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THE THEOSOPHIST

ON THE WATCH-TOWER

"WATCHMAN, what of the Night?" is the cry that is heard from many and many a breaking heart. For the Night is long and weary, and thick clouds lower over the war-pierced Nations. Not yet has the answer rung forth from the hills whence cometh our help: "The Night is far spent; the Day is at hand." For though we know that in the higher worlds the battle is won, that the forces of evil are driven back, and that their strength is broken, yet the enemy, though flung downwards, is yet raging upon the earth: "knowing that his time is short". Truly was it said, "Woe unto the inhabitants of earth," for great and terrible has been the havoc wrought, and sore the grief of the martyred Nations; Belgium and Poland, Serbia and Montenegro, have been trampled into bloody mire under the hoofs of evil. And yet to those who know, it is ever true that in the fair White Island, "the Lord sitteth above the water-floods, the Lord remaineth a King for ever". And as we lift up our eyes to the great Temple, fairy-like in pure white radiance against the sapphire sky, we see

the STAR we love shining ever as the Jewel in the Lotus, and we murmur low, with the old Hebrew singer: "The Lord shall give strength unto His people. The Lord shall give His people the blessing of Peace." How the riven Nations shall feel the joy of that blessing, feel it as they have never felt it before—"the blessing of Peace".

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Yet even as we long for that blessing to descend upon our bleeding earth, we know and realise that no Peace can be a blessing which might come until the forces of evil are broken upon earth, as they are broken in the higher worlds. There is no peace while the Jezebel of Nations still sits upon her blood-soaked throne; no peace while her sword is yet unbroken; no peace while on earth, and in sea, and in air she yet sends out her messengers of murder, slaying harmless men, with gentle women and little children. Never, since the days of old Atlantis, had science been the handmaid of slaughter as it has been made on the battle-fields of Europe to-day. Never, since the Dark Emperor ruled in the City of the Golden Gate, has intellect been so yoked to vilest uses. Well indeed might the Masters refuse to give any knowledge of the forces of subtle destruction to the Nations who have not yet learned the first letter of Brotherhood; for imagine, ye students of the Sacred Science, what would have been the torrent of destruction launched from Berlin, had the German chemists learned to loose the force that disintegrates the atom, and leaves but a whirlpool of astral dust where men and cities had been.

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And when Peace returns, how mighty will be the task of reconstruction set before the Nations of the earth. Freed Womanhood will never again put on the

chains which the sore need of the Nations has riven from her limbs. She has shown herself to be in every necessity of man his comrade and his helper; she can never again sink into his toy or his drudge. I do not mean by "toy" that she is his toy when man and woman play together, the difference of sex adding sweetness to friendship and passion to love; I do not mean by "drudge" the doing of household tasks, the sweet ministry of home, as dignified and needing more intelligence than the soul-less labour of the tender of a machine. The "toy" is the woman who is the mere slave of sex passion unsanctified by love, or the amusement of an idle moment, tossed aside when the graver claims of life are on the man; the "drudge" is the dull toiler through thankless tasks, the maid-of-all-work minus wages, less respected than the servant whose work is paid for. When the War is over, the relation of Man to Woman will become either infinitely nobler, or ruinous to both. For after the War, Man will return home to find Woman occupying all his seats of labour, save the heaviest and roughest; he will see her in the tram, at the railway gate, in the van, in the motor-car, in the office, behind the counter, in the factory—everywhere, even at the plough. There must either be a terrible sex-war for the means of livelihood, such as the world has never seen, utterly destroying human society, or else an equal comradeship, dearer and sweeter than any, save the elect souls, have hitherto known; that friendship, which, between a man and a woman, is the surest, sweetest thing which this world has to offer, the relation into which husband and wife sometimes pass when married lovers become married friends, and which is sometimes, but rarely, found outside marriage, which has all the strength, and trust, and sweetness

of love perfected by the sex-difference, but utterly free from passion.

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In discussing the scope of woman's work in the old days before the War—as one might say, "before the flood"—I had often urged that no artificial restrictions should be placed on woman's labour, manual or intellectual, but that her capacity, her ability, should be left to find its own level. She must always be handicapped by child-bearing, but that is a handicap imposed by Nature, to be cheerfully and reverently accepted in obedience to the law of Nature, which is the will of God. But of artificial restraints and disabilities there should be none. Motherhood is, in itself, one of the highest offices in the Nation, since to bring forth noble boy and girl children, and to train and cherish them through helpless infancy and developing childhood, is a service to the Nation that cannot be over-valued. In a well-ordered State, such as is dawning on the horizon, children will be born only of healthy, strong, vigorous fathers and mothers, and the child-bearing age will begin with full physiological maturity, and end ere the woman begins to weaken, losing the energy of youth.

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The question raised by Mr. Ernest Kirk in one of our articles this month is one in which many are inclined to agree with him, but one which, I hope, will be decided in the negative. It is true that a "creed" gives vigour and cohesion to an organisation and makes a more vigorous propaganda possible, but it also cramps and finally fossilises. The Christian regards his dogmas as "facts in Nature," as the Theosophist considers re-incarnation, karma and the existence of the Masters to be facts. So is the indestructibility of matter a fact in Nature, but the scientific statement of the

indestructibility of the atom has been shown by further researches to be false. The facts of Nature remain, but man's vision of a fact is ever imperfect, partial, and it is only his vision of a fact that he can formulate in words. A doctrine, a dogma, is a formal statement of a fact; no dogma, widely accepted, is wholly false. Science is sure that the planets of our solar system are globes hurtling through space in a regular and balanced order; yet are they nothing of the kind, but are sections of a continuous structure uniting them with the Sun, as leaves on their respective stalks. Any of our imperfect visions of facts stated as a creed for the Theosophical Society would check and dwarf its free development. Let us leave the intellect of every member free to range the mental world at will, to affirm or to deny what we call facts. The statement of a fact is a husk containing a kernel of truth. Can we not trust to the truth for the stability and strength of our Society, and hold the husks loosely, ready to let them go when we find or create a larger, fuller statement of the fact? The truth gives strength to the dogma, the dogma does not give strength to the truth. Let us trust to the source of strength, which is truth, and let the dogmas go. They are crutches for the weak, and must not be turned into shackles for the strong. All Churches have made that blunder, and hence "heresies" have arisen and have torn them, and given rise to sects. A heresy is, for the most part, a vision of a part of a fact concealed by the statement of the fact, and should be an addition to previous knowledge and not the foundation of a new creed. There are members who want to turn any statement of Colonel Olcott's—that chances to agree with their own momentary views—into a law of the Society. There are members who, because they have stood still themselves, think that the

Society must remain exactly what it was when they entered it. The Society, we hope, may go on for centuries. Are our successors, are we ourselves, returning, to be bound down centuries hence by the skimpy views of to-day? Nay, let us trust Truth; let us leave the future to mould itself by its future vision; enough for us, if we can live up to the truths we glimpse, and so help others hereafter to start on a higher level. The open mind has before it infinite possibilities; let us not block the untrodden road with the barrier of some of our "facts".

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Here, in India, the movement for Freedom is going forward very rapidly, and to borrow Mr. A. P. Sinnett's happy nomenclature, we have passed through the Pooh-Pooh stage with quite unexpected speed, and find ourselves suddenly in the Bow-wow period, surrounded by a quite furious pack, giving forth loud-voiced and brazen-throated clamour. There are two special danger-signs in India: the growing poverty of the masses of the labourers, and the growing and spirited independence of the school and college youths. The separation of the Education Department into two sections, deplored and condemned even by a man like Sir Valentine Chirol, has changed the whole educational atmosphere, pushing the English and Indian members of the Service apart, and making two distinct castes. The very ablest Indian cannot pass into the higher Service, and a young and quite undistinguished Englishman is made Professor over the head of the most capable Indian. Hence we find, as Sir Rabindranath Tagore points out in a valuable article in the April number of the *Modern Review*, that the students just now are in a state of unrest; he says:

> If the students' own race or religion is insulted by the teacher, if the students know that for themselves there is no

chance of justice, and for professors of their own Nationality no fair treatment, then they are bound to break out into impatience, and, indeed, it would be a thousand pities if they did not.

In earlier days, before the Partition of Bengal had stirred all the best Bengalis into violent unrest, lads would have been told by their elders to submit humbly to their teachers. But it was the lads of Bengal who were the chief agents in annulling the Partition of Bengal, and the new life of the Indian Nation throbs in their hearts. And so now an elder—and an elder who impressed Europe with his genius—turns to them and tells them, that when they and their race and their religion and their own teachers are unfairly used and they show impatience, "it would be a thousand pities if you did not". That is the new spirit, resistant, no longer submissive, the spirit of the New India that demands Home Rule.

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The great change is being hastened among the young by the type of Professor and Master who now come to the Missionary Schools and Colleges from England, and who are planted on us by our officialised Universities, wherein 80 per cent. of the Fellows are, since Lord Curzon's ruinous Education Act of 1904, nominated by the Chancellor, *i.e.*, by the English Governor—or Lieutenant Governor, if the University be not in one of the three Presidencies. The Missionaries in the Madras Senate back up the Missionaries in the Schools and Colleges, and permit Missionary Colleges to work with a far worse equipment than that which they exact from Colleges under Indian control, as we found at Madanapalle.

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One finds the Indians of 40 or 50 years of age looking back to their English Professors and Masters

with much respect and affection, and deploring the kind of men who have replaced them. Some of the old missionary educationists, again, were men of erudition, sincere Christians who devoted themselves to spread English Education, believing that its spread would inevitably Christianise India. The Church of England Missionaries, usually Oxford or Cambridge men, have at least the advantage of the training of the great Universities, where "the humanities" give culture, and the social surroundings good manners. But the Nonconformist ministers who usually come over here are not men like Clifford or Campbell. They are, for the most part, men who neither impress by their learning nor win by their urbanity. They are of the ordinary dissenting type of the smaller provincial towns, and as members of "the ruling race" they lord it over their pupils, mistaking arrogance for dignity. The Roman Catholics are of a finer type, cultivated gentlemen for the most part, and often much beloved for their kindly ways, as well as respected for their simple and ascetic lives.

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It is the Nonconformist ministers who cause most of the troubles here, and who, in England and Scotland, spread abominable stories about the "heathen," misrepresenting them to the gullible religious public, and so causing much of the misapprehension and misconception which blind the British Nation to the real state of things over here.

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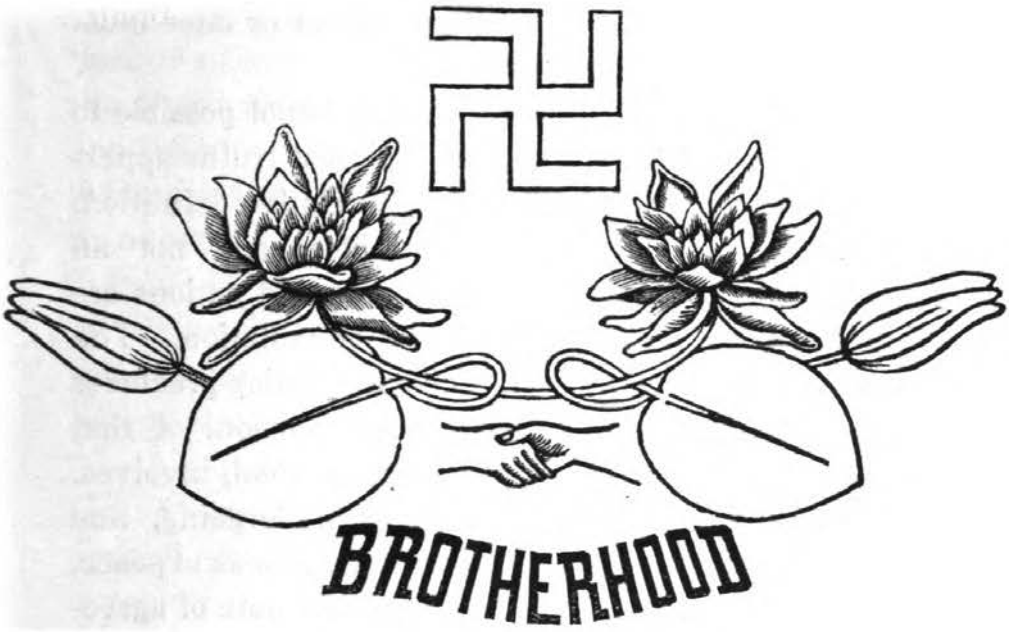
It may be asked: "Why do you regard this resistance among the students as a danger-sign?" Because these lads are the men of to-morrow, and unless Britain has by that time given to India the Home Rule on which their hearts are set, many difficulties will arise.



THE VALUE OF PEACE

By WILLIAM H. KIRBY, M.A.

WHEN a New Year is about to dawn, all men's thoughts turn naturally to ideas of Peace and Goodwill. It is the message of close upon two thousand years ago, that we have all learnt at our mother's knee and that we pass on to younger generations. Yet perhaps never since the message was given us by our great Teacher, has it had more meaning for all of us, or been less practised, than at the beginning of this year of our Lord 1916.

It would be folly to prophesy that what we call peace will come to men in 1916. But since we are in the midst of war and have had a year and a half in

which to realise the full meaning of its consequences, we can all the better measure wherein lie the benefits and the value of the peace that sooner or later must again be established amongst men.

Peace is so big a word that it is not possible to attempt to define it. It is, like all great truths appertaining to the Spirit, capable of only relative definition. In the abstract it involves an ideal and not an actual state of things, as long as men and nations are at different and imperfect degrees of evolution. The diversity of their aims and characteristics precludes the possibility of that absence of tension, of that state of equilibrium which peace, as an ideal, involves. But when we, mere finite beings undergoing, and in the midst of, processes of development, speak of peace, we mean simply an absence of war, a state of agreement with regard to differences between men and nations, a compact, for the time being, not to fight.

History shows that such compacts, however, are but temporary matters, depending either upon a state of equilibrium, or "balance of power," or upon the distinct inferiority or exhaustion of one or other of the contracting parties. And the period of peace will vary in duration in accordance with the continuation of the state of equilibrium, or with the recovery and growth in national aspirations and ambitions of that side which was exhausted or in a state of inferiority. Once the "balance of power" is upset and conflicting interests come into play, inevitably the Dove of Peace takes flight while a new equilibrium is being fought for and a new set of conditions is introduced for men to digest during future years.

The alternations, then, of peace and war appear so far to be inevitable and in the order of things according to man's origin, composition and present place in evolution. As always, it is the animal in man that fights, and the Spirit that rebels. The passions in man conflict, and the mind, becoming the "slayer of the real," is used to devise the methods of offence and defence. But as man evolves, just as his mind is capable of greater ingenuity in inventions and in methods of protection or destruction, so his Spirit is more alive to the assimilation of results, and to a more adequate valuation of causes and effects.

All that European science and industry have evolved in past decades has been brought to bear in the present World-War. Yet, on all sides, from the humblest soldier to the highest statesman, there is not a man who does not deplore the waste and the wreckage caused by the conflict. Yet it goes on, and must inevitably go on to a finish. One side or the other, one group of powers or another, must come out undisputedly the conqueror, before any peace can be established that shall render impossible any such repetition of world-wide suffering and *lèse-humanité* for a long, long time to come. And that peace may grow fruitfully henceforth and spread far and wide over European countries, that group of Powers must fight to the uttermost, and must win, who stand for those attributes of the Spirit, namely, Freedom, Honour and Justice, and who abominate all material ends involving ideas of persecution, oppression and domination by blood and iron.

This is what the amiably-minded importunate pacifist fails to see. He cannot, apparently, realise that peace has no value where it is merely in the nature of

a truce, a patching-up of differences at a given moment, a mere temporary defining of geographical areas of influence, and of economical and commercial relations, *before the time is ripe.* These are all palliatives—cog-wheels in the machinery of peace when the end of war has come; but they do not create peace when the tension that caused war has not been settled and the motives that led to war have not either finally triumphed or been defeated and overthrown on one side or the other.

These pacifists, well-meaning no doubt, but fully deserving the condemnatory character of that faint praise, seem to think that they alone see the value of peace, that they are the God-sent part of the community, endowed with a mission to put salt on the elusory tail of the dove of peace. Fortunately, no serious attention is paid to their misguided and frequently puerile efforts. For combatants know that peace is won by fighting, not by looking on and talking; and that the value of peace lies in the sacrifices made to obtain it, in the valour of men's actions, and in the virtue of their motives.

In this coming year 1916 it is certain we shall hear much about peace. The War is now at, or near, its highest point. Both sides are realising to the full what humanity is in for at the present. The longer-sighted, indeed, are beginning to foresee what the consequences in the near future are likely to be and for how long, how very long, a time they are likely to last. Is it any wonder then that old men and wives and mothers, and even the weary combatants themselves, should at times look back to the days of the peace that was, and sigh for the days of the peace that is as yet not in sight?

Is it only the self-constituted pacifist, the theory-monger, who is to have the presumption to imagine that he alone sees the benefits of peace, that he alone is designated to be an artificer of and a factor for peace? No! In these times of hard facts, arm-chair theorists are merely a nuisance. In the breast of every true man or woman, in the heart of the wife and the mother who have parted with all that is near and dear to them for the sake of their country, in the soul of every human being who is giving up his all in sacrifices of every kind, yes, even of life itself, for the sake of the ideal he or she is standing for in this common struggle, there is implanted deep and firmly the hope of peace as a precious heritage, bought by sacrifice and suffering, that they would hand over to be enjoyed by their children and children's children for the lasting honour of their name and their country.

The irresponsible individual who would prematurely urge and contrive at peace, merely for the purpose of stopping a state of war, is not only short-sighted and unable to appreciate the proportion of things as they are, and to realise that great world-happenings have behind them great designs beyond our comprehension, but he is also unconsciously a source of weakness to his country and a traitor to his fellow-men who are fighting for him too, and giving of their all to obtain a peace that shall have some sure foundation.

Once war is declared, in a just cause, the individual and his theories disappear. No one is any longer a separate unit, free to stand aside and air theories. Each is a cell in the organism that is about to act; and he shares for good or ill the destinies of that organism and its actions; of the country, in a word, to

which he belongs. Such an one is not free by any means, as he thinks, to settle whether he shall fight or not, whether peace or war is best for his country. He is gratuitously assuming that he is wiser than the rest of his nation or than his fellows; he is not content to fall in with the plans of the Powers-that-be in that nation to which he belongs, nor in that organism of which he is a part; his own views, his own ideas, his own aspect of things in general and in particular are, in his own estimation, of far more importance. Let the whole world fight, let men work for their souls, and women weep out their hearts, and children and homes be destroyed, justly or unjustly: "There should be no war," proclaims this prig. "Let us talk it out at a table and settle the affairs of the universe!"

Or again: "What blockheads men are to resort to the methods of the savage primitive races! Won't they see the pity and the waste of it all? Are we not all brothers of one great human family? Have not all Teachers of men enjoined love, not hate? Let us, Oh, let us put an end to these methods of barbarism, and settle our differences by representative conferences, and cease from strife!" So say the more thoughtful and amiable variety of pacifists. But, bless their kindly hearts, so say all of us! So say all who can feel and think and reason. It is no new thought. We all said so ages ago, and also before the War, when that monument to futile and academic attempts at caging the Bird of Peace was erected at The Hague. No doubt we shall all say so again after the War, when, forgetting the flimsy value of scraps of paper embodying the results of these round-the-table Conferences, we invite our friends the neutrals to join us in our happy

discourses and entertain us with regard to what they thought, and especially what they did, while we were busy fighting! But in that certain barbarians, in their lust and greed for power and domination, let loose on Europe at large the sterner methods of "blood and iron," with all the accompanying terrors of murder, arson, pillage and treachery,—"blood and iron" they must taste to their fill at the hands of those they have assaulted, until they cry "Enough!" and henceforward so utterly loathe and detest its nauseating stench that they too learn the lesson and the value of peace so long ago understood by older and civilised nations.

Of what use, then, before the time and in the face of facts as they are, designed by an inscrutable Destiny that guides men and things, for the mere individual to prate of peace? Let him rather join those of his country in working and fighting actively for peace, and he will at least have done something entitling him to enjoy its benefits when it is re-established. For the value of peace lies in the right we have stood for, in the sacrifices we have made, in the services we have individually rendered to make it ours. If our country has been in the wrong and has succumbed in the fight, it will avail us nothing—nay, we will be all the more odious—that we stood aside, out of the conflict, and said: "I told you so!" Similarly if, on the other hand, our country has been in the right and wins an honourable peace, it will be an endless reproach to us and ours that we selfishly held aloof, indulging in our own crabbed opinions, and had no share in the attainment of our country's ends.

There is no place for the peace-monger to-day. All who are fighting or helping the fighters are working

more effectively for an ultimate and a decisive place than he who talks and agitates, and is all the time impotent to do anything that serves in the present phase of his country's activities. Peace will come surely and automatically when all is fulfilled as designed, and when responsible rulers or leaders on both sides, with the knowledge of all the facts before them, realise that there is nothing else in honour to be done.

But the agitation for peace, it may be urged, can begin from below as well as from above, and it must have a beginning, therefore why not admit the value of the humble pacifist, as leaven in the mass? True, but the motive behind the pacifist in this case is different. He is no longer a theorist, a meddler, a talker, an individual crank airing his theories to the detriment of his country's cause. The peace-agitator in such cases is rarely found singly, but in ever-increasing numbers of tired, over-wrought, hard-used men or women who, having done their full duty by the War, having espoused to the utmost their country's cause, and sacrificed their all for its ends, even against their will or their better judgment, see the futility and uselessness of it all, realise the wanton use that has been made of their willingness to trust and serve those above them, and in the name of humanity demand that a false road shall no longer be pursued. No one will confuse the pacifist who is a theorist, with the peace-lover who has suffered unselfishly and sustained his burden with the rest. For he feels that not only is his further help useless, but that he has been deceived, or that mistakes have been made in the purposes for which he was fighting, or that his country has been forced into war by the senseless

ambition of rulers. Even so, it is only the responsible representative authorities who can usefully take action. For in the first of the above two cases, to speak of peace in time of war implies either lack of proportion and comprehension or merely effrontery; and in the second case, instead, it denotes a certain degree of moral courage.

One cannot certainly imagine a less peaceful or more topsy-turvy system of conducting foreign politics than that alluded to in a recent number of THE THEOSOPHIST as embodying the ideas of a league in England called the "Union of Democratic Control"—whatever that may precisely mean! Here, indeed, is theory run riot. It is the tail that is to govern the head, or as if it were suggested that the crew, and not the captain and officers, should navigate a ship! Thus as far as one can make out, it is the idea that the limitations and ignorance of the masses are to supplant the wise concern and experienced training of those carefully selected and eminent statesmen whose special gifts and attributes have peculiarly fitted them to deal with and decide on questions of State in regard to Foreign Affairs, and whose name and position carry weight in International Councils. A country can decide for war or peace by the current of public opinion, or by some great wave of national feeling, but this feeling is guided not by a body of worthy persons who constitute themselves into a league of this or that, but by the national spirit and sentiment that is in them, and that as a rule the highest and best in the land, *not* generally the democrats, control, mould and guide. At any rate, in regard to foreign policy, it is the few, who have knowledge

and experience of other lands and peoples, who count; and not the many whose mediocre acquaintance with matters outside their own run in life produces inevitably a quantity of errors and misjudgments which, as we have seen only too recently, may lead to incalculable consequences and costly sacrifices.

Service, now as ever, must be the watchword of all. Most of all has it a special meaning for us Theosophists. There is certainly no lack of opportunities in any and every direction just now to serve, to prove our belief in the value of that brotherhood that spells love and unselfish devotion to duty all round. It is this that will be the prime factor for consolidating peace when the time comes, and it is this that proves the good Theosophist now in his duty as a belligerent.

It is indeed good to see how on all sides in various countries Theosophists have come forward readily to serve their country in a hundred ways, including, when of age, that of military service. But there is a further feature which shows the value of the character training among Theosophists. Often nowadays, and practically in all countries, there is a tendency to magnify one's individual importance in connection with services rendered, whether they be in the form of leagues or organisations or committees or any other initiative undertaken or volunteered. One has witnessed all sorts of petty competition and mild self-advertisement in good works and beneficent organisations.

Yet in general, the teaching that one does not do anything for the "fruits of action" seems to have especially distinguished the Theosophist in many an undertaking, where he has shone by the quantity and quality of quiet good work done unobtrusively, and by

the modesty and unselfishness with which he has kept in the background and allowed others to figure and to take the praise or the rewards of the "outer" world.

Those who work for good ends, for the right, in service of their country and of their fellows, dispassionately, in the sphere of action to which they properly belong, speaking little and doing much, recognising in their proper proportions men and things as they are and making the best of them, eschewing evil and doing good, reckoning themselves no wiser and no better than their fellows, ready ever to take and to share burdens, endeavouring to understand and to pour out sympathy and tender help, such as these are the really valiant and valuable workers for peace, since they instil into the hearts of men those precious seeds of love—the root of peace—which bear fruit a hundredfold from generation to generation. Whereas the peace of the pacifist is but a barren intellectual growth founded on sand and as shallow as it is Utopian and ineffectual.

The true value of peace lies not in the consensus of heads but in the close ties of the heart. The mind is the instrument that can only devise the means that will make peace durable when the hearts of men are charged with that fulness of comprehension that is born of Goodwill and Love. Dreams of power, designs for conquest, lust for material gains, these spring from a lower degree of evolution, that which is based on obtaining for itself, on taking from others for its own enjoyment. This leads to "envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness," and when put into effect, as in the case of the provokers of the present War, to the uprooting of all the foundations of civilisation and all accepted principles of human intercourse.

The pacifist who would interfere at such a time, merely because people are fighting, is morally responsible for trying to prevent another section of the world standing for those higher principles that are founded on a sense of Freedom, of Justice and of Equity, and who are fighting in order that Liberty shall prevail over Domination, and Right over Might.

From so great a catastrophe the world will emerge chastened and also purified. Far into future generations, and long after peace has been signed, will the barriers set up by the present War continue and the effects be felt. Plans to "kiss and be friends" sound pretty, but are merely Utopian dreams of optimists. Too much there is to remember, too much to forget. Too many standing monuments and memories are there that will relentlessly bear witness to the wanton handiwork of cruelty and barbarity let loose.

But Time, the great Healer, will "like an ever-rolling stream" bear all away on its broad bosom. In the far future, when succeeding generations have lost the sting of the first-hand touch with present-day miseries, foulnesses, and sufferings, and veiling what is ugly and repulsive, memory can only look back with pride at noble traditions of honour and duty done by their families and forebears in the great crisis,—then perhaps will descend the Dove of Peace upon Earth, in a new Springtime of Hope and Endeavour, bearing with outspread wings seeds of Love that shall penetrate and grow fruitfully in the hearts of men and produce a new era of kindliness and true brotherhood.

William H. Kirby

WHAT DOES THE T. S. AS SUCH STAND FOR?

By Ernest Kirk

AT what point, if any, in the evolution of the Theosophical Society must the unanimous statements of our leaders concerning certain Theosophical truths, as Reincarnation and Karma, be accepted by the Society, as a Society, not as tenets or dogmas but as facts, realities? Members of the T. S. are obliged, before becoming members, to recognise the idea of Brotherhood as a fact; why, in its constitution, should the Society stop there? Surely in these matters it has not reached finality! We have probably less proof for the existence of Brotherhood as a law than we have for the existence, say, of the Law of Karma, or for the existence of the Masters; why then should one be included and the others left out? We do not, strangely enough, think of Brotherhood as a dogma; for what reason then do we fight shy of placing other equally significant truths in the same category? As a matter of fact a certain body of truths *are* held by the Society, or at least by the majority of its members, and not to include them in some way in an official document and proclaim them openly and frankly—not as dogmas, but as facts in nature—seems to me scarcely like playing the game. If the Society does

really accept and commit itself to these truths, why keep that fact in the background? Why not give prominence to it, for instance, on the application form for membership? Not that any applicant would be required to accept, as a condition of membership, any of the teachings suggested, but he would at least know what to expect.

It may be argued that all this is clearly set forth in Theosophical books, and that therefore anything further would be superfluous. But frankly, that seems to me a very strong reason why the fundamentals of the teachings given out to us by our leaders, fundamentals, be it remembered, already accepted by the majority of Theosophists, should be codified and presented in some such way as I have suggested.

The Society, like everything else, is evolving; many things taught only in the E. S. T. ten years ago are now common property. This progress is bound to show itself, as indeed it is showing itself, in a more pronounced and definite attitude towards the problems of life, and in greater daring and doing regarding the truths for which we stand.

In this connection it is interesting to recall a pronouncement made by that sturdy Theosophist, Mr. T. Subbarao Garu, in one of his lectures delivered at the Annual Convention, Adyar, over twenty years ago. Said Mr. Subbarao, evidently anticipating the question now under review:

> All of you know that our Society is established upon a cosmopolitan basis. We are not wedded to any particular creed or to any particular system of religious philosophy. We consider ourselves as mere enquirers. Every great system of philosophy is brought before us for the purpose of investigation. At the present time we are not at all agreed upon any particular philosophy which could be preached as

the philosophy of our Society. *This is no doubt a very safe position to take at the commencement. But from all this it does not follow that we are to be enquirers and enquirers only. We shall, no doubt, be able to find out the fundamental principles of all philosophy and base upon them a system which is likely to satisfy our wants and aspirations.* (The italics are mine.)

At what point then, to hark back to my first question, do the statements made by our leaders concerning the facts of Reincarnation, Karma, the underlying unity of Religions, the existence of the Masters, etc.—statements that only gradually come to be accepted by us as true—at what point, so far as the Society goes, do these statements pass into, stand for, and become accepted as truths, realities? What makes a law a law, and a truth a truth? Not, of course, our acceptance or our rejection of it, our knowledge or our ignorance. A law takes no account of a majority nor of a minority, neither is it influenced by threats or bribes. The point at issue, however, is not what makes a truth a truth in the abstract sense, but what makes a truth a truth to the T. S., that is, I repeat, to the majority of its members.

Now there are probably many contributory factors, prominent among which are the following: (1) The united evidence of Great Teachers and Sages, as reflected in the Scriptures of the world; (2) the corroborative testimony of recognised living Occultists, those amongst us who have won our confidence and who declare that as a result of definite training and definite research they have first-hand knowledge; (3) the history of, and discovered causes of, any given phenomenon; (4) one's own experience, intuition and inward verification; and (5) the acceptance of any given truth by the majority of us. Take for example, under these headings, the question

of the underlying unity of all religions. One does not require to be a very deep student of Comparative Religion to know that the main spiritual verities in one religion are found, under varying names, in all the other religions. The evidence in the various World-Scriptures on this point, both objective and subjective, is enormous. Some fragments of this evidence have been tabulated in very handy form in *The Universal Textbook of Religion and Morals*, and in the introduction to *The Ancient Wisdom*. Add to the above the testimony of our leaders and those who have made a thorough study of the subject, and the testimony of Theosophists who belong to one or other of the world's religions, and you have a most convincing pile of evidence, amounting to proof. Some such method applied to an inquiry into the subject of Karma or Reincarnation, would yield similar results. Of course in the case, say, of Reincarnation, direct proof lies in the hands of a very few, but as those few are agreed on essentials and, as between them, command the love and confidence of the great majority of T. S. members, the ground for the acceptance of the truth of their statements is fairly solid and sure. What they say about occult matters and the workings of hidden laws in nature can be put to the test by any one who is able and willing to go to the trouble of making the experiment. If the experiment is a failure, it does not disprove the truths and laws about which the experiment centres, but only that the experimenter is deficient in knowledge and skill. A negation of a fact or statement, it should be remembered, is in itself an affirmation, and of necessity the man who denies must know more than the man who affirms.

After all is not this line of arriving at truth very much akin to that adopted by students of science in relation to the study of the laws and facts of physics and chemistry? As every one knows, the real investigators and seers in the realm of science are few, and yet these are the men who, by their courage, patience and perseverance, discover and make possible the acceptance and application of certain laws. The ordinary student of science, respecting the findings and statements of those sturdy fathers and pioneers, findings usually endorsed by the Royal Society or the British Association, takes the instruction of his teachers for granted and goes to work accordingly. He is told, for instance, that a certain result will follow the union of hydrogen and oxygen, and providing the instructions are obeyed and the necessary conditions established, he may safely put the matter to the test without fear or failure. On the other hand, if he ignores the instructions, preferring in his experiments to "keep an open mind" and an agnostic attitude, he is as likely as not to come to grief.

What I would therefore venture to suggest is that a commission of leading Theosophists, suited for their task, be appointed by the Society to collect, tabulate and put into textbook form, all the present available evidence for those great truths for which one intuitively realises that the Society stands. A textbook of any one subject, as Reincarnation or Karma, might possibly run into two or more volumes. It would be solely a student's book, and should of course be the standard work of the world on that subject. If thought desirable, abridged popular editions could be published. It is scarcely necessary to add that such a series of works would, as new or additional evidence came to

hand, require periodical revision. That revision work should be done by a central authority.

The mention, in this connection, of a central authority raises the question of the advisability of the formation of some select body within the T. S., a body presided over by Mrs. Annie Besant, and consisting of one or more of the best informed and best known Theosophists from each country or section. In its own realm this body should be as important and useful in the world as, in matters of science, are the Royal Society and the British Association. Its annual gatherings and deliberations would act, among other things, as a sort of world sounding-board for the results of the latest investigations and discoveries.

Further, I would suggest that in connection with this body, a College or University for the study of the Science of the Self be established at Adyar, that a regular course of instruction be given both on the spot and—in the case of those students unable to travel to India—by correspondence, that passes and diplomas be granted, and that no one not holding some such diploma be recognised as a regular Theosophical lecturer. Schools or branches of the College could be opened in such centres as London, Paris, Berlin, New York, etc., but the curricula should be uniform, and—a point which seems to me of immense importance—the teachers and examiners, so far as this is possible, should be Initiates and accepted pupils of the Masters.

It may be, in much that I have said, that "the wish is father to the thought," and others reading what has been written may be reminded of the words "fools rush in where angels fear to tread," but honesty must run to a conviction that the time is near at hand,

if indeed it is not already here, when the Society, as such, should take a bolder and braver stand for the truths which have so long been proclaimed by its leaders and by individual members. A perusal of *The Vahan* for January (just to hand) gives the impression that some such forward move as is here indicated is already afoot.

Ernest Kirk

FROM "THE KEY TO THEOSOPHY"

Every such attempt as the Theosophical Society has hitherto ended in failure, because, sooner or later, it has degenerated into a sect, set up hard-and-fast dogmas of its own, and so lost by imperceptible degrees that vitality which living truth alone can impart. You must remember that all our members have been bred and born in some creed or religion, that all are more or less of their generation both physically and mentally, and consequently that their judgment is but too likely to be warped and unconsciously biased by some or all of these influences. If, then, they cannot be freed from such inherent bias, or at least taught to recognise it instantly and so avoid being led away by it, the result can only be that the Society will drift off on to some sandbank of thought or another, and there remain a stranded carcass to moulder and die.

H. P. B.

THE BIGGER ISSUES OF WAR

By H. P. Ray Chowdhury, M.A.

AT a weekly meeting of the Arundale Lodge we were talking about the causes of the downfall of various old nations, and we were trying to gather some lessons out of them. I decided, then, to put down my thoughts about the present conflict in Europe, taking lessons from the past and trying to deduce, as far as my ability would permit, some conclusions which might be of some use to others.

As we turn over the pages of history, we see generally that they are replete with incidents connected with the rise and decline of nations. Nations rise, nations decay. Do they not leave behind them something which makes the world richer and wiser than it was before their rise? Do they not play a distinct part in the evolution of the world, as every age helps the evolution of mankind to a definite goal? I believe they do. Many illustrations can be taken from history, and it is easy to show what particular part in the world-evolution a nation arises to play, and how, when its part has been played, it withdraws behind the scene. The world is not poorer for its decay; on the contrary, it is richer than it has been. The nation which arises to perform a particular task accomplishes it before it decays; so we can see, through the rise and

fall of a nation, an invisible Hand guiding the nation to a definite goal, moulding it exactly in the shape and form which are necessary for its task.

So much is true for nations with regard to the world of which they are parts; the same is true for wars and conflicts, for social, political, economic, industrial and other movements, for the rise of certain cults and agitations within a particular nation. Wars and conflicts, social, political and other disturbances have certain well defined parts to play within a nation, in order that the nation may be prepared for the greater task for which it has been born in the world-plan of evolution. They do not take place at random, without any meaning, disjoined and purposeless. It is my belief that even a trivial event—trivial it may be from the individual point of view—has big potentialities, which we, with our imperfect knowledge and incapacity for broad historical generalisations, may not see. The very fact that such events do take place, goes to prove that they have a purpose behind them.

To make my point sufficiently clear, I shall set forth some historical illustrations. Being more familiar with Indian history, I shall take my illustrations from it. Every thoughtful person will support me when I say that India has something to do in the world, has something to give, together with other countries, to complete the purpose for which the world was created. Everybody believes that the world exists for a certain purpose; what that purpose is, we do not yet see, as our knowledge is limited. It necessarily follows, therefore, that as India has something to give to the world-purpose, she must have been preparing herself for the great sacrifice, and already have been contributing

her share in all these ages to make that purpose possible; therefore that preparation has to be seen from the events that have taken place within her physical boundary.

Let us see, very generally, whether we can deduce, out of the innumerable changes that have happened in India, some definite purpose. From the very beginning, India has been invaded by different tribes and nations. Why is it, one naturally asks, that India only has been subjected to such invasions and convulsions? Why is it that India has had to suffer such a terrible loss? It is extremely difficult to answer such questions, though historical causes may be cited for every invasion; but we are trying to find out something beyond these apparent causes, something more real, something which satisfies our minds. Beyond all these physical metamorphoses there is a truth, there is a lesson which India has had to learn after these terrible sacrifices, a lesson which India, as a part of the world, has to give to the world. It is the lesson of perfect tolerance, religious or otherwise. Different tribes and nations invaded India only to teach this supreme truth, and India has had to learn this after years of suffering. We see that aliens who have invaded India, have after a time been recognised by the Indians as their own countrymen; their lineage has been invented and traced to Gods by the custodians of the Hinḍū religion, to show that they were parts of the original Āryans. We see the followers of religions other than Hinḍūism receiving the same cordiality as the followers of Hinḍūism. The Hinḍūs are not inimical to other religions, they allow them to go on side by side with their own. They invite followers of a different

religion to discussions in perfect equanimity and without the least scruple. One foreign dominion goes, and is replaced by another, but the people of India stretch out the same cordial hands as they did towards the one which has been supplanted. This perfect tolerance has been learnt after many centuries of sacrifice and endeavour; and I think that the sacrifice to learn this great truth must have been great, because nations or individuals learn truths, great or small, according to the sacrifice they are ready to make, and India has made an immense sacrifice to realise the significance of this great truth. She has given up everything—men, wealth and even independence, to learn this truth—the truth of Universal Brotherhood.

We have seen that India has a definite message to give to the world; so also has the West something to give. That something must be a truth which forms a part of the all-pervading truth towards which "the whole creation moves," or as we should say, is moving; therefore this particular truth must be strengthened by combining itself with the larger whole. If this is true, then we should find, at all events in European history, a preparation intended to mould it to the realisation of the part which it has to play in the future. What do these material facts signify? Have they got in them the germ of truth to which the West has been endeavouring to attain? I believe they have. Methods there, are different from those of India. If we learn the histories of the different nations of Europe, we shall see that from the beginning of any nation's history, an endeavour has been going on to shake off a certain narrowness of ideas and conditions, to adapt itself to broader and more liberal views and principles. To show this

movement in every country in Europe would occupy considerable space, but to make my proposition sufficiently clear, I shall take one country and show the way to proceed.

For the sake of convenience we shall take England. From the beginning of English history to the Norman Conquest, we see the people trying to attain political freedom. But what is political freedom after all? It is the shaking off of certain old and narrow scruples, to give place to newer and more liberal principles. Let us take stock, so to say, of the achievements of the English people up to the battle of Senlac, in 1066. The Witenagemot had been formed, the power of kings had been restricted, and a great commercial and industrial impetus had moved the young nation. This movement was stopped, for the time being, by the Norman Conquest, to teach a valuable lesson—the lesson of making room for foreigners and tolerating them, so that this young and rising nation might not forget, in its own great endeavours, that it was not a separate entity, but a part of the whole, and that it should learn selflessness. The same movement has gone on till now, and the nation has received from time to time severe shakings in order that it might give up the idea of exclusiveness and learn the meaning of Universal Freedom. The wars and conflicts, both from outside and from inside, which England has had to fight in the endeavour to attain freedom, have a great significance, and have taught her to respect the freedom of other people, while they have given a certain wide catholicity of temperament, which will bear fruit in the realisation of the supreme truth of Universal Brotherhood. The Catholic Emancipation Act and the Abolition of Slavery have been proofs in

the past, and the part which England is taking in the present War is a proof in the present, of the universal character of freedom and tolerance which she has learnt during so many centuries.

With this idea let us turn to the great War that is going on in Europe. Why is it that this War is taking place? Apart from all the historical causes which have been pointed out in so many volumes, we can see the work of the unseen Hand beyond this conflict. It is not a conflict of mere rights and the saving of them, but a conflict which may help the people of the West to realise the significance of Universal Brotherhood a little more fully. Germany has not been shaken sufficiently by the many wars in her past, to learn the truths that other nations have learnt. She has organised herself in an exclusive way, and wants to intrude on the freedom of other people, neglecting and obstructing the truth of Universal Brotherhood. She must learn the lesson; and she will in this conflict, because the Invisible Powers, which guide the destinies of the world, will that nations should realise the truth by their own experience. To gain a glimpse of truth a great sacrifice must be made, and as the sacrifice Germany is making now is a big one, the truth that she will learn will also be considerable. The world is approaching the realisation of the truth I have mentioned, and this War will bring the world a step nearer to that truth.

H. P. Ray Chowdhury

SONGS OF ISHMAEL

POEMS FROM A PERSIAN GARDEN

SWAN-SONGS

O happy hour when I shall rise
From Earth's delusions to the skies;
Shall find my soul at rest and greet
The traces of my Loved One's[1] *Feet!*

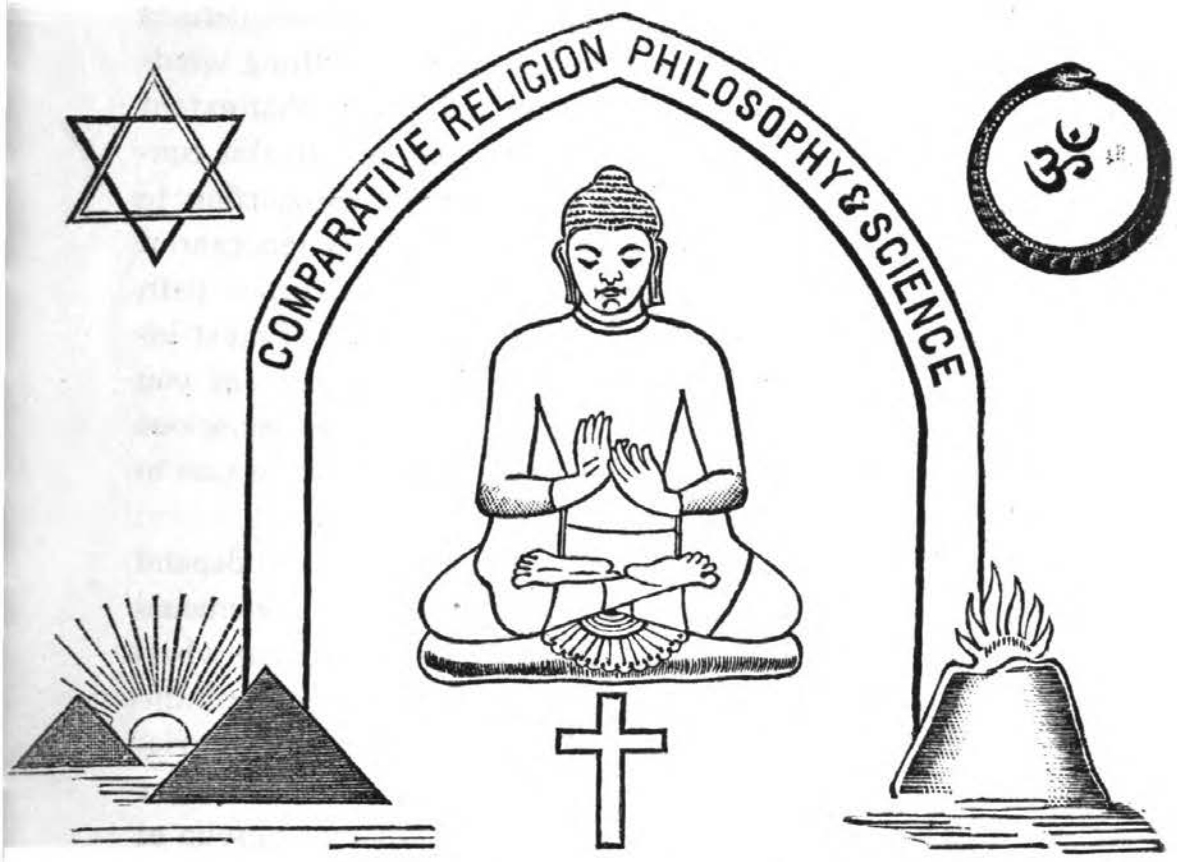
—HAFIZ

They say that without it snows;
They say that the wild wind blows;
How should I know!
Fools . . . . . I've no winter here;
I feel the summer's near;
For in my heart the almond blossoms bear;
And through their blooms the soft spring breezes sigh—
O just to kiss thy hands, lost love, and die!

They say that without it rains;
The hail beats upon the panes;
The daylight wanes!
Fools . . . . . I've no tempests here;
In my soul the sun shines clear,
And all the roses bear
Their fragrant scents through which the Zephyrs sigh—
O just to kiss thy hands, lost love, and die!

KAI KUSHROU ARDESCHER

[1] By "the loved One" Hafiz means God.



FATE AND FREEWILL

By WALTER H. SAMPSON

ONE hears the following questions so often that it seems worth while to consider them carefully:

Can people control their destiny?

If I see disaster approaching, can I avoid it?

Are you a Fatalist?

Now in order to approach this very difficult and intricate subject in the proper way, for it involves the

whole question of Fate and Freewill, it will be necessary to begin by noting that in the case where knowledge foresees certain limitations or conditions, defines certain laws, or pretends to understand anything whatever of the nature of the individual, just to that extent must what is called "Fatalism" step in. In this connection, one's "freewill" is in inverse proportion to one's knowledge—that is, by being utterly ignorant of your tendencies, and therefore of the particular path you are following and the things to which it must inevitably lead, you remain "free"; the moment you become aware of yourself and in any degree conscious of the laws under which you live, you cannot be said to be free.

Does freedom, then, imply ignorance and depend for its existence upon an undisturbed state of ingenuousness? That is to say, yesterday I knew nothing whatever of the laws of my being, my tendencies, and the road upon which I was and am travelling. My curiosity being aroused, I visited some—let us say—astrologer who tells me that I have a certain tendency or group of tendencies which will influence my life at such a time, working out in the form of events, which he says are practically unavoidable. The causes, said this very unpleasant person, had been set in motion, and the effects had to follow. If, then, I am to believe what he says, I am no longer free, but under certain restrictions and limitations; while yesterday, not being aware of these, I was therefore "free". I destroyed my freedom when I increased my knowledge. That is, assuming that the astrologer is right, which might happen to be the case. Please note here that the condition of "freedom" depends entirely upon the fact

of knowing or not knowing, for if I had never gone to the astrologer, I should have passed the rest of my life thinking I was "free". In this case, and all similar ones, therefore, "freedom" seems to have been purely a mental state, and if freewill is an illusion, the sooner it is cleared out of the way, the better for all. But does this settle the case? The laws he mentions and under which he says I am bound—either they exist, or they do not. Is this a Universe of law, or one of chance? Of anarchy?

Every step that science takes seems to proclaim the reign of law—law everywhere, in the heavens, upon the earth, in the waters that are beneath the earth, throughout the whole creation—law upon law, law within law, order, system, form, intelligence everywhere existent. I do not think that anyone will have the hardihood to deny that law is the rule of the Universe, in so far as we are able to judge. Can there be such a thing as law in and about a Universe of "free" creatures?

We shall have to summon the term "free" to the bar, and see what it may have to say for itself.

Freedom implies the absence of restriction, limitation or hindrance; absence of duty, conscience and all connection with one's fellow man; it signifies independence, separateness, anarchy, rebellion against all authority, guidance and control; disregard of the rights, wishes, comforts and necessities of others; complete gratification of the self and of its every wish and ambition. To allow others to interfere with me will not be freedom; to allow others to persuade me will not be freedom; I am independent, capable of doing what I will and with the perfect right to do so. I shall, then,

go my way, do what I wish, when I wish, and act in all things in the manner best pleasing to me.

Well then, say I; you won't go very far, my fine fellow. If you claim the right of liberty for yourself, you must concede it to others. Here is barrier number one. Others are as free as you, surely, and if your interests conflict with theirs, and they are able to overcome your opposition or objections, whether by force, persuasion, or in any other manner, you are then restricted by the wishes and wills of others. If you claim freedom for the human race, the human race has also to concede it to others. If the interests of the human race conflict with those of the remainder of the Universe, it is for the destruction, or at least for the limitation of the human race that they do so. You are restricted by the Will of the Universe. This is barrier number two. If you think you need barrier number three, you have it in your own limitations, weaknesses, errors, inability, ignorance, inefficiency, and all the rest of it. Not only do others prevent me, not only does the Universe thwart me, but I myself persistently defeat mine own ends.

Is this "freewill"? Is this "freedom"? You will observe that here I am only dealing with the most material aspect of the case. And it may be well to inquire at this point whether freedom be really a blessing or a curse to mankind, and in the course of that inquiry we shall have to ask ourselves whence it derived its reputation, which is an honourable one. It is a name of power, a mighty word, a magical formula; one which has been the means of progress and enlightenment, of inspiration and encouragement, a threat to tyrants and a promise to the weak. It has been the

guiding star of this great American nation, and must therefore be not only a good thing but a very good thing.

It is right here that we shall have to make a very sharp distinction—one that I fear is seldom made, and yet one which will have to be made before we can rightly understand the matter. The freedom spoken of here, the freedom lauded and praised, and upon which our national foundations rest, is not personal freedom at all, but political freedom. Political freedom means freedom from oppression, from tyranny, from the domination of a class by an individual, from injustice of creed or caste, from unfair taxation, from any and all indignities, wrongs and deprivations that man can, in his moment of selfish power, inflict upon his fellow man. *Freedom, then, exists through and by reason of the injustice of man, and it is man's injustice that brings it into being. That is political freedom.*

Not so personal freedom. Political freedom being freedom from the injustice of man, personal freedom, of course, is freedom from the injustice of Heaven. Do we need that? The plea for personal freedom means, among other things, the arraignment of the high Powers of Heaven to answer to man why they have inflicted upon him ills and trials. It is man's demand for the separation of effect and cause, the attempt to win from Heaven a licence that will quit us of all responsibility and of the necessary results in our lives of the state of our development. Political freedom is a necessity, since it is ranged against man's injustices, which are many and sempiternal. Freedom in the personal sense is an impossibility, and if not, would be a curse and a calamity.

For what do we wish freedom? At every turn of the road, every step of the way of life, we are faced with the necessity of making a wise decision, of choosing between this and that. We stand at the cross roads—which way are we to take? There are no guide-posts, so we have free choice in the matter. Now the truth, and the truth which none of us dare deny, is that one of these roads leads to ruin and the other to progress, one to evil and the other to good, one to right and the other to wrong. Do we, then, desire the "free" choice or the right choice? If we are fools and madmen, we might desire the free choice, along with such sentiments as "My life's my own"; "I can do as I like"; "I'm my own master"; etc. If we are sane and wise, we shall desire with all our hearts to make the wise choice, the right choice, and we even pray for enlightenment that we may do so. If, perchance, it were revealed to us at that moment which was the right choice, would there be any shadow of doubt as to our taking that? It would be an act of deliberate insanity to take the wrong road. True, we do not always know, and therefore may often choose wrongly. Not from "freewill" but from ignorance. Well, they are sometimes the same.

It may be said that life is a constant succession of such choices, with their consequences. In all cases one choice is right, and the other wrong. Which, then, do you deem it the more noble to do, to choose as you will, to show your independence and take the path you know to be wrong, or take the way you must, the way you eventually will in any case, the Way that leads through the Straight Gate? Will there be any desire for freedom here? The desire for freedom, here

as elsewhere, will be the desire to set at naught all right, wisdom and law, to take things into our own hands, to run away from realities, to refuse to face life as it is, and, in a word, to play the howling idiot, blind, foolish, and rushing headlong to destruction.

You may ask: "Can I always be sure of knowing the right choice?" No, you cannot. But if you always choose with the best of your being, *your* choice will be right, even if *the* choice is not right. If it is the best you can do, it is, to you, to all intents and purposes right.

It is not the noble, the unselfish, the inspired in us that demands freedom, but our rebellious passion, our cheated desire, our unsatisfied emotion, our thwarted ambition, our greed, our pride, our intense hunger for happiness, but most of all, and above all, our impenetrable ignorance.

We will try to conceive however that you are really free. Think what that means, even for an instant. It means to be abandoned of God and man alike; to be alone, an enemy to the Universe, an outcast, a contemptible renegade. Whilst others are toiling under their bonds, you lie in the sun. While others are fulfilling their duties and responsibilities, you fulfil no duty and acknowledge no responsibility. They are both incompatible with your freedom. While others are held by ties, you alone have no ties. The servile crowd yonder are not free; no, but they are loved—their mothers and sisters await them at the gates with refreshment and comfort. You, being free, have no mother and no sisters—mothers are limiting things, involving unpleasant duties, obligations and the like, all quite unworthy of the free. The slaves have wives

and children—more limitations, qualifications, obstructions to their freedom. You will none of these, for you are free. Do you therefore rejoice, and does the fierce fire of independence leap in your veins, and the ecstasy of the infinite glow in your countenance? No, you are abandoned, desolate, unloved, uncared for; and to your utter surprise, when you cast off your shackles and limitations you found yourself not free, but tied hand and foot. Your coveted freedom is as nothing to you, for what can you do without human ties, without proceeding according to the laws you detest, without co-operation, effort, dependency—which are all limitations?

Let us leave, therefore, the ideal of material freedom for its further consideration and enjoyment at the hands of the thoughtless, and turn to the ideal of inner or spiritual freedom, and try to see in what that may consist, and whether it be a possibility, or the reverse—a desirable condition or not. "Well," you will say, "I may not be able to control outer conditions, and really, I didn't mean that, but at least I am free to progress and evolve." Friend, you are *bound* to do so —the Universe is ordained in no other way. "Nay," you say, "but many are not progressing, they are retrograding; see yonder man staggering out of the saloon! He has taken his choice; his course is plainly downward; he wills to set at naught his opportunities and make of himself a beast. He has the perfect right to do with himself as he wills, and he interferes with no one, but simply takes his destiny in his hands and does with it what he will."

Is that strictly true? Let us look into that case a little more carefully. If we cannot state that what we call

misfortune is a means of attainment, and that mistakes are but steps on the path, we shall then have to admit that there is such a thing in the Universe as deliberate and purposeless evil. That, again, arraigns Heaven of folly, and is not a possible standpoint for any but the ignorant or the blasphemous. If we cannot firmly believe that what we call sin, error, immorality, are the chaotic out of which virtue is the orderly; the elementary out of which virtue is the advanced; the indirected out of which virtue is the directed; the passion out of which virtue is gained by transmutation, then of course we can perceive no purpose in sin but the attempt on the part of Heaven to destroy its creatures. Nay, we know that mistakes, error, ignorance, crime, violence, and all the rest of the rubble are our broken attempts to express our better selves. Under the law, our mistakes cost us dear, for the law permits no infraction without its consequences. As Theosophists, we believe that the law pursues us in this life, but not only here—it follows us through many lives, lest justice be mocked, and that the balance may hang true. We are free, do you think, to destroy ourselves? We are never free to do that. We are, rather, bound and compelled to save ourselves. Some of us may remember Thompson's wonderful poem *The Hound of Heaven*, which shows how the Spirit of good pursues the sinner through the ages, never letting him rest a moment, permitting him no respite until he understands, turns and embraces the God he vainly tried to escape in flight. It is even so—the God, whether we believe He is in us, out of us, around, about, above, below, is insistent; His purposes must be obeyed, and there is no possible rest or peace for us until we submit to

His law. We are not free, but blessedly bound to fulfil our high destiny.

Let us try to see that freedom does not consist in separateness, selfishness, and the working of our own wills, in independence or rebelliousness; but in naught else than submitting ourselves to the Divine Will. Let us recall that phrase out of the English Common Prayer Book, which speaks of the service of Christ in these words: "Whose service is perfect freedom." As this is a paradox, it might be well to consider it carefully.

Let us suppose that we live in a walled city, broad, bright, expansive, beautiful, well ordered, well watered, strongly fortified; just like some old Chinese walled city such as one can still see, with broad stretches of meadow within the fortifications. Our life takes its course within those walls, and we take our airings inside them; our friends and relatives are all within these protecting defences, and all is well. One night, sleepless and restless, it may be, and perhaps moved by some spirit of adventure, we bethink ourselves: "How splendid to creep down through the silent city, along the streets across the moonlit meadows, threading the darkness of the narrow gate, and so into the open country." No sooner said than done. We sally forth, make our way to the gate, and to our amazement find it closed, locked, guarded, and no exit permitted. We are told that we are not permitted to go outside; "outside" in our imagination seemed so beautiful, too. We had always thought ourselves perfectly free—we are not free, but limited. Just slaves! Suppose we allow the idea to recur, to rankle. Suppose we make a fetish of our "freedom," become unhappy about it, and finally make our escape.

The first thing that happens is that we are set upon by a band of robbers just outside the gate, beaten, stripped and left for dead. We painfully crawl home, sore, but enlightened. OUR LIMITATION WAS OUR DEFENCE. Our limitations are always our defences. The four walls that enclosed us last night are not there for the destruction of our liberties, but for our protection. The laws under which we live from day to day, peaceably and contentedly enough for the most part, are not thrown about us for our limitation, but for our defence. Without them life would be impossible, and every moment a fresh danger and menace. The wise citizen of our little city lives from day to day within the walls, care-free, contented and prosperous. He understands well enough that the laws of the city exist and are binding, but not being of the nature that must run counter to them, he does not for an instant feel their restraint, but rather rejoices in their protection. *Their* service is perfect freedom.

Then, according to our line of argument, there is no freedom and no freewill? Are we under an irresistible destiny?

If, friends, there is one single event of life that can be demonstrated to be inevitable, not only for one but for all, we shall have great difficulty in upholding the argument that we are not under rigid laws, the operation of which we call Fate. The idea of Fate is that of superior powers which govern us with laws from which there is no escape and no appeal, and which in their operation are perfectly indifferent to the individual. Is there one single law, the operation of which no man can escape, or has ever escaped, and which can with certainty be predicted for all? There *is*

that one. Death is to all of us inevitable. It matters not at all what we may individually conceive death to be in its nature—whether we regard it as the close of an individual existence, or whether we consider it the entrance into another state of being. Here is an event against the consummation of which the whole human race can exert their will and hurl their determination without the least effect. There is evidently something in this idea of Fate. It is fairly just to presume that if one law is so indifferent to the individual, all law is so indifferent—that is to the wishes of the individual.

I am afraid we shall have to take refuge in the idea that as humanity has always misunderstood Death, so we may misunderstand Fate.

What, then, if the things we wish to avoid are the things we not only have to face, but would willingly face if we knew the whole truth? What if it is only the depth of our ignorance and the density of the majority that dims our eyes, that conceals from us the "Hound of Heaven"? We surely believe in the law of Karma, but not as a recompense—rather as a cure, and the only one, for our mistakes and misfortunes. If we fail to learn the lesson in school to-day, shall we know it any better by playing truant? Or by returning to school, in shame and confusion if need be, but determined to go over that hateful lesson again and again until we have mastered it? Suppose life be similarly constituted. Suppose the fate we wish to avoid, which we defy with our every thought, and against the threat of which we claim freedom, independence, the right to choose, and what not—what if this very Fate is what we are seeking and striving for; what if Doom be Janus-faced, throwing out before his path the awful lightnings and

thunders of Jove, and in his rear, the desert blossoming as the rose.

The man who howls dismally over his Fate and who denies his responsibilities in his claims for freedom is like one who locks himself in a prison, throws the keys out of the casement and shrieks to Heaven for help. I am afraid the truth is that when we ask for freedom we ask to be released from our task, to arrest the development which must include some unpleasant growing pains, to be allowed to put aside the nauseous mixture that will make us well; or we complain of the sharpness of the knife that is to sever the afflicted member. It is natural to do this, and human and inevitable that we should do this, but in the name of Heaven, let us at least face the truth, and not beatify the one thing that, given into our hands, would not only wreck us, but the entire race, for all time and eternity. Being human, we must err, but do not let us glorify our mistakes. Glorify the effort, but not the error.

Within our city, then, there is perfect freedom, and within the law there is perfect freedom too. When we are living in accord with Universal Law, and in harmony with the best of our being, we do not even crave freedom, for we have it, and for the precise reason that we have turned our backs upon it. The freedom we once sought, we now know to be absolute slavery, and the servitude we once fled from, we now know to be perfect freedom.

Wherein does the truth of this paradox lie? It is again just at this point that one may be tempted to say: "Well, that's all very nice about freedom being slavery and slavery freedom, but what does it really mean, and how does it really work out?"

To become free, in this sense, is to free yourself from desire—to reach the point where one is so completely unified with Universal Law that there is little personal will remaining. One becomes a channel for Divine Force. This does not mean the loss of the individuality, which is too great a question to go into at the present time, but it does mean the receiving of inspiration, and the taking on of office as a Divine Executor. It becomes a matter of indifference whether things are thus or so, or whether this or that eventuates. Here, then, is the kernel of the whole matter —indifference to circumstance. You may not control events, but you can become indifferent to them. You may refuse any longer to believe in their power and their significance, or their importance. In so far as you can do this, you are really free. It is your business to act—God's is the issue. It is your business to work—God's the harvest. Only, you are to work, and to keep at it. It is nothing to you that you may never eat of the fruit of your planting ; there are other harvests toward which you have never scattered seed—these shall feed you. It is your business to speak—no man may heed. It is your business to heal—what if the patient die? It is your business to love, whether you are loved in return or not. It is your business to live—even into the shadow of Death's approach—the event is not yours ; all you can do is your part, and beyond that, all is presumption and all is vain. Less than that is unworthy.

Your freedom, then, lies not in the freedom of choice—there is no such thing possible. Not in freedom of action—that is anarchy, and will involve the Universe in ruin. Not in anything other than the freeing of yourself

from the illusion of self, its importance, its desires, its folly, self-will, ambition, blindness, arrogance, greed; its childish cry for unlimited power and happiness, its childish abuse of whatever little happiness it can attain, and whatever power it can wield. Not in anything other than in understanding of and subjection to the law, in working through the law, and in trusting the Universe and its great Intelligence to know better what you want than you do yourself, and to be ten thousand times more efficient in obtaining it for you. It never makes mistakes. You seldom do otherwise.

We now arrive very near our starting point, and the conclusion of the whole matter is going to be: "Well, things are inevitable after all, are they?"

In a sense, they are.

What then? What's the use of trying?

O my dear sir or madam, the grand comfort in all this is that you just can't help trying. The glorious consolation is that you will go on trying, and keep on trying, and end by succeeding. You are human, and as such you will rejoice in your happiness and rail at your despair; you will rebel against the law, and the law will revenge itself upon you; you will, in the face of your superior knowledge, deny your divinity and forfeit your birthright, again and again, and you will, in spite of your wisdom, cry for your freedom, and strain at your bonds, since you are but human. You will not transcend your humanity either, because it is divine; and you will not fall below your divinity, because it is human. Your struggles and your successes, your agonies and your ecstasies will naturally proceed from the strange fact that you are human-divine. But

above all things you are alive, and whatever your belief, your convictions, your knowledge, you are gathering experience; it is your great teacher, and you will not be denied it.

Let us consider briefly whether it be desirable for people to believe that they are free, or not. It may not be best for the majority of people to believe otherwise than they do. The conception of freedom within the law is a paradox which needs the philosophic mind to understand and appreciate, and we are not all philosophic. The very young and inexperienced, whether in point of years or incarnations, rebel furiously against the idea of being limited, because they have not yet reached their limitations; and not having reached them, they are not yet aware of them. They are hopeful, buoyant, sanguine; and do not want to be told that their hopes are to be checked, their confidence destroyed, and their ambitions unrealised. One does not realise one's limitations until one comes in contact with them, and that takes time. We do not truly begin to develop either, until we reach them. Let us note also that our limitations are not fixed. This is a very important point; for most of us seem to think that they are like a stone wall—impassable and impenetrable. Let us make a comparison. Physically, the skin is our limitation. When we grow, does it burst? No, it expands. When the character develops, it forces the "limitations" to do the same, and one's limitations keep pace with one's growth. Do we ever wish to escape from the physical boundary, and literally "jump out of our skins"? No, we realise that without it we would be defenceless and helpless. The case is exactly so, and you can fitly compare our

limitations in life with our skin, and you will find that the parallel holds good in every way.

The belief in freedom, then, is the belief of the young, the inexperienced, and the thoughtless; as well as of the rebellious, the insane and the criminal; and it is the acme of sanity and maturity to condemn it unreservedly. It may be necessary for the young to believe it, just in order that they may not be deterred from making the gross mistakes that will finally set their feet on the path. You cannot teach it to them —they will neither understand nor heed.

It is only when we reach that point of development where we see that *our* claims are not to be realised, *our* wishes not to be gratified, and that *our* purposes mean so little to the Universe, or are so contrary to its greater purposes that they cannot be entertained—it is only when we reach that point where we understand that life, looked on from the personal side, is disappointing and treacherous, as it was indeed meant to be, that we can willingly embrace this philosophy and give up for ever our beloved freedom. No really sane thinker believes in personal freedom, just because no sane thinker dare give to the individual the power to control others. It is, moreover, only in the knowledge that we are Theosophists, and able to face the truth, that I have dared to speak so of this matter. In other places, and among other people, it would be sheer madness to express such sentiments, but if the Theosophist, with his wide acquaintance with law, his day-to-day consciousness of the order and harmony of the Universe, and his disbelief in the permanency and value of the mere personality, does not really believe so of this matter, then Theosophy seems but a vain thing, and has taught

him little. Freedom has never been preached by any great teacher, or upheld by any great philosophy.

The real difficulty of the situation is the fact that the denial of freedom seems to give the check to action. Life convicts intellect of stupidity, and intellect convicts life of folly. Which are we to believe?

We must believe intellect, and we must follow life. It is impossible to live in accord with intellect, or believe in accord with desire, for of all things the most deceptive, desire is the worst. I may know that sin and misery are the paths to peace, and the only road to heaven. Shall I, therefore, refuse aid to the afflicted or comfort to the suffering? Shall I withhold my hands because, forsooth, humanity is sickening unto salvation? A thousand times no! Let us live true to our common humanity. Because I feel with the wretched, sympathise with the unfortunate, shall I stultify my intellect and say that misery and wretchedness are wrongs and injustices, and that there is no purpose in their wanton cruelty on the part of Heaven? I shall know that they are the necessary and salutary steps on the path, but none the less shall I do what I can to assuage them, because I am human.

Humanity is a paradox, a mingling of opposites, a confederation of states, an intermingling of planes; and while *they* must *war* one against the other, let us see that *we* preserve our *neutrality*, and give precedence to none. If my intellect enables me to sight Heaven, shall I refuse to live on earth any longer? If I live on earth, shall I then refuse to sight the Promised Land?

It is Man's divine privilege to apprehend the Divine in the Universe, and the most perfect man is he who manifests his humanity and divinity side by side,

the one reinforcing the other, and not warring on the other. The recognition of Law is the recognition of the Divine.

> For all beings there is but one law—immutable and divine; the law by which the lowest must rise to the place of the highest—the law by which the worst must become the best—the law by which the vilest must become a Buḍḍha. (*Gleanings from Buḍḍha Fields*, by Lafcadio Hearn.)

I place the emphasis on the word " must ".

Walter H. Sampson

THE METAPHYSIC AND PSYCHOLOGY OF THEOSOPHY[1]

By BHAGAVĀN DĀS

1. THE EVOLUTION THEORY AS HELD IN THE WEST TO-DAY

AS a single tree with its endlessly diverse parts, root and trunk and branch and leaf, core and layer and fibre and bark, grows up out of a single simple-looking seed, and grows up by successive small steps; even so has everything in the world which can be at all looked upon as a system, a unified aggregate, an organism, a diversity dominated by a unity, grown up by infinitesimal successive steps out of a nebulous plasm by continual differentiation and integration. Such is the evolution theory, which has been gradually coming more and more to the front amongst thinkers since the middle of the nineteenth century, and which has transformed science and literature in the modern West as completely as a turn of the kaleidoscope transforms the arrangement of the coloured pieces of glass and produces an entirely new figure. Star-systems, solar systems, planets; the mineral, the vegetable, the animal and the human kingdoms existing on one of these planets, *i.e.*, our earth; the individual organisms

[1] A Paper Contributed to the Philosophical Congress of Bologna, in 1911.

composing these kingdoms; the individual mind of the animal and the human; and finally, the groupings of men in societies, and in the domestic, ecclesiastical, political, professional, industrial and other institutions which constitute the organs of the social whole—are all seen to have gradually and slowly developed out of small beginnings.

Extremely valuable work has been done along these lines, most admirable collections of facts made, luminous inductions generalised out of them, the law of analogy justified more and more, and the growth of all and each seen to be as the growth of one.

2. Its Incompleteness

But obviously something more—perhaps the most important thing—remains to be done. What is the good of building up the finest palace if no one can be found to live in it? The material coefficient has been prepared with much labour; the spiritual coefficient has to be joined to it. To *know* that the growth of all is as the growth of one is not enough. It is only the beginning, the preparation, the pioneer work, the strong and indispensable foundation, if we would have it so, for the *feeling* of *a common life* running through all, and then for the *deliberate living* of such a common life; the realisation in thought has to be followed up by the realisation in emotion and then in conduct, of the solidarity, first of the human race, and then of all living beings whatsoever; and as it is rapidly becoming clear that all matter is living, that there is *no* dead matter, "all living beings" will soon be seen to mean the whole universe.

3. The Supplement Required

For this auspicious completion of the labour, a further step has to be taken. As the textbooks of science stand to-day, revised in the light of this great theory, they are *descriptions* of the *how* of things, they are not *explanations* of the *why* of the process; they set forth the *effects*, they do not really touch *causes*. The *why* is the purpose, the end and aim, the *final cause*, as rightly named by Plato; and the *how* is the subservient means. The one is Spiritual; the other material. Evolution, professing to explain everything else, does not explain itself. That which explains evolution, *why* it takes place, is the Owner of the palace and the gardens, Who indeed has planned and built and evolved and developed them and spread them out for His own satisfaction, without Whom they are empty and desolate indeed.

When the further step is taken by the workers in the field of evolutionary research, of extending the Law of Analogy, which they now confine mostly to the *growth* of organisms (at least so far as the larger organic wholes are concerned), to the birth, decay and death, and the *rebirth* or *reproduction* of these also; and when we carefully study the *why* of the world-process as a whole, then will the spiritual counterpart of the material appearance be found.

Only when the embryo has attained a certain minimum maturity of form within the womb, does "viability" descend upon it. Only when the body, the material sheathing of the human being, has arrived at a certain stage of development, does self-consciousness appear in him. Only when he has arrived at a certain

further stage can the "All-Self-Consciousness" manifest within and inspire him. In Theosophical language, as the lower becomes more and more fit, so does the higher enter more and more fully into it, and abide in it; having influenced it towards maturity from above, from a distance, so to say, until the entrance, even as the master guides the construction of the house from without, until it is ready for his occupation. Even so, only when the collection of the facts showing evolutionary growth is completed by further facts of this and also of the subtler worlds, relating to decay and death and *rebirth*, individual as well as racial, then only can the true metaphysic descend into it and fulfil its purpose.

4. Need for Criticism

As the recognition of one's deficiencies is the primary condition of the search for the remedy, and divine discontent (vaīrāgya) is the only means of finding the Divine, we might usefully dwell on those of the current evolution theory.

The old Creation theory, in India called the Ārambhavāḍa, made only *one* large assumption, of omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience, which could create everything out of nothing at one stroke. The new Evolution theory (which, with completions, is called the Pariṇāma-vāḍa in Samskṛṭ literature), makes endless small assumptions at every step. What the former did at one "infinite" stroke, this does by "infinitesimal" changes, differentiations and integrations, formations and dissolutions, variations and selections. The marvel is as great, the unintelligibility no less, to the thinker who

does not permit himself to mistake *more familiarity* for intelligibility, mere slowing down for complete rest, the infinitesimal for anything less than the infinite. The need for *final* explanations becomes, if possible, deeper than ever. Formerly it was the pastime of God, or His benevolence and compassion, the wish to share His joy with other conscious beings, or to have His glory seen and sung by such. Now, for the time being, even this has been lost, and no other clearer purpose has risen in its place; and the Force behind each step of the evolution is called the Unknowable.

Of course, even as in the house that is being built, the builders, directly or indirectly but inevitably, feel the guidance of the owner, even so the investigators of evolution, the collectors of facts, the makers of lesser generalisations cannot help sensing the Something which is behind and around all evolution and involution and perpetual re-volution; but they do so somewhat dimly, and often even ignore the feeling, as not of any obvious use to the work immediately in hand. This naturally leads to errors of omission and commission, of interpreting facts wrongly, of emphasising the smaller, unimportant and subordinate ones, and minimising the greater and more vital; even as ignorance of the needs and purposes of the owner leads builders to leave things undone or make excrescences in the house. And the errors are not insignificant and negligible. They have vital consequences. A wrong outlook upon life may make it all barren, pessimistic, desperate, instead of joyful and fruitful. An apparently small defect of sanitation, ventilation or drainage, may mean the difference between disease and health, life and death, to the occupant of the house.

5. Spencer's Unfruitful Recognition of the Spiritual Principle as the Unknowable

Herbert Spencer, whose collection of facts is the most comprehensive amongst the Western workers, and who, therefore, was the readiest to receive the fulfilling inspiration of the Spirit, postulates the Unknowable, at the very outset of his encyclopædic system of Synthetic Philosophy, in answer to the Final Why, in place of the Eternal Reason (of the Joy of Self-assertion and Other-denial) which will explain all. And in so far as he recognises and declares the Presence of this Unknowable Absolute behind and through all the phenomena of the Relative, he rises to his duty as a true scientist and philosopher. But because his collection of facts is incomplete, because he could not seriously take into account the facts of the superphysical worlds, because he had not before him the complete history of any complete cycle, from birth, through growth and reproduction and decay, to death, of any sun-system or planet or race or sub-race, because he could not venture to push the Law of Analogy far enough, therefore his recognition of the Unknowable, the Absolute, the Anirvachanīya or Indescribable, as the Veḍānṭin names It, remains vague, cloudy, meaningless and devoid of living use. He just mentions it, once for all, so to say, and does not revert to it again, whereas he should do so constantly, throughout the story of the Relative, if not to make the latter really intelligible (for a mere Unknowable could scarcely do that), yet at least to prevent the reader from forgetting that there was something left for further research.

6. How That Principle Underlies All Evolutionary and Other Processes

As it is, hasty readers and not merely hasty readers but more industrious delvers in the field of evolutionary investigation, have sometimes, in the first flush of the finding of this great idea, rushed to the conclusion that they had come to the bottom of the Universe, finally and completely abolished all the old superstitions, and explained everything. They have gone the way of the astronomer who declared with a sensational flourish: "I have swept the heavens with my telescope and found no God" —a statement perfectly true, by the way, for God indeed is not to be found by looking *outwards*, with a telescope, at the surface of the visible heavens, but by looking *inwards*, with concentrated and attentive mind, into the depths of one's own being, which is then seen to be identical with All Being. God was verily hiding *within* the wielder of the telescope and smiling while the hands were sweeping the heavens with the instrument. So a physiologist spoke of the brain secreting thought as the liver secretes bile, and others accepted the teaching; till one, erstwhile a disciple and propagandist, happened to study the works of some idealists, and discovered that while the so-called producers, liver and brain, might have something in common, the so-called products, bile and thought, had very little similarity with each other; and that between objective phenomena and subjective phenomena, between so many thousands or millions of vibrations at one end of a nerve and a sound-sensation or a colour-sensation

at the other end thereof, there was a gulf which could not be bridged by lightly declaring the former to be the cause of the latter. Later scientists have gone even further, and declared that physical phenomena have to be explained by and reduced into terms of the psychical, and not *vice versa*; and thus have come to the point where the influx of spiritual metaphysic can take place, completing, re-arranging and making new for them the whole scheme of knowledge and feeling and conduct, even as a stream of rays of light, converging in a cone to the pin-hole in a pin-hole camera, reappears on the other side, reversed and re-arranged, without losing any valuable and useful fact that it possessed before. The scientific world is beginning to realise that while the testimony on which all its knowledge of realities is based, is the testimony of the five senses, these senses do not testify to their own reality; while they prove the existence of other things, their own existence they cannot prove. The eye sees all things; itself it does not see. The ear hears all sounds; itself it does not hear. Their existence is proved only by the Consciousness behind them. This Principle of Consciousness sees the eye and hears the ear. As the sense-organs cognise, so various emotion-organs feel, and action-organs act. But the Principle of Consciousness behind cognises the senses, feels the emotion-organs and moves the muscles. It gives existence to, keeps going, and at will puts to sleep everything and all things, even as the audience, by "attending" or otherwise, brings the playhouse into being, and keeps it going, or closes it.

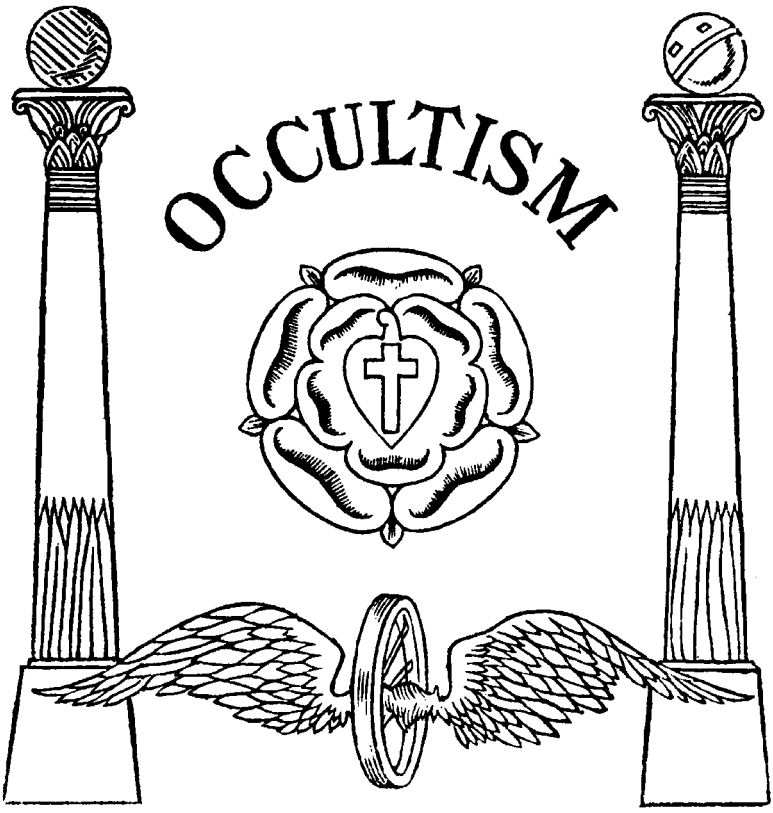
7. How the Evolutionist Must Come to It at last

This Principle the scientist has to come to, more and more closely. Shrī Harṣha, the William James, in brilliance, of the India of a thousand years ago, and deeper-seeing perhaps than he in insight into causes, spoke of the Self-disbeliever as the defaulter who, having successfully dodged the tax-collectors all night through the devious lanes of the town, went to sleep in a dark porch towards the morning, and woke up in the broad daylight to find that his shelter was the threshold of the chief tax-assessor's office building, and that the collectors were smiling benignly upon him.

Even so the modern evolutionist, after having dodged more or less successfully the upholders of special creation, through the winding pathways of infinite and infinitely-changing environments, endless spontaneous variations and survivals of the fittest, and incessant differentiations and integrations and dissolutions and re-integrations—all perfectly true, finds at the end, when he is feeling most self-satisfied, that he has walked into the arms of an even more formidable, exacting and ruthless account-keeper; that he has only come to the conclusion that *the infinite possibility* of all possible forms *is already present*, from the beginningless beginning, in the primeval biophorid, the atomic speck of life,—this same Infinite Potentiality, plus all Actuality, being what the Veḍānṭin calls Brahman, which is, and wherein is, "All, everywhere and always".

Bhagavān Ḍās

(*To be continued*)



THE NATURE OF MYSTICISM

By C. JINARĀJADĀSA, M.A.

(*Continued from p. 661.*)

NATURE MYSTICISM

The great Mysticism is the belief which is becoming every day stronger with me, that all symmetrical natural objects are types of some spiritual truth or existence. When I walk the fields, I am oppressed now and then with an innate feeling that everything I see has a meaning, if I could but understand it. And this feeling of being surrounded with

truths which I cannot grasp, amounts to indescribable awe sometimes. Everything seems to be full of God's reflex, if we could but see it. Oh, how I have prayed to have the mystery unfolded, at least hereafter! To see, if but for a moment, the whole harmony of the great system! To hear once the music which the whole universe makes as it performs His bidding.[1]

TO the nature mystic, the manifold nature around him is as a mirror in which is reflected the Face of Divinity. The mystic of this type is not like the pantheistic mystic who realises God's Immanence in nature; to the former practically there is no Immanence, for his heart is set on the Transcendence. To the pantheist, nature is a veil over the great Reality; to the nature mystic, she is real and not an illusion, though he values in her an inner relation and not the outer form. As in a great piece of tapestry, full of colour and line, there are beneath, unseen, the warp and the woof, without which the tapestry could not be, so too is it in nature; the phenomena of nature —form and colour, dimension and relation, appearance and disappearance—are only as beads strung on a silver thread. The nature mystic senses the hidden divine axes of structure in the shape of wave and peak and cloud, in the delicacy and grace of fern and flower, in the beauty of the human face, in the flowering of love in the heart of man. The beauty of nature and the beauty of man both speak to him one continual message, and it is of " Yonder, Yonder ".

The Theme.—This is the all-powerful fact that the Divine Mind is mirrored in nature. In many forms this thought appears in religions; the greatest exponent of it, with the exception of the Founder of Buddhism, is Plato, and after him come the Stoics, and then the

[1] *Charles Kingsley, His Life and Letters*, I, 55.

Christian mystics who have been influenced by this most characteristic phase of the Greek imagination. For Plato, each object as a particular thing is related to a general concept, whose essence is an Idea of the Divine Mind; and since the Divine Mind is the Good, the True and the Beautiful, whenever we sense these Realities through our sense impressions, which are produced by contacts with nature, we "remember" our true home, whence we have come to earth for a while.

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
> The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar:
> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home.[1]

It is this "Home" of ours that the nature mystic sees in flashes as he thrills to the beauties of nature in all her manifestations. Everywhere he sees, according to his temperament and mood, Rhythm, Order, Beauty, Love, and beneficent Law; he needs no faith or doctrine to guide him to God, for he communes with God as he contemplates nature. The sight of sea or mountain or pool or field is the great purification his heart cries out for; nature's moods are the whispers of the God he seeks.

> Therefore am I still
> A lover of the meadows and the woods,
> And mountains; and of all that we behold
> From this green earth; of all the mighty world
> Of eye, and ear,— both what they half create,
> And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
> In nature and the language of the sense,
> The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
> The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
> Of all my moral being.[2]

[1] Wordsworth, *Ode on Intimations of Immortality.*

[2] Wordsworth, *Lines, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye.*

The theme of the Divine Mind in nature appears in Plato throughout all his philosophy, but one aspect of it is specially noteworthy, and that is the doctrine of Beauty. What we find beautiful in any thing or in any event is only the beauty of the Divine Mind mirroring itself in the thing and the event. Therefore, if we but cultivate our sense of beauty, we pass from one vision of beauty to another till we see the alone Beautiful, God Himself.

> For he who hath thus far had intelligence of love, and hath beheld all fair things in order and aright,—he drawing near to the end of things lovable shall behold a BEING marvellously fair; for whose sake in truth it is that all the previous labours have been undergone: One who is from everlasting, and neither is born nor perisheth, nor can wax nor wane, nor hath change or turning or alteration of foul or fair; nor can that beauty be imagined after the fashion of face or hands or bodily parts and members, nor in any form of speech or knowledge, nor in dwelling in aught but itself; neither in beast nor man nor earth nor heaven nor any other creature: but Beauty only and alone and separate and eternal, which, albeit all other fair things partake thereof and grow and perish, itself without change or increase or diminution endures for everlasting.[1]

It is noteworthy that the fundamental basis of Buddhism is a Nature Mysticism of a unique kind. The Divine Mind is not visualised in any personification; it is, to the Buddha, the great Law, the Dhamma, irresistible and imperishable. This Law is no God's self-revelation or will; it is *The Law*, that statement of the true relation between things as they eternally are. Yet that Law is not an abstraction; it is a mighty Power that permeates the whole universe, and "the heart of it is Love, the end of it is Peace and Consummation sweet". It states the relation between inanimate bodies, and we call the Dhamma

[1] Plato, *Symposium*.

then the Laws of Motion of Newton; it states the relation between souls, and the Lord Buddha then expounds it as "Hatred does not cease by hatred; hatred ceases only by love". Hence the supreme emphasis laid by the Lord Buddha on the Dhamma as the Criterion, the Refuge, the Purification, and the Way of Salvation.

> Its effects are immediate, it is unlimited by time, it is conducive to salvation, it invites all comers, it is a fitting object of contemplation, the wise ponder it in their hearts.
>
> Through life, till I reach Nirvana, I will put my trust in the Law.
>
> The Law as it has been in the ages that are past,
> The Law that will be in the ages that are to come,
> The Law as it is in this present age,
> I worship continually.
> I have no other Refuge,
> The Law is my best Refuge;
> By the truth of these words
> May I conquer and win the victory.[1]

The Method.—This, for nature mysticism, is contemplation. Man need but cast out the self, and see things as they are, apart from any relation to himself, and he sees them in their harmony and beauty, with Plato, or he sees them, in Buddhism, as a vast Becoming, involving delusion and ignorance that cloud vision and trammel his free life as Being. This contemplation may be worked out stage by stage, as in Buddhism, in ascending grades of intensity of spiritual realisation; or it may be induced by a passionate response to the beauties of nature. In the former case, man separates himself from "the world as will," and identifies himself with "the world as idea," and becomes himself the Law, the Dhamma; in the latter, he becomes

[1] *Pātimokkha*, trans. by Dickson.

for the time one of those "organic harps divinely framed,"

> That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps,
> Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
> At once the soul of each, and God of all.

The insight gained by the contemplation appropriate to this nature mysticism could not better be expressed than by these words of Wordsworth, as he analyses what the mood evokes in him:

> that blessed mood,
> In which the burthen of the mystery,
> In which the heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world,
> Is lightened: that serene and blessed mood,
> In which the affections gently lead us on,
> Until, the breath of this corporeal frame,
> And even the motion of our human blood,
> Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
> In body, and become a living soul:
> While with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things.[1]

Nor can the magic of this mysticism be more clearly described than in these two lines with which Wordsworth closes his great Ode:

> To me the meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

The Obstacle.—Wherever there are nature mystics, they love knowledge. Ignorance and superstition are the greatest obstacles in their path, and they feel that to know more is to see more. The mind must be made luminous, for they desire more truth of feeling than its intensity, and for them the clearer is the intellect the purer is the feeling. In Buddhism, the greatest obstacle is ignorance, the last and final "fetter" which must be cast off before attaining Perfection; in Platonism, the

[1] *The Banks of the Wye.*

training of the mind by philosophy and science, and of the feelings by art, is an integral part in the building of character. We shall see more clearly what is *anathema maranatha* for nature mystics when we consider their ideal.

It is interesting to note that wherever this mysticism develops a religious worship, its cults prefer as much sunlight as possible for their rituals. In their temples, there will be nothing akin to the awe-inspiring gloom of Hindu temples, with their innermost sanctuary almost in total darkness, and into which none may enter but the consecrated priests; nor to the dim mystic softness of Christian churches and cathedrals radiating devotion.

On the other hand, as in Buddhist temples now, and in Greek temples of long ago, there will be sunlight and open air, with the Holy of Holies in no mystic gloom at all, and approachable by every worshipper.

The Ideal.—This is the Philosopher, the Friend of Wisdom. And Wisdom for him is not a mere knowledge of facts and events gained by the mind; it is the co-ordination of everything by the human mind, which has become a reflex of the Divine Mind.

Many are the paths to casting off ignorance and coming to wisdom; in Buddhism by rigid self-analysis, detachment and a compassion for all that lives; in Platonism by a contemplation of the "Ideas," the things-in-themselves, the thought-forms of the Demiourgos. The nature mystic is ever the idealist; and so long as the conditions surrounding his earthly embodiment fall short of his ideal, he feels a stranger in a strange land, and so strives to mould his environment

to his ideal. Blake is the typical nature mystic when he sings,

> I will not cease from mental strife,
> Nor shall my sword fall from my hand,
> Till I have built Jerusalem
> Within this green and pleasant land!

And not less typical are these words of Patrick Geddes as he calls for volunteers to build the City Beautiful: "People volunteer for war; and it is a strange and dark superstition that they will not volunteer for peace."

The nature mystic is therefore a reformer—not a mere iconoclast, but a fashioner anew, who longs for the new form because his intuition has seen it. He is more a man who proclaims the ideal, than himself the hewer of wood and drawer of water who actually brings about the changes. Nature mystics may indeed lack executive ability, and a knowledge of ways and means; they can talk more inspiringly about what *must be* than on how it must be brought about. But they long to make all things orderly and sunlit and beautiful. The many forms of ignorance and superstition are for them dirt and disease, passion and delusion, ugliness and crudity, insularity and prejudice, commercialism and leanness of soul; and in the ranks of modern nature mystics are Emerson and Carlyle, William Morris and Matthew Arnold and Ruskin, and all of that ever-increasing band of "volunteers for peace" who are the "children of light," whose path to God is through Wisdom and Beauty.

C. Jinarājadāsa

(*To be continued*)

OCCULTISM AND WAR

By ANNIE BESANT

(*Based on a Lecture given lately in India*)

THE problem of the existence of evil in a world emanating from the Transcendent Perfect is one that has tormented human brains since man has striven to understand his world, himself, and God. There is but one Life in which all subsists: "In Him we live and move and have our being." How is it then that evil and misery blot our world, blot it so much that a writer has named it "the Sorrowful Star"? The distress caused in many a mind by the present War is but an acute stage in the long enquiry. War seems to sum up all horror into one ghastly monster. Yet we see that it is only a special case of the sempiternal difficulty. Whence comes evil, since all is rooted in the Good?

The War has forced on Christian people this ever-recurring problem, and it is increased by a difficulty peculiar to their own creed: How can War be reconciled with the teaching of the Christ? Tolstoy, who took the teachings of the Christ *an pied de la lettre*, had no difficulty at all in answering emphatically that War was against Christ's teaching. Since Christ had said: "If a man strike thee on one cheek turn to him the

other," the young Russian noble left the army and refused to take any further part in military affairs. Since Christ had said: "Sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor," Tolstoy cobbled shoes for a living. He answered the questions frankly and fully, and instead of making Christ's teaching square with his practice, he made his practice square with Christ's teaching, and so found peace.

But it is not only the Christ who has taught the doctrine of returning evil with good. The Lord Buḍḍha and Lâo-tsze had, long before Him, taught the same: "To the man that causelessly injures me," said the Illuminated One, "I will return the protection of my ungrudging love; the more evil comes from him, the more good shall flow from me." Lâo-tsze taught that to meet evil with good was to transform it: "The good I will meet with good; the evil I will meet with good also; so all shall become good." "Overcome evil with good" is the universal teaching among these highest of the children of men. It belongs equally to all. The difficulty is a common difficulty. Earnest and devout people, seeking to know "the mind of Christ," have even extended the doctrine, "Resist not evil," to the case of a Nation. There are a few who hold that a Nation should no more defend itself against aggression than should an individual, and that a Nation should no more go to War than the individual should revenge himself when wrong is done to him. There has been put forward in Europe what is called the theory of the Martyr Nation. It has been said that if a Nation were willing to follow out these teachings to the full, if they would return good for evil, would allow the enemy to overrun their lands, would allow him to seize their

goods, would allow him to slay, burn and ravish as Germany has done in Belgium, that such a Nation unresisting, such a Nation all-forgiving, would in the long run conquer its enemy by the force of patience and forgiveness, would melt the heart of the oppressor, and would gain a securer liberty and peace because they would be based on love and not on hatred and strife. So it was said, and it was pleaded very strongly in Europe before the present War.

On the other hand some Christian men have taken an entirely different view. The late Bishop of Peterborough, a great Officer of the Church of England, a Church established by law, declared that the teachings of the Christ in the Sermon on the Mount were not meant for a Nation to carry out. He said plainly and bluntly that if any Nation tried to carry out the Sermon on the Mount, that Nation could not exist for a week. And that is quite true. If we do away with all Law, with restraint over the evil-doer, if we permit tyranny to flourish unchecked, then the violent, the strong and the oppressive become the masters of the land, and they plunder it as they will. But the Christians, having lost their deeper philosophy, have never been able to answer this problem satisfactorily. They have been content to live by one law, while they profess to accept another. They go to Church on Sunday and accept, "Resist not evil"; but they vigorously resist it on the remaining six days of the week. They live as all Nations live, by the law of reason, by common-sense, by the study of human conditions. None the less there remains always, in the minds of the thoughtful, the opposition between the faith on the one hand and the practice on the other,

between the teachings in the Church on Sunday and the life in the merchant's shop, in the lawyer's court, in the common lives of men—the practice which is not according to the teaching of the Christ.

Hinḍūs have fallen into much the same difficulty in the teaching of Shrī Kṛṣhṇa in the *Bhagavaḍ-Gīṭā*, that a man should work without "desire for fruit". Now it is obvious that all ordinary human action is motived by the desire for the result, the fruit, of action, and that without that desire, men would not trouble themselves to work. But that teaching was not given, nor was the Sermon on the Mount intended, for a crowd of ignorant and undeveloped people. Arjuna was a disciple, a Yogī, and therefore he was taught the way of the Yogī, to work without desire for fruit, the highest form of action possible for the human being. Shrī Kṛṣhṇa reminded Arjuna that neither this world nor any other had aught to give Him in return for action, yet, He said, "I work unceasingly"; and then He gave His reason: He was not working for anything that any world could give Him. What could the Lord of all the worlds desire from any one of them? But He worked unceasingly: "For if I do not work, all these worlds would fall into confusion." There is the new motive. The worlds must not perish; so speaking as Viṣhṇu, as the Preserver, the Maintainer, of the world, He gave His motive for His work; not for anything that He could gain by it, but for the sake of the worlds themselves, because the worlds needed His sustaining strength. Therefore it was exercised to the utmost, and as a man of the world would work for fruit, so Shrī Kṛṣhṇa ever works for the welfare of the world. And there is the motive for the disciple: "Let

the wise man," not every man, but "let the wise man, working with Me, render all action attractive." And He gave yet another reason for this: that the standard the wise man sets up, by that the people go. He draws then the distinction between the wise man and the masses of the people, and to work without desire for fruit is the work of the Yogī, the Sannyāsī, the man who is seeking for liberation, intent upon the welfare of the world. But if that idea too soon is caught hold of as a rule of conduct, the result of that rule on the man who has not made the welfare of the world his only motive for activity is that he ceases to work, and falls into lethargy and indifference. And that has happened too much in modern India. How many Indians we find, not the younger ones I am glad to say, but the middle-aged and the old, who say: "What does it matter how the world goes, provided I can escape from it into peace?" They are not intent upon the welfare of the world; they are intent on their own escape. And for those to whom the divine Will is not the one motive of action and the one law of life, for them it is far better that they should continue to work for fruit, so that they may develop the faculties of the mind, and the qualities of the emotional nature.

In neither of these cases, then, does the teaching given seem to be suited to the need of the ordinary man as a citizen, nor to the need of a Nation at the present stage of evolution. We must seek more deeply for an explanation of the existence of War in a world born out of Love, and guided by Love. We must seek it by the "study of the Divine Mind in Nature," as H. P. B. loved to define Occultism.

There are two great theories of evil, and War comes under evil; one of these recognises the Unity of Life, that all things are rooted in the One Existence, that "there is *nothing*, moving nor unmoving, that can exist bereft of Me". If there is nothing which can exist save as it draws its life from the One, then a true theory of life must include all evil as well as all good in that One Source of Existence. The second theory, the later Persian and the Christian, sees over against God the Power of Good, the mighty figure of Ahriman, or Satan, the Power of Evil. Dualism must then be accepted as a theory, and as all good flows from God, all evil flows from Satan. But even in this theory, for the Christian, at least, there is a unity behind, for Satan is a "fallen" Archangel, and the difficulty is only pushed a step further back. The will is free, it is urged. But that the will should choose the evil in its freedom, prefer the evil, implies an original defect in it.

The post-Babylonian Jews, coming into contact with the philosophy of the East, accepted the Unity of Existence, and we have the Hebrew prophet declaring that God creates evil. The Christian shrinks from this inevitable result of the solitary Creator, and, veiling the ultimate, puts all evil on the broad shoulders of Satan. Hinḍūism, it is needless to say, accepts the primary Pair of Opposites, Self and Not-Self, Spirit and Matter, and sees both as manifestations of the One Existence, inseparable in all manifestations. Further, it posits a gradual unfolding of the germ of Life placed by the Eternal Father in the womb of Matter, through a long series of evolutions, by which the germ-Self, at first identifying itself with the Not-Self, gradually frees itself from that delusion and realises itself as one with

the Universal Self, thereby reaching Liberation. Upon this view of the Life unfolding itself through many stages, was built the caste system and the relativity of morals, the ḍharma, the duty, of each not being identical, but, on the contrary, dependent on the stage of evolution marked by the caste. Thus, in a Nation, into which, necessarily, men at all stages of evolution must be born, there was a duty for each stage, and the complete fabric of the Nation was built up, adequate in every part, while, at the same time, each individual progressed along the line best suited to his own further development. Never was a better system for human progress devised than the caste system, whether we regard the prosperity and safety of the Nation, or the development of the individual, and so long as the castes observed their several ḍharmas, and change from the one to the other was practicable wherever a temporary kārmic disability or ability arose and was exhausted, all went well. The present confusion, foreseen and stated, has deprived the system of its utility and reduced it to a farce.

The absence of all desire for the fruit of action was not laid down as the duty of the developing man. On the contrary, the only check to desire imposed on the "young soul," the Shūḍra, was his duty of obedience to an external authority. Before the Vaishya and the Kṣhaṭṭriya three objects were placed for their pursuit in life, and by the pursuit of these was their evolution secured: Kāma, pleasure; Arṭha, wealth; Ḍharma, duty. They, householders, were not bidden to work without desire for fruit; on the contrary, they were to enjoy the pleasures of life, to possess wealth and to expend it. Only in the Brāhmaṇa stage was desire to

be gradually outgrown, and renunciation gradually practised, until in the last Order of that caste, the Sannyāsa, all desires were to be renounced utterly, and the union of the human with the divine Will was to be achieved. To work without desire for fruit was the glory of the Sannyāsī.

Now the third of the ascending stages was the Kṣhaṭṭriya, the Warrior. His ḍharma—while it permitted him to enjoy all the pleasures and glories of life, to be wealthy, splendid, generous—was to surrender them all at the call of honour, and his honour lay in the protection of the Nation, in the defence of the weak, in the restraining of the strong. He was not to yield to evil, but to resist it with all his might, even to death. Within the Nation, he was to preserve order, to prevent oppression, to keep the peace, to ensure the safety and comfort of all, to punish the thief and make good the theft, for the activity of the thief showed that he was remiss in his duty. Without the Nation, he was to guard it from enemies, to repel invasion, to resist aggression, and to meet any probability of invasion with swift previous attack. "There is nothing better for a Kṣhaṭṭriya than righteous War."

But the old system was rigid as to the duty of a Kṣhaṭṭriya: he must never strike a foul blow; he must never slay one who surrendered, nor strike one who had fallen to the ground, nor who prayed for mercy. The conquered enemy was to be treated with courtesy. The Kṣhaṭṭriya was to be chivalrous, a "very parfaite and gentyl knight". The weak was to be safe from him; he must only strike the strong. He might not refuse a challenge, nor protection to any who claimed it. Thus War was made a school of self-control and of

virile virtue; it evoked high courage but also gentleness, honour, and self-sacrifice.

Thus, in the polity of Ancient India, and still in the mind and heart of the people, War for righteousness' sake is a glorious duty, not a regrettable necessity. In the higher stage of evolution, War had no part. The Brāhmaṇa was to pardon all wrong, never to revenge it, and his highest Order was to suffer all injustice without resentment, to renounce all "rights," to make no claims, to pay all debts and incur none. The teaching of the *Gīṭā*, of the Sermon on the Mount, that was his ḍharma.

But to take the highest teaching before the man is ready for it is to check his evolution, and that has been forgotten largely in modern India, as in Christian lands. If you think for a moment, an ordinary man must have some motive for action; for the majority of men it is money, or fame, or power, or enjoyment; these are the things that stir men to activity; and if you are inclined to think that every one should work without desire for fruit, then you might do well to ask yourself why did Īshvara fill His world with objects of desire, and implant in men the craving to possess them? If man is not to have his craving gratified, why is the object of desire placed before his eyes? The fact is that the modern Indian forgets the ancient teaching. He does not realise that men are at different stages of evolution, and for every stage, its own motive, for every stage its own lesson; and so you have the result that India lacks vigour, strength and earnestness in evolution. You have the result of an India indifferent largely to wrong, because it has misread its own scriptures and does not realise the wisdom of the Ṛṣhis of old.

Let us next consider how far War is part of the working of the Divine Mind in Nature.

Annie Besant

(*To be concluded*)

"AT EVENTIDE IT SHALL BE LIGHT"

DAY hath reached its ending,
Swift is night descending,
Weary folk are wending
Now their rest-ward way:
But no change diurnal
Dims Thy light supernal,
Christ, Thou Sun eternal,
Lord of night and day.

Slumber, o'er us creeping,
Holds our bodies sleeping;
May our souls be keeping
Watch with Thee above.
Drawn by holy yearning,
Unto Thee returning,
May we still be learning
More of Thy great Love.

Through a world unheeding,
May we, gladly speeding,
Helping, guarding, pleading,
Bear that Love abroad.
Or, in blissful wonder,
Gather round Thee yonder,
At Thy Feet to ponder
Mysteries of God.

C. W. S. M.

AN ACCOUNT OF A PSYCHIC EXPERIENCE

By MANOHAR LAL DEB

BABU CHANDRA NATH CHATTERJI, RAI BAHADUR, was a Conservator of Forests in the Central Provinces. He was a well educated and accomplished gentleman, truthful and honest. Being deeply read in philosophy and having a considerable knowledge of science, he disbelieved in any so-called supernatural phenomenon which science was unable to account for. His widowed mother was a very pious lady, and a strictly orthodox Hiṇḍū. She used to spend hours in meditation, and sometimes a whole day in Yoga samāḍhi or trance. But although a high class Brāhmaṇi, her orthodoxy did not make her shrink from her eldest son, Chandra Nath, who openly violated the caste rules as regards food. She held a very high opinion of him on account of his frank and generous nature, which she prized above scrupulous observance of Hiṇḍū customs when not associated with this quality. The following narrative was related by Chandra Nath himself to a friend of mine on whose veracity I rely, and I give it exactly as I heard it from him without any embellishments.

* * * * *

One day, when riding in a forest on duty, Chandra Nath's horse shied at the sound of some wild animals. He tried to control it, but in vain. The horse reared and he fell from its back. One of his feet got entangled in the stirrup, and before he could be helped, the horse bolted, dragging him over the stones and through the briers to a considerable distance, where the foresters stopped it. The injuries received by Chandra Nath were so severe that he was found quite unconscious. He was carried somehow to the nearest hospital, where his wounds were attended to. But as his case was serious, Chandra Nath, under medical advice, was forthwith removed by rail to Cawnpore, in order to be treated by surgeons in possession of better surgical equipment.

At Cawnpore, Chandra Nath put up at the house of a relation who was a pleader. The civil surgeon examined him, and performed a surgical operation with the assistance of the military staff surgeon. The fractured and dislocated bones were put in position by means of a splint bandage, and the patient was directed to lie straight on his back, and not to move. The family physician attended him daily, and the civil surgeon occasionally, during the period ; he was directed to retain a recumbent posture, while his young wife and her youngest sister waited upon him continuously as nurses, according to the direction of the family physician. After the expiration of the appointed time, the bandages were removed by the civil surgeon himself, who ordered Chandra Nath to get up. But to his surprise, Chandra Nath could not raise himself even to a sitting posture, and his affected leg could not be bent, having become rigid. Thereupon the civil surgeon examined him carefully and found that there were defective

adhesions of the fractured bones, which could only be adjusted by a second operation.

A consultation was then held among the members of the family ; and it was decided to remove Chandra Nath to the Medical College Hospital at Calcutta, where the best surgical skill and appliances were available. This idea, however, greatly depressed his wife, for apart from the difficulty of removing her invalid husband to such a distant place, she was afraid that the second operation might prove too great a strain on his already reduced vitality. This dismal contingency made her extremely miserable; and although she tried hard to keep a composed countenance in the presence of her husband, she could not restrain her tears as soon as she was out of his room.

The night preceding the day on which they were to leave Cawnpore for Calcutta, Chandra Nath lay awake on his bed brooding over his misfortune. The room was quite dark, and perfect silence prevailed, save for the breathing of his wife who was sleeping on a separate bed in the same room. Suddenly he was startled by the flash of a very brilliant light. He turned his face towards the direction from which this light came, and was horror-struck to see that the wall opposite to him was cracking and the light issuing from the crevice. In a moment the crevice widened into a breach, through which emerged a venerable person with long flowing white beard and in a white robe, followed by a young woman—almost a girl—whom he recognised as his wife's youngest sister. As soon as they entered the room the breach closed up.

For a while Chandra Nath, who was a confirmed sceptic and did not believe in such phenomena, thought

that he was only dreaming. But he began to realise that he was wide awake when the two figures approached his bed, and the venerable man bade him distinctly in Hindi to get up. Greatly bewildered, he could not utter a word, and remained quiet. The Mahāṭmā again directed him to stand up, but he did not respond; and when for the third time he spoke, the young woman entreated Chandra Nath to make an attempt to comply with the wishes of the Mahāṭma. He reminded her of his having lost the power to raise himself, and so she helped him to sit on his bed. As he made the attempt to raise himself, he discovered that not only could he do so with ease, but he could also move and bend the leg which had become rigid. So with the help of a stick he got down from his bed and stood in front of the Mahāṭmā. The Mahāṭmā directed him to sit upon his haunches and then stand up erect, and under his direction he did this three times, when suddenly the wall again opened and the two persons went out through the breach, which immediately closed up, leaving the room as dark as it had been before; and no sign whatever remained of the breach, which he tried to trace the next day.

Chandra Nath was quite puzzled; but he determined to discover the reason of this phenomenon without speaking of it to anyone. To make sure that his wife had not seen it, he groped his way in the dark to her bed and surprised her by his touch. He assured her of his recovery after a deep sleep, and enquired if she had seen anything happening while he was asleep which conduced to his sudden cure. She said she imagined that she had seen the flash of a

dazzling light just before being overpowered by the deep sleep from which he had awakened her. He made no mention of this momentous incident to her.

The next morning every one in the house was surprised to see Chandra Nath downstairs, walking about with the help of a stick. The family physician and the civil surgeon, after careful examination, declared that the fractured bones had been set right, probably by a suitable jerk caused by a turn he had taken in his sleep. He was all right now; only his general health required toning up, and this was attended to.

Having failed to arrive at a solution of this mysterious incident, Chandra Nath casually asked his sister-in-law, when there was no other person present, if she could explain how he got cured that fateful night. At first she tried to evade his question, but on being pressed she declared, on his promise of secrecy, that the cure had been effected by her Guru, whom she had known as such in her three preceding incarnations also. Chandra Nath said: "How can you remember your past lives?"

She replied: "I cannot account for this, but my Guru visits me whenever I am in sore distress and comforts me by his advice. Perhaps his hallowed influence revives in my mind the principal incidents of my three previous incarnations."

"Can you remember where you were born in your last incarnation?"

"Yes, in an aristocratic family in Nepal"—and the cast of her features resembled a Nepalese.

"Can you ask your Guru to favour me by a visit again, to solve some metaphysical problems which I am unable to do myself?"

"He is too high to be trifled with, and I dare not trouble him so frequently. His orders are that I should call him only when I am in great difficulty. Such a difficulty arose when my eldest sister was deeply distressed owing to the civil surgeon's failure to cure you."

But Chandra Nath insisted on her making an attempt to induce him to comply with his request, and she reluctantly assented. Some days passed, and Chandra Nath's wish was not accomplished. He was therefore beginning to think that his sister-in-law had simply hoaxed him. One night Chandra Nath had no sleep, and he lay on his bed musing on the strange happening of that former night. All at once the same kind of dazzling light as he had seen before filled his room, and through the wall which had just been breached came forth the same Mahāṭmā, who was followed by his sister-in-law. Although Chandra Nath wished to ask some questions he was dumbfounded. He, however, rose from his bed and prostrated himself at the feet of the Mahāṭmā.

The Mahāṭmā said: "You want to ask me to answer some questions. Do you not?"

Chandra Nath could not utter a word.

The Mahāṭmā continued: "You are an educated man and were so in past lives also. You have a large stock of good karma and only a little of bad karma. You are now fit to tread on the right path, so follow me. Your doubts cannot otherwise be removed."

Chandra Nath was unable to follow him; and pointing to his sleeping wife, he said:

"Sir, grateful as I feel for your kind invitation, I am unable to leave my wife, who is so young,

unprotected and unprovided for. Although I am in receipt of a handsome salary, I have not yet been able to save anything for her."

At this the Mahāṭmā reflected for a moment, and then pointed at the wall beneath the cornice in the room. Chandra Nath turned towards that direction; and lo! there was on the whole length of the wall a panoramic view of a burning ghat and its surroundings near a large river. Close to this ghat was a bier on which lay the corpse of a woman whom he made out to be his own wife. There were a few Bengalis near the bier, and one of them was Chandra Nath himself. As he turned towards the Mahāṭmā, he saw him and his sister-in-law going out through the breach in the wall. The breach then closed up and he was left in darkness.

The next morning he questioned his sister-in-law as to why she did not follow her Guru. She replied that her husband would not permit this, and it was the will of her Guru that she should not leave her husband against his wish.

Soon after this incident Chandra Nath, duly restored to health, returned with his wife to the place of his employment. After a few months his wife died; and when her corpse was conveyed for cremation to the burning ghat, the scene of that place presented an exact resemblance to that of the panoramic picture on the wall of his room at Cawnpore.

* * * * *

Rai Chandra Nath Chatterji, Bahadur, is dead, and I do not know what has become of his gifted sister-in-law. My friend does not remember the name of Chandra Nath's relative at Cawnpore. Perhaps the

narrative may attract the attention of some people acquainted with the family, who may be able to trace her and her subsequent history.

Manohar Lal Deb

THE REASON WHY

By C. W. LEADBEATER

SOME time ago I wrote an article on the occult view of the present War, explaining the awful cruelties perpetrated by the Germans as resulting from the obsession of the race by certain Dark Powers. I know that the obsession of a person can never occur without some reason—that the obsessing entity always needs some *point d'appui*, some fulcrum for his lever, in the character of the person whom he seizes. Sometimes a young girl of apparently perfect purity of life will suddenly fall into fits in which she will horrify her friends by using obscene language, such as she could not possibly have known. The language is no doubt dictated by an evil entity, but it is nevertheless a sad certainty that there must have been some spot of impurity in the nature of the victim—which is only saying in other words that obsession, like all else, obeys the inexorable law of karma, and can come only to those who have in some way or other deserved it.

As that is true of individuals it must be true also of nations; and I have wondered what it was in the character of the German nation as a whole that laid it open to such a terrible fate. Since I wrote the article some statistics have come in my way which are remarkably suggestive, and go far, I think, towards solving the problem. They are compiled by a Professor of the University of Erlangen, in Saxony, and are extracted from a book of his entitled *The Soul of Germany*. They consist of a comparison of the number of crimes which came before the Courts in England and in Germany in the course of ten years. The population of Germany is approximately seventy millions, whereas that of England is about forty; therefore we must add 75 per cent to the number of crimes in England to obtain the number that should be expected to take place in Germany if the proportion were the same. Let us see how it works out.

The cases of maliciously and feloniously wounding were in England 1,262, so we should expect in Germany 2,208; the actual number is 172,153—*nearly eighty times as many!* Of murders there were 97 in England, whereas in Germany there were 350; but the crimes classed as murders in Germany are notoriously under-estimated. There are hundreds of man-killings which the German law does not technically term "murder," and so they are not included in these statistics. Rapes in England were 216, and in the same proportion Germany would have 378; instead of that she has 9,381. Cases of incest numbered 56 in our own country; we might expect 100 in Germany, but she counts 573. The number of illegitimate children was with us 37,041—high enough in all conscience;

but in the Fatherland there were in the same time 178,115. Cases of malicious damage to property—a peculiarly mean and spiteful offence—were in England 358, which would lead us to expect 622 in Germany; the actual number was 25,759.

These figures speak for themselves in no uncertain voice, and they may help us to understand how this, the most awful example in history of the fall of a great nation, has become possible.

C. W. Leadbeater

THE RETURN TO INCARNATION

By CLARA M. CODD

IN Devachan—the Home of the Gods—the disciple dwelt with his Master. The Master worked through all the planes of Nature, yet, for the moment, the disciple knew Him only on this one. So, although the Master was very busy, working unceasingly through all God's seven-fold universe, to the disciple in Heaven it seemed that the Master was always with him, and all that long day blessedness everywhere enshrined him and gave to him perfect rest. For Heaven *is* one long, long day. Here it may be measured by hundreds and hundreds of years, but there it is just one long sweet day, but so dear and beautiful a day that all the span of earth-life after it is hallowed by its unconscious remembrance.

All that day through, the disciple had lived near the Master, and been filled with the unspeakable glory of that near Presence. All that day through, he had asked that Dear One many questions, told Him many longings, and the blessedness that overwhelmed him stole like irresistible yet gentle fingers over him, loosening every knot that in earth-life had meant a mental limitation, and breaking silently asunder the bonds that had held a blinded heart. And looking upon the Master's face, the disciple knew that Heaven

was born in himself. Suddenly he seemed to fill the earth and sea and sky, to rush out in every fibre of his being to join all that lived and loved. Expansion! He knew it to be love. . . . . .

The Master was working, but His disciple for the time rested, seemingly to himself never leaving the presence of the Beloved, as, indeed, how should he whose true life was living in that Heart for evermore? Yet his rest was also service, for the Master took the essence of his beatitude and sent it down to the world where blessedness is longed for. . . . . .

But now the evening was come, the close of the Day was drawing very near. The Master looked into the disciple's eyes. Purpose was in the Master's own, and seeing it the disciple felt its sweep encircle him, its shape and power inform him. Determination sprang to life again in his heart, and along the lines of its definition the pathway appeared.

"Child, the hour is about to strike," the Master said. The disciple looked into the widening vista of the approaching form-worlds. A moment, then dimness began to close in upon him, but so slowly, so imperceptibly, he could not tell when it began. Only the face of the Master was bright and glorious as ever.

"The waters of Lethe that all must drink, O beloved son," said the Master, "the night of forgetfulness approaches."

Something almost like fear gripped the disciple's heart.

"Master! Shall I awake again?"

"Ever more and more vividly."

"And will you be always there?"

The Master smiled. His smile was like the last Beauty that would break an earth-man's heart if he could know it.

"O child, are you not always in My heart?" He answered. "Night or day, real life or dream life, you are in My heart. Bless men because of it."

Then the Master took the disciple, whom already the languor of the enshrouding night was overcoming, into His arms. Like a sleepy child the disciple laid his head on the Master's shoulder.

"I am not afraid. Send me to your world," (the disciple hardly knew how the Master's world was the whole law of his being) "but give me remembrance during the night of the dream-world."

The Master laid His hand on the disciple's head.

"Son, My remembrance will be always with you. It is in your heart. Remember often, My disciple, for the moments of that remembrance will be always your best gift to the world you live in."

Darkness gathered round the disciple and all was lost save the Face that bent over him. The Master Himself closed his eyes.

"Sleep!" He said.

And the disciple sank into the dream-life with a smile on his lips.

* * * * *

That smile still hovered on the face of the new-born babe, and from its blue eyes the wonder was not yet quite gone. As years went by and the disciple grew up in the dream-world, he did not know who was near him all the time, nor what consciousness had been his. Yet the remembrance played round him like the scent of summer woods in the air. And sometimes a sudden

stillness held the disciple's heart; when evening fell, when he heard tales of great deeds of valour and of worth, when Love looked at him through the eyes of men and beasts, when his own heart truly sang or wept or laboured. For one fraction of a second, involuntarily he looked up, he listened. Without knowing it, then *he remembered.*

And all men remember thus. With each succeeding life the realisation grows. When the remembrance grows clear down here, then is *His* will done on earth as it is always done in "Heaven," and man begins to be something more than man. To all men that exceeding glory. To all a moment after death; in the end to all in an unbroken consciousness stretching from earth to heaven.

Clara M. Codd

CORRESPONDENCE

THE CASE OF A PEACE-LOVER AGAINST PACIFISTS

Considerable prominence has been given of late to the views of an ardent upholder of the Union of Democratic Control, and there seems to be some danger lest, in countries where that organisation and its activities are little known, it may be thought to have the general support of English Theosophists.

How very far this is from being the case is, however, a sore point with the Democratic Controllers in our ranks, and probably the very poverty of their numbers has made their influence seem so negligible as not to call for any official disclaimer, or even counter-claim.

Still, it seems hardly fair to allow, without protest, every opponent of the policy of the U. D. C. to be branded as militarist, so perhaps it is permissible to present the case of a Theosophical peace-lover, who thinks the activities of that organisation mischievous rather than useful at the present juncture.

In the first place, exponents of the policy of the U. D. C. have shown throughout a singular lack of the sense of proportion, which lack is perhaps essentially democratic, looking on from the plain instead of the mountain, and missing the outstanding, clear issues.

As a statesman they have chosen Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, who, when the question of England's participation in the War was being discussed in the House of Commons, made the singularly inept interpellation: "What about the women and children?" Was it not in defence of the rights of women and children, of the weak on the earth, that our youths, the flower of our nation, were girding on their swords, and did we women of England want to weaken the hands of our heroes by thoughts of the distress they must leave with us? In those terrible, yet sublime days of August 1914, the nation saw its dharma clearly, and rose to it nobly, and saw to it also that its own weaker members did not suffer unduly—those women and children of the labouring classes for whom Mr. Ramsay Macdonald was chiefly anxious, and who are admittedly gainers, and not losers, by war conditions to-day.

The shock of a common danger, then, restored national unity, and for a brief space of time—too brief, alas!—the nation realised where it stood, and what must be its next step.

Party faction must cease, destructive criticism and obstructive tactics must give way to those who were in a position to lead us to battle in defence of the liberty of peace-loving nations.

It was a shock to realise that we had been so far the victims of party-government as to have been led blindfold into a dangerous situation, which had been apparent long before to many who would have warned and prepared us, but to whom the majority of us had remained comfortably deaf, reading only the newspapers of our own political party.

Was this a time, forsooth, when party-government, the darling institution of democracy, had so lamentably failed, to plead for greater Democratic Control, and on what pretext? Presumably because the nation had been compromised by its statesmen into a position in which she was pledged to join in this struggle for the world's freedom, and the U. D. C. would have had her stand aside and grow fat while fair France and Belgium were desolated, and the Kurukshetra of Europe was fought!

The nation is calling for a return to responsible, personal government in each department, not irresponsible bungling of untrained and inexpert representatives of a fluctuating and ignorant public opinion. Many-headed Demos must indeed be ultimate arbiter, and without his support no government can stand, but he has a right to ask that the men paid to do his administration shall know their business better than himself, and shall not require directions in detail, any more than the doctor who undertakes a case would brook unprofessional interference.

Having failed, then, from the first to take the big view, the U. D. C. have continued to voice the individualist. As England should, in their opinion, have stood aloof from the struggle in which her neighbours were involved, so a class may be justified in jealously guarding its rights and privileges, though the nation be jeopardised thereby, and so an individual has a right to withhold his services from the nation, being conscientiously or temperamentally opposed to fighting, or putting the claims of his own family—an extension of himself—before those of his fellow-countrymen, or of humanity in general. How far removed is this point of view from that of Socrates, or of Sir Thomas More, both of whom thought that the sharing of the privileges of any community carried with it the obligation to obey the laws and submit to the regularly constituted authorities of the community, even when unjust. Both held that the State had a right to their lives, though demanding them on the flimsiest of grounds, arguing to their friends that previously they could have left the land of their birth, had they chosen to renounce their citizenship and its privileges, and now the debt was to be paid.

To come now to a more positive justification of the peace-lover's present attitude, he is ready to sacrifice an immediate, imperfect peace to a fuller, truer peace in the future, in a regenerated Society. He recognises some truth in a trenchant phrase used by Dr. Haden Guest in 1914, that this War is but "An acute phase of the chronic disease called civilisation," and he feels that already there is greater peace of heart in the self-realisation that has come to the nation through its fiery ordeal. "I come not to bring peace on earth, but a sword," said He who has been nevertheless acclaimed as Prince of Peace, and the paradox enshrines a truth.

Never has the English nation been more firmly anti-militarist than now, yet she is ready to sacrifice her repugnance to conscription, rather than persevere in the insincere and unequal compulsion which the needs of the hour have pressed on her. There is no fear that it is "The thin edge of the wedge," and that England is on the way to a military despotism like that she is pledged to overthrow, for the nation as a whole is steadfastly against that, and its leaders have repeatedly disavowed such intentions. Why foment class distrust? Our statesmen have themselves been the victims of a false political system, and now for the first time have a real chance to break through the meshes of custom and precedent. Let us credit them with at least as much honesty and clear-sightedness as ourselves and our friends, and expect (and so aid) the nation to remain united in its aim and ideals, standing for freedom, self-government, and the rights of small nations. She has much to do yet in putting her own house in order, especially in India, but having chosen right in the big issue, she deserves our full encouragement and trust, and nothing less will suffice to keep her true to the vision she has seen.

Some will say this is evading the main point, that of the essentially evil nature of war, but the point of view here taken is that while war is admittedly evil, and almost an anachronism in our present stage of human progress, yet it is evidently not entirely outgrown, being here in our midst, poisoning every human relation, domestic as well as international. The way to outgrow it is for each from his own centre to work outwards, to cease fighting for himself, for his class, even for his nation, and league himself with the forces that make for righteousness in the world, wherever the progress of humanity is threatened.

The Theosophist must bring his heart of peace into the world of struggle, and the world of struggle into his heart of peace, until centre and circumference are one.

HELEN VEALE

ON STRAGGLING

In every army in the field stragglers are to be found, and their proportion to the rest is a very fair test of the efficiency of the force to which they belong. To keep their numbers down it is recognised that prevention is better than cure, and so in modern armies everything possible is done to render the lot of the soldier as little irksome as possible, for it is when marches are long and rations are short, that their numbers go up. It was because of his stragglers that Napoleon lost his great venture in 1812, and there would have been no stragglers had he fed his troops properly. Ultimately, we can see therefore that efficiency must depend on good organisation directed primarily towards keeping one's personnel contented and happy, and ready to co-operate heartily with their leaders.

The T. S. may well be likened to a great army; an army which has for its objectives the crushing of ignorance and the annihilation of pain and sorrow. Those are objectives which all members must earnestly wish to see attained, but as yet there is nothing like unanimity and co-operation for compassing those ends, even amongst those who remain in the ranks, whilst our stragglers, alas! amount to an enormous proportion of our whole strength.

Of course we are greatly handicapped, in that membership binds no one with any sense of discipline, and the democratic spirit is so abroad in these days that the least interference with one's liberty is most fiercely resented. In the T. S. our platform is so extremely broad that we number in the Society probably a greater assortment of view-points than has ever yet been included in any one body, and so the task of disciplining the whole is practically impossible. But we venture to believe that much more may be done in this line than is done, or is even attempted. Even in armies under the most autocratic discipline it has been found that far more can be done by tact than by force; that is why such stress has always been laid on the officering of the British Army by gentlemen, and that is why the British army is now, as in the past, proving that it is second to none. So in a volunteer army, tact can be made to achieve results almost as good. Not quite, it is true, even where the ranks are filled by volunteers professing the highest motives, for though tact does wonders, yet the thought that real trouble is in store for slackers must always be a powerful assistant, even if kept well in the background. But not even tact backed up by force will be enough to make an army efficient. Besides these two, the interest of men in their work must be kept up or else they will get bored and then slack. This undoubtedly is what causes our straggling so much; this it is that causes the great number of dormant members we have on our rolls. We know that they all must at one

time have been fired with enthusiasm for Theosophy, or they would never have joined the Society, but like a fire fed on a handful of cotton wool, they blazed up only to die down for want of more fuel. Now this is a point that those who are really interested in their Lodges should go into very carefully. One by one they should consider the dormant and semi-dormant members. Let their characteristics, and strong and weak points be carefully studied, especially the former, for it is to these that an appeal must be made. In most Lodges the activities are far too few—a few study classes and little else. These will appeal only to those keen on study, and then only to those keen on the particular lines of study taken up, and so the dormancy of the stragglers may be far less their own fault than that of the apparently energetic members who have in their more regular attendances been indulging a taste for certain brands of philosophy which do not appeal to all.

In an admirable little pamphlet Captain Powell has outlined some twenty different lines of work which may be taken up as Lodge activities, and besides these there are others which will suggest themselves to those gifted with imagination. Among these activities will be found lines of work which should appeal to all types, and dormant members may be converted into most energetic workers if only gently and tactfully induced to take up congenial lines. One way *not* to recruit them is by means of the circular letter or printed notice. Over and over again have we heard it urged as proof of the utter slackness of the dormant members that they never pay any attention to circulars. Of course they don't. They are simply asked in them to come to a study class which they have sampled once or twice and found exceedingly boring. They are not looking for further attacks of mental indigestion, and so stay away. They can only be induced to fall in by the personal influence of other members who will take the trouble to visit them, to enquire why they do not come to the Lodge, and who will make them feel that they are wanted there, and that other members will be delighted to see them. The visiting member too should have studied the dormant one's idiosyncrasies and capabilities. If he is an engineer, he will ask him to assist with his knowledge and experience in the improvement of the Lodge building and premises ; he may even be induced to take charge of them and to keep them in order. So too a commercial man might be asked to take charge of the book depot and to run it as a real business concern, instead of as a restaurant for cockroaches and white ants. Thus for every member, dormant and active, a suitable activity might be found, for even many of the so-called active members do but little except sit and listen, purring loudly the while. Undoubtedly they create a very favourable atmosphere in a Lodge by their interest and

attention, yet it seems sad to think that, of all that enters, so little ever seems to come out again of many even of these active members.

Our Society is growing, but it is hardly growing as it should do, and here in India many Lodges can show but little increase in membership year by year. The stirring into activity of the stragglers works not only for their good but also for that of outsiders who are, by means of their added activities, brought into touch with Theosophy and thence into the Society. So we may grow into an army, really efficient, marching steadily at full strength towards that great goal on which all our hearts are surely set, whether we know it down here or not.

E. G. H.

THE T. S. AND THE WAR

IV

I ask your permission to point out that Mr. Van Manen's quotation in the February THEOSOPHIST of the resolution (No. 6) of the General Council is irrelevant, as it refers to "the authenticity or non-authenticity of any statements issued as from the Mahatmas," and we are not at present confronted by any such statements.

The other line and a half which he selects, makes a simple declaration that "the T. S. must not be committed to any religious belief". The fault imputed to you as our President seems to be that you constantly speak of Mahatmas and Black Powers, in whom every member is not bound to believe. Neither, we may say, is any member bound to believe in reincarnation, yet no one who believes in one can help believing in the other, and I think it is likely that the member who believes in neither does not exist.

In my opinion Mr. Van Manen would have done better to have confined his discussion to the "personal and unofficial" point of neutrality, on which all of us would find it in our hearts to offer some degree of sympathy. For every German, or pro-German, Theosophist, the point must be a terrible one. Nevertheless, a certain number of us are Theosophists before we are English, German, or otherwise, and if the time comes for me to be Theosophist or English, I hope I may prove a Theosophist.

D. M. C.

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS PHYSICAL LIFE

May I trouble you with a few words of explanation in connection with an article of mine which appeared in THE THEOSOPHIST for December (on "The Problem of Our Attitude towards Physical Life"), and to which you referred in your prefatory remarks?

I see now that the sentence: "The Theosophist is taught to draw a sharp line of distinction between the interior and the exterior life," is very misleading, and I am at a loss to know how I ever came to write it, for I certainly never intended to say or imply that Theosophists were taught to withdraw themselves from active life. What I should have said is that Theosophists are taught to recognise and give much importance to an inner and spiritual life (a life scarcely recognised at all by the world at large), and doing this, some—I confess myself amongst the number—are tempted to turn too much from the world, to adopt too much the life of the recluse. But I did not mean to hold this up as a right or desirable course, or to imply that the leaders of the Theosophical Movement recommended any divorce between the religious and secular lives, the whole trend of the article being to show how the two may be brought into line; and when I said, in the next sentence, "the interior life at which we aim is a very exalted one, and because of its exaltation very far removed from ordinary life in the world to-day," I referred to the ordinary average of life in the world, the life of others; not to that lived by the Theosophist himself. Later, I go on to enquire *how* the dictates of the spiritual life may be applied to secular conditions, but this, surely, is a problem as old as religion itself.

And in this sense, I think a commonly accepted one, is it not true that there are two lives—a life of the Spirit, as outlined in the injunctions of the Sermon on the Mount, and in the sacred writings of all religions—and a life of the world, each possessing its own aim, its own standard of success, its own appropriate line of conduct; and which are mutually destructive and irreconcilable? And even when we have renounced the *goal* of the worldly life, there is still a great difficulty for most of us in determining how to adapt the methods and instruments of earthly life and make them accord with our spiritual ideal. This—the difficulty I attempted to meet in the article—is a practical, not a theoretical one. A man may, inwardly, have attained to a sense of brotherhood with all humanity, but how, at this juncture, if he be, for instance, an Englishman, is he to do his duty and yet to *act* brotherhood to all?

I felt safe in assuming that others besides myself experienced this difficulty, from discussions I have heard and

articles I have read. I have heard it maintained more than once recently in Theosophic circles, that because the spiritual life demanded universal peace and brotherhood and love, therefore, in earthly life, resistance under any circumstances was unjustifiable, and that for us to fight the Germans as we are doing was wrong, not right. It was this contention which I had in mind when I wrote the article, and my endeavour was to resolve the practical difficulty of reconciling our inner, spiritual ideal with life in the world to-day, and my whole object was to show that, in the words of your note: "Fighting, when fighting is necessary for the progress of the world, is an 'action which is duty,' and is as much an expression of the Divine Activity as the nursing of a sufferer, or the education of a child."

M. A. KELLNER

A QUERY

I have had several cases in the dream-land where both the living and the so-called dead, some known to me and some unknown, were helped out of their difficulties and troubles, mostly of mental character.

But recently, only the day before yesterday, during my wanderings in the dream-land, a very near deceased relative of mine made his appearance in his house, terrifying its inmates, and on my coming to the spot I found out that he was very thirsty, and water being given him to drink, he disappeared.

Can anyone of your readers say, from his experiences in the land of the departed, or quoting from the Shāstras, whether departed souls do feel thirsty or hungry? If so, the feeding of Brahmanas after the Shraddha ceremonies has some meaning.

THE SIND DREAMER

QUARTERLY LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

War Letters from the Living Dead Man. Written down by Elsa Barker. (Wm. Rider & Son, Ltd., London. Price 3s. 6d. or Rs. 2-12. Available at T. P. H., Adyar.)

In many respects a striking book is this collection of war letters, purporting to come from the world of the living dead. The Introduction tells us that they are dictations from Judge David P. Hatch, of Los Angeles, California, who died some years ago, and who has already expressed himself through the instrumentality of the present writer in *Letters from a Living Dead Man.* The letters under review began with a cryptic message on 4th February, 1915, and the last one is dated 28th July. Here is the message:

> When I come back and tell you the story of this war, as seen from the other side, you will know more than all the Chancelleries of the nations.

We have read through the volume. We were greatly interested in it; we have gained some instruction also, and pieces of information which sound true; and if they are so, they are very useful. We have certainly appreciated the message of this living dead man—of love and goodwill to all, friend and foe alike; but we cannot say that we have learned any of the secrets of "the Chancelleries of Europe," or understand better the diplomatic relations existing between nations. Causes and effects, sentiments, idealistic and otherwise, pertaining to this War and other wars, strange happenings in the Astral World, incidents of a superphysical nature, aid rendered by invisible helpers—these and such-like we find in abundance in the volume.

We do not wish to discuss the genesis of these letters, nor the mechanism of their production. We rather judge

them on the merit of their contents and teachings, which do not become more valuable simply because they are written, or said to be written, by a discarnate entity. They are written down by Elsa Barker, whose sincerity and straightforwardness we have no reason to doubt. The Judge, who is the author of these letters, claims for himself the privilege of having entered the folds of the White Brotherhood, being a disciple—and apparently no mean one—of a great Master. From his writings before us we cannot definitely say if that be so; there is nothing so striking, so new and fresh, in the shape of knowledge imparted or information given, that it can enable us to accept this claim forthwith. There is hardly anything in what is described which an invisible helper, with a fair amount of knowledge and experience, could not have come across or encountered. On the other hand, we cannot set aside the claim of the writer to his position, merely on the basis of "no new teaching or information". There is no doubt that the author of these letters is in possession of certain information available in the inner worlds only, and that naturally entitles him to a respectful hearing from all Theosophists. How he has come across it, will not prove a very fruitful enquiry on this physical plane; enough for us to note that what he says is in the main true and valuable.

Having so far cleared our ground, let us say that for the Theosophist the volume is at once interesting and useful; interesting, because it gives information which is not usually made public, and useful, because a great amount of it is of the nature of corroboration of our Theosophical teachings; therefore the volume is suitable for certain propaganda work.

We have already heard from Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater something of the hidden side of war. References are made to struggles in inner worlds, which precipitated this ghastly War on the physical plane. We come across the same teachings here with many details. Conversations with those whom we know as Lords of the Dark Face, as also with Devas and others are given; some fine instances of the working out of Karma are depicted, both individual and national; fascinating sidelights are thrown on some interesting psychical and psychological problems; above all, some very fine sentiments are expressed in favour of the doctrine of Universal Brotherhood,

the Law of Love, and the Divinity in man; and we shall quote at random but a single instance to show its nature :

> There is a beautiful being in every one of you, the bird that sings in the heart of the earthquake, the rose that nestles in the hot mouth of the cannon, the pearl that cannot be crushed by the landslide, the angel that illumines hell.
>
> All the normal feelings of the human heart are intensified at this time. No one is the same as before the war burst—no one anywhere in the world. The soul of humanity is in travail. This incarnation of humanity is turned against itself, and rends itself. The heart of humanity is in the abyss, into which humanity had grown too blind to look, so the blazing torches of the guardians of good and evil have been thrust into the abyss, and all the drowsing dwellers therein have been suddenly, rudely awakened.

There are many theories and explanations that sound plausible, there are others which, on the surface, seem fantastic. Here is a good instance; the suffering and humiliation of Belgium, due to the treatment she meted out to the people in the Congo, appeals as a reasonable working out of National Karma; on the other hand, the suffering and humiliation of Serbia, on account of the dwelling of a Black Magician in that country a century or so ago, is grotesque, fantastic and certainly not reasonable; but it becomes acceptable as a cause of the epidemic which worked such havoc in Serbia.

Theosophists who believe in the coming of a World-Teacher will be interested in this :

> Yes, I have seen the Christ.
>
> Look for Him to come again "in the clouds of heaven with power and glory," though He may not walk the earth again in material form. What need is there for Him to walk the earth now in a mortal body, when more and more men and women are opening their spiritual sight, so that they can see Him while still held in their robes of flesh?

In our February number, Mr. Leadbeater gave in his article his interview with Bismarck; our author gives his own with Friedrich Nietzsche.

Then there is a good deal about the Coming Race, the National Karma of France and America, peace propaganda, love and hate, etc., etc., all of which is worth perusing, and we heartily recommend this volume to our readers. The publishers have done a service to Theosophy by this publication, and to them our thanks are due; and we must not forget the scribe, whose share in the work of production is no mean one.

B. P. W.

Fate and Freewill, by Ardaser Sorabjee N. Wadia, M.A. (J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., London and Toronto. Price 2s. 6d. net.)

In this book the old problem of Fate and Freewill is dealt with from the point of view of the believer in Fate. Five chapters traverse the subject as it is found stated in Scriptures, in the Ancient World, in Christian Theology and Modern Philosophy, quoting the views and arguments of the leading thinkers of the different periods; the last chapter sums up and gives the author's reasons for his definite belief in Fate. In doing so, he is careful to state that no world-problem worth the name is capable of absolute or perfect solution, but that it is possible to offer a practical solution, to form a definite opinion amounting almost to a conviction. This is a sound, common sense position, for, since neither Fate nor Freewill can be proved or disproved by scientific demonstration, the problem will continue to be a fruitful subject for discussion, and will, incidentally, remain a valuable training ground for the mind and the exercise of intuition.

For ourselves, we do not share the author's views. We believe that Freewill and Fate, like Spirit and Matter, are two complementary facts in nature, which *can* be reconciled; that the belief in Freewill, innate in most of us, has as solid a basis as the equally undoubted fact that Fate does exist and mould our destiny.

Has the author quite understood the doctrine of Karma, when he maintains that it leaves no room for Freewill? Is he right in saying that, according to the tenets of "freewillists," a particular effect need not inevitably follow, though all the requisite conditions for its production may be present; that human volition stands outside the universal law of causality; that will is, and always has been recognised as a faculty of the *mind*; that the nobler the creature the more limited his freedom (the savage freer than the civilised man); that the stronger type of men need a belief in Fate to bring out the best in them; that one clear indisputable case of prevision will finally prove the fact of Fate, etc.?

If space permitted, it would not be difficult to adduce weighty arguments against the above, and other contentions in which we miss the deeper philosophic insight into this intricate problem. A closer study of Hindu philosophy

(which is only given half a page) would, we believe, have shown the author that Karma is not a fatalistic doctrine, but on the contrary, implies the exercise of Freewill; that Will lies deeper than, and is not considered identical with, the mind in *all* the philosophies; that a possible solution of the problem may be found in the doctrine of the identity of the Self in man with the Universal Self, the one absolute Will expressing itself in the separated Selves as relative Freewill and relative Necessity; that even prevision of events is not necessarily a proof of unalterable fate, since to foresee is not to constrain, and the apparent proof becomes uncertain when tested by a metaphysical consideration of our conception of time, which varies according to the plane of nature on which our consciousness happens to work.

It is to be regretted that these questions have not found a place in a book which in other respects is admirable, full of information and original thought, and which has the merit of being written in exceedingly clear and lucid language.

We have perused the book with singular pleasure, and highly recommend it as a valuable contribution to the literature on this most difficult and vital problem.

A. S.

Visions, Previsions and Miracles in Modern Times, by E. Howard Grey, D.D.S. (L. N. Fowler & Co., London.)

Keats was a poet and a druggist, and here we find a dental surgeon who is a Psychical Researcher, and one of considerable enthusiasm and insight, to judge from the book under notice. The volume is a bulky one of 532 pages, and contains a large and varied range of psychical phenomena drawn freely from all sources and periods. The facility of prophecy manifested within recent years receives perhaps the most marked attention at the hands of the author, but phenomena of stigmata, trance writing, levitation and so on, are also quoted in numerous examples. The value of the book is chiefly as one of reference, since it advances only slight theories of cause, and attempts but small explanation of the phenomena it cites. Its style is a little involved in parts, but as it is not a literary effort, this may be condoned.

I. St. C. S.

Clarinda: A Historical Novel, by A. Madhaviah. (The Cambridge Press, Tondiarpet, Madras. Price Re. 1-8 or 2s.)

It is rarely that one comes across a novel written by an Indian ; and the nationality of the author, coupled with the facts that Clarinda is a high-caste Brahmana girl and that the story takes place in the neighbourhood of Adyar, give it a claim on the special attention of Theosophical readers. There are scores of novels dealing with Indian life written by Anglo-Indians, but we often feel that such authors seldom succeed in correctly drawing their Indian characters, and it is interesting and instructive to find that Mr. Madhaviah fails similarly in the portrayal of the character of his English hero, Captain Harry Lyttleton. It is always more valuable to view the ideals and customs of a country through the presentment of one of its own people, rather than through the eyes of a foreigner, no matter how sympathetic. One feels that Rudyard Kipling got nearest to a true portrait of an Indian in his "Llama" in *Kim*, but in view of the errors in national psychology in this young Englishman, one wonders how similarly far from ringing true the "Llama" may sound to Indians. On the other hand, only an Indian could so powerfully analyse and describe the distinctive customs of Indian life, in their natural atmosphere of belief in karma, astrology, and reincarnation.

The book may be divided into three parts, the first of which deals with the historical events taking place at the time of Clarinda's birth. This is full of local colour of a distinctively Indian type, and it gives one a very good idea of the internal state of Indian affairs in 1746, and the circumstances by which England attained her present position in India. The interest centres round the finely drawn character of the Brahmana Punditrao, who stands as the Wolsey of the time, suffering a similar rise and fall—the latter resolving itself into a retirement into the forest and the acceptance of the vow of the Sannyasin. The second part is devoted to a description of Clarinda's life as the girl-wife of an old roue of fifty. It is a sad story, only too typical of Indian life ; beginning with the wedding festival of this little girl of twelve ; following her through "six years of married slavery," which are filled with the jealousy and ill-treatment of the older women of the

household, schemes for getting her money, and her stepson's sinful passion for her; and closing with the attempt to murder her, under the cloak of religious ideals by forcing her to become a "Sati,"—that is to be burnt alive with her dead husband's body.

The heroine is quite an advanced and original character for her time, largely due to the uncommon home conditions of her early life. She struggles spiritedly against the double moral standard to which she is supposed to bow, and against such sentiments as the following:

> Her husband is the *pativrata's* (ideal wife's) god, and she need know and worship no other, as our holy books say. A woman's life is one of sin and sorrow and her salvation depends on her being a true *pativrata*. Blessed indeed is the woman who makes her lord happy in this world and dies before him and awaits his arrival in heaven; but should he unfortunately be called away before her, she ensures her own and his salvation by becoming a *sati*, entering heaven hand in hand with her husband, even as on their wedding day.

The author's personal attitude to this and other similar ideas may be inferred from his comment:

> Our forefathers were indeed supremely successful in systematizing certain things in life, and this matter of wifely devotion, so very comfortable and convenient to all husbands, that is, men, is one which may well compete for the palm of perfection.

There are in this section valuable searchlights on the evils which arise in daily life from the Hindu's belief in karma and reincarnation.

The final portion of the book, telling of Clarinda's life with Lyttleton, is disappointing. The latter converts the heroine to Christianity, but in so many ways he is such a poor specimen of his own religion that one does not wonder that it was only after his death (brought on by hard drinking) that she became the historical Christian saint of the missionary's calendar. We welcome Mr. Madhaviah's incursion into romance, for it is most necessary, in the interests of Brotherhood, that British people should know more about their fellow-citizens in the Empire, and understand their way of looking at life as expressed by themselves.

M. E. C.

Agar Halfi the Mystic, by Roland Filkin. (Wm. Rider & Son, Ltd., London. Price 6s.)

Here we have a deluge of bathos and split infinitives; the latter appearing in an abundance quite exceptional. Like so many other novels of this class, it has been written with the firm intention of bringing in something mystical by hook or by crook, and it must be admitted the author has succeeded as far as this is concerned. An exceptionally lurid horribleness in the shape of an immaterial vulture, of which a spirited rendering is found on the outside cover, supplies the savour to the book, and the plot, hinging round this noisome entity, displays a certain amount of careful ingenuity.

Such anti-climaxes, however, appear only too often, coupled with lax modes of expression, of which the following is a good example. The heroine is talking to her brother about Mr. Agar Halfi:

> One thing, he looks so intelligent, and another, I cannot help feeling that he is a gentleman, in spite of his dark skin, which I am sorry to say I cannot state about all men of my own race.
>
> Philip nodded his head reluctantly.

Well and good, but might he not have tactfully pointed out that her racial brothers are characterised for the most part by the fairness of their complexions?

We find expressions indicating a warm, if somewhat headlong, support of the feminine sex, such, for instance, as this:

> But it is as well to remember that the feminine mind intuitively arrives at correct solutions of things far more quickly than the masculine mind does by the slow and not always sound process of reasoning.

A varied range of curious adverbs and adjectives confront us from page to page, as, for example, the occasion when a lady of blameless character is described as having a "deep" face. "Hatchet" faces we have heard of, and faces likened to a considerable assortment of birds, fishes and animals, but the part about the "deep" face is past our experience.

In spite of all its faults, however, there is something attractive about the book, and when the author's style becomes a little more lucid and connected, we shall, no doubt, have contributions from him of a more permanent value.

I. ST. C. S.

Le Regime des Capitulations et la Reforme constitutionelle en Chine. Thesis for the acquirement of the degree of Doctor in Political and Diplomatical Science. By Louis Ngaosiang Tchou. Catholic University of Louvain. School of Political and Social Science. (Cambridge University Press, 1915. pp. VIII+230. Price 7s. 6d.)

This most important, most interesting document is a joyous symbol of the awakening of China, a fruit of the best young Chinese intellect and activity. In modern international politics, whether in the Balkans and the other Near East, or in further Asia, no question is more important and fraught with graver consequences than that of the so-called "capitulations", *i.e.*, those treaties which give a special legal status to Christian subjects residing in non-Christian countries. Mr. Tchou gives us a clear and terse summary of the history of these capitulations in general (pp. 20), and follows this up by a similar sketch of the history of these treaties, especially in China (pp. 57). A discussion of the actual condition and working of these treaties (pp. 48) follows, and leads up to the last chapter, which very briefly (pp. 18) deals with the changed conditions occasioned by the new regime in China. A large amount of space has been devoted to the discussion of the special case of Kiao-chou, and the arbitrary German action there. All this part of the work is of the greatest interest, not only for the professional politician, but also for any intelligent student of contemporaneous history, and above all for anyone interested in the problem of "awakening Asia". This main part of the work practically exhausts the treatment of the subject mentioned in the title of the book, but a second part of about 90 pages, and not absolutely connected with this subject, will perhaps prove the most important one of the book for the general reader. It deals with the recent constitutional reform in China and describes the conversion of the old monarchy into a republic. This part is profoundly fascinating. It is divided into two halves of about equal length. The first gives a running and engrossing narrative of the events immediately preceding the establishment of the republic. That story is a record palpitating with life and it reads like an epos. We can scarcely imagine anyone reading it without being drawn under the spell of its dramatic force and impressiveness. The second half of this second part

gives a series of important documents, decrees, provisional and final projects for a constitution, and rules of proceedings to be followed in connection with the new regime. The dry and terse statement of most vital principles battling for survival and victory in these compact articles and serried pages is equally impressive, and the whole constitutional drama here represented under our very eyes furnishes matter of an amount of interest which can scarcely be surpassed by any other modern political story.

J. v. M.

The Song of a Dawning Day, by Francis G. Hanchett. (Privately printed—Chicago.)

> Our young men are seeing visions,
> Our old men are dreaming dreams,
> And on mountain peaks already
> Rising sun of wisdom gleams.

The above extract indicates the theme of this writer who has embodied, in a poem of some eight hundred lines, his vision of the future which is shortly to spring into flower from out of the seeds of the present. America is to be the garden where the blossoms are most fragrant and grow fairest, and brotherhood the band which binds them into a lovely garland. Mr. Hanchett is a disciple of especially Emerson, Walt Whitman and "the eloquent and inspired modern prophet, Annie Besant". He, therefore, "dips into the future," guided by these leaders, and the picture which he sees is one full of hope. Spiritual evolution must go hand in hand with physical evolution to realise his vision, the God within must be awakened, and the Intuition must guide our steps.

Mr. Hanchett has chosen verse as his medium of expression. It is not verse of a high order, and there are many mistakes in technique alone which could and should have been avoided. The writer, however, probably felt that his message —for he thoroughly believes in the poet as prophet—could best be delivered in rhyme instead of cold prose, however poetical. And it is pretty certain that there are a number of people in the world who would prefer and heed the message given that way. Mr. Hanchett writes from a full heart, and surely some of his enthusiasm must touch the reader.

T. L. C.

Documents Relating to the Great War, Selected and arranged by Giuseppe A. Andriulli, with an Introduction by Professor Guglielmo Ferrero, translated from the Italian by Thomas Okey. (T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., London. Price 1s. net.)

We welcome this little book as giving a concise resume of the events immediately preceding the various declarations of war fore-running the present stupendous conflict. To those of us who have not the time or energy to sift the multi-chromatic range of books issued by the Governments involved, this little volume comes as a great blessing, and allays a sense of duty left undone, for which we are truly grateful to it.

The diplomatic records, as they stand, tell strongly against Germany, constituting a severe indictment of her pseudo-peaceful aspirations. They reveal her as the prime instigator of the European conflagration, hastening, in the first place, her declaration of war against Russia, and at the same time obstructing with all her energy the offers made by Great Britain to convoke a meeting of the Great Powers for the object of finding some peaceful means of settling the quarrel between Austria and Serbia. Perhaps the chief point of interest in the present book is the prominence into which is brought the fateful day of July the 29th. On that day three telegrams were sent to Russia by the German Emperor, the first two, sanguine of Germany's power to act as mediator, but the third, one hour after midnight, and subsequent to a Council at Potsdam, in a very different tone, and indicating an opinion that Germany found it hard to adopt a conciliatory attitude in view of Russia's mobilisation on the Austrian frontier. Then followed on July 31st the precipitate ultimatum and declaration of war against Russia, the whole without reference to Austria, and indeed regardless of Austria's attitude towards the Russian mobilisation, which itself was one free of anxiety.

The subsequent reading is interesting, giving accounts of the various conditions under which the countries, one after another, came into a state of war. Reports of speeches from the throne, and their equivalents, mark characteristically the differing temperaments of the races involved in the War, the French orations being, in particular, full of native Gallic fervour.

I. St. C. S.

The Orāons of Chōtā Nāgpur: their History, Economic Life, and Social Organisation, by Sarat Chandra Roy, M.A. (Ranchi 1915. Price Rs. 8 or 10s. 6d.)

The author of this important work was already known to ethnologists as the writer of a valuable book on the Mundas, and the expectations raised by that production have been fully met by his present study. In fact his exhaustive monograph on the Orāons is a first class performance, the result of fifteen years' intimate acquaintance with this most interesting, primitive tribe of the Chōtā Nāgpur plateau. One of the very pleasant concomitants of the present publication is that the author promises, in case it be favourably received by the public—of which there should be no doubt whatever in view of its excellence—to follow it up with a second volume devoted to the religious and magico-religious system, the ceremonies, usages and language of the tribe. No less competent an anthropological authority than Mr. A. C. Haddon contributes a valuable and very appreciative foreword, a fit introduction to the subsequent 500 pages, closely packed with important information, well written and clearly presented. The headings under which the subject matter is dealt with in the work are as follows: (1) Origin and History; (2) Geographic and Social Environment; (3) Physical Characteristics and Personal Adornment; (4) Village Organisations and Economic Life; (5) The Village Dormitories and the Training of Youth; (6) Social Organisation and the Regulation of Tribal Life; (7) Appendices on Agricultural Customs, the traditional story of the Genesis of man and spirits, folk songs, etc. A number of well chosen illustrations enhances the value of the record, and a good index is provided. The book is replete with most curious information, and with facts and inferences of the highest value to ethnologists and anthropologists. Amongst the most important items discussed are the extraordinary ancient marriage customs (the grandparents marrying the grandchildren) and the institution of village dormitories for bachelors and for maidens. The totemistic elements too are carefully analysed and discussed. But it would be useless to attempt to draw attention to even a selection of the most interesting points discussed, they are too numerous to be cited in a short review.

The total number of Orāons is at present somewhat under 1,000,000. Modern influences tend rapidly to change much

in the traditional characteristics and customs of this interesting people. Mr. Roy has performed a work of the utmost importance in so carefully and minutely recording much which, but for his labours, would soon have been irretrievably doomed to oblivion. We wish the work all the success it deserves.

J. v. M.

The Gospel of Hope, A Message of Comfort for the Sorrowing in this time of War. By the Right Rev. G. H. S. Walpole, D.D. (Robert Scott, London. Price 2s. net.)

From the pen of the Bishop of Edinburgh comes one of the many attempts which are now being made to raise popular feeling out of the gloom and depression into which present circumstances are plunging it. *The Gospel of Hope* is addressed to those who are called upon in this War to make the hardest of all sacrifices—that of the lives of those dearer to them than themselves. The book, as its author tells us, is not designed to teach; "it is not a reasoned treatise on the state of the departed". Its aim is "to suggest rather than to instruct, to imagine rather than to assert, to use picture language as a translation or paraphrase of the truth" so far as he sees it, rather than to make clear and convincing statements.

Such being the objects for which it was written, the book is good. It would certainly be disappointing to any one seeking comfort in the definite knowledge of what death means in the history of the soul's pilgrimage. But if the consolation sought be the support of a deep conviction that all is well with those that have passed away from earth life, then the reader cannot but be satisfied. For the author's faith is strong and will communicate itself to any who put themselves in touch with his thoughts. He believes that the fate of those who have fallen in the service of their country is a blessed one; that their condition is one of rest, progress and fellowship; and that the touch between them and their dear ones left behind cannot be broken by death, which, after all, is not an ascent into a distant heaven, but a withdrawing into a world which, though hidden, is very near.

A. DE L.

An Introduction to Ethics for Training Colleges, by C. A. Johnston, M.A. (Macmillan & Co. Price 3s. net).

This little book may be well recommended. It has two important qualities. It is cheap and it is clear. It is not deep. The author, however, points out in his foreword that he intends to avoid controversial points, to lay stress on the psychological argument and to keep metaphysical theory strictly in the background. That he has done. The result is that his little work has become a practical and set little code but lacks life. It is like a coat bought ready made, cheap but stiff, and is without the eloquence of subtle adaptation to individual needs. It might be even said that the book is a trifle " bourgeois " in its neat codification and crystallisation of principles, elements and maxims. Not every one, however, has metaphysical or philosophical tendencies, and to such as do not care overmuch for a delving in and weighing of root principles the work will certainly appeal by its appearance of finality and its great clarity. Anyhow we regard it as a far more solid production than much of the modern (very often American or pseudo-American) ethical literature which is so largely current in our days, and the dominant characteristics of which are optimism plus sentimentality plus sloppiness. The ordinary reader who has never looked into the subject of ethics in a systematic way will make a tremendous amount of discoveries in following the 250 pages of the booklet. Like Mr. Jourdain, who never knew that he talked prose before he was told so, such readers will be amazed to find how profoundly ethical they are unawares. There is a great quality of homeliness in the book which will not fail to make a direct and strong appeal to the ordinary man, and though frankly an elementary book, it is a decidedly useful one. As the sub-title indicates that the book is intended for Training Colleges, it would be unfair to interpret any of the above remarks as indicating failings in the work. In a Training College fixed and acquired results have to be communicated; in the private study such practical generalisations may be probed and analysed—and criticised—*ad libitum*. To do so is, rightly, not brought within the scope of the present book. Conclusion: a useful and recommendable little book for any individual reader who wants a simple, straightforward statement of the net, practical results of modern ethical science. Especially to Theosophists, it seems to us, the little work should be attractive and instructive.

J. v. M.

THEOSOPHY IN THE MAGAZINES

THE SACRIFICE OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND IMMORTALITY

In the January number of *The Contemporary Review* appears a thoughtful article by the Rev. Robert Christie under the above title. The War, he declares, with its ruthless disregard of the individual, confronts us with an almost hopeless sense of the insignificance of human effort in the evolutionary forces of nature.

> A penetrating sense of the sacredness of human life, with its ideals and achievements, a faith in some final good to be won through our efforts, are not easily maintained in the presence of a scheme of things which, on occasion, can treat men like flies caught in an autumn gale.

The only answer, he contends, that can allay this inevitable shock to our ideal of human progress is that of individual immortality.

> In reality, "life is ever lord of death". The apparent passing of the individual into nothingness is really a second birth into a higher and more abiding sphere of being. Death is but the supreme instance of that all-pervading process of change, whereby the imperfect passes away, that that which is perfect may come. On this view it is obvious that the doubts, which weaken our social idealism, are answered.

This belief, he continues, may be reached by various paths. To many minds the Christian revelation is conclusive, but an increasing number are finding in the results of psychical research a scientific basis for survival. Others, again, argue that the moral integrity of the universe demands immortality; on the other hand, this demand has often been held to be satisfied by the fact that good work remains for the benefit of humanity after the passing of the benefactor. This latter view, with its philosophical sequel of an eternal reservoir of life, into which human beings are emptied at death, is referred to by the writer as "corporate immortality," and is disposed of on the ground of its failure to satisfy human aspiration.

> . . . there is good reason for holding that any fundamental and persistent demand of the human spirit is, by itself, a revelation of what the universe requires also. Indeed, how could it be otherwise, seeing that the mind of man is the highest manifestation of reality directly known to us?
>
> That our desires, *when* purified and transformed by the teaching of experience, become prophetic of the nature of things, is a fact to which the whole history of science bears witness. It is now generally allowed that such a principle as the rationality of the world, together with the special forms which it assumes, such as the unity, continuity, and uniformity of nature, are not "so much brute fact thrust upon us, willy nilly"; they originate not in the object but in the subject of experience. They are demands, which we make and must make, if a certain result is to be attained, *viz.*, knowledge itself. Now, knowledge means *the expression of the universe in terms of personality.*

We have italicised the word "when," as we believe that humanity has still a long way to go before this desirable condition can be fulfilled, and in the meantime there is much to be said for the objection which follows, namely, that the laws of nature are independent of personal beliefs or wishes. But if we understand the writer to use the word "personality," as is usual in later Christian theology, in much the same sense as the expression "the Self" is used in the East, we cannot fail to be struck by the virtual agreement of his view with the spiritual monism of the Vedanta.

Another objection which Mr. Christie raises against the idea of a "corporate immortality," at least as far as progress on the physical plane is concerned, is that of the transience of physical conditions and the limitations inherent in physical matter, but we should say that though these limitations point to the existence of less limited planes of consciousness, yet the possibilities of the physical plane as a training ground have by no means been exhausted, but will surely be developed to the full, however slow the process. In this connection the following candid admission is distinctly charming.

> Even if Absolutism were theoretically tenable, it is simply an esoteric point of view. It is like a Sunday confession that the things of the world are naught, while in practice we are unable to treat anything else as of any importance whatever.

We cannot hope to pilot our readers through the undercurrents of the author's reasoning, but we can at least assist them to meet him in harbour.

> And what sort of compensation, after all, do we wish self-sacrifice to have? Simply that it awaken in us the spirit of love which gave it and that that spirit may find expression. . . . . It is when we are most alone, and at our highest and best, that this sense of Communion with God Himself becomes clear and strong. For religious men, this has ever been one great token of immortality, "'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us and intimates—Eternity to man". Such an experience is not present with us at all times, but when it comes, it gives the most intense feeling of reality which we can know.

It is good to find writings at this high level in the leading magazines of the day, for they are signs of the greater Theosophical movement. We may incline to the belief that the essence of individual immortality is by no means incompatible with the essence of "corporate immortality," and we should probably agree that an acquaintance with the doctrine of reincarnation would reconcile many of the difficulties here presented, but we must not forget that even the Buddha refused to discuss ultimates, simply saying "Nirvana *is*".

W. D. S. B.
