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EDITED BY RALPH SHIRLEY

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EDITED BY RALPH SHIRLEY

"Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri"

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS.

IT is rather to be assumed that a man who writes about cosmic consciousness has undergone the experience in his own person. Otherwise what should lead to his writing on so strange and so abnormal an experience? We are not, however, entitled to assume that the individual who has had the experience in question is necessarily capable of writing a good book or even of writing convincingly on the subject. Perhaps in a certain sense the outsider who has had no such experience can write more dispassionately and therefore with less bias on the nature of this strange phenomenon.

The first edition of Dr. Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness* * was published as long ago as 1901. The book has been out of print some time, and the present edition has been corrected and entirely reset throughout. It has, I believe, the outstanding merit of being, whatever its defects, the only comprehensive work on the subject in existence. Dr. Bucke describes his own sensations when, at the beginning of his thirty-sixth year, he met with this experience. As this incident is the foundation stone of the work in question and led to an entire change in the author's

* *Cosmic Consciousness.* A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind. By Richard Maurice Bucke, M.D. American Book Supply Company, Ltd., 149 Strand, London, W.C. 2. 30s. net. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 681 Fifth Avenue.

whole mental and spiritual attitude, it is well to give an account of it in his own words. It will be noted that, though the account is his own, he writes of himself in the third person.

DR. BUCKE'S EXPERIENCE.

It was in the early spring, at the beginning of his thirty-sixth year. He and two friends had spent the evening reading Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Browning, and especially Whitman. They parted at midnight, and he had a long drive in a hansom (it was in an English city). His mind, deeply under the influence of the ideas, images and emotions called up by the reading and talk of the evening, was calm and peaceful. He was in a state of quiet, almost passive, enjoyment. All at once, without warning of any kind, he found himself wrapped around as it were by a flame-coloured cloud. For an instant he thought of fire, some sudden conflagration in the great city; the next, he knew that the light was within himself. Directly afterwards came upon him a sense of exultation, of immense joyousness accompanied, or immediately followed, by an intellectual illumination quite impossible to describe. Into his brain streamed one momentary lightning-flash of the Brahmic Splendour which has ever since lightened his life; upon his heart fell one drop of Brahmic Bliss, leaving thenceforward for always an aftertaste of heaven. Among other things he did not come to believe, he saw and knew that the Cosmos is not dead matter but a living Presence, that the soul of man is immortal, that the universe is so built and ordered that without any peradventure all things work together for the good of each and all, that the foundation principle of the world is what we call love, and that the happiness of every one is in the long run absolutely certain. He claims that he learned more within the few seconds during which the illumination lasted than in previous months or even years of study, and that he learned much that no study could ever have taught.

This experience that has altered, in this and other similar cases, the whole tenor of the percipient's outlook on life appears, in its purer form, to have certain main characteristics. The person affected realizes as never before the oneness of the universe. He sees himself as part and parcel of this unity which he senses as the expression of a single conscious life. At the moment of the experience the realization of the consciousness of the separateness of the ego and the non-ego, the knower and the known, entirely disappears. The man who has once had it is no longer able to feel a shadow of doubt as to human immortality. He knows it with a certainty that no argument or evidence can strengthen or shake. Jesus presumably had this experience on the Mount of Transfiguration, and the Buddha writes over and over again as if he was familiar with it, as for instance when he tells us how he attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. Among earlier mystics who have had kindred experiences the

JESUS, BUDDHA, AND ST. PAUL.

case of St. Paul is probably the most familiar to readers, though we should hardly be justified in affirming in either of the two experiences recorded of him that they were certainly instances of what might strictly be termed cosmic consciousness, though perhaps the latter one to which he alludes in a very cryptic manner may have been more definitely of this nature. The first of these, it will be remembered, was on the road to Damascus, when he was converted to Christianity, and had a vision of the Christ and saw a great light which had the effect of blinding him for some days afterwards. The other was many years later, when he was caught up into the third heaven and heard, as he says, "unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

The seeing of this great light is one of the phenomena which recur again and again in these records, and seems to show that St. Paul's first experience was at least akin to other phenomena of the kind. We should perhaps associate with these experiences what has been termed the Beatific Vision, which comes to the religious devotee rather than to the mystical philosopher, and should (I would submit) be regarded as a more personal phase of the same experience. It may be that the beatific vision is in the nature of a realization of the Higher Self or the Christ in man, while cosmic consciousness is in the nature of an intuitive perception of the immanence of the Deity in all manifested life, and the essential one-ness of the Universal Consciousness. According as the mind of the percipient is attuned by his past life and spiritual outlook, so does he attain to either one form of the experience or the other. Certainly the most noteworthy records in early days, outside those which may be set down as of a specifically religious character, are those recorded of the great mystical philosopher Plotinus, of whose experiences in the matter there is no suspicion of doubt. Plotinus was born A.D. 204, and died approximately at the age of seventy. His philosophic training and ascetic life rendered him a peculiarly favourable subject for such an experience. His ideas as to the true inwardness of the cosmic scheme are beautifully expressed in the following passage :

COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE BEATIFIC VISION.

> There is a raying out of all orders of existence, an external emanation from the ineffable One. There is again a returning impulse, drawing all upwards and inwards towards the centre from whence all came. Love, as Plato in the Banquet beautifully says, is child of poverty and plenty. In the amorous quest of the soul after the Good lies the painful sense

of fall and deprivation. But that love is blessing, is salvation, is our guardian genius; without it the centrifugal law would overpower us and sweep our souls out far from their source toward the cold extremities of the material and the manifold. The wise man recognizes the idea of the Good within him. This he develops by withdrawal into the holy place of his soul. He who does not understand how the soul contains the beautiful within itself, seeks to realize beauty without, by laborious production. His aim should rather be to concentrate and simplify, and so to expand his being; instead of going out into the manifold, to forsake it for the One, and so to float upwards towards the divine fount of being whose stream flows within him.

THE TEACHING AND EXPERIENCES OF PLOTINUS.

He asks how we can know the infinite, and replies that it cannot be known by reason, but only by a faculty superior to this, which is attained by entering into a state in which man has his finite sense no longer, and in which the divine essence is communicated to him. This, he says, is "ecstasy" and clearly by this expression, "ecstacy," which really means standing outside of oneself, Plotinus is referring to the phenomenon of cosmic consciousness. For he adds, "When you thus cease to be finite, you become one with the infinite." He also observes that this sublime condition is not of permanent duration and it is only now and then that it can be enjoyed. "I myself," he says, "have realized it but three times as yet." He tells us that "all that tends to purify and elevate the mind will assist us in this attainment, and will facilitate the approach and recurrence of these happy intervals."

BECOMING ONE WITH THE INFINITE.

Plotinus offers a philosophical justification for such experiences. External objects, he tells us, present us only with appearances. The problem of true knowledge, on the other hand, deals with the ideal reality that exists behind these appearances. It follows, therefore, that the religion of truth is not to be investigated as a thing external to us, and so only imperfectly known. Rather, it is within us. Truth, therefore, he maintains, is not the agreement of our apprehension of an external object with the object itself, but it is the agreement of the mind with itself. Hence, he contends, knowledge has three degrees: opinions, science, and illumination. The instrument of the first is sense, of the second dialectic, and of the third intuition. This third is the absolute knowledge founded on the identity of the mind knowing with the object known.

We have little evidence bearing on this phenomenon between the post-classical times of Plotinus and the later Middle Ages.

In these times, however, there are many noteworthy experiences recorded with greater or less historical truth of the Catholic saints of that period, conspicuous among whom may be named John Yepes, more commonly known as St. John of the Cross, and St. Theresa, both of whose lives date as recently as the sixteenth century A.D. St. John of the Cross was born in 1542 and died in 1591. At the age of twenty-one he adopted the religious habit of the Carmelite friars. In 1578 he was imprisoned for some months for certain practices of a kind which were regarded by the ecclesiastical authorities as unorthodox, and it was during this period at the age of thirty-six that he had the mysterious psychic experience which is identified by Dr. Bucke with the phenomenon of cosmic consciousness, though it must be admitted that the evidence with regard to its specific character is not altogether conclusive. His biographer, David Lewis, gives the account of it as follows :—

MYSTERIOUS EXPERIENCE OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

> His cell became filled with light seen by the bodily eye. One night the friar who kept him went as usual to see that his prisoner was safe, and witnessed the heavenly light with which the cell was flooded. He did not stop to consider it, but hurried to the prior, thinking that some one in the house had keys to open the doors of the prison. The prior, with two members of the order, went at once to the prison, but on his entering the room through which the prison was approached, the light vanished. The prior, however, entered the cell, and, finding it dark, opened the lantern with which he had provided himself, and asked the prisoner who had given him the light. St. John answered him, and said that no one in the house had done so, that no one could do it, and that there was neither candle nor lamp in the cell. The prior made no reply and went away, thinking that the gaoler had made a mistake.

AN UNEARTHLY ILLUMINATION.

St. John, at a later time, told one of his brethren that the heavenly light, which God so mercifully sent him, lasted the night through, and that it filled his soul with joy and made the night pass away as if it were but a moment. When his imprisonment was drawing to its close he heard our Lord say to him, as it were out of the soft light that was around him, " John, I am here ; be not afraid ; I will set thee free." A few moments later, while making his escape from the prison of the monastery, it is said that he had a repetition of the experience, as follows :—

> He saw a wonderful light, out of which came a voice, " Follow me." He followed, and the light moved before him towards the wall which was on the bank, and then, he knew not how, he found himself on the summit of it without effort or fatigue. He descended into the street, and then

the light vanished. So brilliant was it, that for two or three days afterwards, so he confessed at a later time, his eyes were weak, as if he had been looking at the sun in its strength.

Elsewhere St. John of the Cross refers to his own spiritual experiences in language which suggests that these were of a similar character to those already recorded. But his language is vague, and deliberately so, as he says that his description of his experience "relates to matters so interior and spiritual as to baffle the powers of language." "All I say," he continues, "falls far short of that which passes in this intimate union of the soul with God. . . . I stood enraptured in ecstasy beside myself, and in my every sense no sense remained. My spirit was endowed with understanding, understanding not, all knowledge transcending. . . . He who really ascends so high annihilates himself and all his previous knowledge seems ever less and less."

AN EXPERIENCE BAFFLING THE POWERS OF LANGUAGE.

St. Theresa's mystical experiences, as is well known, were legion. They included the stigmata, i.e., the imprint of the five wounds of the Crucifixion, levitation, clairvoyance, clairaudience, etc. She, too, had an experience which she terms the "orison of union," which corresponds closely by its description to cosmic consciousness.

In this orison of union [says St. Theresa], the soul is fully awake as regards God, but wholly asleep as regards things of this world, and in respect of herself. During the short time the union lasts she is as it were deprived of every feeling, and even if she would she could not think of any single thing. Thus she needs to employ no artifice in order to assist the use of her understanding. In short, she is utterly dead to the things of the world, and lives solely in God. . . . Thus does God when He raises the soul to union with Himself suspend the natural action of all faculties. But this time is always short, and it seems even shorter than it is. God establishes Himself in the interior of this soul in such a way that when she returns to herself it is wholly impossible for her to doubt that she has been in God and God in her. This truth remains so strongly impressed on her that even though many years should pass without the condition returning, she can neither forget the favour she received nor doubt of its reality. If you ask how it is possible that the soul can see and understand that she has been in God, since during the union she has neither sight nor understanding, I reply that she does not see it then, but that she sees it clearly later after she has returned to herself, not by any vision but by a certitude which abides with her and which God alone can give her.

THE ORISON OF UNION.

Reverting to the same experience on another occasion, St. Theresa recounts how one day it was granted to her to perceive

in one instant how all things are seen and contained in God. "I did not," she adds, "perceive them in their proper form, and nevertheless the view I had of them was of a sovereign clearness and has remained vividly impressed upon my soul. This view was so subtile and delicate that the understanding cannot grasp it."

Jacob Boehme is another classic example of this experience. His first illumination occurred in the year 1600, when he was twenty-five years of age, and he had a further and more vivid experience ten years later. Martensen describes Boehme's first experience as follows :—

JACOB BOEHME'S VISION.

Sitting one day in his room his eyes fell upon a burnished pewter dish, which reflected the sunshine with such marvellous splendour that he fell into an inward ecstasy, and it seemed to him as if he could now look into the principles and deepest foundation of things. He believed that it was only a fancy, and in order to banish it from his mind he went out upon the green. But here he remarked that he gazed into the very heart of things, the very herbs and grass, and that actual nature harmonized with what he had inwardly seen. He said nothing to anyone, but praised and thanked God in silence. He continued in the honest practice of his craft, was attentive to his domestic affairs, and was on terms of good-will with all men.

Of his complete illumination ten years later he says himself :

The gate was opened to me that in one quarter of an hour I saw and knew more than if I had been many years together at a university, at which I exceedingly admired and thereupon turned my praise to God for it. For I saw and knew the being of all things, the byss and the abyss and the eternal generation of the Holy Trinity, the descent and the original of the world and of all creatures through the divine wisdom : I knew and saw in myself all the three worlds, namely, (1) the divine (angelical and paradisaical) ; and (2) the dark (the original of the nature to the fire), and then (3) the external and the visible world (being a procreation or external birth from both the internal and the spiritual worlds). And I saw and knew the whole working essence, in the evil and the good and the original and the existence of each of them ; and likewise how the fruit-bearing womb of eternity brought forth. So that I not only did greatly wonder at it but did also exceedingly rejoice.

EDWARD CARPENTER AND JAMES ALLEN.

Of men belonging to our modern world who have had the experience of cosmic consciousness, two only seem to my mind absolutely valid instances. One is Edward Carpenter, the author of *Towards Democracy*, a work of great breadth and insight, with which every reader of this magazine should make himself familiar if he has not already done so, and James Allen, the author of *From Poverty to Power, As a Man*

Thinketh, and many other booklets which may be characterized as essays on the spiritual life. Edward Carpenter has himself stated that he had this experience, and in fact intimated as much in a letter to Dr. Bucke himself.

I really do not feel [he says in this letter] that I can tell you anything without falsifying and obscuring the matter. I have done my best to write it out in *Towards Democracy*. I had no experience of physical light in this relation. The perception seems to be one in which all the senses unite into one sense, in which *you become* the object, but this is unintelligible mentally speaking. I do not think the matter can be defined as yet, but I do not know that there is any harm in writing about it.

Elsewhere, in *Civilization : Its Cause and Cure*, he writes more definitely on the subject :

EDWARD CARPENTER ON COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS.

There is in every man a local consciousness connected with his quite external body. That we know. Is there not also in every man the making of a universal consciousness ? That there are in us phases of consciousness which transcend the limit of the bodily senses is a matter of daily experience. That we perceive and know things which are not conveyed to us by the bodily eyes and heard by our bodily ears is certain. That there arise in us waves of consciousness from those around us, from the people, the race to which we belong, is also certain. May there not then be in us the makings of a perception and knowledge which shall not be relative to this body which is here and now, but which shall be good for all time and everywhere ? Does there not exist in truth, as we have already hinted, an inner illumination of which what we call light in the outer world is the partial expression and manifestation, by which we can ultimately see things *as they are*, beholding all creation, not by any local act of perception, but by a cosmical intuition and prescience, identifying ourselves with what we see ? Does there not exist a perfected sense of hearing as of the morning stars singing together, an understanding of the words that are spoken all through the universe, the hidden meaning of all things, a profound and far-pervading sense of which our ordinary sense of sound is only the first novitiate and intuition ?

Mr. Carpenter refers elsewhere to " that inner vision which transcends sight as far as sight transcends touch," and to " a consciousness in which the contrast between the ego and the external world and the distinction between subject and object fall away." These are surely the words of one who has himself undergone this experience. Carpenter, however, is careful to warn us that we are not to suppose that people who have this experience are in any way to be regarded as infallible as to its exact meaning. " In many cases indeed," he remarks, " the very novelty and strangeness of the experience may give rise to phantasmal trains of delusive speculation."

In further interpretation of this mystery he observes that the whole body is only as it were one organ of the cosmic consciousness. "To attain this latter one must have the power of knowing oneself separate from the body, of passing into a state of ecstasy, in fact. Without this, cosmic consciousness cannot be experienced." It is perhaps well that Mr. Edward Carpenter has written of the matter so definitely and from such an aloof and impersonal standpoint as he has done, as those who have experienced the state have, as a rule, been both too reserved with regard to their spiritual experiences and too deficient in the critical faculty to give us anything that would appear to the ordinary mind as a satisfactory explanation of the phenomenon. We have nothing, for instance, in writing, from Mr. James Allen, who claims to have had the experience more than once, which would throw any intimate light on what he saw and felt in connection with it, though it leaves its trace, as it must ever do, on his own standpoint in life, and on all that he has written. Mr. Allen claimed to have had this experience in the first instance at 24, an unusually early age, while later on it returned after an interval of ten years in, as he says, a more permanent form.

THE CLAIM OF JAMES ALLEN.

In three modern poets—Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Walt Whitman—there are suggestions which point to some experience of the kind, and Walt Whitman especially, in his *Leaves of Grass*, has expressed in singularly beautiful phraseology the mental attitude which we associate with the transmutation of the individual life by this mystical experience.

The lines written by Wordsworth on Tintern Abbey, in his twenty-ninth year, are again singularly apposite as an expression of the mental state to which cosmic consciousness serves as the portal. In these he speaks of

> . . . That blessed mood
> In which the burden 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.

Further lines in the same poem suggest the occurrence of an actual personal experience in this connection, and we should perhaps be right if we classed this poet (albeit with some hesitancy) along with the others given in these Notes as one of those who actually entered into this state of higher consciousness, who have been put *en rapport* with the unity of all created life, and have seen "with the bodily eye" and not in any mere poetical vision, "the light that never was on land or sea." Thus he writes once more:

"WITH THE BODILY EYE?"

> I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thought; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man—
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.

Tennyson's verse again is steeped in a mysticism the depth of which the ordinary reader, and indeed the critic as well, have been too slow to appreciate. The author of *Cosmic Consciousness* himself speaks of this poet far too depreciatingly and must, I am afraid, be numbered with those who fail to gauge his true greatness, and the inwardness of what he wrote. The whole conception underlying the verses on the Holy Grail is steeped in mystical insight, and the thought of the deep reality underlying the entire phantasmagoria of the phenomenal world is seldom far absent from the poet's thought.

TENNYSON AS A MYSTIC.

The following lines from *The Holy Grail* may be given as an instance, but they are only one example out of many:

> Let the visions of the night, or of the day
> Come as they will; and many a time they come,
> Until this earth he walks on seems not earth,
> This light that strikes his eyeball is not light,
> This air that smites his forehead is not air,
> But vision—yea his very hand and foot—
> In moments when he feels he cannot die,
> And knows himself no vision to himself,
> Nor the high God a vision, nor that one
> Who rose again; ye have seen what ye have seen.

Again in *The Ancient Sage*, as many readers will recall, he relates how

> . . . revolving in myself
> The word that is the symbol of myself,
> The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,
> And passed into the nameless, as a cloud
> Melts into heaven. I touch'd my limbs, the limbs
> Were strange, not mine—and yet no shade of doubt,
> But utter clearness, and thro' loss of self
> The gain of such large life as matched with ours
> Were sun to spark—unshadowable in words,
> Themselves but shadows of a shadow-world.

This is admittedly the record of a personal experience and is referred to as such in the poet's Life by his son, the present Lord Tennyson.

Dr. Bucke gives many instances in his work of men who, in his view, have experienced cosmic consciousness in some form or other, but by the critical mind many of these can hardly be regarded as legitimate. Among these may be mentioned Mohammed, whose illumination might be defended by some, but who to my thinking rather appears to have written the Koran in much the same way as Madame Blavatsky wrote *Isis Unveiled*, and whom I should class rather as a natural medium in this respect than as a real illuminate. Dante is again another instance given, with regard to whom, however, conclusive evidence is lacking. The Bacon and Shakespeare controversy is introduced rather unfortunately into the present work, from which it would be well, I cannot help thinking, that such fantastic and irrelevant controversies were omitted. Several of the instances given in the present Notes do not appear at all. No woman is named among the subjects of this experience. I myself have instanced St. Theresa, and among the moderns in this connection Anna Kingsford, an illuminate of a very different type, should not be overlooked.

DOUBTFUL INSTANCES.

Probably at the present time, though Dr. Bucke cites only the case of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, this experience is more common among the saints and ascetics of India than in any other part of the world. A training which lends itself naturally to the production of such phenomena is the well-known yoga discipline, the goal of which is the attainment of samadhi, a state near akin to, if not practically identical with, that known in the West as cosmic consciousness.

Dr. Bucke claims that the cases of cosmic consciousness are steadily increasing as the world grows older, and this may well

be so, but the instances chosen by him are not unfrequently so capricious, while other important ones are omitted, that the list he gives in support of his contention will hardly carry conviction, more especially as only one is given from India. In Dr. Bucke's opinion there is a steady development of sentient life from that simple consciousness which is possessed by the higher types of the animal kingdom, onward to the self-consciousness which, together with the use of language, is the differentiating characteristic of mankind, right up to that cosmic consciousness which he holds will be, in æons to come, the heritage of all alike. By that time it may be supposed mankind will have developed a more spiritual type of body and nervous organization which will be permanently responsive to influences which to-day reach only the rarest types of humanity in occasional and evanescent flashes.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

I am publishing a letter in my correspondence columns this month from Mr. Edward L. Gardner, acting General Secretary for the Theosophical Society in England, in which he takes me to task for saying that much dissatisfaction exists at the present time within the ranks of the Theosophical Society, and "that attempts to render it more popular and responsive to the views of its members have been overridden by superior authority, which adopts altogether too autocratic a standpoint." Mr. Gardner traverses this statement, but what are the facts? I have before me the notice of the calling of a special convention of the Theosophical Society in England, in which the two following resolutions appear under the heading of agenda:

RESOLUTION No. 1.

THAT this SPECIAL CONVENTION of THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN ENGLAND resolves that it re-affirms the democratic basis of the Constitution of the National Society, and the right of its Members to have a voice in the management of its affairs and the election of its Officials, and to discuss at the Annual Convention matters of business arising out of the General Secretary's Report.

THAT this CONVENTION furthermore affirms the complete impartiality and neutrality of the Society in all matters concerning religion and politics, and that the Society had no connection, official or unofficial, with any religious or political Organization whatever.

RESOLUTION No. 2.

THAT this SPECIAL CONVENTION of THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN ENGLAND hereby registers its profound regret that the state of the Theosophical Society at large is so unsatisfactory, and that disharmony within

it is so rampant, rendering the Society incapable of performing the threefold function declared in its Objects. This SPECIAL CONVENTION attributes the paralysis of the Theosophical Society to the many grave errors of the Administration, its lack of courage in dealing with alleged delinquencies, and its reliance on autocratic and secret control, rather than on the cleansing democratic principles expressed in its Constitution and those of its component National Societies.

This SPECIAL CONVENTION therefore resolves to appeal to the several National Societies in the above terms to throw off all secret control and to restore harmony by a reliance on the original democratic principles.

What, I may ask, can be the meaning of these resolutions if there is not the dissatisfaction to which I refer and if the governing body is all that Mr. Gardner's fancy paints it ? These resolutions, which are only the two first of nine, are followed by a third which discountenances the propagation of the particular teachings and beliefs of the Liberal Catholic Church, and the Order of the Star in the East, while others deal with more special points to which there is no call to me to allude in the present context. I would suggest that under the circumstances it is a mistake to adopt an ostrich-like attitude and shut one's eyes to facts that are quite apparent and not open to dispute. As to whether the discontented element, which is undoubtedly a large one, is right or wrong in its contentions, is a matter on which different views may well be held. That the discontent exists and has found voice in the calling of this Special Convention is surely sufficient warrant for the observations which I made.

I have always endeavoured to make it clear that in such matters I write as an outsider and not as one who is committed by bias to any one party in such disputes. As my readers must be aware, these are many and varied, and the recent publication of *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, transcribed, compiled and introduced by A. T. Barker,* has tended to foment discussion and to lead to the expression of many divergent opinions, of a number of which the editor has been the recipient in his private correspondence. I am publishing in the present issue two articles dealing with this strange mass of correspondence from two standpoints of a totally different character. These commentaries on a monumental work are, I believe, calculated to arouse interest, though they do not by any means exhaust the pros and cons of the subject, and the problems which it raises. We are confronted in the first instance with the question of the genuineness of the letters ; the actual facts as to the method by

THE MAHATMA LETTERS.

* London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd.

which they were received; and (assuming them to have been psychically communicated by some means or other) the identity and authoritative position (if any) of their extra-mundane communicators. A further question has been raised as to the justification for publishing correspondence of the kind which its recipient was specifically instructed to treat as confidential. Supposing that the passing over of the persons alluded to in the letters in question in none too complimentary terms should be regarded as sufficient justification for their publication, are we entitled to assume that, if some of them are genuine, all are equally so? If this is the case, what view must we take of the contradictory attitudes adopted at times as between one communicant and another? Mr. Barker's preface again raises a controversial point as regards the much-vexed question of spiritualistic communications and the theory widely held in certain Theosophical quarters that the alleged communicants in such séances are merely the shells of disembodied entities. Though these letters are in every case communications to Mr. Sinnett, it is well known that he himself would have repudiated this position, or at least narrowed it down almost to vanishing point, and in fact, he had no scruple in utilizing spiritualistic means of communication over a long series of years. It is not therefore to be supposed that he would have regarded with either sympathy or favour the very frankly outspoken views on this matter of the editor of the letters which, in any case, seem hardly called for in his prefatory observations. However we may regard this extensive correspondence which deals in detail with many problems of supreme interest to the student of the occult, there is no doubt of the historical value of the documents in question as throwing light on early developments of the Theosophical Society.

THE DOCTRINE OF "SHELLS."

Another point of far wider significance is the question that the whole matter raises as to whether, and to what extent, highly evolved spiritual forces on the other side initiate great movements on the physical plane. Such intervention, if it takes place, is assuredly a very great factor in the history of the world, and we are clearly entitled to assume that the spiritual powers that intervene are not always of such potency that they can ensure that the plans they lay shall not miscarry—especially as these must be entrusted for their execution to human agents whose deficiencies, whether

WAS THEOSOPHY INITIATED FROM THE OTHER SIDE?

intellectual or moral, must inevitably hamper the carrying out of the original design. Nor, indeed, can we say that the originators are necessarily so highly evolved that they will be possessed of sufficient wisdom and judgment to choose those instruments who will be best adapted for the purposes they have in view. An Indian occultist on the other side, however far advanced in his cosmic knowledge, it might well be argued, could with difficulty gauge the intellectual outlook of the West and the type of mentality which could best further his projects in a civilization so completely dominated by materialistic conceptions. Mr. Kingsland, I think, well points out that the Theosophical Society has been in error in raising the alleged Masters from beyond the Himalayas to the position of demi-gods. The evidence before us rather points to the fact that, if we are justified in the hypothesis indicated above, they are rather in the nature of advanced occultists. The temptation in the first instance was an obvious one, as it was doubtless thought that the higher the rank accorded the Masters the greater the glory that would redound to the Theosophical Society. The results of such an error are before us to-day, and it is to be noted that these said Masters never appear to have made the claims to that high spiritual eminence which were so readily accorded to them by their devotees. The old proverb says that " the best laid plans of mice and men oft gang agley." Perhaps this alliteration might be still further accentuated by the inclusion of yet another M ! Even on the spiritual plane what is there which should make us suppose that the " Masters," or " Mahatmas " if we so style them, could carry out their plans unhampered by opposing forces ? Take an instance of a parallel kind. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that the conception of the League of Nations was engineered from the spiritual plane. What happened to this when the attempt was made to put it into concrete and practical form ? The fallibility of the human instruments that endeavoured to carry it out has resulted, so far at least, only in its inglorious collapse. Let us hope that some Higher Power has written " Resurgam " over its inanimate form !

I have received an anonymous letter from a psycho-analytical correspondent who resents my classing psycho-analysts and materialists together in my last Notes of the Month. Surely, however, it is the case that the psycho-analyst has specialized on the materialistic side of dreamland and quite unjustifiably ignored its psychical element. It seems to me, therefore, that

my criticism was not uncalled for. My correspondent warns me that I shall be putting up the backs of the psycho-analysts. I am afraid, however, that I have done this already, and I can only congratulate myself on the fact that certain adherents of that cult have so far overlooked my rather scathing criticisms as to remain readers of the Magazine. As already stated, I am quite prepared to admit the sound foundation of certain psycho-analytical theories, notably that which emphasizes the fact that a large number of our dreams are in the nature of wish-fulfilments. Most psycho-analytical interpretations of dreams appear to me, however, to be ludicrous and grotesque, and unquestionably the psycho-analyst reduces dream allegory to an absurdity by his fantastic use and over-emphasis of it. From a therapeutic point of view I would suggest that the average psycho-analyst has done more harm than good, and it would be easy to instance cases in which the unearthing of a person's forgotten past has had lamentable consequences. These persons should remember Longfellow's line, " Let the dead past bury its dead," and not evoke ghosts of forgotten tragedies which may in many cases continue to haunt the waking life of the sufferer by their unwelcome presence. In such cases the banishing ritual of the wise magician would be calculated to prove the more efficient weapon. I would add that, as my correspondent should be aware, I cannot in any case undertake the publication of anonymous letters.

A PSYCHO-ANALYTICAL PROTEST.

THE MAHATMA LETTERS TO A. P. SINNETT

A NOTE BY WILLIAM LOFTUS HARE

I GLADLY respond to the Editor's invitation to contribute a short statement on this remarkable book.* Five hundred pages of small type is more than I can pretend to have digested thoroughly in the short time during which the book has been in circulation. The letters belong to a time remote from me, and, with the exception of Mr. Sinnett and one or two others, refer to persons with whom I was unacquainted. Besides, there is not, and hardly could be, an index to guide the reader in the chaotic mass of subject-matter contained in the Letters themselves. He must read them again and again, making copious notes and cross-references before he can give—if he so desire—a judicial verdict on the meaning and value of this book. And he will have to deliver not one judgment only, but as many as there are outstanding themes blended in the Letters. To perform the task adequately would be a *tour de force* which I doubt if anyone will undertake. And for a good reason : for the book excites reactions according to the predispositions of those who read it. Some will absorb with avidity the sensational marvels therein recounted ; others endowed with *a priori* credulity will recognize all the words as coming from divine wisdom. Readers of taste will jib at the bad grammar, logical people will protest against the torrents of rhetorical dogma ; scientific men will gasp at the outworn conceptions still fighting for a place in the age of wireless and radio-activity. Comparative religionists will rub their eyes and ask if it is they or the authors who play the rôle of Rip van Winkle. Christians will feel hurt at the contempt hurled at their faith and practice : spiritualists will growl, rationalists will grunt, materialists will laugh.

In the Theosophical Society the Letters raise three separate storms—again according to predispositions—among the Blavatskyites, the Besantites, and the neutral sceptics. Calm reigns only on the surface of the ocean of the disinterested members.

* *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* from The Mahatmas M. and K. H. Transcribed, Compiled, and with an Introduction by A. T. Barker. London : T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd. Price 21*s.* net.

The foregoing remarks will indicate how difficult I find it to decide what topics to select for discussion here. The Letters were, and are, the chief and basic authority for all that came after them and out of them. If the Letters can stand scrutiny, what follows from them is one sure ground, not otherwise.

I put aside for the moment the hundred and one separate elements of these Letters—spiritualism, precipitation, cosmogony, magic, evolution, the Masters and Supermasters, etc.—in order to consider their general character. We must go back fifty years and cut out all that has intervened between 1875 and to-day, so that we may estimate their significance. At that moment the *science* of Comparative Religion had hardly come into being. Some few translations of Oriental works had been made but no proper idea had been formulated as to their value and relation. The laity, at any rate, was quite ignorant of Indian, Buddhist and Chinese philosophy, while the specialists like Max Müller and his band of helpers were busy examining the treasures which lay before their eyes. Of a general knowledge of religious psychology there was none; James, Starbuck, and J. M. Bucke had not appeared; universal data had not been collected; conclusions had not been reached.

Philosophically, the Western world was dominated by Spencer, Comte and the neo-Kantians. Schopenhauer, the first of the Vitalists, had spoken but was not heard, while Nietzsche and Bergson had exercised little influence. Mechanical science was conquering all along the line, commerce was supreme and the British Empire was at its height. At such a moment Madame Blavatsky launched her *Isis Unveiled*. She was determined that the world should not be divided between the Pope and Mr. Gladstone on the one hand and Darwin on the other. Her book was full of wit and wisdom—and as full of mistakes. It was in effect anti-Christian and anti-English. The Indian Goddess of Wisdom, Sarasvati, put in a claim to be heard.

The Letters continued the work begun in *Isis* making corrections here and there. They stimulated fresh books from the masterly pen of Mr. Sinnett, who, with the utmost patience, brought a cosmos out of their chaos, transmuted their almost barbaric style into Gladstonian English. The Letters, be it remembered, were strictly secret and were ordered, in a dozen places, not to be published. How then does it happen that Mr. Barker has allowed himself to print them in full and Mr. Jinarājadāsa to print them in part? Anyhow, for the sake of the truth there is no reason to regret their publication now.

I turn next to the general content of these Letters; they reveal a condition of acute strife within the body of the recently born Theosophical Society. Many personages, long since disappeared, are accused of various vices from fraud to narrow minded egoism. The sceptical Mr. Hume, the ascetic and ambitious Mrs. Kingsford, the naïf and worldly Mr. Sinnett, all receive appropriate castigation from the hidden hands of the Mahatmas K.H. and M.—the Masters Koot Hoomi and Morya. We shall never know perhaps exactly how these Letters were transmitted from first to last. Some are supposed to have been "precipitated," some were found under pillows, in books, or were sent through the post. Others were said to have been written automatically by various Chelas, known and unknown, and even by Madame Blavatsky herself. In very early days grave suspicion was roused that the Letters were not genuine productions of their reputed authors, and the matter is hardly settled by the Editor's assurance that "Mr. Sinnett received many letters from the Mahatmas . . . and it is these original communications which are published in the present volume."

The philosophical doctrines contained in the Letters were, of course, almost entirely new in their day, though they have during forty years leaked out, as they were intended to do, in Theosophical literature. India had a long religious and philosophical history to her credit. The Ancient Vedic cults had given place to sacerdotal Brahminism; out of this had arisen scores of schools and disciplines. Yogis and Sannyasins, gurus and achàryas, had multiplied for centuries. The Sutras of the six systems of philosophy drawn from the basic Upanishads were in general circulation. Besides this, there had been the great tree of Buddhism with its branches spreading from India to Ceylon, Burmah and Siam as well as to Kashmir, Tibet, China and Japan.

The passage of Buddhism to Tibet is of peculiar interest to our present concerns. It was due to the missions sent from the fourth century A.D. from the Indian monastery of Vikramasīla to the King of Tibet—and the softening influence of his Chinese and Nepaulese wives, both Buddhists—that the religion took root. But the soil was poor and the growth, though great, was corrupt; the undergrowth of Shamanism, besides the ignorance of the people, has choked the once pure Dharma, and Tibet, instead of being as Theosophical legend has always taught us, the home of esoteric Buddhism, is the least Buddhistic country of all Buddhadom. This brings me to the next point of importance.

We are told in the Introduction to the Letters that they

emanate from " certain Eastern Teachers said to belong to an Occult Brotherhood living in the trans-Himalayan fastnesses of Tibet." After forty years it is tantalizing not to know where the great White Lodge is situated. Visitants to Tibet, from Father Antonio de Andrade in 1550 to Dr. McGovern in 1923, have never discovered any signs of it, though a certain Major Cross last year made the sensational announcement that he had met with Madame Blavatsky's Tibetan guru, aged 240, in his penetration of the " fastnesses." After this news had been trumpeted in the Theosophical journals with great jubilation, it was cruelly discovered that Major Cross was romancing. He was " pulling the leg " of the *Times of India*.

The " Asiatic Researches " of Csoma de Körös and the " Illustrations of the Literature and Religion of the Buddhists " by Brian Hodgson were issued in 1833 and 1841 respectively. French, Indian and German scholars followed with rich results. I say this in order to remark that in these works, so far as I am aware, the system of cosmogony and anthropogenesis expounded in the Letters will not be found. The general belief that " Theosophy," as taught by the Masters, came from the " fastnesses " of Tibet would not be supported, I undertake to say, by the most exhaustive study of Tibetan literature as a whole. What about Indian literature ? With a better knowledge of it—and, what is important, with a *later* knowledge—I say dogmatically that the system of the Letters does not correspond to any doctrine of Indian philosophy known to me. In reading the Letters I cannot tell whether the Authors are Vedantists, Sankhyans, Hinayāna or Māhayāna Buddhists. They do not know their Upanishads very well, and although there are occasional references to Adwaitism, the beauty of the central idea of that philosophy does not seem to have penetrated deeply. The Sankhyan doctrine of Kapila is more evident in the various ideas about *Purusha* and *Prakriti* (the Soul and Nature) and the evolution and involution of the world over incalculable periods of time. Of the Pali Scriptures—the *Tripitaka*—I can find in one reading no mention whatever. A few unknown Chinese books are mentioned while the great Classics are ignored—although the Master K. H. has since been " looked up " and found to be a re-incarnation of Lao-tze the author of the *Tao-teh-King*. Of the Dhamakāya or " Truth-body " of the Māhayāna system there is a discussion in the Letters, but the light is poor compared with what we have now on the subject. The Dialogues of Plato, the works of Aristotle and the Neo-platonists, the Roman Stoics and Christian Saints, never reached the

inaccessible fastnesses of the Tibetan library, although, singularly enough, most of the contemporary scientific literature and some of our rather banal poetic proverbial philosophy—not excluding limericks—had arrived. The Mahatmas know French and a little Italian, though they mis-write and mis-spell English.

On the subject of Yoga, Hindu and Buddhist ethics there is nothing of value compared with what can now be obtained in shilling manuals, though I have no doubt it was all that was available in the 'eighties.

With Scientific conceptions of that day I am not so familiar and do not care to express myself regarding the many astronomical, physical and chemical theories discussed. I point out, however, that—perhaps in accord with the anti-Christian bias of the Letters—the doctrine of evolution " from the dumb off-shoot of the Ape " is accepted (p. 119), and Cuvier " the ethnographist whose Bible-stuffed brain made him divide mankind into but three races " is corrected by an appeal to Pritchard who suggested seven. Thereafter the doctrine of the Seven Root Races is propounded (p. 120) in June, 1882. This is an illustration of the way in which a few Western ideas are " confirmed " by the new occult philosophy, which, of course, is declared to be the ancient wisdom.

In the Letters generally " occultism " is a body of doctrine drawn from esoteric sources plus a spiritual evolution in which the individual consciously and volitionally joins. The high ethical aim—if it can be detached from the mass of detail (which many will question)—must be admitted. The writers want to use Mr. Sinnett and his London coadjutors for the purpose of inducing Universal Brotherhood and they teach what they believe to be the process by which this advance can be made. Life, they say, is a long discipline in which one's deeds count more than men willingly believe. Man's destiny is dependent on his deeds. Excellent doctrine no doubt, and worth repeating ; especially if cleansed of at least four hundred pages of trivial controversy.

The " wheat " of course, is Theosophia, Divine Wisdom, which is found everywhere in Vedas, Suttas, Bible, Dialogue, Chinese Classic, Koran and Gathas. It is not a secret kept back from us by special mountain-custodians, but is revealed in the heart to all who are disposed to receive it. Men, priests, temples come and go ; the Body of Truth remains for ever.

THE MAHATMA LETTERS

By WILLIAM KINGSLAND

FROM whatever point of view we regard the contents of this volume, it presents a series of bewildering problems ; not merely for the theosophist and the Theosophical Society, but also for the scientist, the psychologist, the student of human nature, and even for the man of the world.

The publication of this work is practically a fresh challenge to the world to recognise the existence and teachings of the Mahatmas, Masters, or Adepts who were originally brought into prominence by Madame H. P. Blavatsky, in the seventies of the last century, through her first book *Isis Unveiled* ; by the founding of the Theosophical Society ; and still more so by the late A. P. Sinnett through the publication of his works *The Occult World* and *Esoteric Buddhism.*

The present volume is also a challenge to the official representatives and powers-that-be of the Theosophical Society. By these it will probably be received with the utmost disapproval, not to say consternation—the reasons for which we need not mention here.

It is impossible to deal adequately with the matter contained in these Letters in the course of a brief article. The problems presented are certain to provoke the most extraordinary conflict of opinion, if not of bitter controversy. Careful analysis, and a collating of passages bearing upon particular points, is required before anything like a just estimate can be formed. One would have to arrange the subject-matter, for example, under some such headings as these :—The Mahatmas on themselves—on A. P. Sinnett—on H. P. Blavatsky—on the Nature of Occultism and the Conditions of Chelaship—on the Esoteric Doctrine—etc. Only in such a manner could justice be done to the subject as a whole ; to the details of it ; and to the various individuals mentioned in the work ; and only thus could anything like a correct conclusion be formed as to the nature and value of the teachings presented, and the claims that are made. In the unedited manner—save only for the arrangement in Sections—in which the Letters are now published, they appear to present a

particularly good target for a cheap and superficial criticism, such as they are sure to provoke in certain quarters ; that kind of criticism which—based on a pre-judgment of the whole matter—can pick out a word or a sentence here and there, and present it in a false light apart from its context, or from other matter which would explain it, in order that the critic may hold it up to ridicule. This kind of criticism has, indeed, already been indulged in to a considerable extent by the ordinary Press reviewers of the book. I shall, therefore, in this present article, confine myself to certain salient features and questions which may perhaps be advantageously noted at this early stage of the matter.

First and foremost, who and what are the Mahatmas from whom these Letters profess to come ? Their very existence has hitherto been widely denied. Does the present volume settle that question for those who have previously been sceptics ? The answer to this remains to be seen ; but at least we may say that the work will undoubtedly give the sceptics furiously to think.

It must be noted in passing, however, that the evidence for the existence of the Mahatmas does not depend wholly on these Letters. There is a very large amount of confirmatory evidence entirely independent of them.

Most intimately associated with this first question is the further one as to the genuineness of the Letters themselves—so widely denied when they were first quoted by Mr. Sinnett in the works referred to above. To what extent does the present volume help to settle this question ? The evidence in this matter is naturally of two kinds : external and internal ; but with the former the volume as it is now presented does not deal, save that here and there are references in the Letters themselves to their mode of production and method of delivery.

As regards the internal evidence, we may say at once that for anyone who personally knew A. P. Sinnett, H. P. Blavatsky, and many others mentioned therein—as the present writer did—the internal evidence is overwhelming as regards the bulk of them. There are some respecting which one must reserve one's judgment ; but, taken all through, the information which they afford throws such a flood of light upon many matters which have hitherto been more or less of an enigma, that one must regard them in the main as being genuine.

In this matter of genuineness, however, there is also involved the psychological problem as to how far the subconsciousness,

or the stereotyped thought-forms and language of the *Chelas* through whom many of the Letters are said to have been transmitted, played a part in the matter which they contain, and the wording of the sentences. This can hardly be dealt with without much further information than we at present possess. The problem is somewhat analogous to that of automatic writing. We know that handwriting of deceased persons, and even of living individuals, can be, and is, automatically and faithfully reproduced. How does that apply in this case? This is merely mentioned here, however, to prevent anyone from too hastily concluding that the Letters can be taken *à la lettre*. "K. H." (Koot Hoomi) states definitely: "Very often our very letters —unless something very important and secret—are written in our handwritings by our chelas" (p. 296).

Let us first of all deal with the character and qualifications of Mr. A. P. Sinnett himself as herein disclosed. Most of the Letters were written to and *for* him; and A. P. Sinnett was—well, let us see. These Letters contain a merciless analysis of his motives and actions, and of his fitness—or rather unfitness —to be a *chela* (disciple or pupil) of the "Masters"—not to mention his aspiration to be an Occultist. Over and over again we have passages which throw a lurid light on every detail of what one knew of his personality; of his actions in connection with the Theosophical Society, both in its earlier and its later days; and of his attitude towards, and treatment of, H. P. Blavatsky, down to his dying day; to which attitude he has himself set the final seal by the posthumous publication of his scandalous work *The Early Days of Theosophy in Europe*.

What I wish to point out here in this connection is: that in dealing with the teachings themselves as given in these Letters, it is of the utmost importance that we should bear in mind that they were written *for* this man: who was told over and over again that he *could not* be given the real esoteric doctrine; and that both what he was seeking, and the motives for his seeking, were fundamentally wrong. Very briefly put: A. P. Sinnett got, of occult teaching, just exactly the *kind* that he asked for—and not much of that. It is an occult rule—as also a natural law—that they who ask shall receive—just what they ask for (more or less, and in proportion as they ask aright). Now A. P. S. did not ask for, and did not want, a *spiritual* philosophy. He was out in the first instance for *phenomena*. Phenomena, and again phenomena; something with which he could startle and convince the Western World, and go one better than

the Western scientists. He wanted to demonstrate to the world, as clearly and as certainly as any acknowledged fact, that there did exist the Occult Fraternity with whom he had come into contact through Madame Blavatsky; that he alone was their High Priest; and that they possessed powers over natural forces which Western science has hardly as yet even dreamt of, and has for the most part denied and scorned. He himself, and many others, had already had sufficiently convincing proofs; but that was not enough. The world would not believe him on his own testimony, or even on that testimony supported by many credible witnesses; therefore it was up to the Mahatmas to convince the world—that A. P. S. might be justified. The further phenomena were refused, on grounds stated in the Letters; and which, in the present writer's opinion, were sound and wise. Indeed, the phenomena already given would appear to have done more harm than good on account of the manner in which A. P. Sinnett had himself presented them to the world. It was not very long before all phenomena whatsoever were absolutely prohibited by the Mahatmas; and, indeed, at a very early stage, about 1884, all communication with the Mahatmas through H. P. Blavatsky was also denied to Mr. Sinnett. He claimed all the rest of his life to have other means of communication; but that is another story; and the claim is, to say the least of it, doubtful.

The effort to convince " the whole world "—or even an intelligent portion of it—is a hopeless and futile one—as most enthusiasts find out sooner or later. We might instance, for example, the phenomena of Spiritism. How is it that the Spiritists, with all their wealth of recurring phenomena—much more accessible and verifiable than those of H. P. Blavatsky—cannot convince " the whole world "; nor even certain obstinate and sceptical psychic researchers who, though fully acquainted with the whole range of the phenomena, refuse to accept the theory of " spirits "? In this matter the Mahatmas certainly showed more knowledge of human nature than A. P. S.

In psychical research, however, we have travelled a very long way since the eighties; and the phenomena connected with the Letters are much more credible now than they were then. At that time even telepathy, now so widely accepted, was anathema to the scientists; and the sub-conscious self—now the last refuge of the sceptics, and strained to breaking-point—was practically unheard of.

But A. P. S. wanted not merely these " convincing " proofs

which he could give to the world: he wanted to acquire occult powers for himself. He never did so; and he is told plainly in these Letters why they could not be *given* to him, and what were the conditions under which he could *acquire* them by his own efforts. "The adept *becomes*, he is not made" (p. 310). But these conditions were by no means to his taste: as, indeed, he is told very plainly they would not be, and the reason why. It was not merely that he could not rid himself of his "Western" prejudices, conventions and conceits, but he was also absolutely deficient in certain other qualifications, very specifically mentioned. Over and over again he is told this. "K. H." writes to him: "My poor blind friend—you are entirely unfit for practical occultism!" (p. 351).

I am stating this, not as a criticism of A. P. S., but for the purpose of showing that it was *the nature of the recipient* which determined the contents of the Letters; and how very important is is to take this into consideration in forming any judgment concerning them. Those who would criticise the Letters, let them pause and consider what manner of man, and of men, they were written to, for, and about, in the Section dealing with Probation and Chelaship. Here, until one is almost nauseated, we have the characters, motives, prejudices, conceits and treacheries of these men keenly analysed and exposed in their bearing upon the nature of the Ancient Wisdom into which they were seeking initiation. Ages before a certain teacher is reputed to have said, "Cast not your pearls before swine," it has been the traditional method of the "Mysteries," the Gnôsis, or of Occult Fraternities in general, to refrain from presenting their knowledge to those who were not fitted to receive it. Read the present volume in that light. It is a very cheap criticism that there is nothing to present. Well—so be it. For those who cannot distinguish the pearl from the shell, there are of course no pearls therein. There are many pearls in the present volume; but there is also a mighty lot of shell; and we must not be surprised if it is the shell and not the pearls which will be criticised.

Apart from phenomena, what was it that A. P. S. asked for in the way of occult teaching? and what is he given in these Letters? He asked for definite *scientific* teaching: that is to say, something which could be definitely formulated and grasped by the *intellect* concerning the structure of the world and the evolution of Man thereon. In other words, he wanted a *material* philosophy, not a *spiritual* one. And what did he get? He got

a bare skeleton of " Rounds," " Rings," " Races," and " Planetary Chains " ; and even these latter he so misunderstood and materialised as to imagine that Mars and Mercury—two *physical* planets—could be part of the septenary chain of this globe. He wanted to fill in this skeleton system with the most precise details ; in other words, to materialise it to the utmost extent. All his life he continued to polish up the skeleton he had put on a pedestal, and to make it more and more rigid and—shall we say ?—artistic. He endeavoured to elaborate more and more the purely scientific aspects of the information he had been given. We are not saying that what he sought was not to a certain extent valuable or legitimate ; but it certainly was not Occultism, nor even Occult Science—much less " Esoteric Buddhism." But above all it was not what the Masters *wanted* to give to the world ; and could have given had A. P. S. sought first and foremost for *spiritual* teaching and values. Thus " M " writes to him :

> If you cannot be happy without phenomena you will never learn our philosophy. If you want healthy, philosophic thought, and can be satisfied with such—let us correspond. I tell you a profound truth in saying that if you but choose wisdom all other things will be added unto it—in time. It adds no force to our metaphysical truths that our letters are dropped from space on to your lap or come under your pillow. If our philosophy is wrong a *wonder* will not set it right. Put that conviction into your consciousness and let us talk like sensible men (p. 262).

Here and there in the Letters hints are given as to what the real Occultist should seek ; as to what it was required that the Theosophical Society should stand for ; and above all in this respect is placed a true spiritual understanding of the unitary nature of Man, Humanity, expressed in the one word *Brotherhood.* " The *Chiefs* want a ' Brotherhood of Humanity,' a real Universal Fraternity started ; an institution which would make itself known throughout the world and arrest the attention of the highest minds " (p. 24). But A. P. S. is told : " Neither you nor anyone cared for the real object of the Society, nor had any respect for the *Brotherhood* but only a personal feeling for a few of the brothers " (p. 375).

One more quotation, which perhaps sums up the whole matter in this aspect. " My Brother, in my opinion you are intensely egotistical and haughty. In your appreciation and self-adulation you generally lose sight of the rest of mankind, and I verily believe that you regard the whole universe created for man, and that *man*—yourself " (p. 233).

I hope that I shall not be accused of the journalistic sin I have

condemned above, of picking out sentences here and there for a special purpose. A. P. Sinnett had certain good qualities which are freely recognised and stated in other places in these Letters—otherwise the Letters would never have been written at all. Even when this is said, it remains somewhat of a problem as to why A. P. Sinnett received as much as he did.

Let us now turn to H. P. Blavatsky, through whom the bulk of these Letters, though not all, reached their recipients. In passing we may remark that as regards the evidence for the existence of the Mahatmas—whether they are "spirits of light or goblins damned"*—it is impossible to explain H. P. Blavatsky, either as to her personality or her writings, without them. The one stable and unmistakable characteristic of her complex and perplexing personality—"The Sphinx of the Nineteenth Century"—was her absolute devotion to her "Masters"; for whom she had the utmost reverence; for whom she would endure any hardship, or would willingly lay down her life. Nay, the greatest hardship of all was to *live* in order that she might carry out as far as was possible, and to the limit of endurance, the Mission which they had entrusted to her. This comes out clearly and unmistakably in these Letters. As far back as 1884, H. P. B. was practically a physical wreck, liable to die at any moment from heart and kidney disease; yet she lived till 1891; lived to write *The Secret Doctrine*—the one thing that her heart was set on accomplishing—and much else besides. She lived by sheer will-power, aided by the Masters themselves, who had every now and then to "*fix* her" (p. 242). She writes to Mr. Sinnett, apparently in 1884: "Doctors notwithstanding (who proclaimed my four days' agony, and the impossibility of recovery), I suddenly got better, thanks to Master's protecting hand." After detailing her symptoms she goes on to say: "All this is due to five years of constant anguish, worry and repressed emotion" (p. 470).

In a letter received by Mr. Sinnett in London, October 10, 1884, "K. H." tells him: "She (H. P. B.) is virtually dead; and it is yourself—pardon me this once more truth—who have killed the rude but faithful agent, one moreover who was really devoted to yourself personally" (p. 368). And again: "You have treated the old body too cruelly and now it has its day" (p. 370).

To his infinite shame, Sinnett continued to his dying day to display his ingratitude—a very mild term to use—to H. P. B.

* *Key to Theosophy*, Chap. XIV, The Theosophical Mahatmas.

He never understood either her, her mission, or the Masters who sent her. Writing on this matter, " K. H." says to him : " Beware then of an uncharitable spirit, for it will rise up like a hungry wolf in your path and devour the better qualities of your nature which have been springing into life " (p. 367).

It is fortunate that the reputation of H. P. Blavatsky does not rest upon either the representations of A. P. Sinnett, nor upon the phenomena with which she was associated in the early days of the Theosophical Society. It rests upon her literary work, more particularly *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Voice of the Silence*. The present Letters clear up many puzzling matters in connection with her personality which confronted those who knew and worked with her. There are also other personalities connected with the early days of the Theosophical Society on whom these Letters throw a vivid light ; but space will not permit of any mention of them here.

Finally we must say a few words with regard to the Mahatmas themselves as they appear in these Letters. If we are to accept as genuine the Letters in which they give some account of themselves, we find in these that they appear to be as frank and outspoken about their own limitations and disabilities as they have been in respect of the other personalities to whom we have referred above ; and we are afraid that many who have hitherto regarded them almost as gods will be somewhat sadly disillusioned. This hero-worship was not their fault ; as, indeed, these Letters clearly show. They neither sought nor desired the publicity and notoriety which was thrust upon them. Thus " K. H." writes to Mr. Sinnett : " For years to come the Society will be unable to stand, when based upon ' Tibetan Brothers ' and phenomena alone. All this ought to have been limited *to an inner* and very SECRET circle. There is a hero-worshipping tendency clearly showing itself, and you, my friend, are not quite free from it yourself " (p. 323).

Behind the Masters hovers the shadowy figure of the " *Maha Chohan*," the " Chief," continually checking and prohibiting. And behind the *Chohan* stands—what ? Another problem. Speaking of his " venerable chief," " K. H." says : " We are not Gods, and even they, our chiefs—*they hope* " (p. 210)

Nothing short of a large volume is required to do anything like justice to the problems which arise in connection with these Letters. Personally the writer of this feels grateful to Mr. Barker for bringing them to light ; for the labour he has bestowed upon them ; and for his excellent Introduction thereto.

ELECTRICAL FORCE IN THE ORGANIC WORLD

By JOHN D. LECKIE

THAT electrical forces have a much wider application in Nature, and especially in the organic world, than is generally believed, can easily be proved. We know for example, that trees require for their growth, heat, light, and moisture, but it is not so generally recognized that they also require electricity. It has been observed that trees, and probably plants of all kinds, grow more quickly and luxuriantly during thundery weather, when the air is charged with electricity. Moreover, it has been shown that the growth of plants, and also the yield of crops, can be greatly accelerated by the artificial application of electricity, if this is done in a scientific manner, by the use of conducting wires, so arranged as to convey the electricity of the atmosphere to the plants. Although this has frequently been accomplished successfully in an experimental way, the heavy cost of the treatment has so far prevented it from being carried out in such a way as to make it commercially profitable, though it is not impossible that the day may come when this obstacle will be surmounted, and the supply of electricity to plants will be considered as necessary a part of agriculture as the use of fertilizers is to-day.

Trees in fact are natural receivers and conductors of electricity; their branches spread out into the air in all directions like the antennæ of a wireless plant; they absorb the electric currents always present in the atmosphere; while the roots, which penetrate deep into the soil, reaching the moisture, correspond to the earthed wires of an aerial. It is probable that this electric force is used to a great extent in regulating the flow of the sap. In the case of a lofty tree, the force required to pump the vast quantity of water which is evaporated through the leaves to a height of several hundred feet is very considerable. One theory is that the sap is caused to ascend by capillary attraction, but while this may be true to a certain extent, it does not explain the whole process. It is well known, for example, that heat (which, after all, is only a form of electricity) has an important effect in promoting the flow of the sap. This flow is always strongest in warm weather;

experiments have shown that even if the soil at the base of the tree is heated, the sap rises more rapidly. In the case of deciduous trees, the sap ceases to flow altogether during the cold season, and it would be difficult to explain this fact if capillary attraction were the sole cause in promoting the flow of sap. The vertical fibres of plants, always more or less moist, act as conductors of electricity, in the same way as the nerves of animals, and this serves to show why trees are so frequently struck by lightning.

Stranger still, there is ample reason to believe that the electrical currents of the atmosphere are automatically utilized by many of the lower animals. There are few animals lower in the scale of creation than the humble earthworm. It is credited with only one sense, that of touch. Yet, paradoxical as it may seem, it is also able to see, hear, taste, and smell. That the earthworm is sensitive to light is proved by the fact that if a strong light is thrown on a worm when emerging from its burrow in the dark, it soon retreats, thus showing that it is sensitive to light, which implies that it possesses the sense of sight at least in a rudimentary form—for what is the human eye but a highly developed nerve sensitive to light? It can also hear, for on anyone approaching, it instantly retires again to its burrow. Perhaps it may be said that the worm merely feels the vibrations in the earth or air caused by the approaching footstep. This may be true, but after all, our ears are only nerves highly sensitive to air vibrations. A worm can smell, too. Place some food of which it is fond close to its burrow and it immediately turns in that direction. Lastly, the worm must also have some sense of taste; every animal which eats must have some such sense, or how could it choose its food?

Not only is the humble earthworm endowed, directly or indirectly, with senses corresponding to all those of human beings, but it appears in addition to have a sixth sense. This is the capacity to receive and transmit electrical vibrations; in other words, the earthworm acts as a living wireless apparatus. Darwin made some interesting experiments with worms and showed them to be among the greatest friends and benefactors of the farmer, continually working for him without payment, by triturating and enriching the soil. Wireless telegraphy had not been developed in Darwin's time, or he might have made some still more striking experiments with earthworms regarding the strange faculty which they undoubtedly possess of communicating with each other at a distance. The possession of such a power by the annelids has been claimed by more than one observer, and

indeed it is possessed by many of the lower animals. So far the power has not been satisfactorily explained, but since the development of wireless telegraphy much light has been thrown on the utilization of electric waves as a means of communication. There is good reason to believe that the power of communicating with their fellows by utilizing the electric waves has been employed by some animals from time immemorial.

Let us take the earthworm. Like most " wireless " animals, it is nocturnal in its habits, and it is well known that night is the best time for receiving and transmitting the electric waves. Darwin noticed that the earthworms were in the habit of projecting the upper half of their body outside their burrow, while the lower half remained embedded in the soil. The upper or protruding portion was raised erect in the air and was sometimes waved in different directions. Is the earthworm occupied in sending wireless messages to distant friends, or receiving communications from them? Let us look at the matter. The necessary elements of wireless communication are all present. It is a dark night, the most favourable time for transmission or reception. The protruding part of the earthworm, raised vertically aloft, acts the part of an aerial antenna, the lower part embedded in the moist earth serves the same purpose as the earthed wire. The nerves of all animals are natural conductors of electricity, and the nervous system of the worm, concentrated in a single line, connects the aerial with the moist earth.

The air is full of electric vibrations; we have discovered some of them, but have we discovered them all? We have yet much to learn in this direction. Everything points to the fact that the humble annelid uses what are in effect wireless signals as a means of communication with absent brethren. Nearly all animals have some method of communicating with other members of their own species when out of sight; birds use vocal calls, and so do most land vertebrates; the cicada insect makes with its wing sheath a noise comparable to the whistling of a railway locomotive, the firefly flashes a light signal—and, in fact, among the voiceless animals we find a strange diversity in their methods of communication; it is believed that the antennæ of insects play an important part in this respect. But before the discovery of wireless telegraphy no one ventured to assert that animals were able to communicate with one another by utilizing the electric currents of the atmosphere; yet this is the only way in which distant communication between many of the lower animals can be explained. Worms are very sluggish in

their movements, and it would go hard with them if they had not some special means of communicating with their mates when at a distance.

The common snail also has been credited with telepathic powers, or rather the ability to communicate with absent mates. If he really possesses these powers, the only rational explanation is that, like the worm, he utilizes the aerial electric currents. At the tip of the snail's horns are two small black points which are called the eyes, but it seems doubtful if they perform the function of sight as we understand the term. Though doubtless sensitive to vibrations of light, they probably perform other functions as well. It may be noticed that the snail, when travelling, holds his " horns " upwards, only slightly projected forward—not projected horizontally as might be expected if the eyes were wholly visual organs. The more probable explanation is that the horns are in fact antennæ and receive and transmit electric vibrations enabling the molluscs to keep in touch with absent friends. Owing to the proverbially slow movements of the snail, such a faculty would almost seem to be a necessity. Further, the body of the snail is extremely sensitive ; this is shown by the fact that, if a little salt be scattered on the mucous surface, it melts away at once into foam.

Spiders are also known to have some method of communicating with one another at a distance. The writer is not aware that the precise means employed have been discovered, but hazards the suggestion that the gossamer-like threads which the spider is able to emit at pleasure, by floating vertically in the air, may act the part of the aerial transmitters or receivers. These threads are wonderfully delicate and sensitive ; the spider also has a keen tactile sense, and by feeling the floating threads might be able to detect and translate the meaning of their vibrations.

These are only a few outlines of what is a very interesting subject and offers a wide field for investigation.

SOME VISIONARY EXPERIENCES

By EDWARD WILLMORE, Author of "East London Visions," etc.

WHEN I was a boy in my father's corn-shop in Shoreditch—a shop long since turned to other uses, but still standing—I was fond of reading ghost-stories. We had about twenty bound volumes of *All the Year Round*, and I searched all the indexes of them under G for Ghosts, then A for Apparitions, S for Spectres, etc., in order to find and read all the ghost-stories I could. The house itself, over the shop, was reputed to be haunted. It was an eighteenth-century house, probably built at different times in different sections, which were afterwards joined together. It was much larger than it looked from the street; it had many chambers and mysterious corners. Altogether I was well fitted for a visionary, especially as my outward eye was strictly trained by my father, whose hobby was observation, and who claimed that from the mere appearance of a man he could tell his trade.

I slept in the front garret, an ancient apartment built on the mansard-roof principle common in East London, and facing the east, and in this garret I accumulated many classical books and pursued midnight studies. I did not feel lonely. The main street was below, and there was a rank of night-cabs. It was my habit as a boy to open the casement and recite to the night-cabmen (who were too far below to hear me) the sublime verses in Job: "In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. *Then a spirit passed before my face . . .*," etc. It was in this attic that I exhausted all the works of Shakespeare and Scott for ghosts; and, generally, if an author dealt with ghosts, I read the ghost part of his works first.

Thus it is not surprising that I saw a ghost in this garret. The thing came about one morning early, as the rays of dawn poured in at the casement. I had been studying as usual overnight, and I awoke with an uneasy consciousness of oppression. As I opened my eyes, being wide awake, I saw that an old grey shawl was (as I thought) hanging across the rail at the foot of the bed, a shawl of a check pattern, and I wondered which of the servants had brought that into my room, for I had never

seen it before. At length the shawl began to move slowly upwards, and I thought that somebody was behind the bed-rail pulling that hidden part of the shawl down, so that the part next me moved up. Then I looked up above the bed-rail and beheld a sight that struck me with terror.

For the shawl really belonged to an old woman whose malignant visage appeared at the top of it. She was floating upwards in the air and scowling at me. She had only one tooth.

This produced three effects on me: (1) I was, as it were, caught and held still with fear; (2) my heart stopped beating; (3) after a little, my heart *raced*, or beat double time. You see, this was my first ghost, and it was only natural for a boy to be frightened. I fell out of bed, and regained my feet, with the purpose of attack or flight, but the old woman now floated back from me towards the casement, the old shawl became transparent, I could see the curtains through it, and then she melted away in the sunlight.

I now realized that it was pleasanter to read about ghosts than to see them. So terrified was I at the old woman, who appeared to me to be a sort of devil whom by my occult studies I had evoked, that I never even told anyone in the house about her, or made any inquiries as to who she was. I knew she was not a vision or a dream, for these appear to the inward eye, and, however minutely organized, are not illuminated with bright natural light, on the plane of visual objects in this world. Every thread on that shawl was distinct to the *outer* eye; and this fact itself appeared to be a thing (as it were) out of place, and not to be encouraged or cultivated in a normal healthy world. Of course, a ghost might properly come for an object, but this old woman was irrelevant, and interfered with the view of the washing-stand.

Thus it came about that I dropped ghost-seeing, and began to cultivate rather the faculty of internal vision. By this I mean the power of seeing with the mind's-eye, seeing very definitely and in spatial forms, but not with the ordinary outward mode of vision. At school I had been always known by the boys for my drawings of historical and other characters—mostly, it is true, in burlesque; and the boys told me that whilst I was drawing these figures, my own face assumed the appearance of the characters I was endeavouring to portray. I say endeavouring, but in reality my best effects were those achieved with the least effort; and when my companions asked me, "How do you *do* these things, Willmore?" I replied truly, "I don't know." These school experiences, though mostly fun, doubtless provided a useful training for a visionary. And in after-life I made the

discovery that, at certain places or towns, I could see by internal vision, with no effort, figures and faces which I imagined to be those of characters associated in history with each locality. Thus, at Hastings, standing at the foot of the castle there and desiring to see the builder of the castle, at once there was presented to me, not a fierce Norman warrior such as might have suited convention, but a man in Norman costume whose face appeared to be that of a practical, precise, and almost pedantic orderer of indoor affairs, more like a master of the ceremonies at a dance, or one whose business it was to teach music or dancing and deportment. He had an elegant moustache and prominent front-teeth. I immediately drew his portrait in pencil, and I now possess it.

Of course, it may be asked in such cases, How do I know that these visual forms—highly organized and complete though they always appeared to be—were, in fact, true representations of historical characters? The answer is, that I *do not* know it. I am only recording experiences. These visions were, it is true, convincing enough to me, by their lifelike character, that at all events they were not figments. They sprung instantly to view, and were like people seen in the street.

Another case was at Bath. I stood beside the Roman bath in that city, at one of the longer sides of the rectangle of Roman stonework enclosing the main bathing-place, and I wanted to see some Romans. Immediately on the opposite side two youths appeared—not ghosts, but visions of the inner eye located in space. They were attired in short Roman tunics and walked, conversing, arm-in-arm, backwards and forwards the whole length of the opposite side. Their movement was entirely free, they were aristocrats, and with the right arm and hand one of them accompanied certain points of his remarks with sweeping or illustrative gesture. I had looked for military men, but these appeared rather to be executive business men, only too conscious of being masters of the colony of Britain. The fact that in this case, as in so many others, I got what I did not look for, and got it without effort, was sufficiently striking to me. Outside the bath were fields yellow with flowers, where there are only walls and houses to-day.

Again, there was some years ago in West Ham some public interest in a lawsuit about the will of Nicholas Avenon, an Elizabethan tailor who had left a bequest to the poor of the parish. I was to some extent officially concerned in this matter, and being one morning in the Vestry Office, I saw entering the door the figure of a neat, dapper, trim-bearded little man with ruff and sword,

doublet and hose, and full Elizabethan attire ; and I at once identified him as Nicholas Avenon, accounting for the elegance of his dress—he had a short black velvet cloak—by the fact of his trade, although previously I had not imagined him to be little or neat. I don't suppose any of my friends, who with myself so long took an interest in the charity lawsuit, ever suspected that I had seen the " pious founder " himself. They are the best judges of the extent to which I tried to carry out his wishes.

An opportunity for verification sometimes came. This was the case when in London I saw the relief of Mafeking, the day before the news arrived in England, and I communicated the intelligence to a number of friends. Some of these, on the verification, believed I had a private wire ; others were—this is curious—indignant.

Experiences such as this after a time convinced me that some inhibition of this faculty was desirable, and indeed necessary, in view of the need for balance of life. A lady to whom I had on one occasion given some proofs that I had foreseen the Great War —no uncommon achievement of foresight, by the way—told me appreciatively that I ought to cultivate my psychic faculty. I have more often had to inhibit it. We are placed here in a middle condition of being, and as the tree grows from earth, so, I held, I must retain always a good foothold on the normal, where, indeed, as it seemed to me, I had certain definite tasks assigned to me. To the extent that incursions into the supernormal could help my work, I was free to make them ; otherwise not free.

Therefore there came about a fourth phase. For whereas my father had in the beginning drilled me in observation of the natural world (in which faculty he was himself exceptionally gifted among men, as I well knew from many an incident of his life), and by genial banter, or even stern reproof, had made me develop every day of my life my inherited faculty for seeing nature and the ways of mankind ; and to this faculty, drawn by my own predilection, I had added ghost-seeing, which was not in his line at all, and subsequently vision-seeing, for which his faculty was, as I happen to know, though by no means non-existent, yet almost entirely latent ; so now, having been exercised in these three modes, I attempted a fourth, namely, the mode of the literary vision, and devoted much time to it, because it appeared to me to be the mode whereby I might best express certain truths, moral and social, which required to be made known in the world. It is literary vision, always and necessarily expressing itself by

symbol, that we find in Blake and De Quincey. Literary vision, or the effort after it, is the explanation of much of Isaiah and Ezekiel. Literary vision does not mean what is called "automatic writing," but automatic writing is to it what Fancy is to Imagination, or Arithmetic to Algebra. In these attempts any writer may easily fail, as in all endeavours to release and express the unconscious mind. And when he does succeed, he cannot always claim much personal credit for it. He launches his shell on an ocean. He must begin in obedience to an impulse; but how he is to continue depends on Providence. Nevertheless, if he have been visited, his work, on after-examination, will be found to be organic and significant beyond conscious device. And when he has discovered this, the more difficult task belongs to him of owning that which has been given to him, and of maintaining before a sceptical and bequacked world the assertion that certain of the august authorities of the Universe have been pleased to come into the humble street where he lives and employ him as their secretary. But he has no need to be proud, for he has simply been putting himself in circuit with the powers that make the grass grow.

EYELESS SIGHT

By H. STANLEY REDGROVE, B.Sc., A.I.C., F.C.S.

THE fact appears to be fairly well established that many somnambulists are able to guide themselves with remarkable ease during their nocturnal wanderings with their eyes closed or even bandaged, and the idea has been expressed, and has to some extent passed into popular belief, that this guidance is effected by means of the finger tips to which, in some way or the other, the sense of sight is transferred. Allied to this phenomenon are many well-established instances, in the case of hypnotized subjects, of the apparent transference of the seat of sensibility, as concerns vision, to the knee, stomach or other part of the body. Exactly how such transference is possible, however, remains obscure, and, as an explanation of the phenomena in question, the theory of transference can hardly be regarded as satisfactory. "The common theory," wrote F. W. H. Myers in his *Human Personality*—and the remark is still true to-day—"would be that these [phenomena] are merely cases of erroneous self-suggestion; that the subject really sees with the eye, but thinks that he sees with the knee, or the stomach, or the finger-tips." * Myers' own suggestion is that, although in some cases this theory is the true one, in others there is actual telæsthesia—a perception by the spirit in wholly supernormal fashion, represented as visual, but in an incoherent manner, and thus referred to some part of the body other than the retina.

It must be confessed, however, that none of these theories, nor that which assumes hyperæsthesia of the sense of touch sufficient to acquaint the percipient with properties of an object placed in contact with his skin usually regarded as only perceivable through the sense of sight (e.g., the colour and form of words written on a sheet of paper) can be regarded as wholly satisfactory; and, indeed, in view of the remarkable character of the phenomena in question, the amount of attention bestowed on them, apart from the extraordinary researches of M. Jules Romains with which I shall deal in a moment, seems remarkably meagre. For if the phenomena in question are genuine—which certainly appears to be the case—their observation constitutes

* Abridged edition, p. 150.

a discovery in the realm of psychology analogous—shall I say? —to the discovery of a new element in chemistry or a new star in astronomy.

Previous to the period of Psychical Research the science of Psychology was singularly lacking in such discoveries. It was concerned, almost entirely at any rate, with phenomena which were in no sense new. Certainly, I would not imply that this work of accurately observing such phenomena and as far as possible correlating them was in any sense lacking in value, seeing that it constituted the essential groundwork without which further progress in psychological research would have been impossible. One at least of the generalizations it reached —namely the Weber-Fechner Law—has that quality of quantitativeness typical of the laws of nature formulated by physical science. But whereas in the domain of the physical sciences the tendency is towards the generalization of new phenomena —the correlation of that which is newly discovered with that which was hitherto known—in experimental psychology this seems hitherto to have been the case only to a very limited extent. For example, no sooner was the first radio-active element discovered, and its radio-active properties seen to be due to the disintegration of its atoms, than chemists and physicists began to feel that other radio-active elements must exist, and indeed that possibly all elements were radio-active to a lesser or greater degree. This attitude of mind on their part has led to all the many important discoveries in the domain of radio-activity which the last few years have witnessed. On the other hand, as concerns psychology, the tendency has been to treat new phenomena as abnormal and to regard subjects exhibiting them as being in a pathological condition. This may be due, perhaps, to the fact that the observation and study of these phenomena have been so largely carried on by medical men. The attitude of mind which thus expresses itself is, however, wholly unscientific and the consequent treatment of psychical phenomena is detrimental to research. To label a phenomenon "abnormal" or "pathological" explains nothing. Indeed, the very word "hypnotism," and all terms derived from it, are somewhat tainted, owing to the fact that hypnosis has come to be regarded as essentially an abnormal state. It would perhaps be better to substitute for it the alternative expression "régime of consciousness" and to recognize the fact that more than one régime of consciousness is possible, such régimes having certain elements in common, but others peculiar to each.

I am indebted for this suggestion and indeed to a large extent for the whole of the above line of argument, to the brilliantly-written chapter, entitled " From Histological Physiology to Experimental Psycho-Physiology," of M. Jules Romains' recently-published work *Eyeless Sight.** It is, so to speak, his *apologia* for the belief that if the " transference of vision "—or " paroptic vision," to use a preferable term which implies no hypothesis as to the nature of the phenomenon—is possible in the case of certain subjects, then it should be possible, to some extent at any rate, to all persons. This is the author's justification for undertaking an investigation the results of which are published in the present work. Judging from these results, the investigation has been a brilliantly successful one, and, unless we are to regard the investigator as a deliberate impostor or one subject to an extraordinarily complicated delusion, he must be credited with having made one of the most remarkable psychological discoveries of the century, and a discovery moreover capable of valuable practical applications. That the cry of " charlatan " was raised when M. Romains first announced his discovery in France, I gather to have been the case; but since that time various test-sittings have been held, which have satisfied some of the leading savants in France, including M. Anatole France, of the genuineness of the phenomena, and it is to be hoped that other scientific men will repeat and extend the experiments and observations of M. Romains so that this may be confirmed if possible. The point is made that, although we are here concerned with phenomena that certainly come within the purview of the student of Occultism, they are of a perfectly general nature, and the experiments can be completed by any scientific man with the necessary leisure.

To put the matter in few words, M. Romains claims to have discovered that it is possible to see, not only by means of the eyes, but also by means of any not too small area of the skin, especially in the vicinity of the face, chest or hands. The sense, he argues, resides in certain microscopic organs (the *menisci* of Ranvier) situated in the epidermis, whose existence is already known to histologists, but whose functions, in common with those of many other microscopic organs which are to be found in the skin, are obscure, though assumed by Ranvier to be those

* *Eyeless Sight: A Study of Extra-Retinal Vision and the Paroptic Sense.* By Jules Romains (Louis Farigould). Translated by C. K. Ogden. 7½ in. × 5 in., pp. x + 228. London and New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. Price 5*s.* net.

of the tactile sense. In brief, it may be stated, according to M. Romains, that our skin is one mass of eyes: a heritage from long-distant ancestors belonging to some simple class of creature devoid of differentiated sense-structures. We have, however, forgotten how to use these eyes; but the power is there, and may be regained, either by a mutation of the régime of consciousness or, less effectively and easily, by conscious effort, achieved after much practice, entailing the most rigid attention. No doubt such a claim as this is of the most extraordinary character, and the most convincing experimental proofs should be insisted upon before it is accepted. For an account of these experiments the book itself must be consulted. The general procedure, however, may be indicated as follows: The subjects were chosen at haphazard from those willing to submit to the experiments. The subject to be experimented upon was put into a certain régime of consciousness, i.e., he was hypnotized, to use a term to which M. Romains objects. He was then kept in this régime, his eyes were effectively bandaged, and he was assured that he would be able to see without the use of them. He was asked to make the necessary effort to do this, and, it is claimed, was successful in this effort, giving correct descriptions of various objects, including the reading of a newspaper, the deciphering of numbered cards, and the distinguishing of colours. It is stated that necessary precautions were taken, at any rate in preliminary experiments, to obviate the possibility of telepathy, though my own feeling is that fuller details as to these precautions are desirable, because the elimination of telepathy is as difficult as it is important for the establishment of the author's thesis. Experiments carried out in the dark were unsuccessful, and it is stated that it was necessary for success that a ray of light should pass from the object to be seen to a not too small area of the skin of the subject's body. Experiments were also devised to show that the information concerning the objects described was not derived from the sense of touch in the ordinary meaning of the term, though as a matter of fact many of the results obtained are inexplicable even supposing direct contact between the subject and the object, unless we are to assume hyperæsthesia to an incredible degree.

The series of experiments in which the powers of paroptic vision were made possible in subjects by means of mutation of consciousness were followed by a series of subjective experiments, in which M. Romains attempted to acquire the paroptic sense for himself, without mutation of consciousness, but by mental

effort and the training of attention. The account of this series of experiments is not less interesting and important than the preceding. M. Romains claims that it was successful, although the task was by no means easy and the degree of paroptic sensibility attained appears to have been much less than in the case of subjects undergoing mutation of consciousness.

Finally, M. Romains started experimentation on the blind. A special technique has been developed for use in the case of such persons, the details of which the author prefers not to reveal, not involving mutation of consciousness. "By means of this technique the first manifestation of the paroptic function," to quote M. Romains, "appeared after the fourth or fifth sitting, in a blind person taken absolutely at random, and completely lacking all retinal sensibility." Apparently the experiments on blind persons have suffered some opposition and interruption; it is to be hoped, however, that they will be continued, as their importance can hardly be over-estimated if all that M. Romains claims for his discovery is true.

Naturally, the question of a paroptic sense raises some metaphysical questions concerning the nature of space. Paroptic space apparently resembles ordinary visual space, except that its field seems to be circular, or, rather, spherical, as distinguished from the flat space of ordinary sight. M. Romains appears to think that his experiments go to confirm the metaphysical theory of the objective reality of space. But the conclusion seems hardly warranted in view of the fact that all the persons experimented upon were acquainted with ordinary visual and tactile space,* and would naturally tend to interpret any new sensations in terms of those with which they were already acquainted. Experiments on persons born blind might be more instructive on the side of metaphysics of space. It is not, however, in its metaphysical implications that the phenomena of the paroptic vision appear to be important, but in their practical applications, especially as concerns the blind, and in their significance for psychology (and not less for the serious study of Occultism) as explanatory of many hitherto obscure phenomena. M. Romains' claims cannot be ignored. If they are just—and this alone further independent research can demonstrate—then he has made a discovery of the first magnitude. It is hoped that no time will be lost in determining this momentous question.

* It would, perhaps, be more accurate to say visual space and tactile space, since the two spaces are distinct, although the mind synthesizes them into a unity.

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CORRESPONDENCE

[*The name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication, is required as evidence of bona fides, and must in every case accompany correspondence sent for insertion in the pages of the* OCCULT REVIEW.—ED.]

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—In your " Notes of the Month " for February, in the paragraph referring to the new Blavatsky Association, you state: " that much dissatisfaction with the present state of affairs exists within the ranks of the Theosophical Society . . . and that attempts to render it more popular and responsive to the views of its members have been overridden by superior authority, which adopts altogether too autocratic a standpoint." . . .

May I, in the interests of accuracy, make a brief statement of facts? The reports of the thirty-seven National Societies which constitute the International Theosophical Society are printed in full annually, together with a summary of the address by the President, Dr. Annie Besant. Anyone reading these reports can see for himself that in the output of literature, in the addition of new members and the chartering of new Lodges, and in its general work in furtherance of its three declared objects, the Theosophical Society is showing a wonderful vitality and record of constructive work.

It is a leading policy of this Society to impose no limitations whatever upon the thought of its members. With such an ideal, it is obviously impossible to uphold any dogma of infallibility with respect to the original or any other teachings, however much the founders or authors may be reverenced. The utmost variety and divergence of intellectual opinion in the Society has always been welcomed. As a result of adherence to this policy, the Society has had many critics and crises, but its forty-nine years' history shows that after each crisis it has gone forward with increased strength and power for good.

The basis of the international, national, and local organizations of the Society is entirely representative and democratic. I am, therefore, completely at a loss to understand the statement made that " the views of its members have been overridden by superior authority." This has not, and simply cannot, happen in the Society as constituted.

With reference to the Hon. Mrs. Davey's letter in your correspondence pages, one wonders what Mme Blavatsky herself would have said of an Association bearing her name which excludes from its ranks

anyone who is a member of the Theosophical Society! It would be something of an education to hear it! This naïve, but very significant, rule of the Blavatsky Association does not seem to fit it for a movement "for the purpose of perpetuating the memory and work" of such a great-hearted woman as H. P. Blavatsky.

Yours faithfully,

EDW. L. GARDNER,

February 4, 1924. *Acting General Secretary of The Theosophical Society in England.*

[I answer part of this letter elsewhere. As regards the exclusion of members of the Theosophical Society from the Blavatsky Association, this seems to me a mistake, but naturally I have no voice in the matter.—ED.]

THE MYSTERY OF SLEEP.

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—It appears to me that the word "dream" is being worked too hard. It cannot possibly be used for such an experience as that of Miss Beryl Symons, told by her on page 81 of the February OCCULT REVIEW. That experience evidently took place on the astral plane. And when I say "took place" I mean literally, as I should mean it if I spoke of an event taking place on the physical plane. The Anglo-Saxon word *dream* contains only the meaning of rejoicing. The German for it is but another word for sleep. There is nothing in the derivation to justify using it for a series of scenes and events, maintained sometimes over years (as in the case of Miss Symons) and developing to a climax, as events do on the physical plane. It would seem that she had aroused the anger of an elemental being, neither human nor animal (but able to construct an imitation of such beings), who was "out" to injure her. He had, presumably, to appear in some such badly put together form as he presented to her, in order to encounter her on that plane. She may have aroused his anger in a former incarnation. I have myself met one of these beings on the astral plane; he was a very handsome and attractive person who interested me. But I was warned by a guide who was with me that if he got near enough to touch me he would destroy me utterly, and that this was what he intended to do. Before he reached me I sank down into the blessed refuge of the physical body. These astral experiences belong to the state of *Svapna*—the first condition reached when the sleep of the physical body shuts off external perceptions. *Sushûpti*, the state of deep sleep, corresponding to the deepest trance condition, is the consciousness in which the most real and vivid experiences of the human being take place. In that state all is seen and known that relates to our life here. But it cannot be brought into physical knowledge or remembered clearly (if at all) for the simple reason that our brains are organs of limited power, and unable to receive realities which are quite recognizable to the inner man. These

three states of consciousness are common to all men, the two highest being entered by the door of sleep. The adept can enter into others, inconceivable to the ordinary man. What is sleep ? is so often asked. It is simply the using of that door, or entrance, by the ego, on to other planes. It is possible by long study, to be aware of the great curtain of forgetfulness drawn across the entrance, on returning into the physical body. I have been aware of it, and also of the moment of dropping into sleep and going away ; this is a very difficult exercise.

We should not lose sight of the fact that we are surrounded by invisible friends and well-wishers from birth to death; angels and the hosts of heaven, forces and beings of all kinds who help us at various points in our difficult route through life. Undoubtedly sleep of the physical body, while the spirit is away from it, is guarded and protected, and when the Karma of the ego permits this, vital energy and new power is poured into it so that what we call awakening means the rousing of a body renewed and strengthened. The physical body, composed of atoms, connected with the indwelling ego by a mystic silver cord, could not thus recuperate. How could it ? There is no volition or will power in it—should the ego fail to return, the atoms of which it is composed would at once begin to decay and disintegrate.

The gift of prophecy arises from the remembrance of events which take place on the astral plane, before they take place on the physical. A recent instance of this I will relate. About the middle of November 1923 I was very distinctly aware one night of a vivid experience, and remembered it clearly. Of course it was only the end of a night of experience, but it was the climax. I was with a number of people in a large room on an upper floor of a big town house ; through the open windows we looked down into a city street, crowded with passers by and loiterers. We, and they, were waiting for news. It came suddenly ; a number of young men ran down the street crying out, " The open door Government is in—the open door Government is in." I had no doubt from that moment what the result of the election in December would be.

Yours truly,

CINTRA LAWN, CHELTENHAM. MABEL COLLINS.

THE STRANGE CASE OF OSCAR WILDE.

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—Miss G. D. Cummins' able article concerning " The Strange Case of Oscar Wilde " is unusually convincing. As I have observed before in your valuable pages, I have never yet read a spirit-communication purporting to come from a literary man which bore so sincere an impress of the style of the deceased author as the Wilde messages. Indeed, his imputed remark referring to an eminent archæologist, who was present at a séance : " Here is a mind in whose intricacies I should like to plunge. . . . *Here I find the mediæval mind, and on it is perched like a pert bird the spirit of the twentieth*

century," has all the flavour of a brilliant epigram by the famous Victorian.

Another point which struck me, is Miss Cummins' comment about the wide divisions between portions of the words, which characteristic is found both in the letters and manuscripts left by Wilde, as also in the text transmitted by the media. He would write " d eath " or " v intage." According to a book I read on handwriting, this is *a mark of the writer's great originality.* It seems strange it should be preserved, as one cannot imagine forgeries of caligraphy at the great speed at which, as Miss Cummins notes, Mrs. Travers Smith was transmitting the words. *The survival of the characteristics of caligraphy after death is surely an extraordinary one and should give rise to reflection.* How is it that the spirit reassumes his mannerisms of handwriting? Why does not the medium give the message in her own script? The writing of man seems therefore an integral part of his spiritual make-up, inasmuch as it is thus capable of revival under favourable conditions.

It brings us back to all mystical and Kabalistic ideas concerning the sanctity of the alphabet and " the signature of the creature " as Jacob Boehme would put it.

Believe me, yours sincerely,
REGINA MIRIAM BLOCH.

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

DEAR SIR—The article by Miss Cummins on " The Strange Case of Oscar Wilde," which appears in your last issue, is interesting in many ways. In the first place, it seems clear that at the time of writing her article, Miss Cummins could not have read my own critique, which was published in the January number of *Psychic Science.*

I note, for instance, that in discussing the " Glencree Incident " she dilates picturesquely on the improbability that any person should have been " thinking vehemently of an old priest who lived in a remote valley " while the sitting was being held on a hot July afternoon. But in my own essay I have pointed out that in order to verify the existence of Father Prideaux Fox, it was not necessary to go to Ireland or indeed any further than the appendix of Thurston Hopkins' *Oscar Wilde,* or to Stuart Mason's *Bibliography of Oscar Wilde,* since either of these works contains all the details relating to Father Fox which were communicated at the sitting. Miss Cummins' remarks about telepathy in connection with this incident are valuable therefore chiefly as serving to show how fatally easy it is in psychic research to draw far-reaching and unsound conclusions when one has insufficient premises to work upon.

I am glad to be able to satisfy the curiosity which Miss Cummins expresses about the story of " Wilde kissing the hand of Pater."

The source of this incident appears to be Frank Harris' *Life of Oscar Wilde.* I have not the book by me at the moment, but the gist of the story as told by Frank Harris is as follows: Wilde confessed to Harris that Walter Pater, while they were alone together one day, had listened spellbound to one of Wilde's extraordinary improvisations, had become excited and seized Wilde's hand, wanting to kiss it. Whereupon Wilde had exclaimed, "You mustn't! You really mustn't. What would people think?" Now at the sitting the supposed "Wilde" asserts that this story was a pure invention of his own, "a charming exaggeration." But we may ask: Granted that Wilde sometimes lied to American audiences for the sake of effect, is it likely that he would tell an entirely unnecessary and gratuitous lie about one personal friend to another? I think not, for there is much to show that in his purely personal relations, Wilde had a very real sense of honour, as, for example, when awaiting his second trial, he refused to fly the country and bring ruin to the gentleman who had risked his fortune in bail for Wilde. But if we reject this posthumous refutation of the Pater story, we throw another dash of cold water on the spiritistic theory of the origin of these communications.

The fatal weakness of the Wilde case will manifest itself to the reader when I assure him that, with the exception of the incident of "The Pensive Salmon," I have, in the course of my researches, succeeded in tracing every one of the supposed "Memories" to their probable sources in biographies and other books of reference.

In her article Miss Cummins asks, "Is it possible to forge Wilde's handwriting at a speed of 800 words per hour?" I answer emphatically "Yes." I have recently experimented in reproducing blindfold, memorized but previously unpractised passages in imitation of Wilde's handwriting. On three separate occasions I produced scripts of 740, 915 and 1,020 words in an hour and the imitations were judged to be obviously better than the best imitations of Mr. "V." Previous to these attempts I had practised Wilde's caligraphy for about half an hour daily for five or six days. Wilde's habit of separating letters makes his handwriting peculiarly easy to imitate.

With regard to the question of the value of style, considered as evidence for survival, I am inclined to agree with the eminent researcher, Mr. J. Arthur Hill, who writes to my brother: "No resemblance of style, however close, will satisfy the critical mind, in the case where the medium is an educated person."

Does anyone doubt that if a one-thousand word parody of Oscar Wilde were set in one of the weekly prize essay competitions of the *Westminster Gazette,* the "occasional" literary talent of our country would produce some quite excellent imitations? There is, I believe, no limit to the extent to which an author's style can be assimilated. Mr. John Drinkwater points out in his *Victorian Poetry* that there

were poets such as Lord de Tabley and Richard William Dixon, disciples of Tennyson, who had caught his manner so perfectly that some of their lyrics might have been written by that master himself. All but the very greatest work can be assimilated and creatively imitated. That such imitations as I have in mind would not be produced under the same conditions as the automatic script will not really weigh with the sceptic, since it is always possible for him to retort that the supposed mediums memorize their effusions and come ready primed to the sitting.

But while I think that the Oscar Wilde case has not the same value for psychic research as the classic cases of George Pelham and the " Ear of Dionysius," it has a real interest in another direction. It is evidence of the possibility of producing literary work of value by means of automatism, and it is perhaps not too visionary to anticipate that in the near future there will be an " automatic " school of writers and poets. Mrs. Travers Smith and Miss Cummins have probably an inborn aptitude for automatism, but Mr. " V.'s " case shows that, given sufficient concentration, the faculty can be cultivated. I do not think that literary work produced by automatism will necessarily be of a higher quality than the mediums could produce in the normal way, but it will be produced with less effort and far greater rapidity.

The tendency of modern psychology is not to regard the " subconscious " and " conscious " minds as separate entities, but rather to look upon their manifestations merely as different aspects of one and the same mind. According to this view the mind is always working, but the results of its operations do not always reach the plane of personal consciousness. They can, however, sometimes be tapped by such forms of automatism as automatic writing, etc. Automatism, in its essence, seems to be a kind of mental short-circuiting, whereby ideas are transmitted directly to the motor centres of the brain instead of passing to the conscious centres and being relayed from them to the motor mechanism. If this view is sound a certain resistance will be experienced in bringing ideas above the threshold of consciousness, and this resistance will be lessened or absent when the ideas are passed directly on to the motor mechanism. As a consequence we should expect automatic work to be more fluent and spontaneous than conscious work, and this seems to be the case with most mediums. Automatic writing then has essentially nothing to do with Spiritualism, although Spiritualists may make use of it. Mr. " V." hopes shortly to experiment with persons possessed of psychic power who have no interest whatever in attempted communications with the dead, and it will be interesting to observe whether or not the automatic messages purport to come from deceased personalities.

I am,

Yours truly,

C. W. SOAL.

"ON CRYSTAL-GAZING."

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—Following up my study *On Crystal-Gazing* published in your issue of January last, I am making further experimental investigations into the subject. May I therefore beg for the hospitality of your columns to announce that I shall be glad to hear from crystal-gazers who are willing to submit to such experiments. Enquiries should be addressed to me, c/o *The Occult Review*, 8–11 Paternoster Row, E.C.4.

Yours truly,
THEODORE BESTERMAN.

SIR WILLIAM CROOKES.

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

SIR,—I beg the hospitality of your columns for the following :—

In the life of the above eminent scientist by Mr. Fournier d'Albe, it is stated (page 392) that his son, the late Henry Crookes, was made bankrupt, and that his father was unwilling to save him from this experience. These two statements are entirely incorrect, and Mr. d'Albe has expressed his regrets for their appearance and has undertaken that the erroneous allegations shall be omitted from future editions of his book and corrections made in all unsold copies of the existing edition.

These calumnies have, however, travelled far and wide, and I am advised that I have no means of publicly correcting them, except by the kindness of the Press, as libellous statements about those who have passed away, however painful to those they have left behind, are not recognized by the Law as subject-matter for action in the Courts.

I am, most gratefully yours,
M. G. CROOKES,
Widow of the late Henry Crookes.

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J. M. WATKINS.

BOEHME'S MYSTERIUM MAGNUM (2 vols.). Demy 8vo. 50*s.* net.

SOME MINOR WORKS OF RICHARD ROLLE. Cr. 8vo. 5*s.* net.

SCALE OF PERFECTION. By Walter Hilton. Cr. 8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.* net.

PERIODICAL LITERATURE

THE REVUE MÉTAPSYCHIQUE has completed its issues for the year 1923 and has provided the supplementary tables which indicate with admirable fullness the content of a large volume. The International Metapsychical Institute has suffered during the period in question not only the loss of Jules Roche, but that of its Vice-President, Comte A. de Gramont, well known for his original work in the vast field opened by the spectroscope. A note on his passing and a brief account of his scientific career will be found in the last number of the Review, over the signature of Charles Richet. It is followed by an official address to the friends of the Institute, summarizing the work which has been done since its foundation in 1919, laying stress upon the prolonged experiments with Kluski and Guzik as mediums for materialization and with the lucids Madame B. and Stephen Ossowiecki. There is a word also on the official organ, which is said to be recognized everywhere as the most important periodical devoted to the metapsychical subject. We have borne witness to this effect on our own part independently : it has marked for us a new epoch in the research, and if it is comparable with anything in the past, it is to the early PROCEEDINGS of the Society for Psychical Research in the days of Myers and Gurney. We suppose, in terminating this part of our notice, that it is impossible to look back upon the brief past of the Institute without remembering the hostility of scientists engrossed by the material side of things, and more especially the Sorbonne findings. There is no need to register our sympathy when we hear that the repute and even the honour of those who are devoted heart and mind to the new science have been placed, so to speak, in the dock. Do we not know, however, these Sorbonne experts *et hoc genus omne*, for their counterparts are everywhere, and their constitutional inability outside their own sphere is everywhere also the same ? While we sympathize, it follows that we deplore the superstition which erects them into a certain court of appeal, as if their judgment signified *per se* or their conversion were a vital issue. Beyond the psychic world some of us have come to know concerning a world of the spirit ; but it is unimaginable that experience therein should be exposed to the judgments of material scientists because of their eminence in science of that order, any more than we should look for Ruysbroeck to pronounce upon spectroscopic analysis. In like manner, ectoplasmic manifestations, clairvoyance and so forth are a field outside the normal observation of Sorbonne doctors, and it is not after a few experiments that they, or any who are like them, can pronounce valid judgments.

Passing over the long and careful examination of Richet's TRAITÉ

MÉTAPSYCHIQUE by Sir Oliver Lodge, translated into French from the PROCEEDINGS of the S.P.R., Dr. Geley continues the records of experiments with the medium Jean Guzik, to which are added the individual testimonies of Richet and Lodge. After this comes " an historical document," reproduced from the REVUE DE FRANCE, testifying the conviction of its thirty-four signatories that the phenomena obtained with Guzik are not to be explained by (1) illusions, (2) individual or collective hallucinations, (3) by any fraud whatsoever. The autographs are given in facsimile and include those of Santoliquido, Richet, René Sudre and Geley. The President of the Warsaw Psycho-Physical Society gives account of experiences in clairvoyance with Stephan Ossowiecki, of whom it is affirmed that he seems gifted with all supranormal faculties. We observe in conclusion that nine French delegates have been chosen already for the next Metapsychical Congress, to be held in 1926, place not specified, and that a new Metapsychical Institute has been founded at Vienna.

The story of Guzik and his mediumship is reflected into the JOURNAL of the American Society for Psychical Research (1) by preliminary remarks of the editor, (2) by copious translations of Geley, and (3) by an account of " impressions " on the part of Mr. Harry Price. The last has appeared also in LIGHT and—being unfavourable—evoked considerable correspondence, which the JOURNAL appends. In fine, Mr. Stanley de Brath deals with the hostile comments, affirming that " the foundation of the Metapsychic Institute and its perfectly equipped laboratory, directed by skilled experimentalists of high scientific standing," lends a weight to acquired results which is wanting even to " those of Sir William Crookes and Professor Aksakoff," when these are taken as standing alone. . . . In the PSYCHIC SCIENCE quarterly, Mr. Price, who has been mentioned above, concludes his record of " novel experiments in psycho-physical research " with the medium Stella C——. We are told that circumstances have arisen to prevent their continuation, but that enough has been reported " to establish a positive conclusion as to the telekinetic power of the psychic forces liberated by this medium, and the intelligent nature of the directive agency." Other contributions to the current issue are on a new method in psychic photography, under conditions believed to be safeguarded " against any form of destructive criticism," and on the Oscar Wilde scripts. The first is illustrated, " through the kindness of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle," by a long series of photographic reproductions, and the novelty arises from the fact that " the basis of experiment has been the conscious control and direction of the ectoplasmic forces " by the recorder's " own will and intelligence, reinforced, however, by that of his spiritual instructor." The narrative is of great interest, but as regards " destructive criticism " it is obvious that *bona fides* must be assumed throughout: we do not call it in question, but on the other hand we do not see how the experiments were protected, as suggested in the preliminary statement. The

study of the Wilde scripts is by the brother of " Mr. V.," through whom some of the communications came, and it is an exceedingly fair and frank review of the whole case.

We are reminded by the THEOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY of New York that 1923 saw the tercentenary of Blaise Pascal, who was born in that year. A brief article distinguishes the celebrated author of THOUGHTS from those who are truly mystics. It takes for its authority a notable study which appeared in LA REVUE DE PARIS and maintained that mystics do not oppose their experience " to intellectual knowledge, as if these two were enemies." On the contrary, Pascal is said to have been tinctured deeply with " the Jansenist doctrine of original sin and the total depravity of human nature," owing to his Port Royal associations. When he affirmed, however, that " the heart has reasons which reason does not know," we question whether—as suggested—he was a theologian speaking with " contemptuous views " on the ability of intellect " to symbolize truth." It appears to us rather as an authentic mystical maxim, in which the whole science concurs. So also in LA REVUE DE PARIS, the French Academician, Abbé Brémond, is fully warranted in his view that mystics as such are not in conflict with intellect, but this notwithstanding they realize that their valid experience belongs to a region which lies beyond the measures of intellectual knowledge. Pascal was not of the mystics, but he was a man of religious experience which dwells upon their threshold, and there were moments, we think, when he saw as they see, if it cannot be said that he knew as they know. The issue before us has also an excellent essay on St. Catherine of Siena, based for the most part on modern English authorities and doing full justice to her inward and outward work. It makes, however, the recurring mistake of classing her among mystics : she was a psychic rather, great and holy among those whose vision is in the world of images, one of the very greatest, but not of those whose dwelling is in " the nowhere and the nought."

Periodicals devoted to Spiritism in its several forms have their points of importance and interest, and among others that call to be mentioned there is LA REVUE SPIRITE, which continues to include Camille Flammarion among its unfailing contributors. In the course of a recent review of unexplained telepathic phenomena, he compares the present position of psychical research with that of astronomical science. As regards the first we know scarcely anything concerning the world unseen, save only that its existence is not less real than that of the visible world ; and in respect of the second, though astronomy has penetrated sidereal depths once thought inaccessible, we are still as on the mere threshold of the infinite and that which we know is like nothing in comparison with all that remains for possible discovery in the future. . . . LIGHT is presenting from week to week the life-story of one of its well-remembered editors, the late Dawson Rogers, a record which must interest all readers, but those especially who knew

him. His concern in Swedenborg emerges here and there, but we look for something more definite on this subject in the course of the narrative. . . . Our old friend THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT does not give us too often an opportunity to speak of its contents, seeing that by the necessity of things a large part of its columns must provide Australian readers with summaries of old-world and continental activities, but with these we are acquainted already. Its addresses from the editorial chair represent conscientious work always and we sympathize with their reverent sincerity, as, for example, recently on " the two minutes' silence " of Armistice Day, which cannot fail to awaken in the hearts of many thousands the memory of their lost heroes. To all these THE HARBINGER offers the consolation of its assured belief that in reality there is no loss, because there is no death.

Masonically speaking, the opening of the year 1924 is marked by an important event in its annals of periodical literature, and this is the foundation at New York of a substantial monthly magazine entitled THE MASTER MASON. It appears under the auspices of the Masonic Service Association of the United States and is edited by Dr. J. Fort Newton, well known throughout the English-speaking Masonic world as author of THE BUILDERS, an epoch-marking account of the Fraternity as to its origin, history and aims. THE MASTER MASON claims to be national in character, and it is realized doubtless that in order to deserve this title it must be universal also within the measures of its subjects. There are indications in the first number, which offers many notable points, the concerns of the Craft in England being represented by several articles, chief among which in respect of living interest is that of Dr. Newton himself, a series of extracts from a Masonic Diary kept during his residence here among us. Other papers are on faith in God, regarded as " the fundamental Landmark " of Freemasonry, on the Obligations of Citizenship—by the United States Secretary of Labour—and on Samber's curious volume called LONG LIVERS, the Masonic dedication of which is of great historical interest. We offer a cordial welcome to THE MASTER MASON, wishing it long life among us and increase in values. . . . The Vancouver magazine for Masons entitled THE SQUARE has been mentioned in these pages previously: it remains to be said that each successive issue seems to improve on the last. In that which is now before us there is a paper on Irish Masonry, which is not only an excellent historical summary within the limits of a few columns, but is also and above all a real contribution to our knowledge. . . . THE CO-MASON is good reading as usual: there is some account of an Initiation Ceremony among American Indians, while a short study of the BOOK OF THE DEAD, or the BOOK OF COMING FORTH BY DAY, suggests its relation to the Hebrew Kabalah and the debt of both to a common source in Atlantis. But the best thing in the whole issue is the editor's plain story of (1) the Ku Klux Klan, (2) the Knights of Columbus, and (3) the Crusaders. It enables us to know how things are in respect of these new and rather problematical institutions.

REVIEWS

THE CONFLICT. By Elsie Paterson Cranmer. London : The Merton Press, Abbey House, Westminster, S.W.1. Price 6*d.* net.

MRS. PATERSON CRANMER will be remembered as the author of *To the Living Dead,* and the present little poem justifies the promise shown in her earlier work. *The Conflict* tells in blank verse of the time-honoured strife between the artist and the layman, only in this instance the artist is a woman loved by the layman. She considers marriage fatal to Art :

> " Artists are priests. I must not fail my trust,
> Sweet wives and tender mothers make bad art."

That she is not immune from the more human sentiments, however, the following spirited and forceful lines uttered by her adorer testify :

> " Oft have I felt thy quick-pulsed heart breathe flame
> When sweet child's hands have clamoured at thy breast
> Feeding thy woman's hunger. Fiercely thou hast clutched
> Them to thee, and as fiercely thrust them by.
> (Sullen thine eyes beneath their burning lids)
> Saying, ' It is the common lot of slaves
> To bear and bear, awhile their hearts grow tired,
> Their bodies wither, until Death claims all.' "

Mrs. Paterson Cranmer has a delicate fancy, and there is a direct appeal, and a simple and poignant charm in *The Conflict* which will increase the circle of her admirers. MEREDITH STARR.

TALKS ON TRUTH, For Teachers and Thinkers. By Thomas Hughes, of The Society of Jesus. London : Longmans, Green and Co., 39 Paternoster Row, E.C.4; New York, Toronto, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. Price 10*s.* 6*d.* net.

THE weaving of the web of this exceedingly attractive book is carried out in dialogue, " winding with the turns of many topics over the fields of many thoughts," as says the author in his Preface. The two who discourse are St. Victor and his pupil Benjamin, the latter doubtless voicing many of the thoughts and speculations of those eager and inquiring souls who " in modern conditions are so glibly assailed with strange ideas on religion and science."

The three main subjects discussed are : Prayer, Truth, and Religion, and in the first-named the theme is analysed and enlarged to its widest extent. For, truly, " It takes all sorts to make a world. But there is only one sort of leverage by which the world of mankind can exert its powers in the Kingdom of God, and take its part in the divine providence and government of the world. That leverage is prayer."

The discourse on Truth contains some very apt remarks on Faith,—a virtue too often sneered at as Credulity, yet by which we really all live " as a primary condition for moving on, doing or understanding anything." . . . Says St. Victor shrewdly : " If you will not tolerate the life of faith, because you are deceived sometimes, you will have to go and

become a lonely Robinson Crusoe in an island of the Pacific, or a solitary savage, a mere degenerate of the backwoods."

St. Victor will have nothing to say to the "Modernists," or rather, from another point of view, he has a very great deal to say, gently dissecting them all the time, notably their theories on "Relativity" and "Accommodation"—"which would find under every new image and statement an assertion contradictory to other statements,"—pouring mild scorn on what he calls their "confusion in sophistry." Rationalism, Pragmatism, and the latest presentment of "Christian Agnosticism," likewise come under the mental microscope of a thinker who combines Aristotelian common-sense with the theological mysticism of St. Thomas Aquinas. A combination against which *who* may prevail!

In surveying various methods of education, the author quotes a beautiful passage by Mr. H. W. Nevinson, describing the teaching in the Catholic schools of to-day, from which: ". . . the child passes into life, believing himself to be attended by powers and defenders which most children, I think, would like to have with them, and many grown-up people too." And, "when you hear them instructed that the oppression of the poor is one of the four sins that cry to Heaven for vengeance—it is not difficult to understand why the ancient Church has maintained its hold upon humanity."

EDITH K. HARPER.

LIFE: ITS ORIGIN AND NATURE. By Hereward Carrington, Ph.D. 5 in. × 3½ in., pp. 64.

PSYCHICAL RESEARCH. By Hereward Carrington, Ph.D. Volume 1. 5 in. × 3½ in., pp. 86. Volume 2. 5 in. × 3½ in., pp. 89. Girard, Kansas, U.S.A.: Haldeman-Julius Company. Price (paper covers), 10 cents each.

THE Haldeman-Julius Company deserve a word of praise for their "Ten Cent Pocket Series" which now includes, I believe, between four and five hundred different volumes, including a number of original works specially written for the series, as well as reprints of classical works—many well known; some, perhaps, not so well known as they deserve to be—all at the extraordinarily low price of ten cents each.

Dr. Carrington's works are, doubtless, well known to readers of the OCCULT REVIEW, and in these volumes he writes along lines that are familiar. The two volumes on Psychical Research contain a clearly worded and impartial account of what Psychical Research is, with some cautionary remarks as to what it is not. Special chapters are devoted to the various types of phenomena dealt with by the psychical researcher; and the second volume contains a particularly interesting chapter dealing with "Modern Laboratory Investigations." The volumes are, in fact, very well suited to the needs of the inquirer and are well calculated to give him a saner notion of the aims, methods and achievements of Psychical Research than prevails in many quarters to-day, and to indicate to him the important bearing these have on the solution of the momentous problem of the Immortality of the Soul.

The volume on "Life" reviews various theories concerning Life's origin that have been put forward, without regarding any as satisfactory. The problem of the nature of life is then dealt with, such topics as Evolu-

tion, The Physical Basis of Life, Heredity and the relation between Life and Mind, etc., naturally falling for brief discussion. As before, Dr. Carrington does not pledge himself to any one of the particular theories concerning the ultimate nature of life that he discusses, though he confesses to a preference for Interactionism or Animism, " the world-old notion of mind or soul, and body, existing as separate entities, influencing each other." As concerns Psychical Monism, I must confess that I think Dr. Carrington treats it badly: the fact that common sense is " repelled by it " is certainly no argument against its truth. But emphatically this little brochure is one to make the man in the street think, and that, I take it, is exactly its intention, an intention that deserves hearty commendation. H. S. REDGROVE.

RESEARCHES IN GEOMETRY. By P. S. G. Dubash, D.Sc., etc. 8½ ins. × 5¼ ins., pp. 14. Bombay: Messrs. Taraporevalla & Sons, Hornby Road, Fort. Price (paper covers), 8 annas.

THE problem of squaring the circle, that is, of finding a square equal in area to that of a given circle, is not, perhaps, without interest to the student of Occultism. It may be said at once that the problem is insoluble, that is, so far as an absolutely exact solution is concerned. The arithmetical solution to the problem to any required degree of accuracy short of absolute accuracy is a comparatively simple matter, and various geometrical methods of getting approximate solutions have also been devised. The one suggested by Dr. Dubash in this pamphlet entails the division of a straight line into 200 equal parts, which is an excessively tedious task if it is to be done geometrically. In his Introduction he writes of this solution as being—as of course it is—merely an approximate one, but following the construction itself he makes the extraordinary statement that his method would give " an exact solution " provided the diameter of the circle " is large enough to enable one to divide it into 200 equal parts." Obviously the possibility of dividing a line into a number of equal parts is independent of the length of the line, and in any case his solution entails an error of about one part in 2,000, since it is based upon the value $\pi = 3 \cdot 14$.

The rest of the pamphlet contains some rather ingenious constructions for trisecting angles and constructing various polygons. They are all of them only approximate methods, but will probably be found of use by architects and engineers. H. S. REDGROVE.

THE DIVINE PYMANDER OF HERMES TRISMEGISTUS. An Endeavour to Systematize and Elucidate the Corpus Hermeticum by the Editors of *The Shrine of Wisdom*. 8½ in. × 5½ in., pp. 54. *The Shrine of Wisdom*, Lincoln House, Acacia Road, Acton, W.3. Price 2*s*. 3*d*. post free.

OF all the works attributed to Thrice-greatest Hermes, the collection of sermons known as *The Divine Pymander* undoubtedly ranks first in importance. The origin of *The Divine Pymander* is obscure, but the work is of unquestionable antiquity, its influence in the past upon Neoplatonic and Christian mysticism has been very considerable, and the profundity of the ideas it sets forth ill accords with the self-satisfied notion that only the thought of the present age is of importance.

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The volume under review is not a new translation, but a selection of the more important passages of the work in question—use being made of the previous translations by Everard, Chambers and Mead—arranged under suitable heads and connected together by means of explanatory comments by the Editors. The point is well brought out that, according to the Hermetic teaching, all things are capable of being contemplated under three separate heads, or from three separate points of view, namely that of God (Theology), that of Order and Beauty (Cosmology) and that of Man (Anthropology). "Each of the three Heads," writes the Editors, "gives rise to three distinct conceptions, each of which is a relative aspect of Absolute Truth." Under the first head, the thesis is maintained, with convincing logic and vigour, that "God entirely transcends the Cosmos and Man because He is the Arché of their being; yet He is wholly Immanent, as being the very be-ness of every being that the Cosmos comprehends." Under the second head it is explained that the word "Cosmos" as used by the author of *The Divine Pymander* "signifies the Order by which all things proceed from their producing causes, are made manifest, and are related to each other and to the End for which they exist," and amongst other extracts the very suggestive and important one is included which asserts that "Every Essence is Immortal. Every Essence is unchangeable. Everything that exists is double."

Altogether the Editors have very successfully achieved a by no means easy task, and the volume can be cordially recommended to the student as a very useful introduction to the study of the Trismegistic literature.

H. S. REDGROVE.

WHEN NILE WAS YOUNG. By Anthony Armstrong. London: Hutchinson & Co., Paternoster Row, E.C.4. Price 7*s.* 6*d.* net.

THERE are two things that go to the making of a fine work of fiction—the story-teller's gift of weaving a fascinating tale, and the more subtle gift of revealing the background of thought which informs the whole. It results in atmosphere, without which even the cleverest production lacks something. This the author of *When Nile was Young* has achieved. He has revealed the spirit and temper of the time with which he deals through vivid depiction of the conditions and surroundings of his stage, and by vigorous characterization of the players of the piece. His picturization of the fighting between the troops of the Pharaoh and those of the Khita, arouses an interest almost akin to the excitement with which we lately followed the battle scenes of the Great War.

The struggles between the followers of the two rival religions of the time sets forth the vital force of the religious element in life to actuate the deeds of those who come under its sway.

All who are interested in Egypt, that mysterious wonderland of the past, in its occult rites and old lore, will find this book a helpful guide to their understanding. It might even be studied as an alluring history of the country and time depicted.

The people to whom we are introduced are all types of the differences of human nature—which, when playing its part in other days and under other skies, presents the same contrasts as when finding its way through the problems and difficulties it has to confront in this moment of time. Then, as now, the idealist had to match his strength against the worldling,

the patriot against the self-seeker, and the single-minded against the machinations of the plotting brain.

Of the thrilling romance woven through all this presentment of the past, of the passions and emotions we encounter, of the glowing figure of the hero, the gallant Horemheb, of the beautiful Neferu who so ardently returns his love, and of their sacrificial deeds for the sake of their country, nothing can be quoted without spoiling the sense of the whole. But we express the hope that it may reach all those who delight in rich colouring, and fine language. FRANCES TYRRELL.

SOME MINOR WORKS OF RICHARD ROLLE, WITH THE PRIVITY OF THE PASSION. By S. Bonaventura. Translated and Edited by Geraldine E. Hodgson, Litt.D. London: John M. Watkins. 225 pp. Price 5*s*. net.

IT has been well said that some knowledge of the writings of Richard Rolle of Hampole is essential to a proper understanding of the currents of religious thought in England during the two hundred years prior to the Reformation. But, as the Editor of this present volume remarks in her long and able Introduction, the general reader is apt to be repelled by the difficulties, real or supposed, of Middle English, and will not take the trouble to read it. Miss Hodgson has done a considerable service, therefore, to mystical literature by her modern renderings of these and other of Rolle's Works, which she has herself described elsewhere—in her study entitled "English Mystics"—as the greatest and most important individual contribution to fourteenth-century mysticism.

Rolle was not a speculative but an empirical mystic. His writings do not deal abstrusely with theoretical mysteries peculiar to an age or to a particular system of thought; they deal directly with permanent spiritual realities which he saw steadily with the eye of intuitive certitude. He wrote of what he knew by irrefutable experience. And because his vision was clear and constant, his utterance of it has a quality of crystalline lucidity which leaves one reluctant to quarrel with Miss Hodgson's enthusiastic description of him as the true father of English Prose.

Included in this volume is an interesting fragment from the work of S. Bonaventura, of whom Pope Leo XIII observed that "he treated of mystical theology with such perfection that in the common opinion of the learned he is *facile princeps* in that field." COLIN STILL.

PERSONAL RELIGION AND THE LIFE OF DEVOTION. By W. R. Inge, Dean of St. Paul's. With an Introduction by the Lord Bishop of London. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 39 Paternoster Row, E.C.4; New York, Toronto, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. Price 2*s*. 6*d*. net.

"HEAVEN is not a far-away place to which we hope to go; it is the presence of God in which we ought to live."

In these plain and simple words, the echo of our Lord's fiat, "The kingdom of heaven is within you," Dean Inge has expressed the Spiritual life, the everyday life of the Christian mystic, learned or unlearned, gentle or simple, a life essentially practical, in which "belief radiates into action." This is the mysticism of Saint Francis of Assisi, and of all great souls who

have climbed the starry track. There is no real contradiction between this thought and the Dean's later words in the chapter entitled, "Self Consecration," in which he says :—

"What we are, matters much more than what we do or say." For "at the core of every man's soul, deeper even than consciousness, lies the hidden man of the heart who can hear God speak. And if in ourselves that inmost shrine is a temple of the Holy Ghost, our words and actions will show from whence they came. Deep calleth unto deep ; and those whose hearts God has touched can find their way easily to the hearts of others. The soul may have wandered far from its true home ; but when it meets one who has *been there*, who can bring it tidings of that dear and half-forgotten land, it will spring to meet him. Here is some one who knows ; he can tell me what I want to know."

And there is wise counsel—never so much nor so urgently needed as in these present days of shifting sands—in his warning against being deluded by the "absurd catchword that the voice of the people is the voice of God, which it never has been since the voice of the people cried, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him,' and never will be. . . ."

The sorrowful purport of the last chapter, the awful mystery of Bereavement, is transmuted into a wonderful peace, "that Peace which passeth understanding," and whose fulfilment is supreme joy. Speaking from the depths of his own heart's core, Dean Inge speaks to all and for all who, like himself, know too well the anguish of such unutterable earthly loss, but who have found that it has opened for them, as never before, the Gates of Light.

EDITH K. HARPER.

CICERO, DE SENECTUTE, DE AMICITIA, DE DIVINATIONE. With an English Translation by William Armistead Falconer. 6½ in. × 4¼ in., pp. vii + 568. London : William Heinemann (Loeb Classical Library), 1923. Price 10s. net.

THE dialogue *On Divination* occupies much the largest part of this volume. In it are set out with Cicero's usual forthright handling of dialectics all the facts and arguments for and against belief in divination. The discussion is supposed to take place between Marcus Cicero himself and his brother Quintus. The latter defends divination "not as a special pleader, but in a truly philosophic spirit." He divides divination into two kinds : artificial and natural. This classification is upheld by several more modern authorities, but is no longer tenable. According to Quintus artificial soothsaying comprises astrology, augury, and, in fact, all such modes as depend on observation and interpretation ; while the natural methods are those which depend on dreams and oracular and prophetic utterances. In each of these sections a large number of examples are given from history and mythology. The philosophic argument is (this being the Stoic philosophy) that since the totality of the human soul is in touch with the divine soul, there is no reason why a few specially gifted individuals should not be able to glean foreknowledge from that divine soul.

Marcus then replies to this effect : It is necessary to admit that only chance events can be divined, for all things which happen systematically (e.g., the rising of the sun) can be foreseen scientifically. That being so, a contradiction becomes apparent, for if a thing is foreseen it ceases to

be a thing that may or may not happen ; it therefore is not a chance event, and we are led into a vicious circle. This is Cicero's main contention, and, accepting his postulates, unanswerable.

De Divinatione is principally useful to-day for the clear light it throws on the divinatory practices of Greece and Rome. The *Loeb Classical Library* in which this book now appears should not require any introduction to the discriminating reader ; in its volumes the text and a sound translation face each other page by page, and brief, useful notes are appended. The Library is already well on the way to forming a complete thesaurus of classical literature and learning.

THEODORE BESTERMAN.

LA SORCELLERIE DES CAMPAGNES. By Charles Lancelin. 10 ins. × 6½ ins., pp. 400. Henri Durville, 1923. Price fr. 30.

THIS work purports to be a study of rural sorcery, but it is difficult to see how its contents justify its title. Of the nine chapters which form the book there is only one (pp. 51-58) which bears directly on the subject, and that chapter deals with pseudo-sorcery. The rest of the volume is occupied by more or less inaccurate summaries of such subjects as hypnotism, the astral body, the sorcery of the Bohemians, charms, lycanthropy, vampirism, etc. In the manner in which these matters are treated they have only the most distant relation to the declared subject of the book.

The author gives copious extracts from his own previous works ; well over half the volume is made up of quotations, generally of long legal documents. The references are generally correct, though frequently not sufficiently precise to identify the book referred to, but a reference to page is never given. The citations are—almost exclusively so far as old books are concerned and quite exclusively for modern books—to French works. As the names of the chapters are as misleading as the title of the book, the *Table of Contents* gives a wrong impression, and there is no index. In short, this volume is an addition to that voluminous pseudo-scientific literature, the proportion of which to genuine contributions to occult science is even more astounding in France than in England.

THEODORE BESTERMAN.

THE SCALE OF PERFECTION. By Walter Hilton. With an Introduction by Evelyn Underhill. London : John M. Watkins. Price 7*s.* 6*d.* net.

THE author of this book was a fourteenth-century mystic, of whom we know little save that he was a canon of the Augustinian priory of Thurgarten, in Nottinghamshire, and probably himself a native of the North Midlands, though his birthplace is not known.

This work of his, which Miss Underhill has edited with her unfailing insight, scholarship, and thoroughness, was not printed until well-nigh a century after his death ; but in those days of beautiful and accurate hand-copying, the printing press was not the sole, or even the usual, means by which a writer and his readers could get into intimate touch with each other ; and, as Miss Underhill tells us, *The Scale of Perfection* probably enjoyed a wider and more enduring influence than any English devotional work.

We may look on it, indeed, as an English *Imitatio Christi*, a book which it notably resembles in its strong and, as it were, evangelical piety, its loving concentration on devotion to the Person of Christ, and its inculcation of burning charity and complete unworldliness, as the essential law of the spiritual, or "ghostly," life.

The Editor makes an interesting comment on the author's acquaintance with what we are accustomed to think of as modern psychological difficulties, and his power of dealing with them: "Those uprushes from the lower centres which so deeply distress the religious consciousness were treated by him in a bracing and truly scientific spirit."

The book itself is, in a very real sense of the word, a *ghostly* one. To read it is to renew one's faith in the essential spirituality of our clay-bound nature. G. M. H.

MEDITATIONS FROM "AT THE FEET OF THE MASTER." By a Server. India: Theosophical Publishing House. Pp. 97. Price Re. 1.

THIS is the second edition of a little book which, since its first appearance ten years ago, has no doubt been a source of helpful inspiration to many people. It contains simple precepts expressed in simple language, arranged for monthly, weekly and daily meditation, and its general message may perhaps be conveyed by the two following sentences:

The one thing that you must set before you is to do the Master's work.

In the light of His holy Presence all desire dies, but the desire to be like Him.

Another saying—"Make light of the troubles which come into everyone's life"—seems to be in contradiction to the more usual teaching, that the aspirant should become indifferent to his own troubles, while remaining sensitive to those of others; but no one will question the wisdom of the one that follows it—"Avoid the incessant worry over little things in which many people spend most of their time." The final section consists of quotations from the Bible, the Roman Breviary, and many other sources, on the subject of preparation for the Second Coming.

E. M. M.

MĀHĀYĀNA DOCTRINES OF SALVATION. By Dr. Stanislav Shayer. London: Probsthain & Co. Pp. 55. Price 4s.

MR. R. T. KNIGHT, in translating this very learned German treatise, must have had a difficult task, for the abstruse and complicated subject is treated in a somewhat involved style, with many long and unfamiliar Sanskrit words scattered over the pages. To do the author justice, he usually tries to give the Western equivalents of these terms, but only readers who already have some knowledge of the matters discussed are likely to be able to follow his argument. After dealing with the Doctrine of Individual Salvation, Indian Theism, the Buddhology of the Māhāyāna, the Doctrine of Emptiness, and other kindred themes, Dr. Shayer concludes by declaring that the philosophy of Māhāyāna—

leads to a teaching of universal seeming: to the conjured-up living beings an equally conjured-up Deliverer appears and delivers them from a conjured-up suffering by revealing the universal nothingness of the development of being.

And readers who have followed him thus far will learn with some relief that, even to him, "the final problem remains a mystery!"

E. M. M.

OUR DAYS AND HOURS: WHAT THEY TELL. By Thomas S. Eyre. London: Arthur H. Stockwell. Pp. 63.

WE have here the second edition of a book containing what the author calls "A Method of Astro-Philosophy," though he claims originality only for the exhaustive tables given at the end, by means of which the "planetary hours" for every day of the year may be discovered. He tells us, with truth, that "how far back in the world's history man discovered that the Sun ruled the day, the Moon ruled the night, and that the seven planets named the days of the week, must ever remain a moot point"—but his argument in favour of the importance of the "planetary hours" is not altogether convincing, and the instances cited are too few and too scrappy. One feels that strong good, or bad, planetary *aspects* in force on any particular day, would have greater power than the passing vibrations of the rulers of the "hours"; but this is not by any means to say that there is nothing in Mr. Eyre's theory, and no doubt many people will find it interesting to use the tables and see how it works out in practice. E. M. M.

GIVERS OF LIFE AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE IN MYTHOLOGY. By, Maurice A. Canney, M.A. $7\frac{1}{4}$ in. × $4\frac{3}{4}$ in., pp. viii. + 114. London: Messrs. A. & C. Black, Ltd., 4–6 Soho Square, W.1. Price 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

THIS volume is by a member of the same school of thought as Mr. W. J. Perry, and covers to some extent the same ground dealt with in the latter's *The Origin of Magic and Religion*, recently reviewed in THE OCCULT REVIEW. The school is designated the Historical School of Ethnology, as distinguished from the Psycho-Analytical School, and Prof. Canney gives a useful summary of its history in Chapter II, under the title of "The New Ethnology." More especially, however, as indicated by the title, the present volume deals with the belief of primitive mankind in certain substances as givers of life. Included amongst these substances,

according to Prof. Canney, are all those which issue from the living body, such as blood, tears, sweat, spittle, *etc.*, and serve to distinguish it from one that is dead. In the same category must be included the spoken word, to the belief in the powers of which Dr. Canney devotes a very interesting chapter of his work. There is also a chapter concerning the belief in the power of proper names, and a final one dealing with "The Hand of Might." In these chapters Dr. Canney has amassed a great many interesting details regarding various superstitions which are brought into relation with each other, though the impression tends to be conveyed that the theory is sometimes being stretched to cover the facts. The conclusion that remains with my own mind is that probably the most satisfactory body of ethnological theory will be forthcoming when the views of the two at present opposed schools have been synthesized.

H. S. REDGROVE.

UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS: A Record of a Pilgrimage. By Horace Leaf. With an Introduction by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. 8¾ in. × 5½ in., pp. 263 + 14 plates. London: Cecil Palmer, 49 Chandos Street, Covent Garden, W.C.2. Price 12*s.* 6*d.* net.

THE author of this work, who is well-known both as a medium and as a lecturer on Spiritualism, undertook last year, at the instance of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, a missionary tour of Australia and New Zealand on behalf of the spiritualist movement, and in this volume he provides a very readable account of his experiences. The tour appears in every way to have been a most successful one, Mr. Leaf meeting with many large and enthusiastic audiences. Amongst other subjects he lectured on Psychometry, the Human Aura, Clairvoyance, the Mental and Healing Power of

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Hypnotism, the Subconscious Mind, and the Development and Rationale of Mediumship. Such critics as he met would appear to have been almost entirely theologians of the orthodox schools of thought. Humorous incidents of course were not wanting, one being provided by the good woman—a Roman Catholic with quaint ideas and a leaning towards Spiritualism—who acquainted Mr. Leaf with the fact that she had brought Gabriel and his host to one of his lectures, and claimed to be on a higher "spear" (*sic*) than he was. Naturally the author came into contact with many persons who had had interesting psychical experiences, many of which are retold in the volume, the more important being vouched for by signed and attested documents. In addition the book contains interesting accounts of the beliefs and practices of the aborigines and Maoris, and valuable observations thereon from the standpoint of the student of Occultism. In particular there is a full account of Ratana, an extraordinary Maori Christian faith-healer, who appears to wield great influence on the native population of New Zealand, though how far this influence is beneficial is open to doubt, the synthesis of Christian and Maori moralities not appearing to be by any means satisfactory.

Those who enjoy reading books of travels will find this a volume very much to their taste, whilst the student of the occult will find it full of matters to engage his attention.

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