British prerogative of weighing everything in the universe in our particular pair of scales. A highly proper and desirable proceeding, as I should be the last to deny, so long as we remember that there *are* scales a size larger, and therefore able to hold what ours can't, to be found here and there.

To proceed to point (b). Referring to the question as to whether, if Mrs. Besant were to be elected, she would use her position to reinstate Mr. Leadbeater in the Theosophical Society, Dr. Wells says: "The price we are asked to pay for having Mrs. Besant for our President is that Mr. Leadbeater is to be restored to his place as recognised Teacher of the Society." Now, here again we have Mrs. Besant's own statement, clear and definite as her utterances usually are; but Dr. Wells in a short appendix to his article tells us that he cannot take her seriously, in effect, that *he* does *not* believe what she says!

It is surely a liberal education in the study of human nature to see the havoc played in man's critical faculty by selfish fear and prejudice. This cable has been construed by some as a condoning on Mrs. Besant's part of moral evil, and by others as a further instance of "tyranny"! To deal with the latter first; how about *tyranny* if she had merely cabled "on no account readmit"? Is a "large majority vote" the usual method of tyranny? To take the second and more universal construction put upon her answer, especially when taken, as most people *have* taken it, in conjunction with her article in *MARCH REVIEW*, "The Basis of the Theosophical Society," Miss Ward suggests, and probably with good reason, that the article in question does not definitely refer to the case of C. W. L. and was not intended to be in any sense special pleading for him. This may very well be so, but I think no thoughtful reader can fail to come to the conclusion that even *if* so, her attitude would still be the same in regard to him in so far as *expulsion* from the Theosophical Society is concerned. Let me here point out that Mrs. Besant is not questioning the right of individual action, or of collective action on the part of bodies of individuals; she carefully guards herself from

misunderstanding there in her paragraph beginning, "I do not question the right of any Branch," etc. The point she raises is whether *expulsion from the Society* is desirable, be the wrongdoing ever so culpable, the moral disease ever so dangerous. Mrs. Besant emphatically pronounces against expulsion, and for this she is accused both openly and by insinuation of condoning and thinking lightly of moral evil!

May I take an analogy which seems to be a very close parallel, and ask my readers to consider for a moment the treatment of physical disease in the ordinary life of the world in which we live.

What do we find when we look at the treatment of disease among savage and primitive communities? Expulsion, abandonment, desertion for the sufferer; panic, selfish fear, inhuman cruelty on the part of those who still have a whole skin. Yet with the knowledge of the laws of sanitation and hygiene, and with the development of the philanthropic instinct, we find the point of view has somewhat changed. The sick person is no longer *expelled from* the community, he is nursed and tended *within it*; and if his complaint be incurable he is watched and carefully prevented from spreading disease in its more loathsome forms. Yet who is there who would assert that in the eyes of an experienced physician a case of confluent small-pox is less "grave" than in those of a panic-stricken savage? Or that by his treatment of the evil he can be said to incur the charge of *condoning* it? We have heard a good deal lately of Mrs. Besant's fall from the moral and spiritual altitudes from whence she gave us such books as *The Outer Court*. Personally I see very little difference between her point of view to-day and when she wrote the following words: "Within that calmer atmosphere of the Court of the Temple there is no place for anger of any sort, even though the anger be purged from personal antagonism. For the aspirant has now to learn that those who do the wrong are also his brothers and that they suffer more in their wrong-doing than do their fellow-men by the injury they may inflict; he has to learn that this noble indignation of his and this passion of his against the wrong . . . is not the characteristic of the soul that is striving onwards towards the Divine." (*Outer Court*, p. 30.) It may be argued that *we* are not there yet. That if Mrs. Besant is capable of acting from that standpoint we are not. Granted. But is that a reason for hurling anathemas at her head and suggesting that she no longer takes her stand on Truth, Righteousness and Purity? She ends her article: "Thus believe I," but she began it

by recommending each of us to think of it for ourselves. “You did right to doubt, for it was a doubtful matter,” are the words which she quotes as applying to this question. Let us differ, if differ we must; but let us not call her immoral whose morality transcends our own.

For of a truth, I believe that is the crux of the whole question, I cannot but feel that it turns upon our relative stage of development; and while quite prepared for the outcry that such a statement will raise in many quarters, I cannot end this letter without making unequivocal testimony to the faith that is in me.

I think I have said enough to prove to all fair-minded readers that I claim for Mrs. Besant no sort of autocratic position in the Theosophical Society, that I am as far from wishing to see her its “Pope” as she is herself. But I do claim for her the right to use *her* individual judgment from *her* standpoint without insinuations being made to the effect that she has her spiritual house swept and garnished in readiness for the entrance of devils, or that her mental condition is such that the truest friendship is shown only by keeping her out of the office of President.

I believe, as I always have believed, that she *is* ahead of the rest of the members of the Theosophical Society in development, that she is just a rung or two above us on the evolutionary ladder. I believe with Browning in the years of life of learning (in this case the *lives* of life and learning) “which wear the thickness thin and let men see,” and I appeal to the hundreds who have felt this also when they crowded the public halls where she has lectured and the private houses where she could be interviewed. What went ye out for to see? A society lady in a silk-lined skirt, claiming to give psychic secrets to the curious in phenomena? A scientific thinker perhaps, or a philosopher? Or a blend of religious revivalist with theology up to date? Was she any of these—or all of these, or something more than these—when she gave such lectures as “The Evolution of Life and Form,” in 1898, or “The Christ,” in 1899? Was she any of these or more than these to all the men and women who occupied every moment of her time with their personal difficulties and private problems? To these men and women I appeal; I ask them to put the question fairly and dispassionately in the light of past experience, and of what she has herself stated in the present crisis, whether her claim to their faith and support is such as they can acknowledge and testify to with their best reason and judgment. If so, let them ratify the nomination of Colonel Olcott; if not, let them vote against it.

But let it not be because they have listened to any voice but that of the impartial, testimony of their own heart. Impartial, did I say? May I be pardoned if I find it hard to imagine such a position when the scale on one side must surely be weighed down by gratitude, if not by veneration and by love, born of long years of mutual confidence and of that relationship of Teacher and Taught, which even our boasted Western independence has surely *some* place for in the Theosophical Society!

E. M. GREEN.

I would call Mr. Mead's attention to a mis-statement of fact in his article, *De Re Publica*, published in the April number of the THEOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

In 1905, the Thursday before the meeting of the Theosophical Congress in London, Mrs. Besant addressed the Blavatsky Lodge on the subject of Discipleship. The lecture was given at the Queen's Hall, and was, in substance, the same as the article which appeared in the July number of the REVIEW.

Mrs. Besant stated that the subject had suggested itself to her in consequence of certain correspondence which had been appearing in the *Vâhan*, relating to Madame Blavatsky, and there was constant reference to Madame Blavatsky during the lecture.

Surely, Mr. Mead, you *must* know—and yet one would not willingly credit you with trying to impose on those who may not know—that Mrs. Besant, in making the statement, "*Actions are the least important part of a man's life from the occult standpoint,*" is not referring to the Path or Yoga of Action—"the harmonious reduction of the life of expression to the life of *Īshvara*"—on which your article is mainly based. We have but to read her most recently published book, *Hints on the Study of the Bhagavad Gîtâ*, to see that to-day, as always, she maintains the equal value of all the Paths. "*Of the Divine Wisdom,*" she writes, "*you cannot learn one syllable, nay, one letter, until you live it in life and not only repeat it with the lips.*"

Wherein does this teaching differ from that of all the great world-teachers?

The statement under criticism does not refer to the Path of Action, but to certain possibilities that may arise in exceptional cases, and it is, of course, meant for the guidance of those who have already attained to a *certain measure of discrimination*, and not for the instruction of an indiscriminating public, of whom Bacon says: "The

lowest virtues draw praise from them, the middle virtues work in them astonishment or admiration ; but of the higher virtues they have no sense or perceiving at all.”

Anyway, as we shall see, Mrs. Besant has most certainly not changed as regards her written view. The following paragraph appeared in *January*, 1900: “ We often make unwise and unjust judgments. There is a natural tendency in all of us to judge our fellow-men by their outer life. But it is not the things which are most patent which are most important. If, by a man’s past life, his karma is such that Kāraṇa Sharīra is active, it is quite possible that there may be very much in the life of the physical, astral and mental bodies in which old karma is working itself out, and in which the present life is really very much less active. Such things are of comparatively small importance to his progress. There the ordinary human judgment errs. Judge not, unless the man’s karma is known to you, unless you can see all the past, for it may well be that you are misled. A man may be working out ancient karma without seriously affecting the centre of his life. That which affects the developing centre of man, affects the man. If a man’s life is a life of the senses, then the senses have power over his progress ; if the life is centred in the lower mind, then the lower mind affects his progress ; but if the centre of consciousness is transferred to the Kāraṇa Sharīra then it has enormous power over his progress, and the workings of the lower vehicles do not matter so much.” She goes on to say: “ Whether our judgment of another is a right judgment largely depends on our knowing the centre in which the consciousness is working. For ourselves we should never make excuses—the utmost letter of the law is to be fulfilled. Where our judgment is a self-judgment, it should be rigid to the last extent. But judgment of others is always mistaken without this deeper knowledge,” etc., etc. (For similar view reference may also be made to *The Building of the Kosmos* published in 1894, see Chapter on Yoga.)

All this was written when there was no question of Mr. Leadbeater and why, when similar ideas are put forward to-day, it should at once be assumed, and assumed in spite of Mrs. Besant’s *own deliberate statements*, that an attempt is being made to pave the way for Mr. Leadbeater’s reinstatement, gives one much food for reflection.

To the unprejudiced reader Mrs. Besant’s article looks far more like a protest against the rancour exhibited. For rancour is not a necessary adjunct in the passing of judicial sentence on a fellow-

creature—and to protest against the rancour is not to protest against the judicial sentence. To me it seems that if the Society *could* live up to such a high standard of morality as that put forward in this much-abused article then, indeed, would its life be assured. There would be constant renewal for it at the perennial source of things.

According to Coleridge we are all born with either the Platonic or the Aristotelian bias—with a leaning towards the *to be* or the *to do*. Plotinus is said to have regarded action as “a concession to the weak-minded.” Yet he ever performed such action as was his duty.

Walter Pater, another Platonist, at the close of one of his fine paragraphs, writes: “That the end of life is not action but contemplation—being as distinct from doing—a certain disposition of mind is, in some shape or other, the principle of all the higher morality.”

In Mrs. Besant's condemned article the Platonic bias shows, and the born Aristotelian, who seeks *performance* before all else, does not approve.

But when has Mrs. Besant ever shirked action? The whole of her present life bears witness to her faculty *to perform* as well as to her faculty *to be*. As a Theosophist she fully realises the value of both faculties in the world's economy.

ELSIE GORING.

“The hunt is up.” Let no one make any mistake. “The horn of the militant hunter is heard on the Theosophical hill.” It is difficult to know which to admire most in the sportsmen, their subtlety or subterfuges; the “political methods” of whips, or the docility of the hounds. (I had almost written *dogs*. One must be careful—a technical slip at this juncture ranks as a cardinal sin.)

In the April number of the REVIEW appear four articles, and three times that number of letters, all directly aimed at one person. Cavilling (of true “criticism” I can find no trace), depreciating her abilities, distrusting her methods, belittling her position in the Society as its “guide, philosopher and friend.” Indeed, the REVIEW may be divided into two modes of manifestation, two attitudes:

1. “The Walrus and the Carpenter”: “It is with deep sorrow,” etc.

2. “The Poor Victim of Delusion:” “If the person you revered most in the world were stepping into a quagmire,” etc.

To the present writer, either of these positions seems alike contemptible and pitiable, and only a love of fair play leads her to

endeavour to speak for one who is not in the habit of speaking *for herself*, though the attempt may not see the light of print.

First of all—Why is it imagined that Mrs. Besant would be less scrupulous about moral tone and teaching from the platform and public utterance side of the Society, than the most ethical of morbidly ethical correspondents? Does any Theosophist or member really believe that she would support, uphold or condone teaching which fell below the accepted code and laws of the day? Reading and repeated re-reading of “The Basis of the Theosophical Society” have failed to show a sentence which, to my mind, could mean or imply that she takes any uncertain standpoint whatever, on this subject of the standard of theosophical morality. The thing is absurd. Can nobody credit her with impartially hating a vice while loving the creature who commits it? There seems a feeling in the theosophic atmosphere that Mrs. Besant’s ethics are tottering and must be supported by iron girders applied by various members, official and otherwise. The pencil of the caricaturist is badly needed now, also a theosophic version of “The Walrus and the Carpenter.” Can any member oblige?

At the risk of appearing invidious (for condensation is necessary in any attempt to answer charges so unchargeable that only a sense of the paradoxical nature of truth, spurs one to the fray, the article “Theoretical and Real Morality” shall be considered here as embodying the bulk of the charge and the head and front of the offence. In controversy “the extreme view of the opponent” is a lawful weapon, therefore the utterance of our modern Dionysian is chosen, not because it appears more cosmically important than others.

It is quite true that the Society is “compelled at last to make up its mind on a real moral issue,” but perhaps the “issue” is somewhat other than that which is in our (controversial) opponent’s mind.

The first cleavage occurs when Mr. Orage proceeds to confuse “ideals” with “idols,” and to consider a fact as something more real than an ideal, because more tangible, and of placing the terms ideal and real in opposition, whereas the Real is That of which the Ideal is but a reflection. “But,” says the writer, “having no ideals, real morality is not therefore without a standard of judgment.” “Having no ideals”! Then, let us perish in the Idealist’s quagmire, rather than walk dry-shod on the asphalt road of “real morality.” How glibly he prates as to the easiness of holding up

ideals. Only those who have borne some of the burden and heat of the noon-day of life, some who know what it is to defy and resist "the contagion of the world's slow stain," can afford to laugh at the quips of "the Bernard Shaw of the Society"! But if this disciple of Dionysus would give us some of those poetic outpourings for which his name sake was deified, how grateful we should be. Originality and force he has; indeed it is hard to believe that the same pen wrote the entirely delightful booklet on Nietzsche, and the article now under discussion. No! "When Greek meets Greek, then comes the tug of war," not when Greek meets a 20th century Spiritual Teacher, and expects her to be either Mosaic or Dionysian.

"Try to realise the spectacle that unfolds itself before the eyes of the real moralist. It is quite a different spectacle from the oratorical panorama of theatrical and vocal morality." It is indeed. The question is, what agreement has Real Morality with real morality according to Mr. Orage?

In the opinion of the present writer, there can hardly exist a better synthesis of morality, real and ideal, than that contained in "Rabbi Ben Ezra." It is such a poetic crystallisation of the Law, the Prophets and the Spirit of Christianity, that it is difficult to know which facet to select. These three stanzas may perhaps suffice:

Not on the vulgar mass
 Called "work" must sentence pass,
 Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
 O'er which, from level stand
 The low world laid its hand,
 Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

But all the world's coarse thumb
 And finger failed to plumb,
 So passed in making up the main account;
 All instincts immature,
 All purposes unsure,
 That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's account.

Thoughts hardly to be packed
 Into a narrow act,
 Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
 All I could never be,
 All men ignored in me,
 This I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

Perhaps this, to our modern Dionysian, is but the empty sound of one who plays "on his magical pipes the songs of idealism in the

hope of charming the real moralist. Charm he never so wisely!” What agreement has Wisdom with a *deaf* adder ?

Youth has yet to discover that “slickness” is not Knowledge nor “cock-sureness” first cousin to Wisdom. Real Morality is something quite apart from and beyond all these strivings. Real Morality is born on the Plane of Thought (that “hollow space behind the sky” of which Plato tells, where he saw “the forms of things, Justice and Temperance,” etc.) Thoughts are *Things in Themselves*, they do not invariably work out on the physical plane as actions, and from the standpoint of reincarnation as a working hypothesis, it is both immoral and absurd to judge any man entirely by his actions on the physical plane.

It is a matter of history, beyond all doubt, that “wherever anti-natural conduct has been tolerated, there civilisation has already begun to lose its instincts of life,” but I can see no connotation between Mrs. Besant’s present position, and any encouragement or condonation on her part, for the dissemination of such deadly poison among any community, Theosophical or otherwise. The thing is absurd, and past all belief, to an impartial observer of character who has followed Mrs. Besant’s Theosophical career. She is an idealist, quixotic if you will, but an idealist beyond all things. All great teachers are. Nietzsche was. Yea, verily! There is a gauntlet flung down. Any student of physiognomy does not need more than a glance at her face to see this. Her purity, honour, and honesty are unimpeachable. She is not infallible, and is entirely guiltless of any “pose.” She is a Spiritual Teacher, a hero in the strife. Of such “the world is not worthy,” and perhaps never will be. Still, there is such a thing as “honour among thieves.” Is there none among members of the Theosophical Society? Are we all either apes, tigers, or dumb driven cattle? Is chivalry extinct with the Dodo? It would appear so from the April number of the REVIEW.

If a Society has “splendour of ideals and its conduct be bad,” the fault is not that the ideals are too splendid, but that the Society is in need of more idealists, and those more strenuous. “If its conduct be superior to its ideals,” then let us be sure, of any human institution, that its ideals are low and unworthy of their name. Humanity grows “up from the clay toward the seraphim,” by struggle and defeat, by conflict, by aspiration.”

What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me.

It is more glorious, more god-like, for a man to hold before his sight, in one life, an ideal towards which he strives alike in failure and success, through evil report and good report, than to go through many lives giving tithes of all that he possesses, keeping laws and commandments, because he has no inclination to do anything else. It is better to be an ape or a tiger than a sheep (because apes and tigers have more intelligence and discrimination than sheep, and are therefore one degree nearer Deity), but man's business as Man is to "let the ape and tiger die," to feed the God and starve the brute within. And one of the ways by which men grow is by feeding the capacity for hero-worship (that faculty which Carlyle thinks the most divine in man). "Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." But many of us walk on enormous stilts of intellectual self-complacency, looking down with a pity akin to contempt upon those who are so far above us that they dwell among us as if they were our equals. "Save me from my friends." Mrs. Besant is misunderstood, traduced, vilified, by those who should know better (because they have more experience) the extent of her forbearance, the measure of her tolerance towards those who so misunderstand and misjudge her.

Happy the few who realise that a genius is in their midst. Mrs. Besant told us (and well we know it) once, that "we have many good people among us, but very few great." She is both. Her life is a poem in action. To know her is an inspiration. Into no quagmires will she lead us, unless, on a certain road up to a particular summit that we must attain, there is a quagmire to be crossed. If so, let us follow. We shall not stick in it permanently, of that we may be certain. On the other side we shall sit down (perhaps "for an æon or two") and scrape off the mud from our boots. We shall *not* then proceed to throw it at our Leader. We shall follow on, "conquering and to conquer," still rejoicing because of the radiance of our ideals, not baffled because of mud on our boots.

What is love? What is creation? What is longing? What is star? Thus the last man asketh, blinking.

LILY NIGHTINGALE DUDDINGTON.

In the midst of the questionings and discussions in which we find ourselves, there is one word for which I would claim a hearing. I observe in some of the remarks in last month's REVIEW, and also in conversation with members, a tendency to assume that the painful tale unfolded in the evidence which procured Mr. Leadbeater's resignation, is a final, though tardy, exposure of a character which

had too long deceived the Theosophical Society. I can understand how one who never knew Mr. Leadbeater, and who, perhaps, based his judgment solely upon this evidence, might hold such an opinion, but it is a view which raises more problems than it solves. I too have read all the evidence, but also I keep in mind my knowledge of the man ; I was closely associated with him as a boy and as a young man from 1895 to 1902, not only at meetings but helping him in any ways I could, with his huge correspondence, etc., and I came to know a little and to love much the great-hearted soul who wears the form of C. W. Leadbeater, to whom so many turned for help in their difficulties, and did not turn in vain. This is the picture of him which is indelibly impressed on my memory, and I think I do right to recall it in forming my judgment. I never heard a whisper of these views and practices against which an outcry has so rightly been raised ; on the contrary his word and influence were ever incentives to purity. I cannot reconcile this memory of mine with the picture revealed in the evidence, but I claim that I have more of the facts before me than those who never came into close touch with Mr. Leadbeater, and I make my statement with the sincere hope that it may be for some an item to add to the side of their scales in which they place the good. It is far easier to prove evil than good in such a case ; the evil has revealed itself in a few definite cases which can be investigated, while the good has expressed itself through many years in innumerable gracious ways. But the tongue of good report should be given a hearing.

HERBERT WHYTE.

I shall be obliged if you will allow me space in your columns to make the following protests, as I presume your pages are absolutely impartial, and open to all shades of opinion in the Society. I have been a member of it for many years, and it is the first time I have asked you to allow me this privilege.

I wish to call attention to one or two considerations which, in the heat of argument, appear to have escaped notice.

First : that it is entirely outside the realm of probability that the member whose unhappy conduct has led to much disastrous discussion, should be ever likely to apply for readmission into the Society ; and that the probability of his doing so should be laid as a sort of trap to corner Mrs. Besant, is altogether an unworthy action on the part of some of the leaders of the Theosophical Society.

Second : as regards the question of "sanity." That remains much as it did in the early days of the Society, and might with reason have been raised by Mr. Mead then, when he was Secretary to H. P. B. I do not remember that any question was raised by him or by others as to her mental state, or that of Col. Olcott either, though both were guided in founding and forming the Theosophical Society by psychic phenomena. The question of insanity is a dangerous one to raise, as it is quite a matter of opinion in which directions in the Society the want of balance rests.

Third : To imagine the possibility of Mrs. Besant wishing to use these messages for electioneering purposes is too gross a libel on her to be allowed to pass unchallenged. The person who can so misconstrue Mrs. Besant's motives, both now or in the past, is unworthy of membership in any Society whose motto is Brotherhood and whose watchword is Truth.

Fourth : I have now a charge to bring against the organisers of the Lecture-list at Albemarle Street. They very properly object to the influence in the Society of a man whose teachings are pernicious as affecting the physical plane, but no protest has, so far as I know, been made by them against teachings which are absolutely pernicious in their influence on the mental plane. The whole Spirit of Theosophy is opposed to the tone of these iconoclastic lectures. It is a Society for building up ideals on Truth as far as may be, not to drag down and destroy ideals by the confused ramblings of a chaotic mind whose persistent cry is "I do not know." If we are to be tutored by men of this calibre, our Society must not call itself a "helper" to the growth of the soul but rather a hindrance. Our truest Spiritual Helper is Annie Besant, who is now being so sorely wounded in the house of her friends, and of whom, indeed, the world is not worthy.

FRANCES C. DEVERELL.

I am inclined to think that these protests against Mrs. Besant's article and the general question of her candidature are a trifle overdone. It seems to me that I have heard various prominent Theosophists enunciate somewhat similar propositions, perhaps not quite so clearly put, without raising such a storm.

The April REVIEW and *The Vâhan* brought me back vivid memories of my old hunting days ; I could almost hear the sounds of the merry pack.

I wish to ask a few questions :

1. What is the correct definition of the word "universal" in the first object of the Society?

2. I would ask Dr. Wells: Would Charity be included in the moral code referred to by the distinguished Catholic theologian; and also what is the course adopted by the Catholic Church in the case of clergy who fall morally?

3. As Mrs. Scott-Elliot has gone to the Gospels for a quotation and you are an authority on the subject—What is the modern interpretation of *Luke* v. 32?

As I am a lover of the olden days I am pleased to see excommunication upheld, and would suggest that the Inquisition might add a piquancy to our proceedings.

I am also of opinion that Mr. Scott-Elliot has missed his vocation; he should be a representative of my fellow-countrymen in the Councils of the Nation. I am sure, were he known, Roscommon or Galway would welcome him. And lastly, is it not true that Madame Blavatsky, whom I believe to be an advanced disciple, made use of even more emphatic utterances than: "Most emphatically yes," and "Decidedly not"?

Perhaps you will kindly publish this in the *May Review*, for which I see you have reserved your last comments.

W. B. LAUDER.

I write to say that I consider the pages of the *Review* have been misused in the publication of such a number of letters antagonistic to Mrs. Besant. The mere fact of her being several thousands of miles away, and thereby at a disadvantage in replying and stating her own case, calls for most impartial dealing. The fact is that her most determined opponents are not courageous or convinced enough of their own ground to attempt to face her when she is in England. Such a policy speaks for itself, and I believe it is not the first time we have had examples of it.

EVELINE LAUDER.

THE world cannot show us a more exalted character, than that of a truly religious philosopher, who delights to turn all things to the glory of God; who, in the objects of his sight, derives improvement to his mind; and in the glass of things temporal, sees the image of things spiritual.—JONES OF NAYLAND.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

HEROES OF INDIA

Children of the Motherland. (Published by the Board of Trustees, Central Hindu College, Benares; 1906. Price 4s. net.)

ONE of the most stimulating elements of education is the hearing of great deeds; and any book which can inspire admiration for heroism is to be welcomed. This collection of stories, compiled by various hands from the annals of Indian history, contains material to awaken any reader's enthusiasm. Not only the youths and maidens of India, for whom—as Mrs. Besant's preface tells us—the book was written, will be moved by these records. Other and older students will follow with quickened pulse the tale of the sack of Chittor; share the ideals of the wise and generous Akbar; stand with moistened eye by the deathbed of the faithful Rûpamati.

Every caste has its special virtues; none is afore or after another: but those of the Kṣhatriya are outwardly the most impressive. It is difficult indeed not to thrill at the story of the Suktāvāt Chief who, finding that his elephant refused to charge the spiked gate, blunted the iron spikes with his own body, and commanded his mahout to drive the elephant over him to take the town. And what heart would not stir at the devotion of Samyamarāya, who, lying mortally wounded on the battlefield, and unable to reach his sovereign, with his broken sword cut piece after piece of flesh from his body and flung them to the vultures to distract them from their attack on the helpless King?

If variety is the spice of life, existence in those days of siege and battle, swift triumph and sudden disaster, lit by the gorgeous flames of Eastern colour, and fanned by the aromatic Oriental airs, must have been full-flavoured indeed. Perhaps it is some unconscious remembrance of such a life that bites into us the gray, pale, level monotony of present conditions. Yet these stories show us, too, beneath the flashing ripples of strenuous action, those clear unmoved depths of spiritual aspiration and tranquillity which are the springs of

noble deed. Like gazing into a deep calm lake it is to read the history of Nānak; he who taught the reconciliation of all religions, and whose body—as a lesson to his disciples, disputing to violence whether it should be burned after Hindû fashion or buried after Muhammadan custom—is fabled to have been transformed into a heap of roses.

The various contributions are well written, except for the incautious and uneven use in some of them of the historic present; and the volume is unusually well printed and bound.

A. L.

THE HYMNS OF HERMES

The Hymns of Hermes: Echoes from the Gnosis, Vol. II. By G. R. S. Mead. (London: The Theosophical Publishing Society; 1907. Price 1s. net.)

EVERYONE who has followed Mr. Mead's lectures at Albemarle Street will be glad to possess this little volume. The introduction contains a brief and intelligible summary which will give the reader a better idea of the *spirit* of the great Egyptian religion than many more pretentious works, written as these are for the most part by authors who neither understand nor *wish* to understand—only to show how much wiser *they* are than all the "learning of the Egyptians." Of the hymns themselves we have lately spoken in our review of the larger work; and it is as a help not only to the learning but (as we hope) to the devotion of at least some of its readers that we heartily recommend it to our own.

A. A. W.

AN ESSAY ON CONSCIOUSNESS

Consciousness—Animal, Human and Superman. By A. R. Orage. (London: The Theosophical Publishing Society; 1907. Price 2s. net.)

THIS is a capital little book as an introduction for those who desire to analyse and become better acquainted with their own normal experience. At the same time it makes most generous provision for abnormal possibilities, for it works up towards the transcendental state of the superman, in the sense in which the Hermes-mystics used the term *Daimôn*, and the Buddhists speak of *Bodhisattva*. Mr. Orage is in a constructive mood and in a suggestive frame of mind, and we have read with interest what he has to say from first to last.

There is a slip in the use of the term "one-dimensional" which should be altered in a second edition.

G. R. S. M.

A SECOND VOLUME OF TRANSACTIONS

Transactions of the Second Annual Congress of the Federation of the European Sections of the Theosophical Society. Held in London, July 6th-10th, 1905. (London: The Theosophical Publishing Society; 1907. Price 10s. net.)

WE heartily congratulate the editor (who modestly remains anonymous) and all concerned, for the way in which this handsome and bulky volume has been turned out. Besides the report of the formal transactions there are some forty papers on widely differing subjects which strikingly exemplify the catholic interests of Theosophists. The best way to induce our readers to procure and read this useful addition to our literature is by giving the titles of these interesting, suggestive or instructive papers, for one or other of these adjectives can be applied to nearly all of them. The titles are :

Right or Duty; One of the Uses of Altruism; On Equality; The Myth of Man in the Mysteries; On the Gunas; "That art Thou"; The Religion of our Teutonic Forefathers; On Some British Mystics; The Occult Basis of Goethe's Work; A Study in the Feeling of Reality; Analogical Diagrams; Instinct and Conscience; The Mechanism of Clairvoyance; Hyperspace; Notes on the Fourth Dimension; Physical Evidence of Atlantis and Lemuria; The Scientific Principles underlying Reincarnation and Karma; Modern Astrology; In Defence of Spiritualism; Vibratory Capacity, the Key to Personality; Study of Reincarnation; Artistic Inspiration; Modern Symbolist Movement; The Theosophical Society and Music; The Educative Power of Music; Art as a Factor in the Soul's Evolution; Music as a Factor in Evolution; Theosophical Propaganda in France; The Relation of the Theosophical Society to the Theosophical Movement; A Plea for more Practical Wisdom for Theosophists; A Newspaper Scheme; Some Danger Points in the New Thought Movement; A Tribute to Mme. Blavatsky; The Conditions of Occult Research. In addition there are the Opening and Closing Presidential Addresses (Mrs. Besant) and an address on The Gnosis of the Past and the Theosophy of the Present. All these contributions are by our own members. To these must be added addresses by members of kindred societies: *viz.*, Christian Doctrine

as seen by the Mystic; Francis Bacon and the "New Atlantis"; The Philosophy of Spiritualism; and Gilds, Old and New.

With the exception of a few in French, all the papers are in English. It is seldom we have read a more generally interesting Transaction of any Society.

G. R. S. M.

EGOISM AND UNION

Egoísmo y Altruismo (Biblioteca Sociológica Internacional). Por José Antich.

Andrógino: Poema. Por José Antich. (Barcelona: Henrich y Comp^a, Córcega, 348; 1906.)

Egoísmo y Altruismo is a series of lectures delivered by Don José Antich in Barcelona. In them he tries to prove, at great length, and with great beauty of language, that egoism properly defined is in reality altruism, as no man can give to another what he has not first acquired in some measure himself. He says: "The sentiment of love is the incarnation of egoism. Let us proclaim it without fear; let us accept egoism as the fountain from which springs the river that flows towards immortality, and let us go on our way fearlessly venerating truth in whatever form she may present herself to us."

Andrógino is a dramatic poem in which the author relates the journey of "Andrógino" through the valley of illusion in search of union. The many terrors and temptations he meets with in his search are described under the names of mythological characters. One is reminded of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Though the scheme of *Andrógino* is too diffused to leave a very clear impression, the language in which the various stages of the journey are described is very musical and beautiful.

C. M.

A TRIPLET OF TRIVIALITIES

Living and Being. By R. Dimsdale Stocker.

Poems of Life. By R. Dimsdale Stocker.

Poems of Peace. By Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

(Simple Truth Series. London: Gay & Bird; 1906.)

YET another series of booklets, suggesting yet again the enquiry: To what end are these issues? Here are three books, outside as seemly as simple, inside choked with irreproachable sentiments set forth in the most commonplace style—or want of it. There is nothing in

them that has not been said many times before, and often said many times better.

Mr. Dimsdale Stocker's attempts at epigram in *Living and Being* would weary in homœopathic doses. Spread over forty-seven pages they come near to nauseating. Here is one of his aphorisms: "It is much easier to resolve to live the life of an ascetic amid luxury and opulence than when one is without the bare necessities of life." Contrast this with the proverb: "It is easy to go afoot when you lead your horse by the bridle."

Poems of Life, by the same author, are on the same level as his prose. Not one of them offers a vivid, a subtle or a striking line. But we note with real gratitude that though his forms are (fortunately) not ambitious, his verses do rhyme and they do run.

As much cannot be said for those of Ella Wheeler Wilcox. Her verses are as well known as needs be. This selection calls for no comment except a protest against its inappropriate title. Hardly ever can there have appeared a volume more likely to cause unpeaceful and irritated feelings to lovers of poetry.

A. L.

A BOOK ON DIET

Problems in Diet. By Alice Braithwaite. (London: Richard J. James, 3 & 4, London House Yard, Paternoster Row; 1906. Price 2s. 6d. net.)

FOR this little book we have nothing but praise. The author endeavours to place the whole study of dietetics upon a broad and reasonable basis and to show that not only science but philosophy must be brought to bear on the subject.

To those who have been drawn hither and thither and sorely perplexed by the multifarious theories advanced in recent years by food reformers of every type, and have not yet found a plan of life which really suits themselves, this book will prove a welcome beacon. It sheds new light on well-worn topics and commends itself at once by its wide and discriminating view of the whole problem. Moreover the author writes attractively and in a manner which should interest even those who do not usually trouble themselves overmuch about the care of the body. We cordially recommend the book to our readers.

B. G. T.

MAGAZINES AND PAMPHLETS

Theosophist, March. This number is, naturally, mainly devoted to the memory of our late lamented President-Founder. Mrs. Besant furnishes the account of his last days, and an appreciation of his great services to the Society; and Mr. N. F. Bilimoria writes with eloquence and affection of his value to the Pársis. His Inaugural Address at the foundation of the Society is concluded. The other articles are: the continuation of Van Ginkel's "The Great Pyramid," and of M. Bernard's very remarkable lecture on "The Soul of India"; Miss Edger draws out in a very interesting manner the traces of "Devotion in Zoroastrianism," whilst Râma Prasâd, under his general heading of "Self-Culture" gives us this time a very curious study of the origin of language; and D. J. Subasinha translates for us some of the quaint and thoroughly Eastern stories used by Buddhist preachers to enforce upon their hearers the laws of morality.

Central Hindu College Magazine, March. Here the Editor, in speaking of Mr. Campbell's "New Theology," expresses the opinion, which I think all of us will share, that "the new movement is essentially at one with Eastern thought, and will build another bridge between the East and the West. Heartily may all lovers of religion bid it God speed." A very important article is Mrs. Besant's address on "The Ideals of the Central Hindu College"; and Mr. Geo. Arundale's "Hints to Central Hindu College School Players," are of more than Indian value. Govinda Dâsa's "Hindu Catechism" maintains its high level.

Theosophy and New Thought, March, is mainly occupied, as is natural, with our late lamented President-Founder, of whom it gives a good likeness, with the quaint motto (which would have amused him): "Honest labour bears a lovely face."

The Vâhan, April. In this number the "Enquirer" is altogether crowded out by letters relative to the election of the new President.

Lotus Journal, April, continues Miss G. L. Mallet's "Great Florentine Painters," H. W.'s "Madame Blavatsky," and Miss E. M. Mallet's "Outlines of Theosophy"; whilst Mrs. McGovern treats of the Motto of the Society.

Also received: *Bulletin Théosophique*, April, with the yearly Report. We find that the number of members has been increased by ninety-five. We congratulate the Section on the good account of the work done, and the devotion of the members; *De Theosofische Beweging*, April; *Theosophia*, March, whose contents are a "Memorial of the

late Colonel Olcott," by Dr. J. W. Boissevain, and a "Personal Appreciation," by S. van West, "Old Diary Leaves," "War," by G. Heuvelman, Mr. Mead's "Reincarnation in the Fathers," "Superstitions in Java," by Dr. A. A. Fokker, "Swedenborg's Correspondence," by D. Diephuis, and "Falsehood and Truth," by J. B.; *Bollettino della S. Italiana*, No. 4; *Ultra*, March, with which is bound up an admirable tract for enquirers, by Dr. A. Auro; *Teosofisk Tidskrift*; *Omatunto*; *The Path* (Sofia); *Theosophy in Australasia* February; *La Verdad*; *Theosofisch Maandblad*.

Broad Views, April, has for us a paper by the Editor on "The Meaning of Adeptship," which all should read who wish their minds to be cleared from the misapprehensions which are current upon the subject. An unsigned article, "The Reconstruction of Faith," is also of much interest. In addition to Mr. Mallock's story we have a tale in which the astral double plays a part, from A. Hannam, entitled: "Seeing is Believing"; *Occult Review*, April, has an interesting paper by Mrs. S. Erskine on "Swedenborg as a Mystic," with illustrations; and a characteristic article by A. E. Waite on "The Mysteries of the Holy Graal"; *Modern Astrology*; *Indian Review*, which reprints Mrs. Besant's notice of Colonel Olcott; *The Arya*; *The Dawn*; *Siddhanta Deepika*; *The Forecast*, in which Sepharial expresses his conviction that it is within the power of the New Astrology to tip us the Derby winner and to give us a "system" for Monte Carlo—which may the gods avert! His forecast of thunder for April 10th was literally fulfilled where we live; on that day we had our first and only thunderstorm in the year, and he is entitled to the credit of it; *Lux Astral* (Chile); *O Mundo Occulto*; *La Cruz Astral* (Mexico); *Les Nouveaux Horizons*, in which Dr. Rouby to his own mind finally lays the ghosts of the Villa Carmen; *The Grail*; *New International Review*; *Herald of the Cross*; *Humane Review*; *Health Record*.

Sir James Thornton's protest against *Pasteurism in India* is valuable as another attempt to change the professional fashion of thinking on the subject; a slow process, but we hope sooner or later a successful one. *The World to come and The World to go*, a little pamphlet by W. A. Macdonald, in which a visitor from a higher region sets forth his views as to the world order. At the close his interlocutor sorrowfully says: "It is questionable whether I understand you clearly, or at all." So far the Court is entirely with him.

W.