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Move forward the wheel, O thou whose sight is infinite! Rarely art thou met in the course of many thousands of Æons. Display the benevolence thou hast observed in so many former generations; open the path of immortality.—*Saddharma-Pundarika.*

THE PATH.

VOL. III.

DECEMBER, 1888.

No. 9.

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THE BHAGAVAD-GITA.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

The name of this chapter in Sanscrit is "Karmasanyasayog," which means "The Book of Religion by Renouncing Fruit of Works." It has always seemed to me to be one of the most important in the Bhagavad-Gita. As the poem is divided into eighteen parts, this one is just beyond the first division, for the whole number are to be put into six groups of three chapters each, and we have finished four.

Arjuna is supposed to bring forward the objections raised by, or views belonging to, the two great Indian schools called the Sankhya and the Yoga, one of which advised its votaries to renounce all works and to do nothing whatever, while the other called for the performance of works.

The divergent views naturally caused great differences in practice, for the followers of one would be found continually working, and those of the other continually doing nothing. Hence we find, in India, even at the present day, great numbers of ascetics who remain inert, and encounter on the other hand those who go on making Karma with a view to salvation.

A very little reflection will show the student that the only result of action, as such, will be a continuation of action, and hence that no amount of mere works will in themselves confer Nirvana or rest from Karma. The only direct product of Karma is Karma. And this difficulty rose before Arjuna in the fifth conversation. He says :

Thou praisest, Krishna, the renunciation of works ; on the other hand, devotion through them. Declare to me with precision that one only which is the better of these two.

Whereupon Krishna replies :

To cease from works
Is well, and to do works in holiness
Is well ; and both conduct to bliss supreme ;
But of these twain the better way is his
Who working piously refraineth not.
That is the true Renouncer, firm and fixed,
Who—seeking nought, rejecting nought—dwells proof
Against the “opposites.”

The meaning of the teacher has been by some suggested to be that, inasmuch as the life of the ascetic is very hard, almost impossible for the majority of men, it is wiser to now perform good acts in the hope that they will lead one hereafter to a favorable birth in such surroundings that complete renunciation of action—outwardly—will be an easy task, and that the two sorts of practice were not intended to be laid before the student for selection, nor is he put in a dilemma compelling him to choose. I think such is not the meaning, but that, on the contrary, the seemingly easy alternative of performing actions properly is in reality the most difficult of all tasks. And, no matter how much we may wait for a favorable birth, for a much hoped-for environment which will not only permit the new sort of life, but, in fact, urge it upon us, it will never arrive for us until we have learned what is the right performance of action. This learning can never be acquired by a renunciation of works now. Indeed, it may be taken for granted that no person will be able to renounce the world unless he has passed through the other experience in some life. A few may be found who attempt to do so, but if they have not been through all action they cannot proceed. The character of the man himself inwardly is the real test. No matter how many times during countless births he has renounced the world, if his inner nature has not renounced, he will be the same man

during the entire period, and whenever, in any one of his ascetic lives, the new, the appropriate temptation or circumstance arises, he will fall from his high outward asceticism.

That our view as to the extreme difficulty of *right renunciation through action* is correct, we may refer to what Krishna says further on in the chapter.

Yet such abstraction, Chief!

Is hard to win without much holiness.

Krishna praises both schools, telling Arjuna that the disciples of each will arrive at a like end; but he says that right performance of action is the better. Now we must reconcile these two. If one is better than the other and yet both conduct to the same goal, there must be some reason for making the comparison, or hopeless confusion results. Acting upon his apparent equal endorsement, many seekers have abandoned action, thereby hoping to gain salvation. They ignored the sixth verse, which reads: "O thou of mighty arms, it is difficult to attain true renunciation *without right performance of action*; the devotee *rightly performing action attains to true renunciation* before long." Here again is a higher place assigned to performance of action. It seems clear that what Krishna meant was that renunciation of action in any one life, followed by the same conduct in all the subsequent lives thereby affected, would at last lead the renouncer to see how he must begin to stop that kind of renunciation and take up the performance of actions while he renounced the fruit of them. This is thought by many occultists to be the true view. It is well known that the ego returning to regeneration is affected by the actions of his previous births, not only circumstantially in the various vicissitudes of a life, but also in the tendency of the nature to any particular sort of religious practise, and this effect operates for a length of time or number of births exactly commensurate with the intensity of the previous practise. And naturally in the case of one who deliberately renounced all in the world, devoting himself to asceticism for many years, the effect would be felt for many lives and long after other temporary impressions had worn off. In going on thus for so many births, the man at last acquires that clearness of inner sight which brings him to perceive what method he really ought to follow. Besides also the natural development, he will be assisted by those minds whom he is sure to encounter, who have passed through all the needed experience. Additional support for these suggestions is found in the sixth chapter, in the verses referring to the rebirth of such disciples:

So hath he back what heights of heart
 He did achieve, and so he strives anew
 To perfectness, with better hope, dear Prince!
*For by the old desire he is drawn on
 Unwittingly.*¹

1 The italics are my own.—B.

What we are to endeavor to understand, then, is how to renounce the fruit of our actions, which is what Krishna means when he tells us to perform actions as a renunciation. The polluting effect of an act is not in the nature of the mere thing done, nor is the purifying result due to what work we may do, but on either hand the sin or the merit is found in the inner feeling that accompanies the act. One may donate millions in alms, and yet not thereby benefit his real character in the least. It is very true that he will reap material rewards, perhaps in some other life, but those even will be of no benefit, since he will be still the same. And another may only give away kind words or small sums, because that is all he has to give, and be so much benefited by the feeling accompanying each act that his progress up the ascending arc toward union with spirit is rapid. We find in the Christian Testament Jesus of Nazareth enforcing this view in the parable of the widow's mite, which he regarded as of more value than all that had been given by others. He could not have referred to the intrinsic value of the coin given, nor to the act as thus measured, for that quantity was easily ascertained; he only looked to the inner feeling of the poor woman when she gave all that she had.

No matter in what direction we see ourselves acting, we perceive how difficult it is to be true renouncers. And we cannot hope to reach the perfection of this better sort of renunciation through action, in the present life, be it the one in which we have begun, or be it the twentieth of such effort. However, we can *try*, and such is our duty; if we persevere, the tendency toward the right understanding will increase with each life more rapidly than would otherwise be possible.

And even in the high aim found in aspiration to discipleship under a master, or even to Adeptship, we encounter the same difficulty. This aspiration is commendable above most that we can formulate, but when we coldly ask ourselves soon after that aspiration has been formed, "Why am I thus aspiring; why do I want to be near in sense to the Master?" we are obliged to admit that the impelling motive for acquiring the aspiration was tinged with selfishness. We can easily prove this by inquiring in the forum of our own conscience if we had the aspiration for ourself or for the great mass of men, rich and poor, despicable and noble; would we be able to feel content were we suddenly told that our deep longing had given the boon to others and that we must wait ten lives more. It is safe to say that the answer would be that we were very sorry. In the twelfth verse we find the remedy for the difficulty, as well as the difficulty itself, clearly stated thus: "The right performer of action, abandoning fruit of action, attains to rest through devotion; the wrong performer of action, attached to fruit thereof on account of desire, remains bound."

These instructions will be very difficult for all who are living for them-

selves and who have not in some small degree begun to believe that they are not here for their own sake. But when we feel that there is no separation between us and any other creature, and that our Higher Self is leading us through all the experiences of life to the end that we shall recognize the unity of all, then, instead of continually acting contrary to that object of the Higher Self, we try to acquire the right belief and aspiration. Nor need we be deterred, as some are, by the extreme difficulty of eliminating the selfish desire for progress. That will be the task during many lives, and we should begin it voluntarily as soon as it is known, instead of waiting for it to be forced in upon us through suffering and many defeats.

A common mistake made by theosophical students as well as those outside is corrected in this chapter. It is the habit of many to say that, if these doctrines are 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. And popular writers contribute to this ridiculous impression, as we can see in the numerous articles on the subject. Among those writers it is the sequence of the “personal aggrandizement idea,” which is the bane of the present age, as occultists think, but the chief beauty of it in the eyes of those to whom we refer. Krishna puts it clearly enough in the twenty-fifth verse :

“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.*”

If the last qualification is absent, then he is not a “right-seeing sage” and cannot reach union with the Supreme. It must follow that the humblest imitator, every one who desires to come to that condition, must try to the best of his ability to imitate the sage who has succeeded. And such 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.

WILLIAM BREHON, F. T. S.

LETTERS THAT HAVE HELPED ME.¹

“Seeking for freedom I go to that God who is the light of his own thoughts. A man who knows him truly passes over death ; there is no other path to go.”—(*Upanishads.*)

In THE PATH for May, 1887, we find these words :

“We need a literature, not solely for highly intellectual persons, but of a more simple character, which attempts to appeal to ordinary common sense

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minds, who are really fainting for such moral and mental assistance as is not reached by the more pretentious works."

The experience of one student is, on the whole, the experience of all. Details differ, however. Some are made more instantly rich than others; they are those who put forth more vigorous and generous effort, or they have a karmic store which brings aid. What theosophists know as Karma, or the law of spiritual action and reaction, decided this, as it works on all the planes, physical, moral, mental, psychical, and spiritual alike. Our Karma may be worked out upon any one of these planes when our life is chiefly concentrated upon it, no matter upon what other plane any special initiative impulse or branch of it originated.

The writer, when first he became a theosophical student, had the aid of an advanced occultist in his studies. This friend sent him, among others, the letters which, in the hope that they may assist others as they have the original recipient, are here published. They are not exhaustive treatises; they are hints given by one who knew that the first need of a student is to learn *how to think*. The true direction is pointed out, and the student is left to clarify his own perceptions, to draw upon and enlarge his own intuitions, and to develop, as every created thing must at last develop, by its own inward exertions. Such students have passed the point where their external environment can affect their growth favorably. They may learn from it, but the time has also come to resist it and turn to the internal adjustment to higher relations only.

The brevity of these letters should not mislead the reader. Every statement in them is a statement of law. They point to causes of which life is an effect; that life arising from the action of Spirit in Nature, and which we must understand as it is manifested within us before we can advance on the Path. There is a scientific meaning within all these devotional or ethical injunctions, for the Wisdom-Religion never relaxes her hold upon Science or attempts to dissever an effect from its cause. Most of these admonitions have their base in the constitution of the Archæus, or World-Soul, and the correlation of its energies; others, still, inhere in the Eternal.

No less should the reader guard himself against a slight estimate arising from the exquisite modesty of Z. An occultist is never so truly a man of power as when he has wholly learned and exhibits this truth:

"And the power the disciple shall desire is that which shall make him appear as nothing *in the eyes of men*."

The inner eye, *the power of seeing*, looks deeper into the source of a man's knowledge and takes it at its true value. Those men who are sharers in the Divine, whose first office is to give, are often protected from the demands and curiosity of the careless by a simple exterior which deceives the worldly sense. Some men are great because of the Power which stands be-

hind them, the divine energies which flow through them ; they are great through having learned how to receive this celestial influx from higher spheres of Being ; they are the appointed ministrants, the true servitors of the Law and pupils of Masters whose office is humanitarian and universal.

Such aid is never volunteered ; it follows the Karmic behest, and, when given, leaves the student free to follow it or not, as his intuitions may direct. There is no shadow or vestige of *authority* in the matter, as the world understands the word *authority*. Those who travel the unknown way send messages back, and he who can receives them. Only a few of the first steps are here recorded and the first impediments surmounted. No hints of magic lore are to be found ; no formulas of creed or occult powers ; the questions of an awakening soul are answered, and the pilgrim is shown where lies the entrance to the Path. The world at large seeks the facts of occult science, but the student who has resolved to attain desires to find the true road. What may seem to others as mere ethics is to him practical instruction, for as he follows it he soon perceives its relation to facts and laws which he is enabled to verify, and what seemed to him the language of devotion merely, is found to be that of science ; but the science is spiritual, for the Great Cause is pure Spirit.

Many students must at some time stand where the writer then stood, at the beginning of the way. For all these this correspondence is made public, and they are urged to look within the printed words for their imperishable meaning. They may be cheered to find the footprints of a comrade upon the rugged Path, above which the light of Truth ever shines. Yet even this light is not always a clear splendor. It may seem "in the daytime a cloud, and by night a pillar of fire." We must question every external aspect, even that of Faith itself, for the secret and germ of things lies at their core. Let us purify even our Faith ; let us seek Truth herself, and not our preconceptions of Truth. In her mirror we shall never see our own familiar face : that which we see is still ourselves, because our real self is truth.

As the Theosophical movement gathers new momentum, fresh recruits may be aided by those letters which so greatly sustained me, or encouraged by some co-partnership of thought, and that, too, in the real issue confronting them. We first take this issue to be the acquirement of occult knowledge. Soon we find that the meaning of all really informed occult writers eludes us. We find that books only serve to remind us of what we knew in the long past, perhaps when "journeying with Deity", and the echoes awakened within us are so faint that they are rarely to be caught. Whether we study philosophies, metaphysics, physics, ethics, harmony, astrology, natural sciences, astralism, magnetism, or what not, we meet with endless contradiction and differentiation ; we forever require to strike the balance of our

own intuition. We discover that the final word has not yet been *written down* upon any of the higher subjects (unless it be on mathematics, and scarcely on that), and that all our learning is but a finger-post to that supreme knowledge of Truth which is only found and closely guarded within the human heart. Thrown back upon our inner perceptions for continual readjustment, on every side of experience this warning confronts us: *Stand ready to abandon all thou hast learned!* Not knowing the one centre, we cannot thoroughly know any sub-centre. The cause unknown, effects mislead us. Then we turn to that mysterious centre whereby the One is manifest in man, and we begin the study of the heart, both in itself and in the life it has instituted about us.

To be put into more direct communication with the world of cause is now the student's most pressing need. One thing alone prevents this,—himself. He is of such gross fibre that he cannot be "porous to thought, bibulous of the sea of light." To the refinement and dispersal of this lower self—of the man he now takes himself to be—he then directs his will. Each man has a different mode of doing this, but each who advances at all finds that with every new period of his inner life a new self arises before him. Looking back over a group of weeks or months, he is amazed to see what manner of man he was then, and smiles that pitying smile which we bestow upon the faded letters of our youth.

Yet some there be who ossify there in their rut; let them struggle mightily to break up the mass which has resisted all environment, all change, all the conditions of progressive life. They have done for themselves what the enemy strives to do for others; they are the rock in their own path.

What our Eastern brothers call "the sheaths of the heart" fall away one by one; when the last bursts open there is a silence, the silence of the mystic death. But "the dead shall arise," and from that death springs up the first tender growth of eternal life.

Up to this point we shall not travel in the ensuing pages. Yet having realized the real issue so forcibly that his whole strength was at the start directed towards self-knowledge and the right use of Thought, the writer offers a part of his first instructions to those of his comrades who, single-hearted and of royal Faith, hold Truth to be dearer than all material life and seek it on the hidden way. There is no tie in the universe equal to that which binds such comrades together. It has been forged in the fires of unspeakable anguish; it has been rivetted by a dauntless purpose and an unique, because divine, Love. The fierce hatred of seen and unseen worlds cannot tamper with it so long as a man remains true to himself, for this larger life is himself, and as he grows towards it his self-imposed fetters fall away and he stands, at last, a free soul, in the celestial Light which is

Freedom itself, obedient only to the Law of its own divine Being. To reach it, let us obey the law of our own Being, for, truly, *Being is One*.

My comrades, wherever you are, I salute you.

JASPER NIEMAND, F. T. S.

I.

My Dear Jasper ;

Now let me elevate a signal. Do not think much of me, please. Think kindly of me ; but oh, my friend, direct your thoughts to the Eternal Truth. I am, like you, struggling on the road. ' Perhaps a veil might in an instant fall down from your spirit, and you would be long ahead of us all. The reason you have had help is that in other lives you gave it to others. In every effort you made to lighten another mind and open it to Truth, you were helped yourself. Those pearls you found for another and gave to him, you really retained for yourself in the act of benevolence. For when one lives thus to help others, he is thereby putting in practice the rule to try and " kill out all sense of separateness," and thus gets little by little in possession of the true light.

Never lose, then, that attitude of mind. Hold fast in silence to all that is your own, for you will need it in the fight ; but never, never desire to get knowledge or power for any other purpose than to give it on the altar, for thus alone can it be saved to you.

So many are there around me who are ardent desirers and seekers, devotees ; but they are doing it because the possession seems valuable. Perhaps I see in you—I hope I mistake not—a pure desire to seek Knowledge for its own sake, and that all others may be benefited. So I would point out to you the only royal road, the one vehicle. Do all those acts, physical, mental, moral, for the reason that they must be done, instantly resigning all interest in them, offering them up upon the altar. What altar? Why the great spiritual altar, which is, if one desires it, in the heart. Yet still use earthly discrimination, prudence, and wisdom.

It is not that you must rush madly or boldly out *to do, to do*. Do what you find to do. Desire ardently to do it, and even when you shall not have succeeded in carrying any thing out but some small duties, some words of warning, your strong desire will strike like Vulcan upon other hearts in the world, and suddenly you will find that done which you had longed to be the doer of. Then rejoice that another had been so fortunate as to make such a meritorious Karma. Thus, like the rivers running into the unswelling, passive ocean, will your desires enter into your heart.

I find all your remarks just ; and besides, there seems to be a real spirit behind them. Do not fear nor fail because you feel dark and heavy. The very rage you feel will break the shrine that covers the mystery after a while.

No one can really help you. No one can open your doors. You locked them up, and only you can open them. When you open any door, beyond it you find others standing there who had passed you long ago, but now, unable to proceed, they are there waiting; others are there waiting for you. Then you come, and, opening a door, those waiting disciples perhaps may pass on; thus on and on. What a privilege this, to reflect that we may perhaps be able to help those who seemed greater than ourselves!

O what a groan Nature gives to see the heavy Karma which man has piled upon himself and all the creatures of the three worlds! That deep sigh pierces through my heart. How can the load be lifted? Am I to stand for myself, while the few strong hands of Blessed Masters and Their friends hold back the awful cloud? Such a vow I registered ages ago to help them, and I must. Would to great Karma I could do more! And you! do what you can.

Place your only faith, reliance, and trust on Karma.

Z.

(To be continued.)

AMONG THE DEAD.

[I must write down here nothing of myself, but only that which is given me to write. Who thus commands me I see not, nor do I hear or know him. But these thoughts, and the words that clothe them, are his, not mine. They are formed in my brain, but not by me. I hold the pen—nothing more.]

* * *

“When they found me, in the morning, I was cold and still. ‘He is dead!,’ they said, as they put back the heavy silken curtains of my bed and let the chill grey light fall upon my face. ‘He is dead!,’ they said, ‘past pain, and care, and sorrow. He is at rest. But, for the sake of those he leaves behind, it is not well that men should know how he died.’ So the complaisant physician told the untruth, and the world believed it. But I, pulseless, breathless, lying there before them and hearing their speech, knew that the deed was my own. I had been weary of the strife of life; sad from that which had been; fearful of what was to come.

With ceremonious pomp, befitting one in my station among men, they buried me. Emblems of woe and symbols of mourning were all about me and piled upon my coffin. There was one who stood at my low-lying head

and spake words of eulogy over me. They were mockeries. I, hearing them and conscious of the truth of what had been, knew my deep undeserving. Alas! for the frozen lips that could not gainsay his smooth flatteries.

Then deep-toned waves of solemn harmony awoke responsive trembling in the walls about and the high arch overhead, and even thrilled me where I lay in state that all might look their last upon me. Amid the many who thus gazed and cared naught were a few who loved me, whose tears dropped on my face as they bent to kiss my icy brow; and a passion of pity for their grief that I had brought upon them, and a vain longing to return to life that I might comfort them, came to me like a throb of pain.

Then they shut out the light from me and carried me away to my last resting place. And all the way, though I lay there in darkness, with unseeing eyes, deaf ears, and speechless lips, I saw the infinite loveliness of the dear living world I had abandoned, heard its myriad sounds of life blended into a choral of thanksgiving for the joy of mere existence, and, out of my remorseful yearning to again be part of it all, uttered a shriek of agony—heard and echoed only in my own soul.

Dully rumbled the earth falling upon my coffin; high in a mound above they piled it. Down where they had put me, all was still, and cool, and damp. When their work was done, they went away. Then, all was silence. The momentary pang of desire for life had passed, and I was resigned. Voluntarily I had died that I might sleep, at once and forever. But I could not sleep. Every sense was keenly awake. And now I knew that I would never sleep, that death is an eternal wakening. And that wakening, for me at least, was in the grave. A nameless horror, unspeakable and vast, overwhelmed me.

Lonesome and dark, at first, my surroundings seemed. But I grew accustomed to the obscurity, could in some measure penetrate it, and a consciousness grew upon me that I was not alone. Had I neighbors down there in the ground? Were others awake near me? If so, could I know of them, and in what forms might they appear to me? With appalling shapes my fancy filled the gloom that smothered me. Dimly I felt already that I was not as those by whom death had been unsought; that I, un-bidden, had intruded upon them before my time had come to know them, and I feared them—as if I had still been alive.

But in much time they came no nearer to me, and were no more distinct than are vaguely-defined superior depths of shadow where all is shade. And I had nothing to do but lie still and think, always to think of myself, sometimes with pity, again with contempt, and often with rage, for I was very weary of being there and of thinking that I was so of my own will.

And all this while Nature was reclaiming from me that which belonged to her,—my form of clay. How hideous and loathsome it became to me!

Yet I was bound in it, inseparable from it. With each fibre, in every tissue of the horrible mass that it became, my semi-material second self—my astral body—was inextricably inter-blended, and from it, as now I knew, could only be freed by its mouldering away and returning to the elements whence it had been drawn. Earth ; air ; water ; each individually pure, yet how unspeakably revolting down there in the grave in their process of resolvement. And the demon Worm ; resting not and sated never ; who but the dead themselves can know what tortures he inflicts, to which all agony of living flesh is joy ? Yet to all these dread abominations, their maddening defilement and their pain, the senses of my astral body, keener than those of men who live yet all ways like to theirs, thrilled with extremest consciousness. Oh ! the unutterable misery, the loathing and the horror of that awful prison house.

With the slow progress of the changes thus upon me wrought, my conscious second self by slow degrees gained freedom. Then I knew what was about me ; penetrated with my sight the long, thick-peopled lines of houses of the dead, and knew my neighbors. And I saw that all graves were not fearsome prisons, hells, like mine. In some lay bodies turning back to earth, wherein no soul was pent. Souls whose brief earthly lives were all too short to know of evil purpose or of sin, and those who worthily had lived out their allotted days till, spent with kindly labor of good deeds, therein had left their earthly forms,—for them the eternal wakening was restful peace in realms of light. But those inhabiting there below, with me, were souls, like mine, impatient of their task of life. Not alone is he self-slayer who by violence upon himself abbreviates his earthly span. To the same fate attain the grasping souls who, by excess of toil for love of gain or satisfaction of ambition, and the sensual ones who, through abandonment to fleshly lusts and vices, will to the grave before their time. Such were my company.

Ah ! what democracy there is in death ! In that drear nether world, masks are unknown, efforts at pretence vain. Each naked stands, transparent to his fellow's gaze, each meriting the scorn of all and shunning each the other, self-reproach and vain regret in every one consuming thought of pity for his fellow's woe. Madness, that knows not, and despair, that is past caring, may not mercifully enter there. Man must be conscious, and not quite devoid of hope—even though that hope be but of some other kind of hell—, that he may suffer all the more. How long ! Oh ! Lord of Life, how long ! until such hope springs up as can some comfort bring ; until the end appears, remote but sure, when, through destruction total of the bonds of clay, deliverance shall be. To all, at length, that hope appears, and, as the years roll on, by progress slow is realized.

Up once again, when little more, if aught, than formless dust is left behind, the freed soul rises to the world of living men. So I passed, leaving one woe to learn another not less keen in anguish.

A weary time I yet remained within the narrow confines of the city of the dead, as if some potent spell still linked my soul unto the elements that had been mine; and all my days were filled with sights and sounds of human grief; and all my nights a myriad spectral forms, Remorse, and Sin, and Shame, and Fear—that had been human—and the baleful bodiless things that hate men's souls, surrounded me. The dew upon the rank grass there seemed tears; the dreary moanings of the wind in the bare branches overhead were lamentations; and the moon's cold light, crossed by swift-moving clouds, did seem to shudder at our ghastly multitude.

Stronger and stronger on me grew desire to look again on those I loved in life, until at length my will sufficed to burst the bonds that held me near my grave, and I returned to them,—so plunging in another hell.

On them I saw descend, though far remote, the dire results of the rash deed that I had done, the curse that I had wrought; yet, in comparison, the atom to the Infinite is as my love and sympathy for them had been in life, to what it now was magnified. And herein lay my hell. Their perils and their griefs, cares and temptations, all to me were known, spread clear before me like an open scroll; and I could even read the fate awaiting them; behold the merciless hands—to them invisible—up-reaching from the abysses where souls are lost, to drag them down; mark their vain struggles to escape, and with unerring surety presage their defeat. And, all the while, my knowledge was no less of how they could be helped and saved,—yet I was powerless. Words framed by my immaterial lips made no vibration to their ears; the anguish in my eyes they saw not; thoughts that I strove to force upon their minds in passive sleep distorted were to idle dreams; and the malignant creatures of the air encircling 'round mocked at my impotence.

The end has come at last. Contrition, for rebellion past against the perfect wisdom of the Infinite Will, from Infinite Justice gains surcease of punishment, the severance of all earthly ties, and rest, and peace."

JAMES H. CONNELLY.

THE DWELLER OF THE THRESHOLD.

Has such a being any existence? Has any one ever seen it? Are there many or several, and has it any sex?

Such are the questions asked by nearly all students who read theological books. Some of those who all their life believed in fairies in secret and in the old tales of giants, have proceeded to test the question by calling upon the horrid shade to appear and freeze their blood with the awful eyes that Bulwer Lytton has made so famous in his "Zanoni." But the Dweller is not to be wooed in such a way, and has not appeared at all,

but by absolute silence leads the invoker to at last scout the idea altogether.

But this same inquirer then studies theosophical books with diligence, and enters after a time on the attempt to find out his own inner nature. All this while the Dweller has waited, and, indeed, we may say, in complete ignorance as yet of the neophyte's existence. When the study has proceeded far enough to wake up long dormant senses and tendencies, the Dweller begins to feel that such a person as this student is at work. Certain influences are then felt, but not always with clearness, and at first never ascribed to the agency of what had long ago been relegated to the lumber-room of exploded superstitions. The study goes still farther and yet farther, until the awful Thing has revealed itself; and when that happens, it is not a superstition nor is it disbelieved. It can then never be gotten rid of, but will stay as a constant menace until it is triumphed over *and left behind*.

When Glyndon was left by Mejnour in the old castle in Italy, he found two vases which he had received directions not to open. But disobeying these he took out the stoppers, and at once the room was filled with intoxication, and soon the awful, loathsome creature appeared whose blazing eyes shone with malignant glare and penetrated to Glyndon's soul with a rush of horror such as he had never known.

In this story Lytton desired to show that the opening of the vases is like the approach of an enquirer to the secret recesses of his own nature. He opens the receptacles, and at first is full of joy and a sort of intoxication due to the new solutions offered for every problem in life and to the dimly seen vistas of power and advancement that open before him. If the vases *are kept open long enough*, the Dweller of the Threshold surely appears, and no man is exempt from the sight. Goodness is not sufficient to prevent its appearance, because even the good man who finds a muddy place in the way to his destination must of necessity pass through it to reach the end.

We must ask next, *WHAT* is the Dweller? It is the combined evil influence that is the result of the wicked thoughts and acts of the age in which any one may live, and it assumes to each student a definite shape at each appearance, being always either of one sort or changing each time. So that with one it may be as Bulwer Lytton pictured it, or with another only a dread horror, or even of any other sort of shape. It is specialized for each student and given its form by the tendencies and natural physical and psychical combinations that belong to his family and nation.

Where, then, does it dwell? is the very natural inquiry which will follow. It dwells in its own plane, and that may be understood in this manner.

Around each person are planes or zones, beginning with spirit and running down to gross matter. These zones extend, within their lateral boundaries, all around the being. That is to say, if we figure ourselves as

being in the centre of a sphere, we will find that there is no way of escaping or skipping any one zone, because it extends in every direction until we pass its lateral boundary.

When the student has at last gotten hold of a real aspiration and some glimmer of the blazing goal of truth where Masters stand, and has also aroused the determination to know and to be, the whole bent of his nature, day and night, is to reach out beyond the limitations that hitherto had fettered his soul. No sooner does he begin thus to step a little forward, than he reaches the zone just beyond mere bodily and mental sensations. At first the minor dwellers of the threshold are aroused, and they in temptation, in bewilderment, in doubt or confusion, assail him. He only feels the effect, for they do not reveal themselves as shapes. But persistence in the work takes the inner man farther along, and with that progress comes a realization to the outer mind of the experiences met, until at last he has waked up the whole force of the evil power that naturally is arrayed against the good end he has set before him. Then the Dweller takes what form it may. That it does take some definite shape or impress itself with palpable horror is a fact testified to by many students.

One of those related to me that he saw it as an enormous slug with evil eyes whose malignancy could not be described. As he retreated—that is, grew fearful—, it seemed joyful and portentous, and when retreat was complete it was not. Then he fell further back in thought and action, having occasionally moments of determination to retrieve his lost ground. Whenever these came to him, the dreadful slug again appeared, only to leave him when he had given up again his aspirations. And he knew that he was only making the fight, if ever he should take it up again, all the harder.

Another says that he has seen the Dweller concentrated in the apparent form of a dark and sinister-looking man, whose slightest motions, whose merest glance, expressed the intention and ability to destroy the student's reason, and only the strongest effort of will and faith could dispel the evil influence. And the same student at other times has felt it as a vague, yet terrible, horror that seemed to enwrap him in its folds. Before this he has retreated for the time to prepare himself by strong self-study to be pure and brave for the next attack.

These things are not the same as the temptations of Saint Anthony. In his case he seems to have induced an hysterical erotic condition, in which the unvanquished secret thoughts of his own heart found visible appearance.

The Dweller of the Threshold is not the product of the brain, but is an influence found in a plane that is extraneous to the student, but in which his success or failure will be due to his own purity. It is not a thing to be dreaded by mere diletanti theosophists; and no earnest one who feels himself absolutely called to work persistently to the highest planes of develop-

ment for the good of humanity, and not for his own, need fear aught that heaven or hell holds.

EUSEBIO URBAN.

A CURIOUS TALE.

Some years ago I ran down to the Lakes of Killarney, but not for the purpose merely of seeing them as any other traveler. During my boyhood the idea of going there had always been before me, and, in dreams I would often find myself on the water or wandering near by. After this had occurred many times, I procured photographs of the scenery and was quite surprised to find that the dreams were accurate enough to seem like recollections. But various vicissitudes took me to other parts of the world, so that I had passed my majority without having visited the place, and, indeed, the decision to go there at last was not made until one day, while looking into a shop window in Dublin, my eye fell upon a picture of Killarney, and in an instant I was filled with a strong desire to see them. So I went on the first train and was very soon there, quartered with an old man who from the first seemed like an old friend.

The next day or two were devoted to wandering about with no purpose nor with very great satisfaction, for the place as a bit of country did not interest me after all my wanderings in many different climes. But on the third day I went off into a field not far from the shores of one of the sheets of water, and sat down near an old well. It was still early in the afternoon, and unusually pleasant. My mind had no particular object before it, and I noticed an inability, quite unusual, to follow long a definite train of thought. As I sat thus, drowsiness came over my senses, the field and the well grew grey but still remained in sight, yet I seemed to be changing into another man, and, as the minutes flew by, I saw the shadowy form or picture of a tall round tower rising, some fifty feet high, just beyond the well. Shaking myself, this disappeared and I thought I had fought off the sleepy feeling, but only for a moment. It returned with new intensity.

The well had disappeared and a building occupied its place, while the tall tower had grown solid; and then all desire to remain myself disappeared. I rose with a mechanical feeling that my duty, somehow or other, called me to the tower, and walked over into the building through which I knew it was necessary to go in order to reach the tower. As I passed inside the wall, there was the old well I had seen upon first coming into the field, but the strange incident did not attract my attention, for I knew the well as an old landmark. Reaching the tower, the steps wound up before me to the top, and as I mounted them a voice quite familiar called my name—a name not

the same that I owned to upon sitting down near the well, but that did not attract my attention any more than the old well inside the wall. At last I emerged upon the top of the tower, and there was an old man keeping up a fire. It was the eternal fire never yet known to have gone out, and I out of all the other young disciples alone was permitted to help the old man.

As my head rose above the level of the low rim of the tower, I saw a calm and beautiful mountain not far away, and other towers nearer to it than mine.

"You are late," said the old man. I made no reply, as there was none to make; but I approached and showed by my attitude that I was ready to go on watching in his place. As I did this it flashed across me that the sun was nearing the horizon, and for an instant the memory of the old man with whom I had lodged came before me, as well as the express train to be reached by cart, but that faded out as the old watcher looked into my brain with his piercing eyes.

"I fear to leave you in charge," was his first remark. "There is a shadow, dark and silent, near you."

"Do not fear, father," said I; "I will not leave the fire nor permit it to go out."

"If you do, then our doom is sealed and the destiny of Innisfallen delayed."

With those words he turned and left me, and soon I heard his foot-fall no more on the winding stairs that led below.

The fire seemed bewitched. It would hardly burn, and once or twice it almost paralyzed me with fear, so nearly did it expire. When the old man left me, it was burning brightly. At last it seemed that my efforts and prayers were successful; the blaze sprang up and all looked well. Just then a noise on the stairs caused me to turn round, and to my surprise a complete stranger came upon the platform where none but the guardians were allowed.

"Look," said he; "those fires beyond are dying out."

I looked and was filled with fear to see that the smoke from the towers near the mountain had died out, and in my sudden amazement rushed to the parapet to get a nearer view. Satisfied that what the stranger said was true, I turned to resume my watch, and there, O horror! my own fire was just expiring. No lights or tinder were permitted there; the watcher had to renew the fire by means of the fire. In a frenzy of fear I leaped to new fuel and put it on the fire, fanned it, laid my face to it and strove with maddened gasps to blow the flame up, but all my efforts were vain,—it was dead.

A sickening dread seized me, succeeded by a paralysis of every nerve except those that aid the hearing. I heard the stranger move toward me, and then I recognized his voice as he spoke. No other noises were about,

all was dead and cold, and I seemed to know that the ancient guardian of the fire would return no more, that no one would return, that some calamity had fallen.

"It is the past," the stranger began. "You have just reached a point where you failed to feed the fire ages ago. It is done. Do you want to hear of these things? The old man has gone long ago, and can trouble you no more. Very soon you will be again in the whirl of the nineteenth century."

Speech then returned to me and I said, "Yes, tell me what this is, or has been."

"This is an old tower used by the immediate descendants of the white Magicians who settled on Ireland when England's Isle had not arisen from the sea. When the great Masters had to go away, strict injunctions were left that no fires on these towers were to go out, and the warning was also given that, if the duties of life were neglected, if charity, duty, and virtue were forgotten, the power to keep these fires alive would gradually disappear. The decadence of the virtues would coincide with the failure of the fires, and this, the last tower, guarded by an old and a young man, would be the last to fail, and that even it could save the rest if its watchers were faithful.

"Many years elapsed, and the brilliant gem placed upon the mount of Innisfallen blazed both by day and night until at last it seemed to fade a little. The curious sounding-stones, now found in Ireland, were not so easily blown; only when a pure and faithful servant came down from the White Tower did the long, strange, and moving sounds float over the mountains from the stone placed near the mount on which was the gem. Those stones had been used by the great magicians, and when the largest of them all, lying near the great White Tower, was sounded, the fairies of the lakes appeared; when the stone of the mount was blown together with that at the White Tower, the spirits of the air and the water ranged themselves obediently around.

"But all this altered, and unbelief crept in while the fires were kept up as a form.

"You were relied on with the old man. But vain dreams detained you *one* hour beyond your appointed time on this fatal day, now in the past but shown you by my special favor. You came, but late. The old man was compelled to wait, but still feared to leave you, for he saw with prescient eye the dark finger of fate. He descended the stairs, and at its foot fell down and died. Your curiosity then drew you at the exact fatal moment to look at yonder tower, although you knew the prophecy and believed it. That moment decided all—and, poor boy, you could not hold back the iron hand of destiny.

"The fire has gone out. You returned to the floors below; at the foot

of the stairs you saw them carrying off the old man and——* * ”

At this point I saw the shadowy, waving shape of the tower ; the building had disappeared, the well was beside me, and I was in the field again. Oh !

BRYAN KINNAVAN.

THE PLANES OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

There are three conditions of consciousness in ordinary daily experience, that of ordinary wakefulness, that of sleep with dreams, and that of dreamless sleep. We have already shown that not memory, but consciousness, is the all-potent factor in man. Consciousness as a fact returns to the individual as well as memory, after deep sleep. Every one will admit that, in sleep where dreams occur, consciousness is on a different plane, or under different conditions, from the waking state, and memory brings into the waking state the subject and the varied experiences of dreams. After dreamless sleep memory may bring nothing back from the subjective world; but it resumes the thread of life just where it was dropped before unconsciousness came on. Now what becomes of consciousness during the dreamless slumber? Either it continues or it does not. If it continues, then it must simply be upon another plane and under different conditions, at least so far as thought and memory are concerned, for the gap is between consciousness and memory in relation to thought. If, on the other hand, consciousness is blotted out and re-created every time we enter dreamless sleep, how does it happen that both consciousness and memory, both new creations, at once take up the thread of life just where they dropped it, and resume the even tenor of their way as though nothing had happened? Such a position is evidently absurd. Nature never does things in that way. Her adjustments require time, her developments and all her varied relations are slow growths. Both consciousness and memory have grown and expanded from the original germ. The true philosophy of dreams, then, is a problem in the conditions of consciousness, while we may fairly assume that consciousness still persists in dreamless sleep, though under different circumstances. Nothing is more common in daily life than the shifting of the planes of consciousness. Take, for example, the action of anaesthetics. Chloroform changes the consciousness of the real ego. The individual cannot be called strictly unconscious. He is not conscious in the ordinary way. He suffers no pain, and retains no recollection of what occurs while under the influence of the anaesthetic, but the organic consciousness remains undisturbed, muscular motion may occur, but without coördination. The cerebrum, cerebellum, and sensory ganglia are unconscious in dreamless sleep; the medulla, spinal cord, and solar plexus, and the sexual area

are wide awake, and sometimes these are super-sensitive. The light of self-consciousness is withdrawn, drawn within, but not quenched. In syncope or an ordinary faint, consciousness is likewise withdrawn, but if one will watch carefully the first return of consciousness in such cases, it will generally be found that consciousness has been by no means dead or idle, for by gently attracting the attention just on the turning point it will be found that a few seconds have been sufficient for the recall of a long forgotten experience, recovered now from the all-pervading ether, or for the weaving of romance, comedy, or tragedy quite sufficient for a good sized novel. But, perhaps, the rather common instances of sleep-walking or somnambulism offer the best illustrations of at least dual consciousness. The literature of the subject is, however, so full and so easy of access that it is unnecessary here to go into details. Persons subject to these attacks from childhood really lead dual lives bearing no direct relation to each other. Individuals walking in their sleep have been known to enter a company where there were strangers, carry on a conversation with those to whom they were introduced, and retain no recollection of the events or of the names of the strangers, or even to have met them. But on the succeeding night, walking again in sleep, meeting the same individuals they recognize them and resume the conversation of the previous night. One such case is sufficient to show the existence of another than the outer plane of consciousness. Experiments in animal magnetism, and more especially the recent investigations in hypnotism, demonstrate beyond all controversy more than one plane of consciousness, and these may have no direct relation to each other, or, when desired, the connection may be established between the different planes. In many of these cases the extent of knowledge and intelligence of the faculties of the individual in subjective consciousness altogether transcends the ordinary plane. As previously remarked, the difficulty is not in finding illustrations of the different planes and relations of consciousness, but in selecting from the mass of available material. Even the delirium of fever, the intoxication produced by alcohol and many drugs, no less than monomania and insanity, each and all consist largely in either a temporary or a permanent shifting of the planes of consciousness, and aberrations of memory. Take, for example, the delirium caused by opium and alcohol. Consciousness is shifted to a subjective plane, and sometimes to a very low plane. It is a great mistake to assume that the objects seen and the events that occur have no real existence. If all these are to be regarded as the creations of the imagination, whence arises the great uniformity of the objects witnessed from the effects of alcohol? When we get any rational idea of the subjective world, we shall discover that the snakes and dragons witnessed there are as veritable on that plane, to subjective sense, as their living phototypes are on the phenomenal plane to objective

sense; for it must be remembered that the universal ether is that infinite ocean whence all creation proceeds, and into whose all-dissolving bosom all things return. Our relation to objects here is largely incidental, determined by location, circumstance, and the like.

On the subjective plane our relations are determined by attractions and intrinsic conditions, and an individual full of all evil passions, inflamed by alcohol, will attract entities of like degree, and so on to the end of the chapter. To say that all such cases result from pure imagination is not even to make them thinkable. Many persons assume that when they have named a thing they have explained it, and that further questions are an impertinence. 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 centers. 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 coördinate. 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. But pray what is imagination? Ask the artist, the poet, the painter; ask genius that is so closely allied to insanity; ask all who create from ideal forms; and they will tell us, one and all, that imagination is the wings of the soul that bear up the lagging fancy, the slow and plodding mind, till it enters the ideal world and gazes there on both beauty and deformity in all their nakedness. They will tell us that what we call the real world is at best but a poor and colorless caricature as compared to the ideals open to the imagination, and that what the world is pleased to call the work of genius bears but a touch of that transcendent truth and reality that veils its face from every faculty of man on the phenomenal plane. Ask the true scientist what we knew of anything, of matter, space, time, or motion,—of the whole phenomenal world—, and he will tell us, and tell us truly, that we have our own ideas of these, and nothing more. Finally, ask that greatest of all modern philosophers, Schopenhauer, what is imagination? and he will tell us that not only the world, but ourselves included, is reducible to two terms, Imagination and Will; the one, the essence and the creator

of all forms in nature ; the other, the creative and motive power; and that these powers are as potent on the subjective plane as on the objective ; are as active in drunken delirium, in mania, and insanity, as in that other condition of consciousness that we call sanity, but which is often more insane than any other. There is no subject likely to yield more valuable results to the earnest student than the various planes and conditions of consciousness.

J. D. BUCK.

THEOSOPHIC DIET.

The question "whether to eat meat or not to eat it" is one which is uppermost in the minds of many theosophists to-day. Some will eat no meat, while others still use it, and a few who are vegetarians seem to think that the meat eaters are sinners and cannot be spiritual.

Although I belong to the Spanish-speaking people, I am a vegetarian and a theosophist ; and I hope that the difference in race will not have any effect on my American readers, brother theosophists.

Let us examine the different standpoints taken, and look at the matter without any bias in favor of either vegetarianism or carnivorous diet.

The meat eaters say that in nature we find cows and elephants eating no meat, and yet that they seem to have no additional spirituality as a result, and that among men we often see those who, although they eat meat, are at the same time highly spiritualised. This is their case.

The vegetarians have these arguments : (a) that animal food necessarily imparts to the eater the qualities of the animal, and that the eating of meat not only may give us the diseases of the animal, but also tends to inflame the blood and makes the gross envelope of the body more dense than ever ; (b) that it is wrong to kill animals for food, because, as we did not give them life, we have no right to take it away from them ; (c) that by living on vegetable food we make the gross body more permeable to higher influences. There may be finer divisions of the argument, but the above will give their case in general.

It must make much difference in the conclusion whether one is speaking of a man belonging to the western nations or of one who, like the Hindu, comes of a race which for ages has taken no animal food. It is held by many physiologists that the stomach is an organ for the digesting of animal food only, and that in a vegetarian the pyloric valve leading from the stomach is so paralyzed from want of use that the food passes directly into the intestines. It must therefore follow that the western man may be placing himself in danger of fatal derangement of his system when he leaves meat eating and takes up vegetarianism. This has, indeed, been

proved in many cases to be a real danger. I have before me the reports of several theosophists who found that it was not possible for them to make the change ; at the same time others have made it with perfect safety. The trouble did not arise from weakness following lack of meat, but from imperfect digestion causing disease. This is due to the retention in the stomach of vegetable matter for so long a time that yeast and other growths were thrown into the circulation ; these are sufficient to bring on tuberculosis, nervous diseases, and other manifold derangements. It is well known that a man who has melancholia due to systemia cannot expect to reach a high development in occultism.

We next find that there are powerful black magicians in farther India and in many other places who do not deny themselves meat but take as much as they wish, and also stimulants. From this we conclude that power over nature's forces is not solely in the hands of the vegetarian. We need not stop to consider the fate of such magicians, as that has been often dilated upon.

Now although the Hindu has been always a vegetarian, it is a fact that for him the acquirement of knowledge of absolute truth is as difficult as it is for the western man who eats meat. In the books of the Hindoo on the subject of spiritual culture or soul development, the rules laid down are extremely hard to follow. The eating of meat is not definitely referred to, but the attainment of union with the Supreme, *from which alone knowledge of absolute truth results*, is hedged about with difficulties in comparison with which the eating of meat sinks into the shade ; but we must remember that it is assumed in India that the student is not a meat eater. The reason for the prohibition, however, is that a man has no right to kill animals for his food or for any other reason. He must refrain, not because the act is forbidden, but because his whole nature, through the great love and pity that he feels, naturally recoils from such an act. It is plain, if this rule be the correct one—and I think it is—, that a person who stops the eating of meat in order that he may by complying with that condition attain to a development he has set before him misses the mark, and has acquired a selfish motive for the line thus adopted. It is an old and true saying that the kingdom of God cometh not from taking or refraining from meat, nor from the refraining from anything whatever, but that it is *within us*. In another place it is said that this kingdom of heaven is taken by violence ; that is, it requires all knowledge and all goodness to attain at last to that union with the spirit which is the kingdom of heaven. And such attainments are not in the reach of either those who, on the one hand, long for sentimental religion only, or those who, on the other, work that they may reach the blissful result for themselves. The first, although extremely good, are barred from want of knowledge, and the other by the selfish motive at the bottom of their practice. In the "Great Journey,"

translated from the Sanscrit by Mr. Arnold, is a beautiful illustration of the spirit and motive which must actuate us. Yudissthira reached heaven after losing his friends on the way, and was at the gate accompanied by his dog who looked to him as his only friend ; and when he was refused admission because the dog was with him, he declined to enter. He was let in, and the dog revealed himself as one of the gods ; then the king found that his friends were not there, and was told that they were in hell. He asked to go there, and was sent. He found it an awful place and was on the point of returning, when the pitiful voices of his friends called him back, saying that he gave them some comfort by his presence, and he then said he would stay in hell for them. This was reported to the gods, and they in a body went to hell and rescued all the denizens of the place for his sake. The selfishness or selflessness of the motive will determine the result.

We find, on referring to the great Indian work of Patanjali on the Philosophy of Yogam, that nothing is said about meat eating. The disciple is not met with the regulation at the outset, "You must refrain from eating meat." This is not because the people were all vegetarians at the time it was written, because even then permissions were extended to certain classes of men for the eating of flesh. The warrior was allowed to eat meat, and out of the warrior caste arose many who attained to the supreme heights of adeptship. To say that carnivorous diet will *in itself* exclude you from spiritual attainments is of like character with the statement that one cannot attain unless he is of the unsullied Brahmin caste. That was sometimes said by some Brahmins, but is easily met by the fact that the great Krishna was a shepherd by caste.

What, then, is the true theosophic diet? It is that which best agrees with you, taken in moderation, neither too much nor too little. If your constitution and temperament will permit vegetarianism, then that will give less heat to the blood ; and, if it is practiced from the sincere conviction that it is not true brotherhood to destroy living creatures so highly organized as animals, then so much the better. But if you refrain from meat in order to develop your psychic powers and senses, and continue the same sort of thoughts you have always had, neither cultivating nor practicing the highest altruism, the vegetarianism is in vain.

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 abnegation 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.

RODRIGUEZ UNDIANO.

TEA TABLE TALK.

Rich indeed is the chronicle of the past month. The year 1888 closes ripely, full of harvest for succeeding time. The appearance of Vol. 1. of *The Secret Doctrine*; the formation of the Esoteric Section; the announcement of the probable visit of our President-Founder next year, (an event sure to be productive of great stimulus and general public awakening); each of these taken singly is a decided step onward in the affairs of the Theosophical Society, and taken altogether they seem to form a bright harbinger of a better day. *The Secret Doctrine* itself is a tremendous event. It is simply overwhelming. The stanzas from the ancient Book of Dzyan are sublime. They have all the thrilling poetry of Truth. There are phrases that run through the body like fire; ideas that make the flesh to curdle and the very hair to tingle with their shadowy awfulness. Who among occultists can read without emotion that weird phrase, *The Army of the Voice?* It is not for me to review this work; not for language to return thanks for it. We can only take the gift in silence, repeating our pledges in our hearts. Two years ago H. P. B. wrote; "Have patience. *The Secret Doctrine* will teach you more definite things than *Isis* now ever could. The latter was only an essay balloon. I hope you will be satisfied with the last and final work of my life." The book verifies this assertion; it teaches definitely. There is much that we cannot fully understand, of course; moreover, the present volume does not complete the work. It would, then, seem wise for us not to be too ready to form opinions, to build up doctrines, or to reject what may conflict with our present ideas. These truths are to be developed by her later. Also to be tested in our experience, and not in our brains, and much of our experience now lies in what we call the Future.

When we consider that these events have come about under the Law of Karma, we may regard them as the just dues of the Society as a body. In these opportunities the Karma of Humanity has also a share, though coming, perhaps, less forcibly home to them by reason of their greater remoteness from Occultism. Following occult analogy, we may see in the T. S. the immediate Karmic vehicle or organism for the distribution of knowledge on our plane to all who can receive it. "To him that hath shall be given." This mystic saying is verified here and continually through processes of Attraction. The above view finds corroboration in the dedication of the *Secret Doctrine* to all Theosophists; "for they have called it forth." This fact is an encouragement and a warning. The first rewards while it prompts us to fresh efforts. The second reminds us of the increased responsibilities of enlarged knowledge. Whether we "take knowledge" or not, as we have called it forth, each in his own degree and according to his aspirations, this opportunity, whether in its use, disuse, or misuse, is now set down to our account. Wherefore it behooves each one of us to ask in the secret tribunal of the soul this question; "Am I doing *all* that lies within my power for Humanity?" What hidden sores this probe discovers in us!

Our Founders are doing their utmost, with every nerve and faculty on the strain ; H. P. Blavatsky fighting materialism in England and the world ; Col. Olcott sustaining those efforts by his own sacrifices and inexhaustible devotion ; and the third Founder, who in the pages of this magazine must go unnamed, but, let us hope, not unthanked by its readers. And the month that has slipped by us has brought some bright examples of unselfish work. Some have cropped out through the working of the T. P. S. Scheme. Strangely enough, by the way, a comparison of lists developed the fact that THE PATH is almost wholly supported (in so far as it is supported by the public) by truth seekers who are not members of the T. S. From this public comes also the more prompt support of the scheme named. Possibly because the work of copying was not asked of them, as it was of members who stand professedly ready to do work. No reference is had here to persons who disapprove of the scheme. They are as 9 in 225, so far as heard from, and their opinions are of course their own. Undoubtedly a better plan might be devised. But this is the only one that *was* devised, the only help offered. Beyond the mere financial question it has done good in arousing thought and discussion, an effect both desired and foreseen. It is hoped that those who are waiting for some more ideal method to offer itself will initiate some such themselves and go to work on it. They may be sure of aid, for the great thing is to take what work offers itself, and not to stand waiting for the perfect plan or opportunity which never is found.

Here, for instance, is a theosophist who was obliged to re-use the ten cents asked, while expressing his sympathy. Why? Because his income from hard labor has not averaged over \$3 per week for 14 years. On this he managed, by strict economy, to "subscribe for *Lucifer*, THE PATH, the *Esoteric*, and other lesser lights," to buy *Isis* and *The Secret Doctrine*, to subscribe to one Branch of the T. S., and also to pay a fixed sum towards his church and orphans. His letter asked to "be regarded as an humble confession which tends to show and prove what wonders could be accomplished in this great and good Cause if all interested persons would put their shoulders to the wheel. I can do no more now, further than feel very grateful for the sure and certain *knowledge* that those who can do more are doing it : e. g. *some* of them are."

The Tea Table, for one, thought it was doing its best, until the above facts made it feel *small*. After all, how many of us make sacrifices of our daily comforts or habits in order to give? The Tea Table does not, more shame to it! But such examples will cause it to reflect and amend. Then there are the Christian or Mind Cure Scientists. We are told by the agent that every one of them on her list has been most liberal, and a couple of soldier members, far on the Western frontier, each gave from his slender pay ten times what was asked. One of them apologized for not handing on his circular by saying, "I know it is not polite, but I do not know anybody who will take an interest in such things." What a picture of moral courage here rises before us. The brave soul holding to occult truth in silence, distance, isolation, all of them real trials to the flesh if not to the spirit. And this

amid the rough army life, and its material tendencies and jests. These instances could be matched with others which, like these, asked to do good in silence, but one can show as well as a thousand that circumstances do not hamper our powers when it is our will to surmount circumstance.

Another touching event has come home to us in the last days and death of our late Brother, Govinda Row Sattay. It is a sad story, with hope and good cheer breaking through the sadness. It is a tale befitting the Christmas season ; one of love for humanity, of peace triumphing over life and death : let us read it reverently as an epitaph truer than most in its final eulogy.

Over a year ago the public first heard of Mr. Sattay through a public injustice. He was present at a religious meeting at Ocean Grove where the "heathen" were severely commented upon. Among other statements was made this ; viz., that Hindus worshipped the images which they, in fact, make of clay for memorial decoration upon certain high festivals, throwing them into the river when the day is over. Wealthy persons have images of gold for use upon such occasions ; these are preserved, for, as Mr. Sattay used to say with his rare smile, "I do not think an American would throw a gold image into the river." He had previously aroused the anger of some sectarians by his lectures on such points in hotel parlors, and when he rose to ask some questions at this meeting, in response, it is said, to an invitation addressed to questioners, he was ordered to be silent, and, persisting in his queries, was arrested and thrown into prison. Fancy an American's being so treated if he rose to some question at a public meeting, even without any of Brother Sattay's habitual and serious courtesy !

At this juncture the General Secretary of the T. S. saw the occurrence in the newspapers, and at once went to Ocean Grove to effect the release of the friendless stranger. Mr. Sattay naturally asked what had procured him this unexpected aid, and being told, he remarked that, if he might judge from their actions, he should say that the Theosophists were the *real* Christians. This said, he went away, and was for the time forgotten.

But he did not forget. His Hindu code was simple, but it had a grasp on the daily life of the man such as dogmatic creeds never can have. He had received a benefit in the name of Humanity : that benefit must be returned to Humanity ; such is Karma. This autumn he reappeared at the T. S. Headquarters in New York. He had worked at photography until he had saved enough money to live upon (and he ate mainly bread and milk) for one year. He now proposed to join the Society and to devote that year to working entirely for the Cause, whether in free teaching of Sanscrit, in expounding Oriental Scriptures from his standpoint as a Brahmin and a Buddhist, in giving lectures on India or on psychic or literary topics,—in a word, all that he could do. His gratitude inspired him with a single aim ; towards it he had worked with whole soul. One humane deed had lit, or revived, the sacred fire within his heart, and the wanderer became an ardent humanitarian. He knew no other course but the following of his inner conviction, and for it he abandoned all else. It was the unqualified action of a strong soul. It reminds us of the acts of our Founders. What human failings do not such acts redeem ?

Then the great Shade drew noiselessly near and enveloped our Brother without a warning. He had worked for some brief weeks, happy in his new aims and friendships, with the placid contentment of an exile who feels once more about him that spirit of sympathy which makes the warmth of home. His home had been abandoned from hereditary discontent. Without kindred or ties, he crossed the seas, hoping, as other patriot hearts had hoped, to learn in Western countries the secret of their power and to transfer it to India. Like his friend and fellow Theosophist, Annandabai Joshee, he believed that power lay in our educational system, and both endeavored to procure it for the women of India.

After a short visit to the Philadelphia Branch, Mr. Sattay suddenly fell ill. Just before, he had lectured to the Aryan T. S., and a lady present, seeing him for the first time, remarked that she saw death in his face. Being told that he was always thin and grave, she replied that she did not judge from externals, but from the terrible hollowness she felt and the cold cloud which seemed to envelop him. Two weeks later his illness declared itself; in two days his friends became alarmed, and he was placed in a pay ward of the Brooklyn Hospital, where the doctor in charge said he might linger some time but could not live. A day or so passed, when on Saturday night the lady before named awoke from a sound sleep. Feeling cold, she rose to close the window, and had hardly returned to her bed before a panoramic picture passed through the dark room. She saw a bed in a small hospital ward, and noted all its special surroundings. On the bed Sattay lay dying; a nurse stood by him, and a subjective voice said, "This is Death." With that a second picture slid across the first,—a dark and deserted dead room; in its centre stood what looked like a table, yet she knew it was not one. Upon this lay a body prepared for burial, and covered. The face she could not see, but saw through the covering the position of the hands, and *knew* it to be Sattay. The pictures passed like vivid flashes. She exclaimed, "Sattay is dead!" Lighting a match, she looked at her watch. It was half past eleven. He died that night at half past twelve. So she saw at once what was transpiring at the hour of her vision, and also the future event. Next morning she saw a friend who had been interested in Sattay, and who had just come from the hospital which she had never seen. To this friend she described correctly all the surroundings, the details, and position of the dead, even to the table which appeared like one but was not, and this in our presence.

Our Brother died as a man should die, with firm faith and that courage which is not self conscious but innate. He said that he was ready to go away, and desired that he might be cremated and his ashes thrown upon the river, according to the custom of the country he loved too well. Making a will by which he left his money to the General Secretary in trust for the Cause, he said: "If I die, all I have is for Humanity. If I live, I will always work for it." And thus, his worldly goods and body disposed of, his debt of gratitude paid, his few comrades thanked, he withdrew into the temple of spiritual contemplation, and, calling upon the Three Great Powers in triple invocation, the solitary wanderer withdrew from solitude, and passed to the

place prepared for him where he may rest. His ashes to the waters ; his heart to Humanity ; his soul to the Supreme. Peace be with us !

JULIUS.

LITERARY NOTES.

The Possibility of not Dying, by H. C. Kirk, is a book that vindicates the famous Elixir of Life, an article which originally appeared in the *Theosophist* and was much ridiculed by many. Mr. Kirk goes even farther than the author of that article, for he considers physical immortality possible, whereas the Hindus say a body can be made to last only three hundred or so years. Remarkable to state, the Press and many learned men who scoff at Theosophy and its scientific teachings have received Mr. Kirk's book with praise, and find it impossible not to be struck with its vivid ingenuity.

THE THEOSOPHIST.—The September number contains Col. Olcott's article upon "The Barisál Gun," given also in *Lucifer*, and worthy of the widest publicity because, in a very striking instance, once more upholding the truth that phenomena which shall not have been resolved by natural laws shall frankly be remitted to a frankly-recognized region with which Science does not deal and with which Occultism does,—the Astral Plane. Mr. Charles Johnston, whose name is savory to readers of the PATH, contributes an instructive article upon "Karma and Ancient Law," though we doubt whether the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is traceable so much to Latin civil law as to Greek metaphysics.

The October number, in "Two Curious Experiences," gives not merely an instance of the tests which may very well occur to a candidate for the Mysteries, but a graphic description of certain types of Elementals, and, still more, a visible *proof* that an adventure among them of the astral body may take place and leave its marks. There is an excellent article on "Atmagnyan," another, less excellent because condoning injustice and breach of contract, on "Hindu Marriage," and a generous notice of the PATH. In the Supplement is given in full Dr. Elliott Coues's able address before the Western Society for Psychical Research in Chicago last April. Apart from its literary quality and its exposition of fact, this address has the merit of a singularly fair and judicial discrimination, and we are the more glad to see it spread before Oriental readers because it may show to them that a man in this country may be a competent writer and a student of science, yet also a believer in the unseen and a member of the Theosophical Society. There are some most interesting facts about the present surroundings of our honored Madame Blavatsky, but not more than we hope ourselves to present in a later number of the PATH. Announcement is made of Bro. Tookeram Tatya's republication in pamphlet form of Mr. Subba Row's *Discourses on the Bhagavad Gita*. We some time ago ordered copies, and hope to announce them as on sale before long. Sanscrit schools seem to be multiplying in India, thanks to the T. S.

MR. A. P. SINNETT has prepared a pamphlet giving a *Course of Theosophical Reading*, a most excellent and well executed idea. Instead of stumbling about among a number of books at random, the inquirer is led on from the more to the less elementary, and always with the graceful touch of that most accomplished writer. We have some copies of this, but are a little chary of parting with them, having an eye to new Branches and to the needs of the future.

THE SECRET DOCTRINE.

The 1st Volume was sent out November 3d ; the 2d will probably reach subscribers at about the same time as the December PATH. It will be noticed that the postage charged, even allowing for the contract price of wrapping each volume for the mail, is slightly in excess of that needed. This charge was twice estimated, first upon a book of similar size, afterwards upon the book itself when received ; but certain changes in the binding process reduced the weight materially.

The time for subscription at the lower rate (\$7.50) expired with the issue of the first volume. The price has now been definitely fixed at \$10.00, not \$10.50. Orders not adding postage should indicate the Express Company or other mode of forwarding desired.

Any attempt at critical review of this marvellous book would properly seem—to those who notice that Madame Blavatsky refers to herself as “the Author—the writer, rather”—presumptuous. But, if time now allowed, it would be permissible to give some outline of its character, and especially to invite attention to some most important statements in the Preface and the Introduction. This may be attempted hereafter. To say that *The Secret Doctrine* is the most extraordinary, the most unique, book in literature ; that its exposition of cosmogony is absolutely unprecedented since the age of print began ; that the attention now given it is as nothing compared to that assured a century hence ; is a very temperate assertion. If not technically a “revelation,” it is virtually such to the Western world ; and one may well exclaim—as was once before done when strange truth from Adept sources was disclosed, “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

Owing to the absence of the Editor upon business in Europe, Correspondence and Answers to Inquirers must temporarily lie over.

THEOSOPHICAL ACTIVITIES.

AMERICA.

THE BRAHMANA T. S. of Milwaukee, Wis., has been duly chartered, and has organized with Bro. Bryan J. Butts as President, and Mrs. Alice M. Wyman, 421 Milwaukee street, as Secretary. There are thirteen Charter-members, and we are informed that other applications for membership have

since been made. Milwaukee is a very important city, and certainly should become a Theosophical centre.

KRISHNA T. S. of Philadelphia has again changed its President, Bro. Henry B. Foulke having only consented to take the office as *locum tenens*, and now retiring in favor of Bro. Edward H. Sanborn, once more a resident of that city. If President Sanborn's time permits, much hopeful work might seem possible in a population of 900,000 (Philadelphians say a million).

STILL ANOTHER Application for Charter comes from the far West. Of this we shall have more to say in the PATH for January.

THE ARYAN T. S. of New York has established a Committee, whose duty it is to receive and collate suggestions for topics of discussion, and to submit at each meeting a subject for the ensuing. System is just as essential in Theosophy as in any other science, and helter-skelter talks on matters casually arising cannot give the richness and symmetry of growth which are conditioned on prepared, nutritious pabulum. If the mechanical aid is offered, there is a possibility that notice of the following meeting and subject may weekly be sent to each member. "Gurus" have lately been discussed, and why none of us need them yet; also Animal Magnetism.

WITH GREAT SATISFACTION we record a most welcome offering for use in the Headquarters at 117 Nassau street, New York. A generous Theosophist has presented two life-size portraits in crayon, the one of Madame Blavatsky, the other of Col. Olcott. That of Col. Olcott is now finished and adorns the room. It is an excellent likeness, vigorous and accurate. Of this and of its companion, when finished, we shall speak further next month.

A SIGNIFICANT INDICATION of Theosophic interest through the States is this. The better to answer inquiries, the General Secretary last winter printed 500 copies of a circular "How to join the T. S.," giving full instructions, and appending a list of the then Branches. That edition is so nearly exhausted that a new one is soon to be issued. The new will not only add the steps needful to form a Branch, but will show an increase of *nine* (possibly *ten*) Branches during the eleven months since its predecessor. There are now in the U. S. 23 Branches, some sleepy, but none dead.

EUROPE.

THE DUBLIN LODGE, Ireland, is in excellent condition. It has now a nicely furnished room, with a Library and various magazines, enriched with a Theosophical Shield and with photographs of Madame Blavatsky and Mohini M. Chatterji. Photographs of American Brethren will receive fraternal welcome. It is from this Lodge that Bro. Charles Johnston lately went to India, whence he promises the PATH a series of articles upon Indian topics, ancient and modern.

THE NEW PHOTOGRAPH of Madame Blavatsky, mentioned in our last, has not yet arrived, the reasons for delay having been sent us. An ample supply has been ordered, so that all Branches or individuals desiring her most lately taken portrait, as well as her autograph, may procure them from this office. The price (\$1.50) seems high, but it is really a contribution to the publishing fund, as hitherto explained.

INDIA.

BRO. RICHARD HARTE, of blessed memory in the Aryan T. S. was to reach India, in company with Col. Olcott, at the close of November. In addition to other notable services at Headquarters, he will edit the *Theosophist* during the President-Founder's journey to Japan and to (possibly) the United States. Bro. Harte's pen is endowed with peculiar acumen and

potency,— more so, indeed, now than ever. We are informed, moreover, that a new department will be established, somewhat lighter in touch and not wholly destitute of facetiæ. If all the nonsense reaching an editor (or even a General Secretary) was put in type, not a few Theosophists would grin—or weep.

THE ESOTERIC SECTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

Owing to the fact that a large number of fellows of the society have felt the necessity for the formation of a body of Esoteric students, to be organized on the ORIGINAL LINES devised by the *real* founders of the T. S., the following order has been issued by the President Founder ;—

- I. To promote the esoteric interests of the Theosophical Society by the deeper study of esoteric philosophy, there is organized a body, to be known as the “ Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society.”
- II. The constitution and sole direction of the same is vested in Madame H. P. Blavatsky as its head ; she is solely responsible to the members for results ; and the section has no official or corporate connection with the Exoteric Society save in the person of the President Founder.
- III. Persons wishing to join the section, and willing to abide by its rules, should communicate directly with Mme. H. P. Blavatsky, 17 Lansdowne Road, Holland Park, London *W, England.

Signed, H. S. OLCOTT,

Attest :—H. P. BLAVATSKY.

President in Council.

So many letters reach us in relation to the above that we need to make distinct the fact that this office has no information thereon other than what has appeared in *Lucifer* and the PATH, and absolutely no authority or interpreting function. Inquirers should address themselves directly to Madame Blavatsky.

COL. OLCOTT'S TOUR.

We have to thank no small number of Branches and Brethren for their generous pledges in response to the November circular. Some of them disclose that test of all Theosophic advance, self-sacrifice. The measureless importance to Theosophy and to the Society of an American Tour by the President-Founder is so clear that we cannot hesitate to again ask the Brethren whether each has done all that he can to effectuate it. About two-thirds the necessary sum are now pledged. Should we be assured of the remainder, and should the projected Lectures and visits really become a fact, the consciousness of having thus assisted may well be envied any one. We again commend this matter to the generous instincts and heartiest efforts of every true Theosophist, and shall rejoice if hereafter able to announce that the fund is complete and the tour assured.

The General Secretary has received from Mrs. VerPlank to date \$44 for the T. P. S. Scheme. Half of the proceeds go to the T. P. S. of London ; the other is to be used for Theosophical publication purposes in the T. S. here at home.

A stone becomes a plant ; a plant, a beast ; the beast, a man ; a man, a spirit ; and the spirit, a god.—*The Kabala*.

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