

Correspondence.

AN INTERESTING QUESTION.

SIR,—I should like to draw the attention of some of our learned brothers to a subject that seems to me well worthy of elucidation in your columns. The influence of different modes of disposing of the dead upon the *post-mortem* processes.

A man dies, and let us suppose:—

(a) That the body is left in the open air, but protected from beasts and birds of prey.

(b) That the body is exposed to the elements, as before, but unprotected from beasts and birds.

(c) That it is buried in the ground, in a simple wooden coffin.

(d) That it is buried as before, but in a metallic coffin, air-tight.

(e) That it is cremated, and the ashes preserved.

(f) That it is buried in the open sea.

(g) That it is embalmed and the mummy preserved.

Now the question is: What in each of these cases is the influence of the method employed to dispose of the dead upon the disintegration of the body, upon the dissociation of the astral body, and upon the evolution of the other elements that compose the human body?

Yours, &c.

D. A. C., F. T. S.

[We shall be very glad to hear from any reader who wishes to throw light on this interesting subject.—*Ed.*]

PUBLICATION WORK.

SIR,—With reference to the letter from Professor Max Müller which appears in the *Theosophist* for December, I beg to state that the printing of the Rig Veda with Sayana's Commentary has not been given up, and that the first Ashtak is now ready for sale.

I did receive a friendly note from Prof. Max Müller some months ago, advising me to give up the printing of the Rig Veda with Bashya, but I was unable to act up to his advice, since the work had by that time been put in the printer's hands and much expense incurred on account of it.

Yours fraternally,

TOOKARAM TATYA,

17, TAMARIND LANE, } *Manager, Theosophical Publication Fund, Bombay.*
6th Dec. 1888.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY.

SIR,—I shall feel much obliged if you or any of your readers will kindly let me know through the medium of your esteemed Magazine the names of Sanskrit books, which treat of Anthropology and Ethnology.

Yours, &c. STUDENT.

[The writer of the above, Mr. Raj Coomar Roy, F. T. S., will be glad to correspond with any Brother on the subjects mentioned. His address is, Jamalpur, Monghyr, Bengal.—*Ed.*]

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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

THERE IS NO RELIGION HIGHER THAN TRUTH.

[Family motto of the Maharajahs of Benares.]

“IS DENUNCIATION A DUTY?”

WE reproduce here lengthy extracts from a powerful article by Madame Blavatsky in *Lucifer* for December, as many of our Indian readers do not see that Magazine, and the article, like all that falls from that writer's pen, is, of course, worthy of the most serious attention of all Theosophists.

The Article was called forth by the objections made to one of several clauses of a “Pledge” which has been laid before such Fellows of the Society as wish to make Theosophy a real factor in their lives, and think that they will be strengthened in whatever good resolves they may make, by banding together to pledge themselves to, or, at least, in the presence of one another, instead of trusting wholly to their own secret resolutions and their allegiance to their “Higher Selves.” This “Pledge” was explained and defended in an article called “The Meaning of a Pledge,” in the September *Lucifer*, and the correspondence which that article has caused to flow in from all quarters of the globe, from outsiders as well as from members of the Society, is understood to have been the immediate cause of Madame Blavatsky's vigorous reply to questioners and critics alike.

The article has two mottoes, a Buddhist precept, and a Christian aphorism, which are:—

“Condemn no man in his absence; and when forced to reprove, do so to his face, but gently, and in words full of charity and compassion. For the human heart is like the Kusuli plant: it opens its cup to the sweet morning dew, and closes it before a heavy shower of rain.”—BUDDHIST PRECEPT.

“Judge not, that ye be not judged.”—CHRISTIAN APHORISM.

After a few words of introduction the writer proceeds:—

"What is then this *terrible* pledge, to carry out which seems to be above the strength of the average mortal? Simply this:—

'I PLEDGE MYSELF NEVER TO LISTEN WITHOUT PROTEST TO ANY EVIL THING SPOKEN OF A BROTHER THEOSOPHIST, AND TO ABSTAIN FROM CONDEMNING OTHERS.'

"To practice this golden rule seems quite easy. To listen without protest to evil said of *any one* is an action which has been despised ever since the remotest days of Paganism.

'To hear an open slander is a curse,
But not to find an answer is a worse,'

says Ovid. For one thing, perhaps, as pointedly remarked by Juvenal, because:—

'Slander, that worst of poisons, ever finds
An easy entrance to ignoble minds' . . .

—and in antiquity, few liked to pass for such—minds.

"In fact, the duty of defending a fellow-man stung by a poisonous tongue during his absence, and to abstain, in general, 'from condemning others' is the very life and soul of practical theosophy, for such action is the hand-maiden who conducts one into the narrow Path of the 'higher life,' that life which leads to the goal we all crave to attain. Mercy, Charity and Hope are the three goddesses who preside over that 'life.' To 'abstain' from condemning our fellow beings is the tacit assertion of the presence in us of the three divine Sisters; to condemn on 'hearsay' shows their absence. 'Listen not to a tale-bearer or slanderer,' says Socrates. 'For, as he discovereth of the secrets of others, so he will thine in turn.' Nor is it difficult to avoid slander-mongers. Where there is no demand, supply will very soon cease. 'When people refrain from *evil-hearing*, then evil speakers will refrain from *evil-talking*,' says a proverb. To condemn is to glorify oneself over the man one condemns. Pharisees of every religion have been constantly doing it since the evolution of intolerant religions. Shall we do as they?

"We may be told, perhaps, that we ourselves are the first to break the ethical law we are upholding. That our theosophical periodicals are full of 'denunciations,' and *Lucifer* lowers his torch to throw light on every evil, to the best of his ability. We reply—this is quite another thing. We denounce indignantly systems and organisations, evils, social, and religious—*cant* above all: we abstain from denouncing persons. The latter are the children of their century, the victims of their environment and of the Spirit of the Age. To condemn and dishonour a man instead of pitying and trying to help him, because being born in a community of lepers he is a leper himself, is like cursing a room because it is dark, instead of quietly lighting a candle to disperse the gloom. 'Ill deeds are doubled with an evil word,' nor can a general evil be avoided or removed by doing evil oneself and choosing a scape-goat for the atonement of the sins of a whole community. Hence, we denounce these communities not their units; we point out the rottenness of our boasted civilisation, indicate the pernicious systems of education which lead to it, and show the fatal effects of these on the masses.

"A true theosophist must be a cosmopolitan in his heart. He must embrace mankind, the whole of humanity in his philanthropic feelings. It is higher and far nobler to be one of those who love their fellow men, without distinction of race, creed, caste or colour, than to be merely a good patriot, or still less, a partizan. To mete one measure for all is holier and more divine than to help one's country in its private ambitions, aggrandizement, strife or bloody wars in the name of GREEDINESS and SELFISHNESS. 'Severe denunciation is a duty to truth.' It is, on condition, however, that one should denounce and fight against the *root* of evil and not expend one's fury by knocking down the irresponsible blossoms of its plant. The wise horticulturist uproots the parasitic herbs, and will hardly lose time in using his garden shears to cut off the heads of the poisonous weeds. If a theosophist happens to be a public officer, a judge or magistrate, a barrister or even a preacher, it is then, of course, his duty to his country, his conscience, and those who put their trust in him, to 'denounce severely' every case of 'treachery, falsehood and rascality' *even* in private life; but—*nota bene*—

only if he is appealed to, and called to exercise his legal authority, not otherwise. This is neither 'speaking evil' nor 'condemning,' but truly working for humanity, seeking to preserve society, which is a portion of it, from being imposed upon, and protecting the property of the citizens entrusted to their care as public officers, from being recklessly taken away.

"Many are the men and women, good, charitable, self-sacrificing and trustworthy in every other respect, and who accept unhesitatingly every other clause of the 'Pledge,' who feel uneasy and almost tremble before this special article. But why? The answer is easy; simply *because all fear an unconscious (to them), almost unavoidable PERJURY.*

"The moral of the fable and its conclusion are suggestive. It is a direct blow in the face of Christian education and our civilized modern society in all its circles and in every *Christian* land. So deep has this moral cancer—the habit of speaking uncharitably of our neighbour and brother at every opportunity—eaten into the heart of all the classes of Society, from the lowest to the very highest, that it has led the best of its members to feel diffident of their tongues. They *dare not trust themselves* to abstain from condemning—others—from mere force of habit. This is quite an ominous 'sign of the times.'

"Indeed, most of us, of whatever nationality, are born and brought up in a thick atmosphere of gossip, uncharitable criticism and wholesale condemnation. Our education in this direction begins in the nursery, where the head nurse hates the governesses, the latter hates the mistress, and the servants, regardless of the presence of 'baby' and the children, grumble incessantly against the masters, find fault with each other, and pass impudent remarks on every visitor. The same training follows us in the class room, whether at home or at a public school. It reaches its apex of ethical development during the years of our education and practical religious instruction. We are soaked through and through with the conviction that, though ourselves born in sin and total depravity, *our* religion is the only one to save us from eternal damnation, while the rest of mankind is predestined from the depths of eternity to inextinguishable hell-fires. We are taught that slander of every other people's gods and religion is a sign of reverence for our own idols, and is a meritorious action. The 'Lord God,' himself, the '*personal Absolute*,' is impressed upon our young plastic minds as ever backbiting and condemning those he created, as cursing the stiff-necked Jew and *tempting* the Gentile.

"For years the minds of young Protestants are periodically enriched with the choicest curses from the *Communion Service* in their prayer books—or the 'denouncing of God's anger and judgments against sinners, besides eternal condemnation for most creatures; and from his birth the young Roman Catholic constantly hears threats of curse and excommunication by his Church. It is in the Bible and Church of England prayer books that boys and girls of all classes learn of the existence of vices, the mention of which, in the works of Zola, falls under the ban of law as immoral and depraving, but to the enumeration and the *cursing* of which in the churches, young and old are made to say, 'Amen' after the minister of the meek and humble Jesus. The latter says, Swear *not*, curse *not*, condemn *not*, but, 'love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate and persecute you.' But the canon of the church and the clergyman tell them: Not at all. There are crimes and vices 'for which ye affirm with your own mouths the curse of God to be due.' (*Vide 'Communion Service.'*) What wonder that later in life, Christians piously try to emulate 'God' and the priest, since their ears are still ringing with '*Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark*,' and, '*Cursed be he, who does this*,' that or the other, even 'he that putteth his trust in man(!), and with 'God's' judgment and condemnations. They judge and condemn right and left, indulging in wholesale slander and 'comminating' on their own account. Do they forget that in the last curse—the *anathema* against adulterers and drunkards, idolaters and extortionists—the UNMERCIFUL and SLANDERERS are included? And that by having joined in the solemn 'Amen' after this last *Christian* thunderbolt, they have affirmed '*with their own mouths the curse of God to be due*' on their own sinful heads?

After comparing the physical martyrdom of the Roman Arena, with the moral and social martyrdom inflicted in the world at present,—greatly to the advantage of the latter in respect to its superior heartlessness and more refined cruelty,—the writer proceeds:—

"Addison had not words of contempt sufficiently strong to rebuke this Society gossip of the worldly Cains of both sexes.

'How frequently,' he exclaims, 'is the honesty and integrity of a man disposed of by a smile or a shrug? How many good and generous actions have been sunk into oblivion by a distrustful look, or stamped with the imputation of proceeding from bad motives, by a mysterious and seasonable whisper. Look . . . how large a portion of chastity is sent out of the world by distant hints—nodded away, and cruelly winked into suspicion by the envy of those who are past all temptation of it themselves. How often does the reputation of a helpless creature bleed by a report—which the party who is at the pains to propagate it beholds with much pity and fellow-feeling—that she is heartily sorry for it—hopes in God it is not true!'

"From Addison we pass to Sterne's treatment of the same subject. He seems to continue this picture by saying:

'So fruitful is slander in variety of expedients to satiate as well as to disguise itself, that if those smoother weapons cut so sore, what shall we say of open and unblushing scandal, subjected to no caution, tied down to no restraints? If the one like an arrow shot in the dark, does, nevertheless, so much secret mischief, this, like pestilence, which rages at noonday, sweeps all before it, levelling without distinction the good and the bad; a thousand fall beside it, and ten thousand on its right hand; they fall, so rent and torn in this tender part of them, so unmercifully butchered, as sometimes never to recover either the wounds or the anguish of heart which they have occasioned.'

"Such are the results of slander, and from the standpoint of Karma, many such cases amount to more than murder in hot blood."

The article concludes with an appeal to "working Theosophists":—

"Who of these will undertake to maintain that clause 3 is not a fundamental principle of the code of ethics which ought to guide every theosophist aspiring to become one in reality? For such a large body of men and women, composed of the most heterogeneous nationalities, characters, creeds and ways of thinking, furnishing for this very reason such easy pretexts for disputes and strife, ought not this clause to become part and parcel of the obligation of each member—working or ornamental—who joins the Theosophical movement? We think so, and leave it to the future consideration of the representatives of the General Council, who meet at the next anniversary at Adyar. In a Society with pretensions to an exalted system of ethics—the essence of all previous ethical codes—which confesses openly its aspirations to emulate and put to shame by its practical example and ways of living the followers of every religion, such a pledge constitutes the *sine qua non* of the success of that Society. In a gathering where 'near the noisome nettle blooms the rose,' and where fierce thorns are more plentiful than sweet blossoms, a pledge of such a nature is the sole salvation. No Ethics as a science of mutual duties—whether social, religious or philosophical—from man to man, can be called complete or consistent unless such a rule is enforced. Not only this, but if we would not have our Society become *de facto* and *de jure* a gigantic sham parading under its banner of 'Universal Brotherhood'—we ought to follow every time the breaking of this law of laws, by the expulsion of the slanderer. No honest man, still less a theosophist, can disregard these lines of Horace:—

'He that shall rail against his absent friends,
Or hears them scandalised, and not defends;
Sports with their fame and speaks whate'er he can,
And only to be thought a witty man;
Tells tales, and brings his friend in disesteem;
That man's a KNAVE—be sure beware of him.'

Able as the foregoing article deals with the very difficult question at issue, it is written from too high a moral attitude to be of much practical utility to any but those into whose Theosophy, whether consciously or unconsciously to themselves, there has already entered a strong dash of the spirit of the true Chela. Gossip and slander, there is no use in denying it, form together one of the great pleasures of life. Man, especially woman, is essentially a gossiping animal; and it is a universal experience that gossip and slander are inseparable. That is the reason why in Buddhist morality "Idle Talk" is accounted an actual sin. No one would indulge in idle talk were it not that the little, almost imperceptible and unavoidable exaggerations of ordinary language create innuendoes and hints and breed surmises and suspicions, which are to the bare statements of insipid trivialities what salt is to veal. Moreover, man is by nature an opinion forming animal. He cannot help it. At any cost he must have opinions on all kinds of subjects, and when he is unable to come at them at first hand, he accepts them at second, from priest, professor or paragrapher—who seldom quite know what they are talking about. Man is also, by a law of his existence, a fault-finding animal. That he is so is incident to his power of discrimination between good and evil, and to his innate love of the former; and that he should be, as he is, a critic much more prone to blame than to praise, is perhaps mainly due to the fact that there is so much more in the world that is worthy of blame, than there is of praise-worthy, and also to his laudible desire to make everything better worthy of being praised.

Granting, as every one must, that the authoress is perfectly justified in her Denunciation of denunciations, how are the canons of Theosophical morality to be applied to practices that would really seem to be no more than lamentable but natural and unavoidable incidents of man's present very imperfect stage of development? How can poor, weak, gossiping, opinion-forming, fault-finding animals like the average men and women that compose the much beloved "humanity" of to-day, how can they manage to avoid slandering each other? This simple and fundamental question does not seem ever to have been satisfactorily answered. One hunts in vain through the piles and piles of moral exhortation of churches and schools for some specific that will cure that moral leprosy. The nearest one gets to anything definite is the information, common to them all, that men get rid of their evil tendencies only by trying to do so. This sounds very like a platitude, but it covers an all-important truth; namely, that the *will* is the great power for good. If one wishes strongly and steadily the result is sure to follow by-and-bye. The strong wish is the motor that acts when men petition. It acts upon an inner plane whether the person moved be a mortal or a "God," constraining him to perform the act thus willed or wished "in prayer." This power of will can be turned in upon oneself, and then it becomes a species of self-mesmerism, an action of that "better self" whose existence is so universally acknowledged in the metaphysics of poetry, but which is none the less a fact. We have

it on the authority of the Bhagavad Gita that the man who fixes his mind on virtue will become virtuous, even though he be at present sunk in sin. The thought comes first, then the wish, then the firm determination which moulds the desires, and makes that thing loathed, which but a little while ago was loved.

This, however, is not an instantaneous process. Sudden conversions are not lasting, because no miraculous influx of spiritual power accompanies a sudden change of heart. That the spirit may be truly willing while the flesh is weak, is the universal experience of mankind. What is wanted is perseverance and patience, patience with one's self as well as with others, patience on the part of the willing spirit, (*willing*, in both senses of the word) towards the weakness of the flesh; not, indeed, indulgence, nor the making of plausible excuses for one's own shortcomings, but a care not to lay upon the lower self burdens that would overtax its strength, and cause it to break down, and thus leave in the heart an opening for reaction. Now, the clause in the "Pledge," to which so many people seem to object, says very distinctly that the person taking that pledge will never do the things prohibited; instead of saying that he or she will *endeavour* to avoid them; No one can do better than his best; and no one's "best" is better than an attempt, therefore under the circumstances, this clause is precisely equivalent to promising to do a thing whether one is able to do it or not; and this singularity of the clause is a much more likely explanation of the hesitation to take the pledge exhibited by so many, than the moral depravity with which the writer seems to debit them; for it can hardly be supposed that the situation is entirely new to them, nor that they have felt the beauty of godliness for the first time when they set eyes on the "Pledge." On the contrary, it may logically be concluded that they long have wished to cease from evil and do good, and that it is previous experience of the weakness of the "flesh" which makes the willing spirit shrink in this case from deliberately setting a trap to catch itself.

It is only by dint of painful failures that success is ever achieved. By falling the child learns to walk; but it is doubtful if the child would ever learn to walk were falling down a pleasant experience; and to cause the giving way to weakness and temptation to be a painful thing is half the battle won for virtue. This a pledge undoubtedly can accomplish, for to break so solemn a compact is a proof of weakness and a shameful thing; but in order that this shame may be experienced, it is necessary that the self-imposed task should not be above one's power; for if it be, self finds excuses for self, and a little breach is made in good resolution which quickly widens till it lets in the whole host of the enemy. A pledge which does not take into account the tendency to fail, and which makes no provision for "trying again," may do very well for real Chelaship, wherein the aspirant accepts failure without chance of recovery during this incarnation, as a condition incident to his ambitious attempt to raise himself above the ordinary level of humanity; but in the case of the drawing-room Theosophist, or even of the boudoir Chela, to make the pledge so severe a test of moral courage and self-abnegation seems almost as unnecessary and as

dangerous as it would be to load with ball cartridge in order to fire a salute.

The question still remains, however, how the aspirant may gain strength to stand and walk without falling. It would seem that the only real safeguard lies in being able to feel that all this mortal life is vanity, a fleeting shadow, a Maya. It is on the instability of all earthly things and their intrinsic worthlessness, that religion has always relied to raise men's mind to higher things, and that is also the burden of the song Theosophical. But the Pessimist sings his little ditty to the same tune, and assuredly the words of no two songs are more unlike than those of the Pessimist and the Theosophist! The fact is that the worthlessness of material things, which forms the whole of the philosophy of the Pessimist, and all the science of the Theologian, is but the prelude to Theosophy; for this latter opens up a view of other states of being, of other interests, and of other aims, in comparison with which the little affairs of our present terrestrial lives seem of microscopic importance. It may be necessary for religions to abuse and belittle this mortal life in order to heighten the colours in the pictures painted by preachers of their heavenly cloudland, but the Theosophist should have no need to adopt any such stratagem. All nature is lovely and full of the Divine. The great All is not "divided against itself." If the Theosophist knows of something still nearer to absolute Divinity than material nature, he is not obliged to hate the one in order to love the other. Now, the very moment it is perceived that men need not be condemned because they are not perfect,—that man, in fact, is not exactly fitted by nature and circumstances to be a perfect being just yet,—an immense load of painful responsibility is lifted from the mind. When people further come to understand that no amount of blaming, and denouncing, and vilifying of their neighbours can by any possibility turn them into angels, toleration makes its appearance, and men begin to ask whether, after all, it is possible for the world at present to be very different to what it actually is; and whether poor, stupid, ignorant, narrow-minded, toiling, hungry humanity is not rather to be pitied for its many short-comings than blamed for them. To any one who comes to see things in this light, pride of heart is impossible. He knows that he is one of the crowd of half-developed beings now struggling with heavy throes to become "human."

He feels that to imagine himself, as compared with ideal man, perceptibly a higher creature than his neighbours would be a self-evident and absurd delusion. He becomes permeated and warmed through by the thought that there exists between himself and his fellow men a Free Masonry of folly, weakness and stupidity, which relieves him of the dreadful necessity of having to hate his neighbour for not being perfect, as well as of having to advertise his own hypocritical professions of sanctity. This growing feeling of equality in their natural predisposition to selfishness and all the other vices, and budding consciousness of a community of aspiration to better feelings and worthier modes of life, is, after all, one of best earnest for the ultimate realization of the sentiment of Universal

Brotherhood; and to experience those feelings would seem to be the necessary safeguard against over-confidence in his own strength on the part of anyone who, in the wild freshness of his theosophical morning, sallies forth to tackle Satan single-handed, clad in the shining armour of an iron Pledge; which, while it doubtless keeps away many a shaft of the enemy, has the same drawback as the coats-of-mail of the knights of old; namely, that if the wearer does happen to trip up and tumble down, he has to lie where he falls, for the weight of his own armour is sure to keep him down.

Let it not be supposed for one moment that the writer of these lines would have the audacity to question or to gainsay the superior wisdom of the honored Teacher who writes in *Lucifer*. He would but respectfully advance certain considerations on behalf of those who do not feel themselves strong enough to take the Pledge as it now stands, with any great chance of keeping it intact, and who do not want to treat it like a farce, by taking and breaking it light-heartedly, and still who ardently desire to make Theosophy their Rule of Life. There are pledges and pledges, and their manufactory is the monopoly of no one. Those who do not feel themselves able for the London Pledge can take an easier one. In the *Theosophist* Supplement for last month a matter-of-fact notice occurs of a pledge taken by the Fellows in a Ceylon Branch which might better suit some of our British brothers than the one they feel afraid of. This Ceylon Pledge solemnly binds the takers not to tell lies on the festival days of every month, and purports to be preparatory to a further pledge extending the prohibition against indulgence in that pleasure to all days alike. Comical as this pledge in its naïve simplicity may sound to English ears, it has at least the merit of humility, and it is probably very well suited to the strength of those to whom it is administered. Each man must be a law unto himself in Theosophy, we are told; and he must judge for himself whether it agrees better, with his own particular "constitution, rules and bye-laws" to promise a little with the intention of performing ever more and more, or to undertake a heavy burden, in fear and "trembling," lest he may break down under the load.

R. H.

OFF TO JAPAN.

NO situation more dramatic has ever occurred in the history of the Theosophical Society than the late departure of Colonel Olcott for Japan, whither he goes at the invitation of the Buddhist community, who hope, with his powerful aid, to infuse new life into the ancient religion of their fathers.

Ever since the guns of Commodore Perry, some thirty-five years ago, made a breach in the jealous exclusiveness of the Japanese, and thus opened up the country to foreigners, European ideas, customs, institutions, and vices have been pouring into Japan. The Western civilization was to the Japanese like something coming from another planet—wonderful, worshipful, irresistible; and they accepted at their own valuation its torch-bearers and porters—the

liquor sellers and the missionaries. In the innocence of their hearts they fondly fancied that the people from the West were in reality the superior beings they professed themselves to be, and they felt that in keeping such superior beings out of Japan so long they had been guilty of a sin only to be atoned by cheerful compliance in the future with all their demands and suggestions. The new-comers laughed at the dress of the natives, poo-pooed their laws, scouted their social customs, scoffed at their religion, and praised to the skies the corresponding institutions of the West; and the poor Japanese not being aware of the fact that bare-faced lying is a recognized element in the advertising business, and that *caveat emptor* is the maxim acknowledged in Western law and morality, became perfectly ashamed of themselves and all their works, and hastened to discard their old ideas and customs, and to deck themselves out in the shoddy and frippery—material, intellectual and religious—so lovingly dealt out to them (for a consideration) by their new teachers and fleecers. The inevitable reaction has come, however. The Japanese are now awakening from the hyponitized condition into which a too sudden introduction to the wonders of the West had thrown them. They suspect already that they have allowed themselves to be the dupes of interested and designing chapmen, and they are looking round for some way of recovering what they have carelessly lost or foolishly thrown away.

The position could not be more curiously illustrated than by what has taken place in regard to Japanese art. Nothing in Japan struck the uneducated eye of the new-comers as more amusingly ridiculous than Japanese pictures, ornaments and decorative art, and the natives were soon induced to sell, often for a mere song, their most precious heirlooms as "curios;" and to buy at fancy prices instead the vulgar ornaments and decorations of Western civilization. European and American dealers, laughing in their sleeves, bought up all the old "thrash" and exported it for sale, and in this way the most precious collections of the native grandees have been scattered in a hundred thousand Western drawing rooms, while one American citizen is said to possess a finer museum of Japanese ancient art than exists now in all Japan. But when Western artists saw for themselves what real Japanese art was like, they first wondered, then admired, and finally accepted much that is characteristic thereof, not only as being true art, but as possessing very valuable features hitherto wanting in the art of the West, whether pictorial or decorative; and already the artistic influence of Japan is almost obtrusively evident in Europe and America. When the Japanese saw all this they began to suspect that the torch-bearers and porters of Western civilization were not quite such superior beings as they had supposed; but wisdom came too late, and vainly do they now wish that they had their treasures back again. Failing this, they have turned their attention to their own old Schools of Art, a revival of which is reported to be now in progress.

An exactly similar series of events is now occurring in regard to the religious ideas and life of the Japanese. The missionaries found that people to be impressionable, unsuspecting, innocent,

and particularly amenable to the influence of barefaced pretence and audacious assertion. They had only to spit on the old religion and the poor bewildered, hypnotised Japanese immediately threw it away as something impure—submissively accepting missionary theology in its place. But after a time they learned that the religion they were so lightly discarding is becoming every day more studied and more highly thought of in the West; and they also learned that the theology they were in such a hurry to welcome is undermined by criticism, openly denied by almost every advanced mind in "Christendom," secretly or semi-secretly questioned by an increasing number of its own nominal adherents, and a matter of dislike or indifference to a very large and steadily growing part of the Western public at large. They have further learned, by bitter experience, that Christianity is accompanied wherever it goes by a retinue of sycophantic attendants, whose voices more than counteract the effect of whatever faint echo of the words of Jesus may still linger in the Churches—a retinue, namely, of drunkenness, prostitution, lying, cheating, selfishness, hypocrisy, avarice and insolence, all of which vices the universal testimony of travellers in Japan declares the Japanese people to have been particularly free from before the arrival in their midst of the trader and the missionary.

Hitherto the blessings of Christian civilization have been chiefly confined to the large towns of Japan, but there has been some talk lately of making Christianity the State religion, and this has aroused the whole country to a perception of the danger that threatens the very existence of Buddhism in one of its most ancient strongholds. The influence of the missionaries at the Court of the Emperor is very strong, and as Japanese national pride seems to have melted away before the loud-mouthed assertions of superiority made by the invaders, the eyes of the national party, the Buddhists, turn not unnaturally to the man who has wrought so great a change in the status and feelings of the Buddhists in Ceylon.

It is well known to most Fellows of the Society that before the first visit of Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott to Ceylon, the leading Buddhists of the Island were in despair about the future of their religion, in the face of the bold and unscrupulous efforts made by the missionaries to undermine it. The missionaries had pushed themselves forward until they had got the education of the Buddhist children almost entirely in their hands. There was no one to oppose them. Well supplied with money for all purposes, secretly favoured by the powers that were, they already looked on the people of Ceylon as grapes gathered into the winepress of Jehovah; when lo! a little cloud appeared upon their horizon, which quickly grew to huge dimensions, and burst upon them. No man, nor any hundred men, could do what Colonel Olcott has done in Ceylon, had not the mass of the people been unanimous in backing him up. Then was seen the difference between a movement that owed to its existence to money and foreign influence, and one that springs from the heart of the people. Colonel Olcott has travelled through the Island many times, making addresses and initiating Fellows of the Society, and wherever he

goes the people welcome him as a deliverer and an apostle of their faith, and wherever a school has been opened by the Society the children of the Buddhists have crowded into it, leaving deserted the hated missionary schools, the only ones they had before. It has been the policy of the enemies of the Theosophical Society to decry and belittle it, but how small in reality is the effect of such lying reports is shown by the invitation of the Buddhists of Japan, delivered to the President by their special envoy Mr. Zenchiro Nogouchi, who has just returned with him to Japan, an invitation which prayed him in touching terms to come and do for Buddhism in Japan the same thing which he has done for Buddhism in Ceylon,—to rally the people round the flag of their old faith, and enable that flag to withstand the attacks of its powerful and unscrupulous enemies.

One of the effects of the action taken by Colonel Olcott in Ceylon has been a stirring up of Buddhism in every country where that religion exists, and a drawing together of the various Buddhist communities and sects. Already the effect of his reiterated exhortation to "study your own religion" is bearing fruit in deeper knowledge thereof on the part of the various schools into which in the course of time Buddhism has been broken up; and this deeper knowledge is resulting in greater largeness of mind on the part of all of them, and in a disposition to drop their differences in regard to non-essential points, in order to join their forces on the main issues, so as to be able to present a strong and united front to the enemies of the Lord Buddha and his Law.

If the President succeeds in rallying the Buddhists of Japan, and thus checking the progress of the missionaries in that country, he will have done a work of more far-reaching consequences than were he to conquer those Islands with an army of a hundred thousand men. Were it truly the religion of Jesus that the so-called "Christian" missionaries are trying to impose on the Japanese, the case would be altogether different; Theosophists would be the last people in the world to oppose that beautiful religion of forgiveness, humility and love, so like in its essence to the doctrines of Buddha himself; but the Theology of Exeter Hall and Andover College is about as far from the Religion of Jesus as a missionary is from a Christ. If there be one institution which, to be anything better than a mere form and a farce, must be in harmony with the genius, traditions and institutions of a people, it is their religion; and modern Christianity being in all these respects out of harmony with the lives and natures of the Japanese, is as little suited to their souls as the ugly fashions of European dress are to their bodies. As an artistic people possessed of looking-glasses, the European costume is the last in the world the Japanese would have adopted, had not their self-respect and their better judgment been overawed and overpowered by iron-clad ships and steel-clad audacity; and, even were they in search of a new religion, which is notoriously untrue, the so-called religion of Europe would be the last which they, as a naturally moral and pious people, would adopt, were their eyes once opened to its past

scandalous history and its present exceedingly uncertain position in the West.

It is strange how little notice the world sometimes takes of events that are fraught with the most momentous consequences. The few friends and members of the Head-quarters Staff who assembled on the beach at Madras at midday on Thursday, the 10th of January 1889, to bid God-speed to the President of the Theosophical Society as he departed on his mission of peace and good-will, thought of all these things. They thought of the splendid work which the noble looking and genuinely modest old man standing before them had already so unselfishly and steadfastly performed for the cause of enlightenment and of truth, in the face of every kind of opposition and difficulty—including the very lukewarm support of a section of the Fellows themselves; and they wondered, at the same time, at the blindness and apathy of a world, too stupid, too selfish, too jealous to conceive or to recognise even the possibility of disinterested love of humanity as an impelling force in the lives of men. And, as they thought and wondered, they smiled to themselves, for they knew that it is precisely this force of disinterested love for humanity, and devotion to a grand ideal, that has always guided, and will always guide, the destinies of men; while princes, popes and parliaments mouth and strut, as little able to control even their own actions as marionettes upon a mimic stage; the playthings of the circumstances, which in their vanity they fancy they contrive; the little bursting bubbles in the seething cauldron of human life, below which burn the great spiritual forces of nature, of whose very existence they are as piously, profoundly and proudly ignorant as the gilded weather-cocks on their own church steeples.

ONE OF THE STAFF.

SANSKRIT PHONETICS.

SANSKRIT, the most perfect language in the world, possesses, —as might be expected from its regularity and the logical power manifested by its grammarians—the most perfect phonetic system that has ever been conceived by human ingenuity; a system so perfect that the Brahmans reverence not only the language, but even its vehicle, the Devanâgarî alphabet, as a gift of the gods. The name of this alphabet signifies the “Nâgarî” of the Gods, though the Brahmans themselves are often called Devas.

Doubtless it is this character which is meant by the Deva alphabet mentioned in the Lalita-vistara,* though the reverence for this sacred writing was so great that any mention of it by this name is hardly to be found in the ancient scriptures.

Max Müller suggests that the Devanâgarî character is derived from some Semitic alphabet. Not a fragment of really valid

* LALITA-VISTARA: “A Life of Buddha, translated from Sanskrit into Chinese, 76, A. D.”—Max Müller.

evidence is forthcoming in defence of this suggestion; the chain of reasoning by which it is sought to be supported is as follows:

We know of one great alphabet, the progenitor of almost all, if not all, of the alphabets of Europe, America, and Australia, and of a great part of Asia and Africa.

This is the ancient Hebrew-Phœnician which seems to be derived from a hieroglyph system, probably that of Egypt.

The names of the letters in Hebrew, when compared with their forms, make its hieroglyphic origin at once apparent. The letter “shin,” for instance, bears as strong resemblance to a “tooth” as the letter “lamed” does to an “ox-goad.”

The arrangement of the Hebrew alphabet,—which is neither phonetically nor scientifically complete, but entirely at haphazard, and so deficient as to be hopelessly unintelligible without diacritical marks and vowel-points, (the recent work of the Massorah school, and entirely absent in the old scrolls)—this infantile and rude alphabet has stamped the mark of its unscientific individuality on the alphabets of all the European languages, and of all the languages written in the Arabic character. The “aleph, beth, gimel, daleth” of the Hebrew reappear under a very thin disguise as the “alpha, beta, gamma, delta” of the Greek—whence the word “alphabet” and the a, b, c, of the European languages,—not less than as the “alif, be” of the Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Hindustani.

This Hebrew alphabet, this prolific mother of illogical children, is the unique example of the process of development which the philologists imagine as necessary in every case; that of ideograph, hieroglyph, and, finally, letter; thus exalting a single instance into a rule, and illogically generalizing from one particular case.

They argue that as the ideographic and hieroglyphic fathers of the Sanskrit are unknown to them, the only ideographic progenitor they are acquainted with—the Hebrew—must necessarily stand in a paternal relation to the Sanskrit.

But this reasoning is so manifestly absurd that it requires no refutation, and the evidence they bring to support it points really in quite another direction, for it proves that the Devanâgarî is so old that its ancestry is lost in the night of time. Even if it were demonstrated—as we may confidently assert that it never will be—that the Devanâgarî is of the same stock as the alphabets of Europe, the result of this demonstration would simply be, that, during the three thousand years since Cadmus brought the oldest European alphabet from Egypt to Greece, not a single European nation has had sufficient ingenuity to do what the grammarians of the Sanskrit tongue had completed, if the hypothesis of the philologists be accepted, in the time of Pânini (to whom even Max Müller allows more than two thousand years), namely, the task of reducing to order and scientific precision the crude and illogical alphabet of the Hebrews.

For the Devanâgarî alphabet is eminently scientific.

Beginning with the consonants, which are the production of definite vocal organs, and are not, like the vowels, formed simply by modifying the form of that most delicate resonance-chamber,

the human mouth,—the Sanskrit grammarians grouped them into classes, according to the organs which formed them.

Starting from the back of the throat, they found that there are five distinct seats of sound in the mouth; these in their order, are—(1) the soft palate touched by the root of the tongue; (2) the ridge of the hard palate touched by the tip of the tongue; (3) the roof of the mouth touched by the under surface of the tip of the tongue; (4) the teeth touched by the tip of the tongue; (5) the lips, closed.

To form a clear idea of these groups, it is recommended to practice them, when the following consonants are produced,—(1) ka, as in “kalender;” (2) cha, as in “charter;” (3) ta, as in “task,” (though this sound has no exact equivalent to Europe); (4) ta, as in the Italian “tardo,” a softer dental than the ta in the English “tardy;” (5) pa, as in “pass.” It is usual to call these five classes (1) gutturals, (2) palatals, (3) linguals, or cerebrals, (4) dentals, and (5) labials; or, throat, palate, roof, teeth, and lip sounds.

The next fact to be remarked in classification is that there are several different shades of sound produced by each of these sound-organs.

To take the lips, for example; we have the two sounds pa and ba, the difference between which is that in pa the breath is not intoned, while in ba the breath is intoned. From this fact pa, ka, ta, cha, are called surds, while ba, ga, da, ja, are called sonants. Further when the lips are opened after producing each of them, the air already in the mouth may be retained there, or it may be forcibly expelled: in the latter case we have the true aspirates of pa and ba,—(the so-called aspirate in English, as in “phial,” being really a sibilant, as we shall presently show).

The sounds of these true aspirates may be represented in English by the letters p-h and b-h in the words “top-heavy,” and “cub-house.”

So that we have four modifications for each of the five initial groups of sounds.

There is yet a fifth modification. In all these four modifications, *e. g.*, pa, p-ha, ba, b-ha, the veil which separates the nose from the pharynx is closed; suppose it to be opened, and, while the vocal chords vibrate, let the air be expelled through the nose; then let the lips be opened, and the sound of ma, as in “man,” is produced.

Those who are unfamiliar with the names of the various parts of the mouth are recommended to pronounce the sounds we have given, and to remark carefully the position of the vocal organs in each case. This course will, if carefully followed, insure a perfect comprehension, not only of the Sanskrit alphabet but also of the whole system of phonetics. It is thus seen that we have in Sanskrit, five places of sound in the mouth, and five modifications for each place of sound; these modifications are the “sharp,” or “tenuis,” as “pa”; the “aspirate sharp,” as “p-ha”; the “flat,” or “medial,” as “ba”; the “aspirate flat,” as “b-ha”; and the “nasal,” as “ma.”

These sounds may be tabulated thus:

(Gutturals):—ka, kha, ga, gha, nga.

(Palatals):—cha, chha, ja, jha, nya.

(Linguals):—ta, tha, da, dha, na.

(Dentals):—ta, tha, da, dha, na.

(Labials):—pa, pha, ba, bha, ma.

To give an idea of the sound of the aspirates—the second and fourth letter in each row—the following examples may be given; the sounds kh, gh, etc., in “take-head,” “tug-head,” for the gutturals, “catch-hold,” “large-heart,” for the palatals, “hot-head,” “cold-hand,” (unfortunately we cannot illustrate the difference between the linguals and the dentals by any examples in English; the two words last quoted must therefore stand for the aspirates of both these sounds;) and the examples already given of the labials.

In transliteration, the only real difficulty is with the linguals; they are represented either by putting a line or a dot under the dentals, or by printing them in italics; in practice, however, they may be represented by the same letters as the dentals without any serious danger of confusion; since only Sanskrit scholars could profit by the distinction, and they may be trusted to make it themselves, without any typographical guide.

Moreover, we may without danger represent the palatal and guttural nasals by a simple “n,” as these letters are almost always found in conjunction with a palatal or guttural, respectively, which sufficiently mark their character; in the word “sing,” for example, we cannot pronounce the “n” otherwise than as a guttural nasal, because a guttural follows it.

The semi-vowels, ya, ra, la, va, give no difficulty in pronunciation; it will be seen at once that ya is the semi-vowel of the palatal, that ra is the semi-vowel of the lingual, la being the semi-vowel of the dental, and va that of the labial; ha, the aspirate, in like manner, corresponds to the guttural. In transliteration, these letters are represented by y, r, l, v, and h. As there is a liquid, or semi-vowel, corresponding to each place of sound in the mouth, so there is a sibilant for each sound-place; only those of the palatals, linguals, and dentals, however, are ever used; the sibilant of the palatal is a soft *sha*, the tongue being in the position necessary for pronouncing the letter ja; it may be represented by the cedilla c (ç), but for all practical purposes may be represented simply by sh. The lingual *sha* has no equivalent in English; it is a hissing sound, with the under-surface of the tongue turned up, and pressed against the roof of the mouth; it may also be represented by sh, the difference between it and the last sound being only marked by Sanskrit scholars, who would make it in any case. The sibilant of the guttural is represented by the Greek letter “khi,” or the Arabic “ghain,” it is no longer used in Sanskrit.

Similarly, the sibilant of the labial is the Greek “phi,” or the English “f”; these last two sounds are not now written in Sanskrit, though sounded, but we have given them to make the theory of phonetics complete.

This method of transliteration is used in all the following words, and the application of the above values to the letters will give the correct pronunciation :

Advaita . . .	unity, undividedness . . .	Advaita.
Ārhata . . .	(originally) a Jaina . . .	Ārhata.
Ārya . . .	noble, high-born . . .	Ārya.
Ātmā . . .	self, soul . . .	Ātma.
Avalokiteshvara . . .	manifested deity . . .	Avalokitēsh- vara.
Brahman . . .	the unknown God . . .	Brāhman.
Brahmā . . .	the Creator . . .	Brahmā.
Brahmachāri . . .	a Brahman student . . .	Brahmachāri.
Buddha . . .	the enlightened one . . .	Buddha.
Dhyāna . . .	spiritual meditation . . .	Dhyāna.
Guru . . .	a spiritual teacher . . .	Gūru.
Kāma . . .	the Indian Cupid . . .	Kāma.
Karma . . .	action, work . . .	Kārma.
Mahat . . .	great; intellectual principle . . .	Māhat.
Mahātmā . . .	a great-souled one . . .	Mahātma.
Mahā-yuga . . .	great age, or cycle . . .	Mahā-yūga.
Moksha . . .	final liberation . . .	Mōksha.
Mukti . . .	liberation, final beatitude . . .	Mūkti.
Mumukshatvam . . .	desire for liberation . . .	Mumūkshat- vam.
Om . . .	the mystic name of the Trinity . . .	Om.
Pānini . . .	a celebrated grammarian . . .	Pānini.
Pishācha . . .	a demon . . .	Pishācha.
Prakriti . . .	nature, matter . . .	Prakṛiti.
Pralaya . . .	destruction of the world . . .	Pralāya.
Purusha . . .	man, soul, supreme being . . .	Purūsha.
Rāja-yoga . . .	royal union with the divine . . .	Rāja-yōga.
Samādhi . . .	spiritual trance . . .	Samādhi.
Sannyāsi . . .	a Brahman sage . . .	Sannyāsi.
Vāch . . .	word, speech . . .	Vāch.
Yoga . . .	union with the divine . . .	Yōga.
Yogi . . .	one who seeks this union . . .	Yōgi.

The circumflex in the first column marks the long vowels, while the accent in the last column marks the syllable on which stress is to be laid; the meanings given are those of the words, when used in classical Sanskrit, though the technical use of these words has, in some cases, given them a slightly different import. If we have succeeded in giving our readers an insight into the scientific understanding of the Sanskrit alphabet, while giving them certainty and precision in pronouncing those Sanskrit words commonly used by theosophical writers, we shall be satisfied, but if this explanation should lead to a regular system of transliteration in theosophical works, instead of the dozen methods at present in vogue, we should be more than satisfied.

MARAKATA DVIPA, F. T. S.

KARMA, HEAVEN, HELL, AND RE-BIRTH.

READER, before commencing upon the conversation relating to Karma, let us first analyze the personality of man, in order that the subject we are about to discuss may be more readily understood. First of all, let us acknowledge the fact, that all things in nature are impermanent and subject to the law of change, therefore, according to this law, we have every reason to believe that all material and immaterial constituent parts of man's body and mind are also constantly changing whilst living, as well as after his death.

Let the reader imagine his own material body and immaterial mind at the time of his infancy, and ask himself whether the same material has lasted permanently up to the time at which he is reading this article.

I believe every reader will see clearly that all such materials of his body, so long past, will have been gradually wasting away, and that at the present moment not one of the former particles or molecules of matter that existed when in infancy remains in his body. Thus also with past consciousness, or mind, because even his body which produced it has been wholly changed, but then what is the nature of his self-consciousness which seemingly is always the same from that time to the present. It is in fact nothing more than a series of delusions of a similar character, bred out of materials forming the successive substances of the body during life, or, in other words, it is only the identity of successive forces or minds evolved from the action of matters, in uniting their molecules to one another in repeated succession.

The process works after this principle. Different matters uniting their molecules to one another produce action or motion, and from action or motion force is evolved, and this force again causes the uniting of matters, and so on, in constant repetition and succession. There is however a certain space marked between each period of the process so as to separate one from the other, or, in other words, a series of successive states of activity and dormancy. This creative process of nature is going on in all living beings, as well as in actions of nature in the whole universe. For instance, molecules of water and heat uniting together produce action or motion, *i. e.*, the wind, and from this motion evolves force or electricity, which in turn acts to produce combination of water again. Now, if we can rely on the existence of the process aforesaid, we also can form the conclusion that man consists of body and mind; the former is a combination of materials which produce action or motion and the latter is the result of that motion and factor which will in turn produce a combination of materials again, and so the process goes on imperceptibly, at the same time a peculiar character is kept up almost identically during the whole course of life. This peculiar character, which owes its existence to actions and experience during life, may properly be called the man himself, and which gives him the idea of individuality 'I am I'; in truth any one may see for himself that the past 'I' is not the present 'I' at all, yet through ignorance of the facts we come to the conclusion that it is. To illustrate the

wrong idea of individuality let a photograph of a man (savage) be taken and print several pictures from the negative; let these be shown to him one at a time, but be careful to remove the picture you show to him, before another one is presented. By doing this, if the man is ignorant of photography, he will no doubt believe all the pictures that were shown to him to be only one. This deception is caused by the similarity existing in all the pictures that were shown. So it is with the individuality of man: every force, mind, or sensation is produced by the materials introduced as food to form parts of the body, seemingly identical to its preceding kindreds, although it is actually and perceptibly changing in character. This is the cause of our deception in holding the idea that "we exist." To prove that man is never the same person for two consecutive moments is not a difficult task. We know for certain that the consciousness of self which we experience at this moment, is but to be felt by us at this moment; it is only a force evolved from the material for the time being, but through the grasping nature of this force we reach to our next idea, and hold the new thought or feeling, which belongs separately to the next moment, to be the same force, or same self. This is owing to their common likeness of character and property. Let us enquire into the nature of the process of thinking and the movements asserted by our limbs. By our knowledge of the creative process before mentioned, we may infer that the action of thinking is nothing other than movements in the thinking organ caused by the uniting of matters which take place between the new materials in the blood and the old material forming the organ itself. The action or motion of the thinking organ thus produced evolves in its turn a force, which we call the will-power or mind; this, if in the case of our desire of moving a limb, causes the new materials in the blood to unite with the old material of the moving organ or muscle in the limb, so that an action or motion is produced to accomplish our wished-for movements, while the force here produced is partly used as a propelling agent in the other active organs of the body.

The process is therefore going on in succession, keeping up the sufficiency of stock or force of life for the working of the whole section of active life; as, for instance, the heart is in motion, because a combination of its substance and the new material in the blood takes place, and the motion produced becomes force, causing the blood to combine with old materials in other organs,—the force evolving from these organs again causing the combination of matters in the substance of the heart. The heart is, in fact, the storehouse of normal force or life, and we owe to its regular action the facility of the thinking power which, in its turn, produces the force in other organs of movement throughout the different parts of our body: thus we can accomplish our actions in life. During sleep the production of moving force is suspended, the organs of the six senses being at rest, and the equilibrium of force in stock, which is understood by us as life restored, before another successive round of active process can begin again.

The cause of suddenly awaking from sleep may be attributed chiefly to two forces, viz., the force from within our bodies caused

by disease, or by too sudden an equilibrium of forces which still linger in the different organs of the body after exertion during the day. The other force is from outside, which excites the organs of the senses and then passes into the thinking organ causing sudden waking. Every thinking action and power of will is produced by external surrounding objects, which co-operate with the physical impression we formerly had from experience in our organ of memory. For instance, we can see a tree, hear the sound of music, smell a flower, taste the flavour of food, touch objects or obtain knowledge,—all these impressions will be found more or less physically prominent in our organ of memory. Whenever we see, feel, hear, smell, taste or learn anything anew, it causes the substance of organs of the six senses to unite with the blood, and causes an action to take place which produces a force, therefore if it is the case with the five senses, viz., seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching, the force will pass to the organ of memory and reawaken or cause activity in the old impression formerly existing. The degree of activity of the memory or thinking organ depends upon the old impression which is more or less prominent. Thus in our wakeful hours the thinking process is always in an active state.

Perhaps it may be thought out of place here to enter so minutely into the functions of the body, but my object in describing some of the physical functions is to convey an idea to the reader, so that it may enable him to see how Karma works its way along these organs.

I have mentioned before that a certain interval or mark exists between each successive round in the working of the creative process in all things forming part of the Universe. This interval may be called, in another sense, the successive states of activity and dormancy. An organ is called active when it is working for the benefit of other and passive or dormant organ, when expecting the benefit from another organ. This space between the state of activity and dormancy explains why it is necessary for all bodies to pass into a passive state, called death. Death occurs when the whole materials forming a body are passing into a passive state, *i. e.*, the time or space has arrived to stop working altogether, for it has done its work for the benefit of another body in the same manner as the organ does in performing the functions of the body; but in death the whole material of the body becomes disengaged, while in the case of an organ its materials are gradually wasting away.

When a body has become thus passive, another living body is bound to benefit, *i. e.*, the living body has again to be brought into existence. This is done by a natural process, which we call re-birth.

Now, dear Reader, let us try to solve the mystery of re-birth which we should be able to explain, because we have as our guide the creative process of Nature before mentioned, viz., that the uniting of matters into combination produces action or motion, and from action force is evolved, and force in its turn causes combination of matters again. This law, which is taught by Our Lord the Great Teacher Gautama Buddha, is called in Pali the *Paticcasamuppada*. This law has, in its whole series, three important abiding causes, viz., "*namarupa paccaya sankara, sankara*

paccaya vinnanani," and then again "vinnana paccaya namarupani" and so on the chain goes on unceasingly. Dear Reader, we have known that during all our lives, especially from infancy up to the present moment, the long past idea I is not the present "I," and we know that the future I, will not be the present "I." This is the real fact of the case, but it is through our own ignorance that we conclude all to be the same. But let us reflect once more on the fact that when the past idea I was in existence, the present I had not existed, therefore it must follow that the future I will never be in existence, unless the present I is out of existence. Now let us look for the cause which thus produces existence after existence, so successively in a line. In doing so we find that the force evolved from the materials of the past "I" had produced the present "I," and it must follow in consequence that the future "I" owes its existence to the force evolved from the materials of the present "I." But then, at the moment when the present "I" has evolved its force, its whole material happens to pass into a passive state or death, how will the force produce its infallible effect? This point is the mysterious link of re-birth. In order to bring the process of re-birth to light, we have to consider again in what manner the force of the past "I" had produced the material of the present "I." This will be seen to be done by its causing the new materials in the blood to unite with the old materials then in activity; but when the old material and the new material in the blood are unfit for the process of combination, *i. e.*, when they have past into the passive state, the active force then has only one way to produce its effect—by causing dormant force in space to undulate, *i. e.*, a vibration in space will be caused by it according to its character or likeness, just as a sentence is transmitted through a telephone, and the current thus produced will pass into a being, causing within a new combination of matters. Thus by virtue of the existing affinity new force of a similar character as the old, though it is not the same, is evolved, and the old passive or disengaged matters of the dead body are made to combine into active existence again. This is the very process by which, after death, the future "I" will be brought into existence. The reason why the force does not cause vibration of the medium fluid in space during life and takes rebirth in the manner described is, because when a body is in an active state, its force which passes out of the body can never be exhausted, or, in other words, that which leaves the body has already become passive, *i. e.*, it has produced its usual effect in the system of the body. It is active only when death intervenes in its process, so that it cannot produce its usual effect in the body, therefore of necessity it must cause vibration in space in order to find out an active matter to act upon. I have mentioned before the compound force or will-power, which is evolved out of the exercise of different organs of the body through the influence of external objects. This force, will-power, or mind, is divided into two distinct classes, *viz.*, the unindividualizing or active, and the individualizing or passive. The former is in the nature of all living beings of the whole universe, while the latter only belongs to Buddhas, Pacceka Buddhas

and the Arahats. The acquaintance with the two divisions of minds is the secret key to open the mystery of Nirvana. But we will revert to this subject after having discussed Karma. Life and death are best compared with the motion of a pendulum, whose only object is to restore equilibrium, but so long as more force is generated to cause its motion, the pendulum will keep in swinging motion. So it is with man, if he produces his Karma or action anew, in deed, word, or mind, so as to generate more force of individualizing character, in addition to that of his old Karma, which produced his present existence, the motion of his successive life and death, will be kept swinging for ever. Re-birth is necessary, because force is indestructable, unless it has produced its effect, and the real man is nothing but a series of identical forces. But force in man is compounded according to the complicated organs which produce it, and unlike the force in lower beings, whose organs are but simple. The forces of any kind, either simple or compound, can never loose their effect. For instance, a sentence is spoken into the mouth of a telephone, the vibration is conveyed by the medium fluid electricity to the ear-piece at the other station, however far may be the distance, a new voice will be created there of an exact likeness of the sentence first spoken, showing the effect that the sentence cannot be destroyed. So man's force or mental power can never loose its character and effect, so long as there are beings of like affinity to it either in this or other worlds, and a proper medium fluid or spirit exists in space to receive its undulation. The proof of the natural law of re-birth is in the civilization of mankind and the great variety of conditions in living beings. Re-birth is necessarily an important process of nature, because by it all heavenly bodies can exist, and by it all the retribution of right and wrong is judicially administered, and by it the universal force is maintained; in short, it is the only means by which nature can administer impartial justice and equity. Besides we all know that all natures can only exist and act to propagate their species by mutual dependence, and therefore it is illogical to say that only two parents are concerned in the process of reproduction, whilst it is very apparent that three are concerned. Now let us devote an exclusive discussion to the subject of Karma.

It is, as is well known, a Sanskrit term and means action, or doing. This term, according to what I understand, means action, movement of all things, both animate and inanimate, forming part of the Universe. The rise of all movements or Karmas is caused by combination of matters, which are taking place through the agency of force which evolved from the Karma of the antecedent cause. The universal principle or force which is always kept up by the successive Karmas of all bodies is the self-existing God of the Universe, which has all the attributes described to it by the Christians, Mahomedans, and Brahmins. It works its way from matters, to matters and causes them to assume all the variety of forms and properties, and it is owing to the nature of its progress, which is always keeping harmonious time, that all the changes of natures, such as life and

death, activity and dormancy, appearance and disappearance of all things, are the result. Now, for the convenience of reasoning upon the subject of Karma, we must go to the beginning of this solar system, and then we shall see how the powerful Karma works its way through successive generations of living beings. The former force of the last system evolved from Karma at the moment it was passing into a passive state, caused vibration in space, so that molecules of matters existing in space were put into action, and evolved in turn new forces which attract themselves, and by the aid of all the attractions of other heavenly bodies our solar system has been gradually formed. And by this universal process of uniting different matters together, Karma or action of all simple beings take their first origin. And from the first period of existence or during the infancy of this world also, the first evolution of species takes place. For instance, different matters are brought together by the force of nature, an action will in consequence be produced, more or less accompanied by motion or movement in the whole mass. This first movement owes its origin to the uniting action of matters evolving in turn a new force peculiar in itself. Now, if foreign matter be added either by natural force or by the movement of the mass itself, another force of different character will be produced, and in the same manner the next movement will also be changed. And so on the character of actions or doings of the living mass is differentiated higher and higher in the scale of existence, and its form, property and organs will also gradually be changed by its own Karma or movements. But if it happens that the living mass shall arrive at its period of passive state or death, which eventually must come to pass by the universal governing force, although the duration of life may be lengthened or shortened according to the nature of its own Karma, the last force evolved by it, when finding itself unable to produce the usual effect in its own body, will, in obedience to the law of seeking affinity (as water seeks to unite with water), cause vibration in space, in order to unite matters in one of the living masses having the nearest character to itself. Such living masses of this character can easily be found in the world, because we know for certain, that a shower of rain does not consist of a single drop of water only. If, however, a like mass required cannot be found, the vibration thus caused can extend itself in space to find out an element akin to it in another world (or worlds). Thus all beings belonging to the three kingdoms of nature are making their progress from generation to generation, while, at the same time, improving their forms, property, organs, intelligence, &c., by the agency of their own Karma through innumerable existences. Beings from other worlds send also their vibrations in space to this earth, causing matters here to unite in combination in the bodies of the inhabitants of this earth, and thus being re-born after this earth's life. In the same manner the inhabitants of this earth send their vibrations to other worlds, and are re-born there according to the dictation of their Karmas or doing in this earth's-life. The evolution of species just mentioned was taking place at the beginning of the world just as much as at this very moment. Its object is to

supply living beings in the universe, because those which have been evolved to the highest types, such as Buddhas, Pacceka Buddhas, and Arahats are always passing into Nirvana; i. e., their Karmas have been reduced to a passive state, and, in consequence, their last forces or mental powers loose their character, just as the sea is, through lack of wind, so all the waves subside. Buddha is a being who has passed through many existences, performing always good Karmas in experiences, through his great love for fellow beings who are at the same time evolved in the same world with himself. He rejected his Arahatship or Nirvana which he obtained during many journeys among the innumerable worlds. This is the reason why a Buddha always possesses great wisdom and powers superior to all living beings in a world in which he appears. Man is at present in this world the highest being Karma ever yielded, and he alone has a variety of forces or mental power, by a class of which he can control if he likes the other active class, thus to neutralize the whole into passive state. They cannot thus again form another individual in his place, but have to renew evolution and new accumulation of Karma to form new character again. It must be remarked that before man can gain his present condition he had, during innumerable existences and deaths, been travelling from world to world in quest of his affinity. Sometimes he may have elevated himself by his good deeds to a highest being, incomparable in greatness to this earthly life, but at other times also he might have been degraded by committing bad deeds to the lowest and most miserable existence possible, incomparable in degradation to this earthly life. All the conditions which he suffers or enjoys either in this or other worlds, are dictated to him by his own doings or Karmas. Supposing if this world of ours were to arrive at its passive period, all the living beings in it must also arrive at the end of their earthly life, when all will pass together into a passive state or death, and their common matters will be reduced to molecules, and scatter about the universe. But their last mental forces evolved at the time will cause vibration of the conducting fluid in space in different directions, seeking after their affinities in all the existing worlds according to the nature of their characters in life, just in the same manner in which oil seeks to unite with oil, water with water, and so forth, because they are substances of the same nature, being good conductors to each other.

CHANDRAHAT CHUDHATHAR,

Prince of Siam.

(To be continued in next No.)

[Prince Chandrahat Chudhathar has declared that in stating the ideas of Siamese Buddhists he is desirous, in the interests of truth, of eliciting competent criticism thereon from other standpoints.—Ed]

MODERN MAGIC.

THE traces of the great wisdom of the ancient priesthood is still to be found in Egypt. There are some stories which prove that now-a-day magicians, not less skilful than Pharaoh's wise men, had not disappeared entirely from this country.

I have just read a book entitled "Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians," an edition of 1836, by E. W. Lane. He relates an episode of his life, which contains an account of a meeting with a modern magician. An interpreter of the British Consulate brought him to a well known magician, whose name was Abd-el-ckadir El-Mughrebee, and then took place a "performance" narrated by the author as follows:

"He addressed me and asked me if I wished the boy (evidently a medium, who was a tool of Abd-el-ckadir) to see any person who was absent or dead. I named Lord Nelson, of whom the boy had evidently never heard, for it was with much difficulty that he pronounced the name after several trials. The magician desired the boy to say to the Sultan, a spirit familiar to him: 'My master salutes thee and desires thee to bring Lord Nelson: bring him before my eyes, that I may see him speedily.' The boy then said so, and almost immediately added: 'A messenger is gone, and has returned, and brought a man, dressed in a black suit of European clothes: the man has lost his left arm.' He then paused for a moment or two; and looking more intently into the ink, said, 'No, he has not lost his arm, but it is placed to his breast.' This correction made his description more striking than it had been without it: since Lord Nelson generally had his empty sleeve attached to the breast of his coat."

This reminded me of a similar story I heard several years ago from a relation of mine, a Russian General engaged to the Khedif's service. The story I am going to narrate took place in 1874—76, a great deal later than Mr. Lane's visit to Egypt. Probably the magician he spoke of to me was not the same magician, and his means and proceedings were entirely different. The General * * * went to the magician in the company of a young English gentleman, a friend of his. The General asked to see his parents, and saw them as if they were photographed on the inner part of the magician's hand, that he had first held close to his forehead, whilst the General was thinking about the persons he asked to see.

As to the English gentleman, he thought of Lord Nelson, being perhaps perfectly ignorant of Mr. Lane's experiment. He attained his aim, and recognised his great compatriot on the magician's hand, but was very disappointed in seeing Lord Nelson without the left arm, when it is generally known that it was the right arm he had lost. Being asked for an explanation, the magician answered: "The visions do not appear as actually before the eyes, but are seen as in a looking glass, so that the left appears right."

I don't remember the young Englishman's name, and have no right to tell that of my relation, but I never had reason to doubt the truth of his narratives.

Surely the modern magicians of Egypt have lost centuries ago the great powers and sciences of their ancient predecessors. But it is curious to confirm the existence of such facts as the above.

E. W. Lane writes: "The more intelligent of the Muslims distinguish two kinds of magic in modern Egypt, which they term 'Er-Roohance,' and 'Es-Seemiya'."

The former is spiritual magic, which is believed to effect its wonders by the agency of angels and genii, and by the mysterious virtues of certain names of God, and other supernatural means; the latter is natural and deceptive magic, and its chief agents, the less credulous Muslims believe to be certain perfumes and drugs, which affects the vision and imagination in a manner somewhat similar to opium."

Does not this division in "Er-Roohance" and "Es-Seemiya" remind all the students of occultism of the White and Black Magic of the Eastern wisdom?

VERA JOHNSTON.

THEOSOPHY.

The Aim of the Movement and the Main Features of the Belief.

E. I. K. NOYES, F. T. S.

I WISH to state at the outset that I lay no claim to authority in what I write. I shall simply try to give, as I understand them, the aims of the movement, which is generally spoken of as the Theosophical movement, and of which the Theosophical Society is one of the most influential instruments, and the main ideas of my own view of the belief.

The objects as given in the documents of the Society are three in number, as follows:

1. To form the nucleus of Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed or color.
2. To promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literature, religions and sciences.
3. To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the physical powers of man.

Of these three, the one which is most important and which is most strongly emphasized as the great aim and object of the movement, is the inculcation of the spirit of brotherhood among mankind. It is not given out as a new idea by any means. It is as old as the human race, but at no period within historic times has there been greater need of emphasizing that idea than at the present day and in our western civilization.

Those of my readers who are familiar with Aryan traditions regarding the chronology of mankind, know that, according to their traditions, mankind is now at the end of a period of preparatory growth, and is now commencing a cycle where great strides forward will be taken in all knowledge and power. After several

thousand years of preparation, mankind is now advancing with great rapidity in the knowledge of all departments of nature,—like a flower which takes long days of growth and preparation and then blossoms in a night. The same traditions assert that this advance and broadening of view will not only apply to the realms of sciences already known and to the discovery of new methods of using powers now in existence, but will open up to view realms of nature which until now, have been not only unknown to the masses but denied existence; in other words, that there will be a vast advance on our knowledge of the superphysical or psychic realms of nature. While this is given simply as a tradition, yet I think close observation of the present tendency of scientific research will at least prove that it is not entirely unfounded. There has been within the last few years a great advance and broadening of our views respecting these subjects. We see this primarily in that outgrowth of our century, Spiritualism, and later in the movement we now see towards the investigation and examination of mesmerism, or if one chooses to call it so, hypnotism, in researches into animal magnetism, thought-transference and in all the various phenomena which science is just beginning to admit as facts. If this investigation goes on, it is equally true that the various laws of nature which govern this realm will be discovered and the use of powers now unknown come into view. Whether these traditions are true or not it is perfectly clear that mankind is destined to make great discoveries and to obtain the use of many powers now unknown.

Is mankind, as a race, likely to be benefited by such advances while men are governed by the forces which now rule in human affairs? I think almost any candid thinker who has examined into the matter will say No, to such a question. Our civilization to-day is founded not on the principle of brotherhood, but on almost the exact opposite of that doctrine. Instead of being founded on the principle of unselfishness and brotherly love and help, the ruling principle of the 19th century is personal aggrandizement and selfish work for the benefit of the individual. All recognize the beauty and the worth of the sentiment of brotherhood, love to our fellow men, and disinterested work for the race; but so far as the practical affairs of our civilization are concerned, such sentiments are considered utterly impracticable, and the rule in practical affairs of life is to look out for the welfare of the individual first, last, and all the time. I do not mean by this statement that there are no unselfish individuals in the world; far from it. There are many and none recognize that fact more clearly than students of Theosophy. When, however, it comes to a question concerning business, politics on the practical affairs of life, their influence is almost nil. The trend of our civilization today is towards absolute selfishness and personal gain. It would be impossible under present conditions of competition to carry on business otherwise. If one did not work and scheme to undersell his competitors, they would assuredly undersell him and ruin his business. We see the same ruling principle in the vast combinations of capital which have arisen in business. The object of such combination is and

must be to combine so that the combination can undersell those outside and force them either to join or be forced out of business. The same spirit of selfishness is equally shown in almost every department of life. The child from his cradle almost is taught to accentuate self. He receives a prize in school for being or doing better than the rest. The same principle is seen even in the preaching in the churches, where the aim is for people to become converted to some particular creed or doctrine, because by so doing they will reap a rich reward in some future state and be exposed to dire punishment if they do not accept certain dogmas and doctrines. As was very well said in a late article which I read, the hearer is invited to exchange worldliness for other worldliness, and to give up pleasure here for the sake of greater pleasure hereafter.

Perhaps I may put the case too strongly, but I think not. We are a civilization to-day where a few are rich, a larger proportion comfortably well off, but in which by far the larger number are engaged in a fierce struggle for existence and competing against each other for a chance to make a bare living. Our business men to-day are engaged in exemplifying the purely animal law of existence which is called by Darwin the "Law of the survival of the fittest," and the fittest to live in this age are not those which the consensus of opinion in all ages has held up as the best and truest. The coldly selfish, the keen, sharp calculating natures which look closely after their own affairs, are the ones who are the fittest in this age, and the meek, the humble, the gentle and spiritual natures are the weak who are crushed out in the race for 19th century success.

Is then the future advancement in knowledge and power likely to aid the best progress of mankind as a whole? I say most emphatically no. It would simply hasten the destruction which must inevitably come to any civilization which is based on selfishness and the care of the individual solely, instead of each working for the advancement of the whole and gaining his reward in the greater prosperity of the race. The logical outcome of a system of life founded on selfishness instead of altruism must be absolute anarchy. It must end in a state where every man's hand is against his neighbour and is looking out solely for himself.

Perhaps I can make my meaning plainer by taking an example from the lower realms of nature. We see the natural exemplification of the principle of brotherhood in a swarm of bees. Each individual bee works for the benefit of the swarm as a whole, each doing its appointed task of gathering honey for the benefit of the hive, and profiting as an individual bee through the growth and prosperity of the hive. If a hive of bees should attempt to carry out the rule of the life which governs the human race in this century, how long would it last and flourish? In that case each bee would begin to gather all the honey it could for its individual use and not the benefit of the hive. It would not look for the honey entirely from nature, but would try to gain a large share by taking the honey gathered by other bees, obtaining it either by force or shrewdness. If anything, it would be considered that honey ob-

tained in this way was rather a credit to the individual bee than otherwise, as showing his sharpness and business ability. Yet how long would a hive last under any such rule of life? It might go on for a little while, but it would inevitably end with internal dissensions and the dispersion of the bees. Yet this is exactly the rule which mankind in this century is trying to live by. It is apparently advancing under the law of selfishness, thinking that the selfish striving for the individual good even at the expense of other individuals is right. It is breaking a law of nature which says that the individual entity can only rise permanently through the rise of the whole body politic. The example of the bees may appear a very homely one, but I used it because it exactly illustrates the theosophic point of view: namely, that mankind must rise, if rise at all, through the combined efforts of the individuals working for the common good, and not through striving for individual success at the expense of other individuals.

To hasten the destruction which must come of selfishness as a law of life, the same advance in 19th century thought which has led to the advances we have made materially, has invaded the domain of theology. It has led the great mass of thinking men to do their own thinking in religious and ethical matters, just as truly as in scientific and secular, and weakened the hold which the world-religions formerly held on man by appeals to his superstition, and through hope of reward or fear of punishment in some future state. Men to-day are thinking for themselves. The mere assertion that any theory or hypothesis cannot be true, because it disagrees with certain theological conceptions, or is contrary to certain interpretations of inspired writings, does not carry weight now. On the contrary people are calling on theologians for proofs of their assertions and dogmas, which shall be abreast of the culture of the age, and appeal to common sense and reason, a proof which, it is needless to say, can seldom be given.

If men had confined their thinking to rejecting the dogmas which were plainly absurd, it would have been a good sign; but in many cases they went to the other extreme and assumed because some of the ideas of theology were plainly false, that all religion was a sham and that there was no foundation whatever for the beliefs of man except blind superstition. The spread of agnosticism and pure materialism among the thinking portion of mankind within the last fifty years has been very great, and it has led to a large number denying entirely that there was any truth whatever in religion, and asserting that the best rule to go by was to "eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die."

It is under such a civilization that the theosophical movement was founded. The aims of this movement are two-fold:—

First and foremost:—By inculcating and living to the best of our power the principle of the brotherhood of humanity, to check this dominant idea of selfishness and personal aggrandizement which is the mainspring of our life to-day, and thus avert the logical result which must overtake a civilization founded on such a basis.

Second:—To furnish to thinking men a reasonable and common sense explanation of ethical facts with which we are all familiar,

but for which no existing system has, or is offering, any explanation whatsoever, unless an exhortation to believe on blind faith can be called one.

We believe that the destruction which will come as the outcome of the present tendency of our life to-day can only be averted by the adoption of the principle of the brotherhood of man as a rule to live by. That altruism and the good of mankind should be the aim of life instead of individual self-seeking.

This principle of brotherhood is not a new idea put forward for the first time by Theosophy. It has been propounded as the rule of spiritual advancement by every great reformer the world has known,—by Confucius, Zoroaster, Buddha Siddhartha and by Jesus of Nazareth. Nowhere it is more plainly stated than in the ethical teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. To be sure he did not enter into metaphysical explanations concerning the reasons for it, for he was speaking to people who could not have understood such reasoning, yet nothing in all his teachings is so plainly put as his injunction to "love your neighbour as yourself," "Do unto others as he would they should do unto you," and the principles of right put forth in the Beatitudes. Theosophical students believe that the principle of brotherhood and love towards mankind which has been taught by Jesus, Buddha, and other great reformers, is not simply a platitude, a pretty ethical saying which is not intended to be used in practical life, but we believe it to be an absolute natural law of spiritual advancement, which is just as absolute in its sphere as the law of gravitation, and that it is only through its adoption in our daily life that mankind can make any lasting progress.

The second object, as I said above, is to furnish to thinking men rational explanations (or perhaps give out reasonable hypotheses would be a better term) concerning many ethical facts in nature which we see round us, for which no explanations have been attempted, which are on a level with modern thought. The theories are not given out as inspired utterances, which must be accepted absolutely on the authority of any one, but are given to be examined as scientific hypotheses and judged without prejudice on grounds of reason and intuition. At least theosophical students recognize no authority as absolute, but judge any and all theories on grounds of reason and common sense, and certainly I desire no one to accept any fact or statement of Theosophy which does not, after candid and unbiased investigation, appeal to them as truth or to be at least a reasonable hypotheses.

The theories of Theosophy furnish, so far as I have ever seen or read, the only rational and common sense religious conceptions concerning man, which appeal to the reason and judgment and have any scientific basis. The three doctrines of Soul Evolution, Karma, and Re-incarnation taken together, are the only theories which offer even a slight explanation of the present condition of mankind, unless we take the purely materialistic ground that man is simply an animal and all nature is the result of blind chance.

I have said that the theories of Theosophy have a scientific basis. They are founded primarily upon the principle of the law

of evolution, and almost all the doctrines given are founded directly or indirectly upon that law. It is recognized almost as an axiom by the scientists of to-day that physical nature (which is all of nature which they recognize) is under the domain of absolute law, which is immutable and absolute, and further that the universe is evolving under the law of evolution by which higher forms are continually evolving from lower.

Theosophical students also accept the law as axiomatic, but in a much grander and more extended form. That, admitting the existence of other states of being at all, those states must also be under the control of natural law. In other words, we extend the domain of the law of evolution over all nature, not simply material nature, but over the domain of the soul. We believe that man, as a spiritual being, is evolving from a lower state to a higher, and that instead of this life being the beginning to be succeeded by an indefinite future, it is simply a page in the book of life of a soul which had no beginning and will have no end. If we admit the existence of the soul as apart from the body and as an eternal being, it follows logically that it could have had no beginning, unless we bring in the conception of a God who is continually creating new souls, and who is very unfair to them at that, for instead of starting them equally in the race, some are given a body in the slums of great cities, while others are given all the advantages of education and pleasing environment.

Theosophists believe that probably at some point in the past all souls started level, but that the difference in position and environment to-day is simply a result of past acts and lives. That the apparent unfairness in life here when looked at from the larger point of view is simply the logical result of the sum total of past acts.

The same regarding Karma. Karma is simply the logical working out of these acts. It is simply the working of the law of cause and effect applied to all life. We all recognize that if we break laws of nature relating to the physical world, we shall suffer for it. We are not punished by some outside power, but we punish ourselves. If we break laws of health, we suffer poor health. The law of Karma applies that to all life and asserts that if any one degrades himself spiritually through selfishness, crime or vice, that he will surely suffer for it. He will punish himself for it, because in so doing he neglects opportunities for improving himself spiritually and will fall behind in the evolutionary progress. According to that law the position of any one at any point in the future will absolutely depend on himself. If he improves his opportunities he will be higher; if he degrades himself he will stand lower. His position will depend not on the caprice of some outside power, but will be simply the logical working out of his past. We all recognize the working of that law when applied to the future, but it is equally true that the position of an individual to-day must be the result of past causes if there is law governing all nature.

I do not desire to go into a long discussion of these theories, as all I wish to do was to give the main objects of the theosophical movement as I understand them, and a brief resume of the main principles advanced in theosophical publications.

Whether re-incarnation is or is not a proved truth, to my mind at least it appears as a reasonable hypothesis, which explains certain facts regarding evil and the apparent unfairness in this world, which are hard to explain without it. If one soul is born into the world in some Five Points, while another is born in a family where it has all the advantages of education and culture which wealth affords, there must be a reason and a law governing those facts unless the world is run on chance alone. Under reincarnation and Karma these apparent injustices become simply logical consequences. Each one is to-day just where the sum of his past acts fit him to be, and his future will be just as absolutely the result of his acts, as a whole.

Now a word in conclusion regarding the standpoint taken by theosophical students in examining all theories. I have said before in this article, and I wish to repeat it again, that Theosophists recognize no authority as absolute except each individual's reason and intuition, and the acceptance or rejection of any belief or theory must be decided by each one on the intrinsic merit of the theory. Students of Theosophy do not form a religious sect, with a set creed and dogmas which must be accepted on the authority of some infallible authority. We are simply students who desire truth regarding the great religious and ethical problems we see around us, and who desire to test and try theological or ethical conceptions by the same standards of reason which we would use in accepting or rejecting any theory in any other domain of scientific thought. If I accept, for example, the idea of re-incarnation, I do so, not on the authority of some person, but because, so far as I know, it is the only reasonable hypothesis which explains certain effects which I observe on this physical plane. The same judgment will apply to any assertion of truth made in any sect or system of thought. If Theosophists accept some of the ideas inculcated by modern Spiritualism, and reject others absolutely, it is simply because in our judgment those rejected do not explain the facts we see and know. I accept any theory in religion just as I would one in physics, say, for example, the atomic theory. I cannot assert that theory as an absolute fact, for I never saw an atom, but it is generally accepted, because it furnishes the most reasonable explanation of the various phenomena connected with the higher physics and chemistry. In the same way I cannot assert absolutely from my own knowledge that re-incarnation is absolutely true, but I accept it as the best attainable explanation.

I have given the position of students of Theosophy at some length, because in almost all the attacks on Theosophy it has been entirely ignored. It has been assumed that attempts to discredit Madame Blavatsky were also of necessity discrediting Theosophy. I personally have the greatest respect and admiration for Madame Blavatsky, for her learning and what she has done for the cause of Theosophy, but I have accepted nothing as truth on the authority of Madame Blavatsky, and if every statement made against her were true, which I absolutely disbelieve, it would not affect the question of the truth or falsity of the law of Karma, re-incarnation

or any of the cosmological theories an iota. It has no more to do with the truth or falsity of theosophical ideas than personal attacks on the character of Isaac Newton or Charles Darwin would have on the truth of the law of gravitation or the law of evolution, which were respectively given out by them. If future critics of Theosophy would bear that principle in mind, they would not have need to complain regarding the treatment accorded them, but when attacks on the personal character of an individual are presented as arguments against scientific theories of cosmology, it is not at all strange that such critics should be handled without gloves.

[The above excellent sketch of Theosophy is taken from the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* of Chicago.—Ed.]

OM.

THE MAHA NIRVANA TANTRA.

CHAPTER I.

THERE is a picturesque spot on a summit of the Lord of mountains (*i. e.*, the *Kailas*) which is adorned with various jewels, thickly shaded with trees and creepers of diverse kinds, and which is redolent with the music of diverse birds.

2. It is fragrant with the odours of the flowers in all seasons, is pleasant to behold, and is perpetually being fanned with soft-blowing breezes cool and fragrant.

3. It resounds with the chorus raised by the songs of the Apsaras, and is made lovely and pleasant with the permanent shades of the shadowy trees.

4. From the recesses of its deep forests and groves there flows the joyous symphony of the amorous Kokilas (nightingales), and the Lord of the seasons (Spring) dwells there for ever together with all his relations and attendants.

5. There dwell also, the *Siddhas*, the *Charanas*, the *Gandharvas*, and the *Ganapatyas*. On such a spot sat absorbed in self the Lord of the animate and inanimate universe, the God Sada Shiva (Ever-auspicious).

6. He is ever-happy, the Ocean of the Nectar of Mercy, white as camphor or *Kunda* flower, the Pure Existence, the Lord and Allpervading.

7. His covering is all the quarters of the heaven, He is the Protector of the poor, the Lord of the yogis, the Beloved of the devotees. His flowing long locks of hair are well watered with the drizzly spray of the Ganges.

8. He is adorned with mighty powers (*vibhuti*), and is calm. On his neck hang garlands of skulls and living snakes. He has three eyes, he is the Lord of the three worlds, and his one hand holds the trident (Trisula) and the other showers blessings.

9. He is easily pleased. He is full of knowledge, and gives the fruit of emancipation. He is unconditioned, without ailment,

free from all differences and distinctions, and void of all passions and emotions.

10. He is the well-doer of all, God of gods, and free from sickness. Him of the cheerful countenance, the Goddess Parvati once addressed with great modesty and the welfare of the worlds in her view.

Parvati said :

11. "Oh God of gods, Lord of the universe, my Lord, Ocean of mercy, I am subordinate to thee, Oh Lord of gods, I am always obedient to thy commands.

12. Without thy commands I dare not speak anything. Therefore if thou hast any regard for me, if thou bearest any love towards me,

13. Then I shall venture to express certain doubts which have arisen in my mind, and over which I have brooded long. Without Thee, Oh Great Lord, who else can, throughout the three worlds, resolve these doubts, who else is omniscient, and knows all the sacred scriptures?"

Sada Shiva said :

14. "What sayst thou, Oh thou of the great wisdom? Speak, Oh beloved of my life! whatever thou desirest. That which I have not spoken or revealed to Ganesh, or the commander Skander,

15. I shall reveal that unto thee, be it the mightiest of the secrets. What is there in the three worlds that should be concealed from thee?

16. Thou, Oh Goddess, art my reflection, there is no difference between thee and me. Oh Omniscient, what dost thou not know, since thou askest as if thou didst not know?"

17. Parvati having heard this speech of the God, became happy of heart, and that holy one then asked Shankar with great humility.

Parvati said :

18. Oh Deity, Lord of all creatures, best amongst all the knowers of religions, Oh Knower of the secret of creation, through mercy in ancient times,

19. Thou didst reveal the four Vedas and spread all the religions. Thou didst establish also the rules of the various orders and castes.

20. In the Krita Yuga men in this world gratified the Devas (gods) and the Pitris (fathers) by their actions, such as Yoga (concentration) and Yagna (sacrifice), and they were all virtuous.

21. They performed Swadhaya (incessant devotion to God or study of the Vedas), Dhyana (contemplation), Tapas (austerities) charity, benevolence and subjugation of the senses. They had mighty power, great energy, great truthfulness and strength.

22. Though of this earth, they could enter the celestial regions, they were like unto gods and firm in their determinations, they were followers of the true religion and were holy and speakers of truth.

23. The kings were in that age truthful-minded and ever anxious to protect the people. The men of that age looked on other men's wives as their mothers, and they regarded their sons as their own sons.

24. They looked on other men's gold as if it was iron, they were devoted to their respective duties, and always trod the path of truth.

25. There were no liars in that age, nor were then any drunkards and confusion-workers. There were no thieves, no fomenters of quarrels and breakers of peace, or men of evil intention.

26. There were then no proud men, nor angry, avaricious or lustful persons. All were then true-hearted and ever joyous in mind.

27. The lands were then all very fertile and the clouds rained in their proper season. The cows were full of milk and the trees laden with fruits.

28. Then there were no untimely deaths nor famines, nor diseases. All were then cheerful, thriving and well nourished, and full of perfect health, energy, beauty and ability.

29. Women were not then unchaste and were devoted to their husbands, and the four castes, viz., the Brahmans, the Kshatryas, the Vaishyas and the Sudras observed the proper duties and customs of their castes.

30. Performing ever the respective duties of their orders, they reached salvation. But when the Krita Yuga had past away and the age of Trita came, then thou didst perceive a decline in religion.

31. Men in that age could not attain their objects by performing the Vedic action, as the Vedic karmas became difficult of performance and required much labour for their accomplishment.

32. Since men in the Trita age could not perform fully the Vedic duties, they became troubled in mind. They did not like to abandon the Vedic duties, nor were they competent to fulfil them satisfactorily, and so they always suffered great mental distress.

33. Then didst thou reveal to them in this world the Smritis, which are the sacred scriptures containing the essential meanings of the Vedas: because men had become incapable of performing austerities and the study of the Vedas.

34. Thou didst then deliver those men from sin,—the mother of pains, sorrows and diseases. Besides thee, Oh Lord, who else is in this deep ocean of the world?

35. The protector, provider, saviour and fatherly well-doer to all creatures? Similarly when the Dwapara Yuga arrived and when men could not longer follow the doctrines of Smritis, and their good works consequently began to diminish.

36. When one-half of the true religion became extinguished and men became involved in debts and diseases, then also by Thee was humanity saved through the doctrines of *Sanhitas*.

37. And when the sinful Kali age will come, then all religions will be extinguished, and men become of bad character and conduct and evil will become universal, then men will fall into evil deeds.

38. Then the Vedas will lose their hold on mankind, then the Smritis will be forgotten, then the manifold Itihasas showing diverse ways of salvation.

39. And the numerous Purans will all be destroyed, O Lord! Then men will turn away their face from duty, religion and works.

40. Then men will become unbridled, self-willed, insane through pride, always engaged in sinful works, lustful, avaricious, cruel, cunning, harsh in their speech or foul-mouthed, and cheats.

41. They will be short-lived and foolish and plunged in sorrows and sickness. They will be poor and unlucky, infirm, mean and addicted to evil and degrading conduct.

42. They will keep the company of the wicked persons, and rob the wealth of other men; they will talk ill of others, will foment quarrels, will be slanderers and hypocrites.

43. They will be sinners and adulterers and will have no fear or shame. They will be poor, unclean, miserable, beggarly and always diseased.

44. The Brahmans will act like Sudras, they will abandon the prayers (*Sandhya*) and worshipping, and accept gifts from prohibited persons (or officiate as priests to prohibited persons), will be greedy and of bad character and sinners.

45. They will be ignorant, vain, extremely wicked and speakers of falsehood. They will sell their daughters in marriage, and will be unmindful of duty, vows and austerities.

46. They will be addicted to Japa (repetition of God's name) and *Poojas*, only to deceive mankind. They will be heretics, hypocrites, and fallen and devoid of faith and devotion.

47. They will eat filthy things, be of degraded behaviour and dishonorable. They will serve the Sudras, eat the food of Sudras, will be cunning and lustful, and have illicit connections with women of low castes.

48. Through greed of wealth, they will give their own wives to men of low castes. Their only sign of being a Brahman will be a piece of thread.

49. They will have no restrictions about eating and drinking, they will make no distinctions about lawful and unlawful foods. They will always ridicule sacred Dharma-shastras and seek perpetually to injure good men.

50. They will never think in their minds even of good words and deeds. Then were the Tantras revealed by thee for the salvation of all creatures,

51. And the various Nigamas and Agamas which give enjoyment and deliverance, and the Mantras and Yantras for obtaining control over gods and goddesses.

52. Thou hadst revealed also various Nyasas and the causes of creation and destruction, and its existence as well as various postures of Yoga, such as *Baddhasana*, *Padmasana*, &c.

53. The states called *Pasu* (spiritual), *Vira* (heroic human), and *Deva* (divine) (or the three modes of worship), and the ways of obtaining success through mantras (charms) over Devatas, the

methods of *Savāsana* (sitting on a corpse in order to perform magic), the funeral pyre-magic (*Chitároha*) and skull-magic (*Munda Sádhana*).

54. The magic called *Lata Sádhana* and thousand other innumerable works didst thou reveal. Thou thyself hast forbidden the forms of worship called animal and divine.

55. In the Kali age there is no *Pasu-bháva* (spiritual state), how can then the divine state be possible (*i. e.*, *Divya bháva*)?

The follower of *Pasu-bháva* should personally gather flowers, fruits, leaves and water.

56. He should not see any Sudra and should never think in his mind even of any woman. The divine state or *Divya-bháva* is almost god-like: in this order one is bound to be always of pure mind.

57, 58. He should be free from the duals (pleasure and pain, heat and cold,) &c., above all passions and holding all creatures in equal regard and forgiving. But how can men tainted with the sin of the Kali age, always of the unstable mind, addicted to sleep and idleness, be pure in their states or *bhavas*?

59. (For such men incapable of following the spiritual and the divine paths) thou didst reveal the *Vira Sádhana* or (the human or the heroic mode of accomplishing salvation), consisting of the five truths, viz., *Madya* (wine), *Mánsa* (meat), *Masta* (fish), *Mudra* (that which is eaten with wine), and *Maithuna* (copulation, *i. e.*, the five Makars). They are the five truths revealed by thee.

60. But men of the Kali Yuga will be greedy, libidinous, and unable to perform these *Sadhans* (modes of accomplishing siddhis).

61. For the gratification of their senses, they will indulge in excessive drinking, and will become mad with intoxication, and will be incapable of distinguishing between good and bad.

62. Some of them will violate the chastity of other women, others will be plunderers in the world:—being mad and sinful, they will not make any distinctions between proper and improper sexual connections.

63. Through excessive indulgence in drinking and other vices, many will become diseased in this world, and being devoid of strength and intellect, many will become deformed in their body and senses.

64. Dead drunk, and out of senses, such men will meet unnatural deaths by falling into lakes, and caves, or from the margin of rivers, house tops, and mountains.

65. Some will quarrel with their elders and relatives; some will be silent as if they were dead; and others will be very garrulous.

66. They will do prohibited deeds, will be cruel, and fallen from the path of virtue. Those works which thou once didst reveal for their good,

67. I fear they will be now injurious to mankind in their results. Who will practise in this age Yoga, or who will perform Nyasa? Who will read the hymns, write *Tantras* (mystic diagrams) and perform sacred rites and offerings, Oh Lord of the universe.

68. According to the tendency of the age, the men of the Kali Yuga will be naturally evil-minded and always doers of evil.

69. Oh Lord of the poor! tell me the way in which they may get salvation.

70. By what favourable means shall they attain long life, health, energy, strength and courage: how shall they get knowledge and wisdom?

71. How shall men become very powerful, great, pure in mind, doing good to others and pleasing their parents by good works?

72. (How shall they become) attached to their wives, avoid those of others, devoted to gods and elders or Guru, and protectors of their children and relatives?

73. (How shall they become) knowers of Brahm, and of Brahm-Vidya (sacred-knowledge) and their minds fixed on the contemplation of Brahm? Tell me for the good of mankind and for attaining success in spiritual and temporal concerns, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done; by men of different castes and orders? Besides thee, throughout the three worlds, who else is the saviour of all mankind?

(To be continued in next No.)

"TRY-SQUARE."

"TRY-square, or the Church of Practical Religion," is the name of a book lately published in America. In the work itself there is perhaps nothing sufficiently new or striking to warrant a theosophical magazine in saying much more about it than that it is a thoroughly healthy book; but as a sign of the times, showing the gradual rapprochement that is taking place in all directions towards Theosophy, the little work is of considerable interest. Published by the Truth-seeker Company, of 28, Lafayette Place, New York, "Try-square" would undoubtedly be called an "infidel" book by dogmatic religionists; yet it is in a true sense a religious work, and there are not a few, even among those who are most content with their own piety, who might profit by its perusal—be they Christians or Theosophists.

"Try-square" purports to be the record of the formation of a Society for the propagation of "Practical Religion." The record is kept by "Reporter"—the *nom de plume* of the Author,—who chronicles the words and actions of Mr. Job Sawyer, or "Uncle Job," the founder of the Society. The "plot interest" of the book is furnished by the combats of the Trysquarians with the combined forces of the Parson and the Devil, over which they triumph in the end. Village affairs and village politics afford the necessary pegs upon which to hang a great many sensible ideas and straightforward moral sentiments. But let us listen to Uncle Job:—

"I have long noticed that in every large city there are tens of thousands, in every medium sized city thousands, in every considerable village hundreds, in every rural townships scores of the very best of citizens, of both sexes, who take no interest whatever in the fashionable church societies, church-going, and church services of the present day; and I have observed with great sorrow that very many

of these good people, because they do not enjoy ordinary church-going, nor feel any duty incumbent upon them to attend what is called divine service, have withdrawn and secluded themselves, to a great extent, from the society of their fellow men, thus wasting the mighty influence they might and ought to exert for good in the world. A little inquiry generally shows that nearly all of these people have strong religious feeling, and have thought much and deeply on the subject; but they are all independent thinkers, and usually have the honesty and boldness to express any scepticism they may entertain in relation to the creeds and dogmas and sacred words which the preachers tell us we must believe or be for ever damned. For these reasons, these people are frequently stigmatised as infidels. My friends, whenever you hear any person derisively spoken of as an infidel, make haste to seek him out, for, in nine cases out of ten, you will find a person of moral worth, and in the majority of cases you will find the genuine stuff of which martyrs have been made in all the ages." (P. 27.)

Uncle Job does not see why religion in its widest sense should not enter into men's daily lives; which, by the bye, is just what real Theosophy does. Of people at present, he says:—

"They seem to regard it (religion) as something having no connection with this life, and they take great pains to keep it separate from business affairs as much as possible. Most men feel ashamed to be found talking on religious subjects on a week day. Now this should be reversed. Religion is *natural*, and it should be *practical*. A man should never engage in any pursuit that will require him to leave his religion behind; but his religion should be his constant companion and guide, as well in business and pleasure as in what are called hours of worship. I am not now intending to deny that there may be supernatural elements in religion, but I do say that is folly to reject all other parts of religion, excepting the supernatural, when we all know that not more than one in ten of the human family even get so much as glimpse of the supernatural part. The practical religionist will not object if his neighbour has found a higher element in religion than he himself has found, and much less should the possessor of a higher religion condemn or stigmatise the practical religionist who faithfully and honestly follows all the light that God has given him." (P. 123.)

So Mr. Sawyer set to work to find a few men in his own town who would join him in trying to revive the spirit of Religion, and place it upon a practical basis. He succeeded in getting nearly twenty men and women together, of unblemished reputation and unprejudiced minds, and they started out to regenerate religion, without scrip or purse, and armed only with a magic wand, in the shape of a Rule of Life. This they obtained by joining two other celebrated rules together:—

"Some twenty-five hundred years ago Confucius (whom Christians call a heathen) laid down this rule, in substance: 'That which you would not have another do to you, do ye not the same to him.' Some five or six hundred years later, Christ introduced what is known as the Golden Rule, as follows: 'All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' I have heard a Christian minister argue in the pulpit that Christ's rule was much the better of the two; but I confess that I cannot see it so. Both rules are most excellent so far as they go; but either, taken alone, I think, falls far short of perfection as a guide to be relied upon under all circumstances." (P. 68.)

The negative rule of Confucius and the positive rule of Christ the author combines so as to make a rule of life which will cover all possible contingencies, and this he calls the "Try-square," from which the book takes its name. The Try-square runs as follows: "*Every act or word that will result in injury to anybody, is wrong, and is prohibited. No other act or word is prohibited.*"

This, of course, falls far short of the rule of life prescribed by Theosophy, for that is founded on the belief, or rather knowledge, that acts and words are preceded by thoughts, and that if the thought be harboured, it tends by its own inherent power to trans-

late itself into words and acts; and it therefore enjoins that evil thoughts should be resolutely seized, as it were, by the throat, and cast out of the mind whenever they attempt to enter it. This, obviously, requires it to be settled in advance, what classes of thought are noxious, so as not to have to go back to first principles on every occasion; which, indeed, seems to be an unavoidable inconvenience of the "Try-square." But, on the other hand, the thing that is most wanted in the world to-day is the habit of submitting social and moral questions to the test of reason, for the importance of "right thoughts" is acknowledged in all religions, and one of the commonest devices of priests has always been to make use of this fact, in order to consolidate their power, by making out that any doubts of the truth of what they say are not "right thoughts."

With regard to the "religious ideas" of the Trysquarians, they may be said to be pure Theosophy, as far as they go. Uncle Job believes:—

"That there is, and has been from the beginning, a power, a force, which, acting on matter and controlled by law, created and governs the universe, there can be no question; but whether that power or force is embodied in an intelligent, sentient Supreme Being, in the sense usually implied by these words, will probably never be known in this mundane existence any better than it is now. In so far as it is given us to see and know, it may be said that God is Law, and it is in this sense that I habitually use the word God." (P. 44.)

In another place he defines what he means by the words "Supreme Being":—

"When first coined, the word *being* was a participle of the passive verb *to be*, and meant exactly the same as the word *existing*. Again, the word *supreme* means *highest*. Now, if we elevate the participle "*existing*" into a noun, and create the expression "*Highest Existing*," we have an exact equivalent for the term *Supreme Being*, and either of those terms satisfies, and is satisfied by, my idea of God as I have theretofore endeavoured to define it. I do not believe that the man who first used the term *Supreme Being* had any more belief in a personal God than I have." (P. 119.)

This is a great improvement and advance upon the Jehovah of the Christian clergy, but it is not the Absolute, Unknowable, Infinite All,—the Lowest Existing, as well as the Highest,—which Theosophy sees under, behind, above and in everything, and which, being *absolute, infinite and unknowable*, cannot be credited with qualities that are necessarily limitations, even such as intelligence and sentience, without a self-evident contradiction in terms. Strange it is that so many people cannot perceive that any "*Being*" possessed of qualities must of logical necessity be "*personal*," and, however great, must of equal necessity be relative—not by any possibility "*The Absolute*." Still Theosophy tells of such Beings as our friend apparently mistakes for the impersonal God. It does not indeed profess to know anything definite about these, to us, para-metaphysical entities, but it is somewhat doubtful if Uncle Job is thinking of a being higher than the synthesis of those Dhyan Chohans who have to do with our solar system.

With regard to Jesus, Uncle Job speaks as the large majority of Theosophists would:—

"I do not believe that any man was ever the son of God in any other and larger sense than all men are sons of God. But expurgate from the story of Christ all the miraculous and the absurd, and we still have left one of the grandest characters in

literature. It matters not to me whether Christ was a real personage or the invention of some unknown writer. If the latter alternative be assumed as true, then I think the man, whoever he was, who conceived, created, and delineated the character of Jesus Christ, must necessarily have contained within himself all the elements of goodness, gentleness, charity, simplicity, sublimity, greatness, and grandeur that he puts into the character." (P. 231.)

A Theosophist would not, however, credit the delineation of the character of Jesus to any particular person, knowing it to allegorise the universal Drama of Initiation; or, in other words, the struggle of the human soul with evil, and its ultimate triumph through suffering and final crucifixion.

To the question, why they do not call their Society "the Church of Practical *Christianity* instead of Practical *Religion*, he replies, "Christianity is *sectarian*, while we are *non-sectarian*, and we hope never to become otherwise. It is not our intention to add another sect to the thousand already in existence; but, on the contrary, we have laid our foundation as broad as humanity, in the hope of eventually swallowing up and obliterating all sects." (p. 162.)

Again he says:—

"Nor do I intend to found a new religious sect. God forbid. On the contrary, I want to lay down a platform that is broad enough for the whole religious world to stand on—so broad that when the sects shall lay aside sectarianism (as they some day will), they will then be at one with us. I do not want to pull down a single church edifice, nor throw a single preacher out of business—there is need enough for all—but I shall rejoice to see them so managed and employed as to do more good to mankind than they seem to be now doing." (P. 28.)

Uncle Job is perfectly disinterested in his horror of narrowness, and only expresses a widely felt sentiment when he says of "Freethinkers," whom he apparently distinguishes from "Infidels":—

"I have had the opportunity to become acquainted with only a few of them, and for the most part I have found them very upright, earnest, unselfish, and good people; but it has sometimes seemed to me that they have become about as sectarian and dogmatic in their way as the orthodox religionists are in their way. . . . I prefer under all the circumstances to be called an *independent* thinker instead of a freethinker. What the world wants to-day is not a new religion, but an eclectic religion—one that shall adopt all the good points and reject all the bad and worthless points in all the religions of the past and present, and such eclectic religion will not be bound round with iron hoops, but will be elastic enough to permit the greatest freedom and diversity of honest thought and speech." (P. 122.)

An eclectic religion, such as you dream of, dear old Uncle Job, would not be Religion at all, but THEOSOPHY.

A. R. C., Junior. F. T. S.

THEOSOPHY AND SPIRITUALISM.

THAT excellent monthly, the Melbourne *Harbinger of Light*, takes Theosophists to task in a recent leading article for misrepresenting and underestimating Spiritualism, and also reprints a defence of Spiritualism published in the *Hestia* (the organ of the New Zealand Theosophists) in answer to an article in a previous number of the latter magazine. The leader in question is written in the *Harbinger's* usual temperate and philosophic spirit, but it ends with these words:—"The 'ideal' Spiritualism is to our minds the highest practical religion extant." Now, leaving out of consideration the grave question whether the "ideal" Spiritualism is to be found anywhere,—and consequently whether the "highest practical religion extant" has any existence,—it seems doubtful if this assertion would meet with acceptance by Spiritualists themselves. Let Spiritualism be judged out of its own mouth, or at least out of the mouths of two of its most advanced representatives. On the 28th of November last a joint paper on "Spiritualism and Religion," by Mr. Morell Theobald and Dr. R. M. Theobald, was read before the London Spiritualist Alliance, and afterwards published in *Light*, which contradicts point blank the above assertion of the *Harbinger*, and says many things about Spiritualism quite as sharply critical as anything that Theosophists have ever ventured to whisper.

The writers begin by acknowledging a relation between Religion and Spiritualism, but they maintain that Spiritualism is a matter of intellectual belief, while Religion is purely an affair of the emotions. They say:—

"The reason why Spiritualism and Religion are so closely connected, and consequently sometimes confounded, is not far to seek. Spiritualism concerns itself, among other things, with facts relating to a future life, its nature, its occupation, its relations to the present stage of being—and to intelligent persons outside the visible scheme of nature; and all this region of thought and inquiry is haunted by the awe and majesty of religious feeling, and seems to be holy ground, to be approached with unshod feet and bowed head. It speaks also of a future which must sooner or later (and in the measures of duration which the immortal spirit contemplates—very soon) become present. It comes with a special and often irresistible pressure at the great crises of life, when loved ones vanish and leave the earth dark and desolate, when the one overmastering impulse that remains is to follow them and lift the veil that has been stretched between us and them. Spiritualism thus comes when the mind is in the attitude of supplication, and earthly things have lost much of their interest and attraction; when we stretch forth hands of faith and prayer in eager quest of such gifts as no earthly resources can satisfy; which must be granted, if at all, by some invisible power outside the ordinary course of nature as we usually contemplate it. Thus it is associated with the supernatural, and the supernatural is easily identified with the Divine, though there is really no necessary connection between them. The supernatural may be finite, faulty, and even evil and diabolic—it is not necessarily infallible, perfect, good, or Divine."

"The facts of Spiritualism then, in individuals, may be held as simple matters of knowledge without making any deep impression on the character. We do not expect that any one, simply as a Spiritualist, should be benevolent, or unselfish, or honest, or truthful, or pure, or devout, or reverent, or in any way interesting or attractive. A spiritualist may be an unprincipled liar, an eager, grasping self-seeker, a grovelling sensualist, an unscrupulous swindler, a profane, godless scoffer; in fact, a pernicious rascal of any conceivable type. And, *per contra*, a man who not only disbelieves in Spiritualism, but hates it with rabid ferocity, may be a generous philanthropist, a gentle and loving friend, overflowing with the milk and honey of human kindness and charity, a saintly worshipper of God, full of holy aspirations and active faith."

"This being the case, it is evident that Spiritualism and Religion occupy different places in the economy of human nature and human life."

"Now when all this is apprehended—even if exception be taken to any particular modes in which the principle is expounded—it is not difficult to see that Spiritualism has no more essential connection with Religion than chemistry or political economy has. Spiritualism enlarges our knowledge; it speaks to our intelligence; it tells of facts relating to the spiritual world, and these facts may have important bearings on life and morals. But it opens no arcana of consciousness—it does not introduce us to any being that can claim the homage of worship, or the prostration of conscience; it does not bring the infinite into contact with the spirit, nor open any inner eye that it would otherwise remain blind; it may present a new prospect for the eyes to gaze upon, but this is mere discovery; it does not alter or regenerate the life. All the surroundings are finite: the persons with whom we are brought into contact have limited natures analogous to our own, are in fact very often but reflections of ourselves, our other self projected on the plane of disembodied existence. What those communicating intelligences say has no binding quality. We may lawfully dispute both the truth and the wisdom of their utterances: we must subject them to criticism, and judge for ourselves what their import and value are. Our horizon is enlarged, but still we are on the plane of finite experience; other worlds arise; the only result may be that our worldliness becomes *other* worldliness: for no Holy of Holies is opened for us to enter. It is always an open question whether we shall believe or not; and, if we believe, whether we shall receive what is communicated with reverence, or respect, or the reverse, or with simple apathetic assent. There is no compelling force in this new knowledge—it may enrich the intellect, but it does not sway the will or put any irresistible pressure on the heart and conscience."

"We have placed Spiritualism and Religion as apart as different in nature and distinct in function, and then shown that it is both unphilosophical and injurious to confound them."

Having done so however, the writers proceed to show further in what manner they are connected. This connection may be best summed up in their own words. Speaking of Spiritualism they say:—

"It furnishes the *missing link* which is required to connect our common-place existence with the exceptional signs and wonders of old, which are fraught with such momentous significance. It thus enlarges the scope of theologic perception, and supplies new and necessary premises for its most important syllogisms."

"Vir"—the anonymous writer of the article in the *Hestia* reprinted in the *Harbinger*—makes very much wider claims for Spiritualism than those put forward by the Theobalds. He says:—

"Spiritualism covers the whole field of religious, philosophic, metaphysical and scientific enquiry, being in fact an enquiry into the inner nature of man and of nature itself. This enquiry will determine for each individual just where he stands with regard to all religious philosophies and the higher kinds of sciences."

Again:—

"As the definition of spiritualism I and most spiritualists give covers the whole field of Theosophy, Christianity, Buddhism, etc., it is only saying the same thing to say that spiritualism is a name for all spiritual enquiry that now exists and that may in the future be evolved. Also every truth of any of these sectional beliefs, *if capable of proof*, is also a truth of spiritualism. A spiritualist may believe in Christianity, Paganism, Theosophy, Buddhism, or any other system, provided to *his own mind* the system he accepts has been proven to be true and has not been simply accepted to save the trouble of further enquiry."

Now a definition is useless unless it defines, and the essence of definition consists in circumscribing the thing divined, thus bringing to light its limits, and the points in which it differs from other and cognate things. If by any stretch of politeness the term "definition" could be accorded to the above wholesale appropriation of the world's religions and philosophies, it

simply means that Paganism, Theosophy, Christianity and Buddhism are component parts of Spiritualism, which is not true according to the meaning now given to English words. One might say that Scotland covers all the ground occupied by Europe, Asia, Africa and America, but if such an assertion were made by a presumably sane man, one would be obliged to conclude that it was not the Scotland of the Atlas, the geographical portion of the earth's surface, that the asserter had in this mind, but some conception of his own to which he arbitrarily gave the name "Scotland," probably because he had never strayed over "the Border," and innocently supposed his native land to be the largest, most fertile, and most beautiful place in the Universe. Precisely so in the case of this omnivorous claim made for Spiritualism. The body of ideas that go by that name at present do not, as a matter of fact, begin to "cover the field" of the religions and philosophies mentioned, although individual Spiritualists do, no doubt, sometimes explore those wider domains, but it is as vain and ridiculous for a Spiritualist, *quâ* Spiritualist, to lay claim to them, as it would be for a Scotchman to scrawl "This is Scotland" over the maps of Europe, Asia, Africa and America in his Atlas. But surely the writer in question can hardly pretend that if any one went to look in Modern Spiritualism for the Vedanta Philosophy, or the four Noble Truths of Buddhism, or even the Sermon on the Mount, he would find as much as the traces of them there.

The fact is, however, that there does exist just such a comprehensive system as this, but its name is not Spiritualism, but THEOSOPHY. Theosophy is really and actually inclusive of all religions and philosophies, for it explains their meaning, accounts for their origin, and is in itself the synthesis and co-ordination of the ideas that underlie and are common to them all. The name after all, matters very little, for names are given to things as a matter of convenience; but since both the words "Spiritualism" and "Theosophy," have now got definite and distinct meanings and connotations, it is hardly permissible to call what is in reality Theosophy by the name "Spiritualism," as "Vir" does.

It should be also remarked that while it is somewhat annoying to Theosophists to find their "field" coolly occupied by a presumptuous stranger, it is even more irritating to be misrepresented and maligned after having been elbowed out. This anonymous writer has the effrontery, or the ignorance, to say:—

"Now, Theosophists want mankind to adopt various conclusions of a religious, moral or philosophic kind, simply because they have been handed down to us by persons who have attained to a perfectly justified importance as teachers, but whose teaching and its results, if simply adopted by us, would lead to a stultification of our own faculties of thought, invention and observation."

By this passage "Vir" completely "gives himself away," as the Americans say, for, if it be written in sincerity, it proves that its writer has not taken the trouble to make himself acquainted with the A. B. C. of Theosophy before sitting in judgment upon it. Had he done so he would have known that the first maxim of theosophical teaching is: Use your own powers of discriminating between truth and falsehood. The enquirer into Theosophy is told to accept nothing on faith; to study the meaning and basis of his

own religion ; and to regard in the light of an hypothesis the great outlines of the cosmogony about which Theosophy tells him, until by degrees his understanding and knowledge develop sufficiently to enable him to view it all as a certainty. Theosophists accept to the full the precept of the ancient Hindu sage Vasistha, who said : "*Yaktiyuktammupādeyam vachanam balakādapi anyat trinamevat tajyamapyoktam padmajanmanā*" ;—"The words of a child, if reasonable, are acceptable, but what is unreasonable should be spurned as grass, even if uttered by the god *Brahmā* himself." The great difficulty that Theosophy has to contend with is not that people refuse to *accept* it on blind faith, for that is the very thing it prohibits, but that people *reject* it on blind faith, and in blind prejudice, refusing even to make themselves acquainted with its first principles before condemning it, as is apparently the case with "Vir."

The Messrs. Theobald also evince a tendency to appropriate the property of Theosophy, and label it with their own trade mark, which although, no doubt, flattering, is hardly honest. The following passage, for instance, from the paper above mentioned, is replete with theosophic thought, but rather than so acknowledge it, the writers prefer to risk their reputations for ordinary intelligence by calling these deep and metaphysical ideas the "crudest form of religion."

"In its crudest form religion is simply a sense of infinite and absolute dependence ; it is a consciousness, however dim and inchoate, of the infinite, and a feeling that the finite individual personality is essentially united to an infinite presence which claims perfect and lasting loyalty.

"This sense of infinite dependence is present in all that is characteristically religious. In worship the spirit is absolutely prostrate before a Divine presence ; a prostration which, so far from being abject, is the very basis and groundwork of the most exalted self-reverence and freedom. And in accepting the rule and control of conscience, there is the same recognition of an absolute and eternal law, so completely blended with the finite personal consciousness, that the finite subject and the eternal origin of the infinite law cannot be completely distinguished. I, the limited Ego, find that the most essential attribute of my nature is the sense or perception of an infinite living law, which identifies itself with me, and yet commands me ; which rebukes all self-will, and yet enthrones itself within me as an authority claiming my allegiance. This is the paradox of life—the union of the finite with the infinite. Religion is the realisation of this infinite fact or inhuman experience ; the bowing of the finite will before an infinite authority. Self, however, is not crushed ; it is ennobled, aggrandised, exalted. As self retires, being expands. When I, the Ego, am weak, then I, the inheritor of the infinite, am strong."

This is the crudest form of religion only in the sense that the ancient temple is the crudest form of the houses that modern vandals construct out of its ruins. In the same sense Theosophy might be called "the crudest form of all religions," for it is the soil out of which they sprang, each one extracting therefrom only the juices and essences that are required for its own growth. According to these writers religion assumes an advanced form as it becomes more definite and more personal in its ideas of God—in other words, in proportion as it brings down the Infinite and Absolute to the level of the finite and concrete. If a religion be regarded as a work of art, whose chief merit consists in pleasing and "satisfying" our little minds, by presenting to them a plausible theory of a universe such as we with our present knowledge might have invented, then indeed the more definite it is in its details the more "advanced" it may be considered, because the

more perfectly in conformity with our own ignorance and littleness. But the further religions proceed from the theosophical soil from which they spring, the more they differentiate from their mother and from each other. If these differentiations be rubbed out, by eliminating all the artificial and fanciful human element, what is left is the "crude form" of religion—the theosophical basis of them all. Theosophy, by explaining the philosophical meaning of the myths and dogmas or the various religions, brings its votaries back to the point at which religions began to diverge, and to get mixed with a human element. And having got to that standpoint, the effort of the Theosophist is not to bring the Great down to the level of the Little, as religion does, but to raise his mind to the level of those grand conceptions of the Universe, which are contained more particularly in the Eastern philosophies ; knowing full well that the whole truth respecting the government of the Universe could no more enter our every-day understandings than the Himalayas could fit into our back yards.

A. K.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

THE Theosophical Society has just entered on a new minor cycle. It has reached a larger development, and a greater work lies before it. Three main questions were considered and settled at the late Convention ; the division of the whole Society into Sections ; the abolition of Fees and Dues ; and the dissolution of the Executive Council, thereby reinstating the President in the position he formerly occupied. As explained in the "Introduction" to the Rules, the changes made by the Convention were in part merely the recognition of practices that already existed in the Society, and in part of the acceptance of new developments, which had already come to maturity in the "womb of time." The reasons which induced the Convention to make those changes need not be repeated here, but it is opportune to consider the probable effect of the Revised Rules upon the future development of the Society.

It must, however, be remembered that the Revised Rules were the consequences, not the causes, of the changes they legitimise ; therefore we must look in the tendencies towards a certain line of development, which have always existed and still exist in the Society, for the data by which to judge, rather than exercise our ingenuity in picturing what the probable effect of the Rules themselves would be in imaginary cases.

The tendency that strikes us as most prominent in the history of the Society is one common to all healthy living organisms,—the tendency to develop by power from within in a manner unexpected and sometimes puzzling. The history of the Society, as illustrated by its Annual Reports, and by the frequent changes in its Rules, fully bears out the assertion of the Founders, that they themselves have sometimes been as little able to foresee the particular course its development would take as one else in the Society. It is only

when the growth of any organism is reaching maturity that the "intention of nature" is perceived, and this has been the case with the Theosophical Society. Every new phase of its growth has been a matter of lamentation to some, and an object of resistance to others. It has required a living faith on the part of the Fellows to keep on believing that the destinies of the Society are really under superior guidance—call it Nature, Providence, or what one will—and not the playthings of chance, which any mischief-making, conceited or semi-crazy individuals or cliques can direct and mould at their pleasure. Looking back from the point of development at which the Society has now arrived, it becomes evident that it has been growing in a certain definite direction all the time, in spite of the follies of its friends and the malice of its enemies; and that, moreover, it has all along been gradually undergoing preparation for the great work which it is now becoming evident lies before it in the future.

As is abundantly proved by its first Minute book and early "By-laws," the Theosophical Society in its infantile stage was in a condition just like that of any recently formed Branch at present. By and bye Fellows residing in other parts of the United States, and in Europe, formed out-lying circles, and the New York Society gave Charters to these as Branches of itself, thereby growing into a condition similar to that of the present "*Section in Partibus*." Then began the cares and sorrows of maternity! The Society, as represented by its officers and original Fellows, found itself in great measure occupied with the supervision of its own sub-divisions. Like a child placed in charge of younger children, it had to find employment and amusement for the little ones instead of thinking of itself. When its Head-quarters were moved to India, the Society entered on a higher phase of its existence, accompanied by a new consciousness, on the part of its officers and Fellows, of larger duties and responsibilities, for the rapid increase of the Indian Branches soon caused India to attain to the position now occupied by a territorial Section. But the American Branches also increased. Nearly five years ago they were granted autonomy, and two years later were formed into a separate "Section" of the Society, under Charter from the President in Council; while last autumn a similar step was taken in regard to the British Islands, by the chartering of a British Section. In the meantime Theosophy in Ceylon, where Buddhism prevails, had taken a development peculiar to itself, insomuch that Ceylon had become practically a third differentiated Section of the Society.

Circumstances had by this time brought face to face the two parties that have all along existed in the Society, the centralizers and the decentralizers, animated respectively by these centripetal and centrifugal forces, the harmonious equilibration of which is necessary for any kind of stability. On all hands it was acknowledged that the existing anomalous state of affairs could not go on. Either the Theosophical Society must remain an international body, aspiring to be a Universal Brotherhood, in which case an effort had to be made to reunite the Sections, already drifting

away from each other, and from that figment of the theosophical brain, the so-called "Parent Society;" or the policy of masterly inactivity, tempered by mutual recriminations, had only to be kept up a little longer, in which case the Universal Brotherhood would inevitably degenerate into a number of independent, more or less theosophical bodies, each selfishly paddling away in its own little boat, in true "go-as-you-please" fashion.

The matter has been decided in favour of unity by the action of the late Convention; and as a "nucleus of Universal Brotherhood" the Society is saved from a lamentable and ridiculous failure.

It remains to be seen now how many there are in the Society who find its real aims too large for them, and resent being deprived of any further opportunity of scheming to set themselves up as independent sovereigns in a territory stolen from the Theosophical Society. Let such disloyal hearts desert the ship if they will; their absence is less dangerous than their presence in the Society. It is for loyal hearts, however, that this article is written,—in order to enable them to understand fully the work before the Society now.

According to a simple law of biology, as applied by analogy to the development of the Society, a new and higher stage of growth has now been reached—a kind of coming to age as distinctly an advance on the Sectional stage as that was upon the Branch condition; and bringing with it larger interests, and a wider and somewhat different field of duty and activity for the governing body of the Society, as well as a new consciousness of duty, higher in degree than that belonging to the preceding stage. This larger life, and the consciousness of the more important part the Society has in future to play in the world, are super-added to the duties and functions belonging to the Section and the Branch, and, in fact, form a new "Object" of the Society, which the late Convention might, perhaps, with advantage have registered in the Revised Rules.

The progressive changes in the ostensible "Objects" of the Society illustrate the process of growth from the Branch to the present stage, when the Society has become the synthesis of its component Section. The preamble of the original "Bye-Laws" of the Theosophical Society, published in 1875, says:—

"The title of the Theosophical Society explains the objects and desires of its Founders: they seek 'to obtain knowledge of the nature and attributes of the Supreme Power and of the higher spirits by the aid of physical processes.' In other words they hope that by going deeper than modern science has hitherto done into the esoteric philosophies of ancient times, they may be enabled to obtain, for themselves and other investigators, proof of the existence of an 'Unseen Universe,' the nature of its inhabitants, if such there be, and the laws which govern them and their relation with mankind."

The Chapter II of the Bye-Laws of 1875 contains only the following:—

"The objects of the Society are, to collect and diffuse a knowledge of the laws which govern the universe."

In the "Rules and Bye-Laws" of 1879, when the Society had attained the condition of a section, no mention is made of the above "objects," but "the general plans of the Society" are "declared to be as follows":—

"(a) To keep alive in man his belief that he has a soul, and the universe a God.

"(b) To oppose and counteract bigotry in every form, whether as an intolerant religious sectarianism, or belief in miracles, or anything supernatural.

"(c) To gather for the Society's Library and put into written form correct information upon the various ancient philosophies, traditions, and legends, and, as the Council shall decide it permissible, disseminate the same in such practicable ways as the translation and publication of original works of value, and extracts from and commentaries upon the same, or the oral instructions of persons learned in their respective departments.

"(d) To seek to obtain knowledge of all the laws of nature, and aid in diffusing it, thus to encourage the study of those laws least understood by modern people, and so termed the occult sciences. Popular superstition and folklore, however fantastical, when sifted may lead to the discovery of long lost but important secrets of nature. The Society, therefore, aims to pursue this line of enquiry in the hope to widen the field of scientific and philosophical observation.

"(e) To promote the feeling of Brotherhood among nations, and assist in the international exchange of useful arts and products, by advice, information, and co-operation with all worthy individuals and associations; provided, however, that no benefit or percentage shall be taken by the Society for its corporate services.

"(f) To promote in every practicable way, in countries where needed, the spread of non-sectarian western education.

"(g) Finally and chiefly, to encourage and assist individual fellows in self-improvement, intellectual, moral, and spiritual."

In the following year Clause "(a)" is altered into, "To keep alive in man his spiritual intuitions," but otherwise these "General Plans" remained until 1882, in the Rules of which year the "Objects" of the Society are stated as follows:—

"*First.*—To form the nucleus of an Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed or colour.

"*Second.*—To promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literature, religions and sciences, and vindicate its importance.

"*Third.*—To investigate the hidden mysteries of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man."

These remain the declared objects of the Society, except that the third object has since become "a third object, pursued by a portion of the Fellows," and is now stated in slightly different words.

This variation in the declared objects of the Society must not be taken as indicating any real change in the intentions of the Founders. There is abundant evidence in their writings and speeches that from the first their purposes were to stimulate the spiritual development of the individual, and to awaken in the race of the sentiment

of Brotherhood. But the world, and even Fellows themselves, had to be educated up to the point of regarding these real objects as anything better than utopian dreams, and the Founders dared not insist upon them too obtrusively at first. This education, which consists in an enlargement of ideas and a purification of motives, has been going on continually, the slow hand of time being one of the most powerful factors in bringing it about.

An analysis of the old By-laws and Rules of the Society brings into prominence the two influences that have been at work in its bosom; the one elevating and progressive, ever tending to largen and widen the sphere of its influence: the other a deadening and narrowing influence, ever seeking to infuse personalities and selfish considerations into the organization and work of the Society. These influences seem to be the result of the double process of increase that has been going on in the Society, corresponding of the increase by growth and by accretion, known to physical science. The Society, as a collection of Fellows, has grown from the Branch stage, with its ostensible basis of psychical research, into the Sectional, stage with its programme of practical work for the benefit of the species, and from that to the stage of an international brotherhood intent on advancing the spiritual welfare of the individual and of the race. At the same time it has increased in numerical strength only by the accretion of new component atoms—its Fellows—every one of whom brought with him all his own prejudices, idiosyncracies and selfishness, to make turbid the clear waters of Theosophy. As a rule the Fellows have grown up with the Society, and, indeed, the development of the Society has gone on *pari pasu* with the average development of its individual Fellows; but there have been many arrests of development of Fellows, and even of Branches, that could not rise to the higher ground now occupied by the Society, but remain always on the plane of psychic investigation, or at best of works of charity. Fortunately the same educational process has been going on outside the Society also. In every Church, in every School, there has been a very distinct advance in spirituality since the Theosophical Society was founded. A greater tendency is now found everywhere to listen to what others have to say, a keener power of distinguishing mere pretence and assumption, a deeper dislike of sham and humbug. The outside world has been growing in theosophical grace without even suspecting it, and those who now enter the Society come in, as a rule, at a higher level of personal development than was the case in its early days.

It is well to recall two other circumstances in the history of the Society which are corroborative of what has been said above as to the apparent changes in the Society being in reality a development along natural, and therefore preconceived, lines. One is that an attempt to divide the Society into Eastern and Western divisions was made in the year 1879, but was found to be premature, and abandoned. This was an arbitrary partition—America, Europe, and Australia being included in the Western division—whereas the present Sections are spontaneous divisions along natural "lines of cleavage." The other circumstance is that the recently formed

Esoteric Section or Division of the Society is not a new idea, but a revival, in a modified form, of a second Section mentioned in the Rules of 1879 and 1880, and afterwards dropped as then impracticable, without ever having been properly organised.

We are now in a position to make a forecast for the Society. We have seen that it has passed through two stages, and is now in the third. From the Branch, occupied with the study of the laws of nature, it developed into a Section, busying itself with the consideration of the great problems of philosophy and of life, and from a Section it has grown into a cosmopolitan Brotherhood, whose object is to humanise humanity, by infusing into the minds of men a perception and appreciation of things higher than the material. We have seen that each expansion of the Society has been not only an enlargement of its field of action, but also an endowing of it with the consciousness of a higher duty and a weightier responsibility; and we have also seen that these progressive stages were not consecutive but cumulative, the functions of the Branches remaining equally necessary for the well-being of the Society after the Sections were formed, and those of the Sections equally indispensable now that the Society, by being synthesised, has acquired a still higher function; finally, we have seen that at each progressive stage of its growth the Society has become more catholic in the true acceptance of that word. How then can there be any doubt or question about its future? *All who sympathise with its object are, in proportion to their sympathies, Fellows of the Theosophical Society at heart*, and the formal uniting of themselves with it is certain to follow as soon as they learn its real nature and aims, and have arrived, by means of the educational process now at work all over the world, at a point of personal training, where they will be able to sink smaller differences in order to unite with their neighbours for the attainment of a larger common good.

For several years the following paragraph has stood without change in the "Special Information" published at the end of the Society's Annual Report:—"From the objects of the Society it will be observed that its programme offers attractions chiefly to such persons as are imbued with (a) an unselfish desire to promote the spread of kindly and tolerant feelings between man and man (b) decided interest in the study of ancient literature and Aryan intellectual achievements; or (c) a longing to know something about the mysterious department of our human nature and the universe about us." Every word of this, except one, holds good still, and will do so as long as the Theosophical Society exists. The one word now no longer correct is "chiefly." There are millions of people who do not come into any of the above categories—who are not distinguished above others as apostles of toleration, who have no decided interest in Aryan literature, who have no desire to pry into the mysterious department of nature—but to whom "the programme of the Society" now offers very special attractions, for that programme is no longer limited to the wishes or needs of three classes of persons. The real purpose of the Society—the original intention of its Founders—has been discovered and made evident by the recent developments in the Society; and,

as we have seen, that purpose is the spiritual development of the individual and of the race—a consummation that lies at the foundation of all real and abiding progress, intellectual, moral, or even physical. This larger purpose has been recognized and expressed in this year's reprint of the "Special Information" by the addition of the following paragraph to the above statement of the Society's "programme":—

"Looking, however, on the Society as a whole, with one synthesized purpose, it may be truly said to appeal to the sympathies of any one who wishes to do what lies in his power to make the world better and happier than it is now, by awakening in mankind a greater love of all that is noble, good and true."

The Theosophical Society, however, does more than appeal to such as these; *it claims them as its own*. Not by any imaginary right conferred upon it in the long distant past by some problematical personage—who had no other warrant for conferring rights than his own strong fancy and overweening audacity—but by the right of natural affinity and actual predisposition. That evilly disposed persons should be able, in these days of free publication and easy dissemination of information and opinion, much longer to obtain a hearing for the wretched slanders and gross misrepresentations of Theosophy, and of the Theosophical Society and its Founders, which are still current in the world, is not to be believed. The tide of public opinion must turn—is, in fact, already turning—and when it has turned the thing wondered at will be why the world was blind so long to the Theosophical Society's real nature and aims, and how it came to pass that the Fellows themselves felt so little pride in their Society, showed so little loyalty to it, and gave it such lukewarm support.

F. T. S.

Requies.

THE SECRET DOCTRINE.*

IN accordance with the policy notified in our last Number, we here present to the reader a review of the "Secret Doctrine" which appeared in the *Secular Review* of December 15th :—

"The first volume of Madame Blavatsky's long-expected work is now offered to the reading public. Its subject-matter is *Cosmogogenesis*, including the consideration of a multiplicity of other data—mythological, symbolical, scientific, etc.—which have a direct or indirect bearing on the important problems raised. Admirers of the intellectual vigour and extent of reading which characterised "Isis Unveiled"—the popularity of which was evinced by a sale of some 60,000 copies—will welcome its successor. The extreme interest attaching to this most recent exposition of Eastern Occultism is well justified, seeing that these teachings are not only comprehensive and fascinating in the extreme, but involve, if valid, the reversal of the main positions of modern science and psychology. In the volume before us the sphynx-like utterances, enigmatic hints, and vague mysticism of "Isis" are developed into a lucid and determinate scheme of cosmic origins and planetary evolution. Believing as I do that this block of teaching will form the nucleus of the religious philosophy of the future, I propose to submit to the readers of the *S. R.* a brief *résumé* of this monumental work. The fact that Theosophy has been already dealt with on various occasions in these columns serves to render my task a far simpler one than it would otherwise be.

The talented authoress disclaims any intention of putting forward "The Secret Doctrine" as a revelation. Nevertheless, the coherent scheme of cosmic evolution now presented for the first time as a whole to Western thought has, in our opinion, a distinct right to that appellation, assuming of course that the statements referred to admit of future substantiation.† This right will be still more forcibly apparent when the second volume, containing the secret history of the origin of man and primæval ethnology, comes under our consideration. It may well be that these great truths, so long shrouded from view by the exotericism of religious allegory and the mystery of the initiation chamber, are to be detected piecemeal in records, pictographs, manuscripts, and sacred literature‡ all the world over. Such is undoubtedly the fact and testifies to the universality of influence, once the appanage of the "Wisdom Religion." But to Madame Blavatsky is unquestionably due the supreme credit of having pieced together the isolated data into a wondrously coherent and complex whole, always assuming that she is in actual truth no more than a compiler. It would, however, be incorrect to limit her labours to this sphere of action, notwithstanding her modest claim. Her information was derived *en masse* from an adept instructor—a

* "The Secret Doctrine." By H. B. Blavatsky. (Theosophical Publishing Company, 7, Duke Street, Adelphi, W. C.)

† Madame Blavatsky simply asks that the presentation of Eastern lore shall be regarded as a "working hypothesis," meriting the same consideration as is accorded to the theories of that very fickle goddess, Science. A fairer attitude than this it would be quite unreasonable to expect.

‡ The vast aggregate of sacred MSS.—Chinese, Brahminical, Buddhistic—with their commentaries, have mysteriously disappeared. Western scholarship is brooding over exoteric texts and dead-letter verbiage. For the present possessors of the old MSS., vide the "Introductory" to "The Secret Doctrine."

member of one of the few really esoteric schools of occultism now extant—during her long residence in Thibet. The Western world has now the benefit of a glimpse into the archaic doctrines then imparted to her. This instalment is enshrined in a mass of erudition of the most diversified and comprehensive nature, her wide reading enabling her to detect correspondences and parallelisms in the most unexpected quarters. Thus we find the same fundamental doctrine underlying the Vedas and Purāṇas, Bhagavat Gīta, the loftier parts of the Bible, as we do in the case of the Scandinavian Eddas or Red Indian's "superstition." Moreover, whatever religion is subjected to our criticism, we always discover the contrast of "parables for the multitude," and the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" for the disciples—i. e., the initiated.

The *raison d'être* of the recent infusion of Eastern philosophy into Western thought is simple enough. The great fraternity of Initiates whose nucleus is in Thibet saw that the time had come for a departure from the old rule which restricted all knowledge of the mysteries of supra-terrestrial being to persons who had passed through the requisite probations. In the words of a writer in *Lucifer* :—

'A crisis had arrived in which it was absolutely necessary to bring within reach of our generation the *Esoteric Doctrine*.....Religion, both in the West and the East, had long been smouldering beneath the dust-heaps of sectarianism and enfranchised science.....To crown the disorder, the phantom world of Hades or Kama Loca* had burst in a muddy torrent into 10,000 *séance* rooms. Nothing but a few fundamental tenets from the Esoteric philosophy.....could snatch mankind from drowning in the sea of ignorance.'

The most important of the works containing the information vouchsafed by the Lodge of Initiates alluded to are "Isis Unveiled," "Esoteric Buddhism," and "The Secret Doctrine" now before us. For the strange and romantic manner in which the movement was inaugurated the reader is referred to Mr. Sinnett's and others' experiences, as recounted in "Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky" and "The Occult World."

"The Secret Doctrine" opens with some seven pages of Stanzas, culled from a "very old book"—the book of Dzyan—the MSS. of which is part of the secret literature of the Thibetan school of adepts. It contains a record of immense importance, some extracts from which constitute the backbone of the "Cosmogogenesis" and "Anthropogenesis" divisions of the work. The sublimity of the Stanzas even in their translated form is notable; but the philosophy they embody is even more striking. They must be read to be appreciated.

The compass of "The Secret Doctrine" is, however, so great that any detailed treatment of the interesting issues raised would require a volume. I must therefore content myself for the present with giving an epitome of the teaching *re* Cosmic Origins—at least as much as is comprehensible without special elucidation.

(1) There exists one Absolute Reality, which is Absolute Consciousness, Absolute Space and Duration, and Motion at the same time. It is incomprehensible. *It exists*, as sole and necessary reality. *Voilà tout*.

(2) This One Reality has two great aspects, Spirit and Matter, the *duality* of which is essential to a *manifested universe*.

(3) Spirit is the fount whence all subjectivity wells up. Matter is the substratum of the objective world.

* Vide Sinnett's "Esoteric Buddhism."

(4) During a "night of Brahma"—i. e., a universal dissolution of all things into non-being—the absolute being—Spirit and Matter sink back into Nirvanic latency in the One Reality. There are thus *cycles* of cosmic manifestation (maha-manvantaras) and dissolution (pralaya). "The Secret Doctrine" opens with a sketch of the commencement of a Universal Evolution period (or Great Manvantara) after a universal Pralaya.

(5) The Universal Mind—Spirit—awakens. Primordial *undifferentiated* matter emerges into abstract objectivity. With the awakening of the Universal Mind the Dhyani Chohans (i. e., the hierarchy of human souls of previous world-periods classed in varied grades of advancement) are outbreathed into renewed being. They exercise important functions in cosmic evolution.* As a whole, the Universe is the "Son of Necessity," neither the Universal Mind nor primordial Matter having independent activity. They are but aspects of the Great Unknown Reality, which "knows not itself." The ultimate "Why?" of manifested being is inscrutable.

(6) The clairvoyant ideation of Spirit conceives the "world plan" instantaneously and supra-consciously† woven into a harmonious whole; minor cosmic adjustments of detail are left to the Dhyani Chohans. This ideation of Spirit gives rise to Fohat,‡ the "link between subjective thought and objective matter." Fohat stamps into primordial inert matter the *divine impress*, which gives it that *impulse to differentiate* which converts it from an abstraction into a substance, controlled by the "laws of Nature," and suitable for evolutionary work. *Material Causation* "dates" from this Fohatic impress.

(7) Primordial matter, fertilised by Fohat with every "promise and potency," now passes into objectivity. It develops six protyles.§ Relative Space and Time are its aspects.

(8) One of the most "gross" protyles, that of our *present plane* of perception, now becomes *atomic*, and breeds the "elements" of chemistry. We have the diffuse nebulousity of the "Fire Mist." Under the Fohatic impulse, nuclei of fire-mist aggregate and develop suns, planets, and satellites. The theory of Laplace, however, as to planets having condensed from rings thrown off by central suns, is erroneous. They originated independently as comets in the matrices of nuclei, suns being merely "big brothers." Natural Selection determines what planets survive.¶

* E. g., in the formation of solar systems and the origin and evolution of man.

† There is a curious parallelism here between "The Secret Doctrine" and Von Hartmann's views as expressed in his chapter on "The Metaphysic of the Unconscious."

‡ "Fohat is the steed and Thought is the rider," say the Stanzas. Fohat is thus a species of Schopenhauerian Will Force, saturated with the *organising wisdom* of the Universal Mind. It is the *source of Force*, and differentiates matter into protyles and elements with their wondrous potentialities in accordance with the world-plan conceived in the immaterial field of cosmic ideation. In fine, it is the long-sought-for link between Mind and Matter.

§ Mr. Crookes' term for the homogeneous world-stuff out of which the seventy or so "elements" of Chemistry were differentiated ("Genesis of the Elements"). It is analogous to protoplasm in Biology.

¶ Vide pp. 201-3, Part I., Vol. I. "Secret Doctrine." The comets which survive in the struggle for existence—caused by collision or absorption of the smaller by the greater—become planets. A similar theory has been previously broached by Carl du Prel, in his "Struggle for Existence in the Heavens" (Berlin, 1874). According to him, all planets which had irregular orbits left the solar system, or were absorbed by the sun. This elimination of nascent globes by Natural Selection is, he believes, sufficient to explain the gaps in our system. He, however, accepts the nebular theory *in toto*, and ascribes the order present in the solar group to "the aimless working of physical forces."

(9) But, besides the myriad solar systems that stud the visible "expanse of heaven," there are other and higher planes of matter, each with its appropriate objective furniture. The "ether" of science is a *phase* of the plane of matter immediately "adjoining" our visible environment. The extent of these "unseen universes" will be inferred from the fact that there are no less than five other protyles yet to be accounted for.

(10) The Universal Mind has to endure a "pilgrimage" on the globes—physical, ethereal, etc.—now evolved. That is to say, it manifests in myriads of rays or *conscious units*, which have to pass through all phases of experience ere attaining the supreme bliss of Nirvana. An almost endless series of re-births awaits each unit.

(11) This process of re-birth is essential. Previous to its pilgrimage round the chains of worlds, the Monadic unit "knows not itself." It is part of the Universal Mind, and devoid of all semblance of *reflective* consciousness. But after overshadowing countless enfleshments or re-births of its lower aspect, and thus accumulating vast stores of experience gleaned under the conditions of self-consciousness, it finally wrests itself away from further re-birth, and knows itself. It is now able to do so. Its essence is saturated with the aroma of the experience contracted in all its varied incarnations.

(12) I write re-births of its "lower aspect" intentionally, because that consciousness which is vehicled by the brain is *not our real Ego*. It is merely a reflection of its light caught up by and conditioned by the organism. The Divine Self of Man is, to his brain-correlated personality, what the sun is to a flickering rushlight. The real goal of incarnation is the centering of our consciousness in its glorious radiance. Until that end is achieved, a weary pilgrimage of the "lower self" through interminable re-births—the conditions of which are decreed by Karma—is inevitable.* Say the Stanzas: "This is thy present wheel, said the Flame [Divine Higher Self] to the Spark [its terrestrial reflection or personality]. Thou art myself, my image, and my shadow. I have clothed myself in thee, and thou art my vahan (vehicle) to the day. 'Be with us' [Nirvana], when thou shalt re-become Myself and others, Thyself and Me" (owing to the *universality* of conscious being then attained by the loss of the "sense of separateness").

With this brief *résumé*—so brief as to constitute a travesty of the subject under consideration—I must close. Interesting topics, such as the Planetary Chain, the Dhyani Gods, the Substantiality of the Forces, the Nature of the Atom, the very striking doctrine of the "fiery lives," etc., etc., to say nothing of a vast mass of detail and incidental matter, must perforce be passed over. Many of these points could not possibly be discussed in a review, and are only indeed only intelligible as complex features of a complex system, which must be considered as a whole. Suffice it now to say that no more fascinating or momentous work has, so far as we know, signalised the literary record of the past half century.

E. DOUGLAS FAWCETT.

* "Starting upon the long journey immaculate," writes Madame Blavatsky; "descending more and more into sinful matter.....the Pilgrim [Monadic Unit], having struggled through and suffered in every form of life and being, is only at the bottom of the valley of matter, and half through his cycle, when he has identified himself with collective Humanity.....In order to progress upwards.....the God has now to ascend the weary up-hill path of the Golgotha of life.....It is the martyrdom of self-conscious existence.....Like Visvakarmam, he has to sacrifice himself to himself in order to redeem all creatures, to resurrect from the many into the one life. Then he ascends into heaven indeedthe incomprehensible, absolute being and bliss of Paranirvana" (p. 268 part i., vol. i.).

THE MAGAZINES.

LUCIFER.—The first article in *Lucifer* has been quoted at length elsewhere. "The Idylls of the King" is an interesting study of Tennyson's poem "The Holy Grail." To those who are fond of analysing their spiritual pabulum, and examining the contents of the stomachs of poems that have pleased them, this article will be a treat, but, after all, that is more or less like extracting the perfume from a flower or the sugar from a fruit. There is not much to show for the trouble, and the flower or fruit is all pulled to pieces in the operation.

"Was he Mad?" is brought to a conclusion. It is a somewhat sad story, and the conclusion is unhappy. The poor Professor had his inner powers sufficiently excited to get him into a lunatic asylum at last, and there his friend left him without taking the trouble to see for himself what his condition really was. The keepers of lunatic asylums are not very often persons whose unsupported word any sane individual would be very likely to accept in questions of this kind.

"Two Christmas Visions," are dreams that the writer is supposed to have had. They form an exception to the well known rule that other people's dreams are about the least interesting of narrations. Inventing dreams is easy enough, and it is not an uncommon amusement with children and also with grown people who get a reputation for being dreamers of dreams. One never likes to be so impolite as to question the fact of these dreams being really dreamed, but as a rule the steady improvement in the quality of noted dreamers' dreams is a standing provocative of scepticism on that point. Real dreams, moreover, are always remarkably silly, as they appear when remembered, and those who have true visions are chary of telling them when they regard them as intended for their own instruction, for there is no surer way to put a stop to that kind of private teaching than to blab about it.

"The Talking Image of Urur" conveys occult philosophy as smoothly and agreeably to the readers' mind as lemonade conveys castor-oil to the parched invalid. Everything that Dr. Hartmann writes is as full of excellent philosophising as an egg is full of meat. There is not much adventure in the story as yet; but, then, nobody looks for bones in an egg, at least he is not very much pleased to find them there. Urur, by the bye, is the name of the native village half a mile from Head-quarters (*Ur* means a village in Tamil). There is an image of a bull sitting before the little village temple, but he has not been heard to speak lately, and even if he had the voice of men and angels, that would not account for the volleys of diabolical noises that proceed from that one small village at night, especially at festival times.

"The Dirge for the Dead" is part of a chant sung over the entranced body of a neophyte during initiation in ancient Egypt. It is a beautiful and remarkable piece; and, as given here, is vouched for by the editor of *Lucifer* to have been written down automatically by a medium who had never seen the original Papyrus, in the possession of some Egyptologist. *Lucifer* attributes it to a recollection on the part of the medium of a former incarnation.

"Accursed" comes to an end in this number; it is an exciting story, well told, and the facts are said to have occurred.

"The Seven Geometrical Vowels" connects the phenomena of consciousness with various geometrical figures, and then explains the figures by the phenomena of consciousness, and the latter by the former, in a very learned, mystical and ingenious manner. This article is by "A Chela,"

and one of the visions above-mentioned is also by "A Chela." There is a letter at the end of the magazine by another Chela, so Chelas seem to be becoming as plentiful as cocoa-nuts over in London.

"The Elixir of the Devil," translated from the German, by Mr. William Ashton Ellis, the learned and able editor of *The Meister*, is a story left at his death by a monk of the order of Capuchins. This is only the first instalment of the story of Brother Medardus, and there is not much of either Elixir or Devil about it yet. But there is an Old Pilgrim in it who must have been a re-incarnation of Elijah; for when Brother Medardus was a child some young strolling artists proposed to sketch him and his companions. "See! A Holy Family. A subject for my sketch book," cried one of them; whereon the Old Pilgrim roars:—"Wretched scoffer! Thou wouldst fain be an artist, and yet hast never felt within thee the Flame of Faith and Love. Thy works shall remain dead and feelingless as thyself, and thou shalt despair in lonely solitude, and perish in their own mind-waste!" We are told that "the youths rushed in terror from the spot,"—probably expecting that the Old Pilgrim was about to whistle for his bears.

"Dialogues between the two Editors" is a valuable addition to the contents of *Lucifer*, for it promises to be continued—let us hope without break in all succeeding numbers. The dialogue is somewhat one-sided, as the Senior Editor does all the talking, the Junior merely posing the questions. It is therefore a dialogue after the manner of that held between the fiddle and the fiddle-bow. It would be hard to determine to which instrument the hearer owes in largest part his pleasure, and in the case before us the difficult part of the bow is admirably played by the Junior Editor, who succeeds in eliciting delightfully occult melodies out of her Senior; the tune played this time is "On Astral Bodies, or Doppel-gaugers," about which a vast amount of highly interesting information is given.

THE PATH.—In his studies in the Bhagavad-Gita William Brehon touches very ably on several important points contained in Chapter V. One of these is the nature of the renunciation demanded of the aspirant. The giving up of action is not what the writer understands thereby, but the giving up of the fruit of action. It stands to reason that in a world where so much exists that needs the labor of man, to renounce the world in the monkish sense means to renounce helping those who want help, and the duties that require to be performed; but the man who gives God the glory, as the Christians say—who, in other words, feels that in all that he does he is but carrying out nature's work, himself a part of nature, and deserving neither praise nor blame if he does the best he knows—that man is reaching towards true renunciation of self by means of the right performance of action, and acquiring a consciousness of the larger self that includes first the whole of humanity, and by and by the whole of existing things. The writer also notices a common error of students of Theosophy as well as of outsiders; that if Theosophical doctrines were followed to the letter, "the result is a being who cares for nothing but the calmness which comes from extinction in the Supreme Spirit—that is the extreme of selfishness." This is shown to be contradiction and an impossibility by the verse in the Bhagavad-Gita, which says: "Effacement in the Supreme Spirit is gained by the right-seeing sage whose sins are exhausted, who hath cut asunder all doubts, whose senses and organs are under control, and who is devoted to the well-being of all creatures." "And such," the writer says, "is the word of the Master: for He says in many places that, if we expect to have His help, we

must apply ourselves to the work of helping humanity—to the extent of our ability. No more than this is demanded."

In "Letters that have helped Me," Jasper Niemand gives us a short epistle from "Z," an advanced Occultist, and a longer and very excellent letter from himself. J. N.'s writings are always good and useful. He pours oil and wine into the weary aspirant and cheers him on his way.

"Among the Dead" is a thrilling account of the adventures of a suicide from the moment he commits the rash act until he becomes thoroughly contrite. A suicide breaks the laws of nature, and, according to this one's experience, pays very dearly for his rebellion, for he cannot get his more etherial parts properly separated from the body, and feels the worms at work, and is afterwards made wretched by the sight of the misery his suicide has created in his quondam home. The article is signed by Mr. James H. Connelly, but purports to have been put into his head by some unknown influence—mediumistically, not to put too fine a point to it.

In "The Dweller on the Threshold," Ensebio Urban dilates upon the vexed question of: Who, which, what, is that mysterious personage. "It is not a thing to be dreaded by mere dilettanti theosophists" he tells us, which will be good news for a good many of the Fellows of the Theosophical Society; "and no earnest one," he adds, "who feels himself absolutely called to work persistently to the highest planes of development for the good of humanity, and not for his own, need fear aught that heaven or hell holds."

"A Curious Tale" is a mystical vision the writer had at the Lakes of Killarney of the times when the Round Towers were used for magical purposes by "the immediate descendants of the White magicians who settled in Ireland when England's Isle had not arisen from the sea."

In "The Planes of Consciousness," the strong man of Cincinnati, Dr. J. D. Buck, plays gracefully with weighty problems which few other Theosophists can do more than roll over an inch or two. What he says is as usual extremely interesting and suggestive. He very justly regards the different planes and all they contain as equally real according as the consciousness is centered in any one of them. Broadly dividing these planes into subjective and objective, he says:

"Perhaps the most important consideration in regard to the shifting states of consciousness from the objective to the subjective condition regards that vague and varying state known as insanity. As a rule, with the insane this transfer of consciousness is partial, seldom complete. Consciousness is rather out of joint than actually transferred from plane to plane. There is usually an organic lesion, or a functional obstruction that tends to tissue change in some of the nerve centres. The result in many cases is to break down that sharp line of demarcation between the objective and subjective worlds. The individual becomes bewildered, loses his bearings. His experiences are no longer coordinate. The instrument through which consciousness manifested is out of tune, and the result is discord. The great mistake in regard to all these cases of perverted function arises from the fact that no differentiation is made as to planes or states of consciousness. Practically but one state of consciousness is recognized, and the still further mistake is made of looking upon all objects cognized, and all experiences outside the ordinary plane of consciousness, as altogether non-existent, a figment of the imagination."

"Theosophic Diet" is not a very filling article. The writer, Rodrigues Undiano, after beating all the diatetic bushes within reach, only succeeds in chasing out a very little bird indeed. He expresses his conclusion in

these words: "What, then, is the true Theosophic diet? It is that which best agrees with you, taken in moderation, neither too much nor too little." The gist of the article, however, follows in a kind of postscript to this effect:

"The inner nature has a diet out of our thoughts and motives. If those are low or gross or selfish, it is equivalent to feeding that nature upon gross food. True theosophic diet is therefore not of either meat or wine; it is unselfish thoughts and deeds, untiring devotion to the welfare of 'the great orphan Humanity,' absolute negation of self, unutterable aspiration to the Divine—the Supreme Soul. This only is what we can grow upon. And vain are the hopes of those who pin their faith on any other doctrine."

Julius in "Tea Table Talk" has taken a serious turn this week, apparently caused by over indulgence in theosophic diet in the shape of the Secret Doctrine. He mentions several interesting things about the late Govinda Row Sattay, some of which are quoted in the Supplement to this number.

L'INITIATION steadily improves. No. 3 (December) contains (1) an able critique on German Philosophy, by M. Eugene Nus, whose philosophical writings are well known in France. (2) An interesting essay on Divination by "Rouxel." (3) A "Study of Spiritualism" or more properly "Spiritism." (4) A continuation of "The Theory of Temperaments" by Messrs. Polti and Gari. (5) A continuation of Scientific Christianity by Henri Lizeray. The literary department contains a continuation of Jules Lermina's story "A Bruler," and a thrill ghost story by Manoel de Grandford; and the various Bulletins are full of news of the various movements in France—Theosophical, Mesmeric, Free-masonic, &c. The price is one franc a copy, 10 francs a year. The editorial office 14, Rue de Strasbourg, Paris.

LE LOTUS.—The double number of *Le Lotus* to hand (October—November) contains, (1) A translation of an article by Madame Blavatsky on the "Occult Arts and Occultism" that appeared in *Lucifer*. (2) A continuation of "The Three Emanations," by "Amaravella." (3) "An Experimental Study of some Phenomena of Psychic Force," by D. Macnab. (4) A translation from *The Path* of an article by C. H. A. Bjerregaard on "Elementals and Elementaries." (5) "The Great Paradoxes of Numa Pandorac," a disgraceful rhapsody on the pleasures of intoxication, by a writer who seems to practice what he preaches. (6) The Astral Plane by M. Guymiot. (7) "Beliefs about Phantoms," a translation, extending through 44 pages of the number, of Colonel Olcott's Appendix to his translation of D'Assier's "Posthumous Humanity"—Reviews, &c.

MR. GEORGE REDWAY has called the Editor's notice to the fact that his name as publisher was accidentally omitted from the notices of the "Grammar of Palmistry," and "Bacon, Shakespeare and the Rosicrucians" contained in the December number of the *Theosophist*.

THE T. P. S.—Numbers 14, 15 and 16 of the Theosophical Publication Society's pamphlets have reached us. These pamphlets are a feature in Theosophical literature that deserves to be widely known and well supported. They are issued from 7, Duke Street, Adelphi, London. The yearly

subscription is 5 shillings (7 shillings and sixpence for India). No. 14 contains three articles, "Selflessness" by Pilgrim, whose essays are well known to readers of the *Path and Lucifer*; "Thelyphthoria" by Harij, whose name is a power in Theosophical literature; and an anonymous article on the Taro. The following passages may be taken as samples respectively of the first two articles:—

"It is natural that when the fantastic religious ideas about a future life, or the pessimistic negation of any future life, which in the one case dominate, and in the other darken the man's spiritual horizon, are replaced by the conviction which takes the form of a scientific conclusion, that, as the soul is intuitively felt to have eternity before it, so it must have eternity behind; and that, consequently, the only explicable theory of life is to be found in the doctrine of reincarnation, with its complement and corollary, the law of Karma—facts which have been more or less clearly shadowed forth for the dim multitudes by the initiates through all the ages."—(*Selflessness*, p. 5.)

"We hear a good deal of the brotherhood of man, but there is more pressing need of the sisterhood of women. True, the heaven of humanity is beginning to work. Yet, how many of these free and really noble women will pass a poor prostitute in the street without, almost unconsciously, gathering in her skirts for fear of contamination? How many will meet a girl in society over whose fair name has passed a cloud of suspicion, whether true or false, and not shrink into herself? And yet where are they who are so much in need of love and sympathy as these poor victims? To house these outcasts in asylum, feed them, clothe them, pray over them, thus marking them more indelibly as outcasts than even man has done, has seldom permanently reformed one. Ask your woman's soul, my noble sister, how it would regard these things were you to change places, and do not call yourself Christian till you have learned how Christ spoke to these, and how he loved them. You can reform them but by love, and not by cold charity and self-righteousness."—(*Thelyphthoria*, p. 14.)

The paper on the Taro describes the manner of laying out these ancient cards for three purposes;—to get answers about everyday matters, about philosophical or religious questions, and about Divine Wisdom. There is a descriptive coloured plate.

No. 15 is "Swedenborg Bifrons," and is a very remarkable pamphlet indeed, and deserves to be widely known. The writer ("A. F. T. S.") evidently knows his Swedenborg by heart, and he shows that the great visionary held two diametrically opposite sets of opinions on a very important subject, and that what is known as Swedenborgianism now is only one set of his opinions, and the narrower Christian one. The other is almost pure Theosophy, but those ideas are carefully hidden away by his present followers. Swedenborg's *Theosophical* ideas about "Transmigration" are stated by the writer thus, chapter and verse being given:—

"Man receives through his parents nothing but the physical body. His soul is altogether independent of them. Man is, however, more than a duality of soul and body; he is a trinity of body, mind and soul; and more than this, he is a quaternity of body, natural soul, spiritual soul, and the Lord; and still more than this, he is a septenary of body, its vitality, sensual degree, natural degree, rational degree, spiritual degree, and Divine degree. With regard to the seven degrees let me state briefly that man receives the first and the second from his parents and nature; the third and fourth he creates for himself; the fifth (the human soul proper) is the result of his experiences; the sixth is, or will be, so to say, the sweetness, the aroma, the fulness of the good and the true he has acquired (in his transmigrations); and the seventh is the Divine Being: the self infinite, or the God in man. As to the statement that the doctrine of pre-existence is a spiritualistic and gentile delusion, depend upon it, the delusion is altogether on the side of those that make it. 'For man, as to all his degrees, existed similarly before his nativity, as he exists afterward.'" (P. 14.)

We cannot resist the temptation of quoting the following remarkable passage from page 18:—

"It has hundreds of times been publicly stated, but upon what ground I do not know, that the real, invisible FOUNDERS of the Theosophical Society, the Mahatmas (Great-Souls) have no existence: that they are figments of Madame H. P. Blavatsky's, wherewith either to advertise her books, her "new religion" or herself. Less sceptical persons of the spiritualistic and Christian Swedenborgian creeds believe in their existence; but explain that they are her "Spirit-guides," or "Devils of a Spiritual Hell." With these suppositions, theories, and statements in view, it is interesting and instructive to note the following statements made by Swedenborg, in the last century: First, that there exists a system of Spiritual Truth, of far more transcendent nature than any known in the world to-day; second, that it is in the hands of certain inhabitants of Central Asia (Buddhists); third, that it is inaccessible to the world at large, especially to Christians; fourth, that he, by occult means, and in the company of the possessors of it, visited Central Asia, and there got a glimpse of it; and fifth, that it should be sought for among the (Buddhist) inhabitants of China and Tibet. These statements were made at different times, and in different works of our author, between the years 1764-71. (See M. 77. T. 279. Coro 39. R. 11. S. 101. D. 6077)."

No. 16, "Theosophical Concepts of Evolution and Religion," by Wm. Kingsland, is an excellent pamphlet, being a review of the Theosophical position by a man of science, who is thoroughly imbued with the modern scientific spirit. We strongly recommend its perusal to all Theosophists and to any one who wishes to know how the subject looks when viewed from the stand-point of Western culture. We give here a few characteristic extracts:—

"Science has come to teach much more than an isolated knowledge of matter and its properties. By its inductive methods it has arrived at certain generalizations, at certain conceptions of the operation of universal law, which strike at the very root of the cherished ideas of religion respecting divine interference and revelation. It strikes at the whole record of the Old Testament, so far as that relates in an exoteric form the origin and progress of the race towards divine knowledge, by a series of divine manifestations and interventions. It strikes at the miraculous in the New as well as in the Old Testament. It asserts that the laws of nature never have been, and never will be, broken. It extends to the remotest time, and to the most distant regions of space, the laws and principles which are found to condition us on this earth. It asserts the unity of the Cosmos, the operation of the same laws in both small and great, and the absolute unchangeableness and reliability of these laws. Looking back, it traces the present order to a pre-existing one, and that again to an earlier one, an endless sequence of cause and effect, but through all the self-same laws in operation as those which we find at the present day. Looking forward, the same view presents itself. Time is but a conception of our brain, something inherent in our mental constitution. Nature knows no time. She is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Our little span of life is great in comparison with the life of the lower orders, some of which complete their term in a few moments, yet our longest span is as naught compared with the life of the species, and that, again, is but a passing phase—the whole history of our globe but a raindrop falling into the ocean of eternity."

"Science endeavours to connect all the phenomena of the universe in one harmonious whole, and to show the inter-dependence and co-relation of every part, and though she has only succeeded in doing this to a very limited extent on the physical plane merely, yet it is fundamental with her that not one atom exists except as an integral and necessary part of the whole, and not one form of life is manifested apart from that universal principle which is active in everything that lives and moves and has its being."

"And now what is required is that this principle of unity shall be extended so as to embrace the higher psychical and spiritual aspects of our nature, so as to embrace that inner consciousness of our relation to a higher and unseen world which men in all ages have sought to express in a thousand different ways. What is required is a knowledge of the co-relation of the physical with the spiritual, a bold step forward from matter to spirit, from the seen to the unseen, from the known to the unknown."

"There is a law of correspondence which enables us to penetrate deeper and still deeper into the workings of nature, but we shall never find a break, we shall never find a *spiritual* world where there is no *natural* law, nor a *natural* world where spirit is not ever present. The triangles are interlaced. Night and day, summer and winter, these are smaller cycles within the larger ones to which they correspond, and which stretch out in an endless succession of Kalpas and Yugas; the days and nights of Brahmā; the Manvantaras and Pralayas. The activity of the day is followed by the unconsciousness and sleep of night. So is our life. The sleep of death is

followed by a reawakening, and the man takes up his real life-task at the point at which he left off. As the actions of yesterday are related to those of to-day, so are those of our previous incarnation related to the present one, and the present becomes the potentiality of the future."

"There are many such cycles in the evolution of the Ego, the real man, and what is true of the individual is true of the race and also of the whole universe. There is only one law operating in both great and small. That which takes place in the individual unit is a reflection of similar processes which are repeated in ever-increasing magnitudes throughout the circle of eternity. The microcosm reflects the macrocosm. As above so below, is the fundamental truth by which we are able to transfer our knowledge to that which is unseen, and grasp those universal principles which must become the basis of our faith."

"Man's experience works in cycles, and after rising to the spiritual plane through the emotions of religion, he may again descend into matter, and working through the intellectual plane, he will reascend to the spiritual, *plus knowledge*. While on the descending arc he loses sight of the spiritual part of his nature, but on the ascending arc this grows brighter and clearer, and becomes self-conscious, as the result of the experience through which the Ego has passed."

"And now, when men are demanding a larger knowledge and a deeper spiritual insight, there is discovered to them a possibility and source of knowledge and wisdom far surpassing their largest expectations. This knowledge is only new in the sense that it is now given to the world afresh and in a new form. In reality, it is as old as the hills, for it is the ancient "Secret Doctrine," or "Wisdom Religion," which has been the inheritance of the spiritual adepts and initiates in all ages. It does not supersede, but it gives a new meaning to old beliefs. It does not put aside the sacred books, but it is the true key and commentary to them, for it gives the real meaning of that which they express in allegory and fable."

"From the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of Revelation, we may read the Bible without this key, and it will claim our superstitious reverence, and belief in its superhuman origin, or be rejected in the light of modern science and criticism. But when once we have apprehended that the Bible was written by men who *knew*, that it is a book of symbolism and not of history, that it contains the same teachings as the sacred books of other nations and races, only wrapped up in a different allegory; there no longer exists for us the necessity of regarding it either with superstitious reverence, or with incredulity; but it becomes to us a storehouse of knowledge which we may verify in a thousand ways, without waiting for an entry into the spirit-world through the gates of death."

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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

THERE IS NO RELIGION HIGHER THAN TRUTH.

[Family motto of the Maharajahs of Benares.]

PRACTICAL THEOSOPHY.

WE hear a good deal at present about "Practical Theosophy." Is such a thing possible? If so, in what does it consist? To many Theosophists Theosophy is an individual internal thing, a system of cosmogony, philosophy, ontology, to which the term *practical* is completely inapplicable. As well, they think, talk of practical metaphysics! Others, again, feel that to love your neighbour and still neglect to help him in the material things in which your aid would evidently be to his advantage, is a barren mockery. One meets people continually who hardly stir a finger to help others, and yet who talk glibly about the "Rounds" and the "Rings," and the "seven principles" of man; who long for Nirvana, even for Parānirvana; who ardently desire to be joined to the Infinite, absorbed into the Eternal; who feel that all men are their brothers, all women their sisters, and that thought makes them Oh! so happy, gives them such peace of mind! The convict is their brother—their caught and locked up brother; the tramp is their brother—their idle, unwashed, whiskey-soaked, good-for-nothing brother; the work-woman is their sister—their poor, friendless, sister, who has to sew sixteen hours a day to keep body and soul together; even the prostitute is their sister—their fallen, wicked sister, who is hurrying to an early grave; the famine-stricken Irish, Chinese, Hindus, are their brothers and sisters—their skin-and-bone brothers and sisters, who are dying of starvation. Theosophy teach them these beautiful truths, they say, and it does them so much good to know it all! Speak to these sentimentalists about "Practical Theosophy," and they look suddenly stupid. Tell them that in a garret not a

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