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NOTES BY THE WAY.

WE are not indebted to the Hebrews for the primitive idea and form of intelligent religion. From the roots of the Aryan tree, the Israelite derived his first feeble image, hugging himself, meanwhile, in the fantasy that he alone knows the true God. He did not know that his local religion was but a dwindled off-shoot of the paternal tree, and that other off-shoots of that tree survived among races of a sweeter amenity, and of a deeper and loftier learning, who kept more perfectly the divine law.

READING a rather strange book some time ago, I came across the following passage:—"There was a primitive people living in the highlands of India, the progenitors of the Aryans, indeed, our primeval forefathers, who were preserved from becoming wholly brutal in their sensations. They were preserved as the seed grain of the world—the future civilizers of humanity. These never abandoned themselves to animal promiscuity and man-eating, and they had a form of monogamic marriage. Woman was not a slave among them. They had the family and the household, and thus the *germ* of civilization." The writer went on to say that this people, dominant among the sons of man, first absorbed the inferior races, and taught them the primitive arts of human society. They migrated at an early date into Egypt, forming there the ruling caste. Afterwards they established themselves in Greece, founding the Hellenic culture. "Abraham was derived from this stock, and the writing preserved in his family, and now known as the first record in Genesis, was a poem of the early religious scriptures."

GRADUALLY, however, the ideal worship of the Ayran became an idolatry. The despotism of priest-craft dates far back. It fought and slew the poets, seers, and prophets of these early days, and held in bondage the spiritual freedom of the race.

RATIONAL religion shatters no true sacredness; it will keep all that is true in our own Scripture with unflinching care, and welcome all that is Truth in all other Scriptures with equal joy, and thus it will never close the Canon of the continually uttered Word of Revelation! It knows that all Holy Scripture is not in the Bible, nor is all that is in the Bible Holy Scripture. The wind of the Spirit "bloweth where it listeth," and whatever it touches it consecrates. We need not go to Jerusalem to find the "Word of God," and the "Cross of Christ" is lifted up wherever temptation is bravely met, and painful duty well and patiently done. There is "a book of God" whose syllables are in every spherule of the revolving universe, and whose "Word" is from everlasting to everlasting.

THE evolution of the religious sentiment is going on as rapidly now as in any former age—yea, more rapidly. The mustard seed of rational religion is growing, and its grateful shade shall yet cover the earth. This religion teaches that nowhere in the Universe, outside of the morbid fancies of priest-ridden men, is found a revengeful and jealous Deity. An angry God is as obsolete to its thought as is the tree-worship of the savage, or the grotesque beast-worship of old Egypt. It teaches that law governs; that there is no space, no possible crevice anywhere in the Creation for caprice, miracle, parenthesis, or interpolation. There is very little "other worldliness" in its creed, and that little will continually grow less.

FOR though we may live hereafter in another, we are in *this* world. Here we get our bearings, and take our direction. Here we learn lessons, which nothing that we may learn in any other world can ever contradict. We ripen best for the future by being heartily devoted to the work and duty of the present moment. True religion dwells with man, and asks to be put to service. It will teach society to be more humane, and to become more brotherly. It will persuade the forces of the world to work in amity, so that tyranny and greed shall be a mutual blunder, and concert and co-operation a mutual success. It will leave off the paltry business of scattering tracts and preaching revivals through the world; for the present age needs not tracts, not effusions of ecclesiastical piety, but the abatement of moral griefs and wrongs, the suppression of intemperance, the purifying of vice and crime, the protection of the helpless, and the uplifting of woman.

NOR promises of a distant and future heaven, but righteousness and justice prevailing *now* on earth. If we do well the duty of the passing hour, the broad Universe has nothing, and holds nothing that we need dread. Safe and sound as our souls are to-day, so shall they ever be.

THIS faith comes "eating and drinking" as did the Son of Man. Its ministry has no more formal piety than the wild roses in a hedge-row. "Every man will

hear the Gospel preached in his own tongue"—that is, through his own peculiarities of mind and ways of life. It sets men, not, to building costly Cathedrals and Temples, to be inhabited during the week by rats, while childhood and womanhood are left crowded and smothered in the slums; but the Industrial Palaces, where Labour justified at last, leaves the social horde, sheds its sordidness and rags, and enters with singings and rejoicings. Alms-giving feeds and breeds poverty, but the organization of Industry will abolish poverty. This religion will enlist the whole of our Intelligence, and use all the tools of science and civilization, until Humanity shall be born again in its inalienable rights in this new cradle of mankind. The sacrament which it offers is its own worship of Truth and Beauty, whose elements it distributes to all communicants.

I HAVE endeavoured to give a short summary of a sensible book. No Christian can misinterpret the language: many Theosophists will regard it as a fair statement of their ideas on "rational religion;" and it may appeal to some stray readers—a class I have been asked to bear more in mind, now that the *I. T.* is to be seen on so many railway bookstalls.

THE "Lotus Circle" page has not been so well supported as I expected, and it would seem as if I must discontinue it. I looked for more contributions from parents on the Theosophical Education of children. In any case I hold over this month's article, and shall be pleased to receive suggestions on the matter. The N. E. Federation have at their meetings expressed their approval, and promised support to a Magazine dealing with this department of theosophical work, and yet—well! I would like to hear from some member of the N.E.F. on the subject.

I HAVE to thank an anonymous friend for 5s. received for "*I. T.*" fund. Would it be too much to ask his or her name and address?

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THOUGHTFULNESS.

THOSE who believe that in the teachings of Theosophy they have found the Path that leads to the Highest, are beset by dangers unknown to other men, and as we look round and mark what is going on in our midst, we would sound a note of warning against one in particular that almost bars the entrance to that Path. We have awakened to the knowledge of a new Spiritual faculty, a limitless Force both within and without ourselves: and with Thought centred on this Force we become conscious of new powers opening before us in every direction. The position we have held heretofore appears, in retrospect, almost incomprehensible; the ignorance darker by contrast; and there is a tendency to disparage the past, to cast the natural world (so-called) behind us, as of the Earth, earthy; to fix the will chiefly on the attainment of Individual Spiritual development, and to forget that the Higher Revelation never could have reached man, except as manifested through the flesh.

This confusion at first perhaps is natural, for the Spirit has asserted its right to rule, and we do not realize the absolute inability of the Higher Self to work *independently*, save on its own plane. The mass of humanity have no knowledge of its existence; to most of our brethren amongst whom we labour it is a dead letter; it, therefore, cannot make itself understood in any way,

except by working in and through the corporeal man. It is vain to imagine that we are treading the Path—that we can attain to Selflessness, if the Divine within keeps apart, as it were, wrapt in Self centration, intent only on its own development. Granted that there are hours necessary to the very life of the Spirit when we must be alone, when like the Christ we must depart into the mountain to pray; but the everyday training must be in the world and by the world; we must make use of every earthly faculty, make the Body veritably the vehicle of the Spirit, before we can raise our fellow-men, and in them lose ourselves. The body, subject at every point to the law of Christ, becoming day by day purified, etherealized, spiritualized, will gain a power over others, and will speak with a voice that many otherwise deaf will hear.

“What a man thinks, that he becomes”—such are the words of wisdom. Our aim is to attain to Selflessness, to become one with the Eternal Life manifested now around us in all that lives and moves and breathes—the Universal Self that inhabits all things. Thoughtfulness for all is then to become one with all. To be filled with thoughtful kindness for the rich, for the poor, for the sorrowful, for the glad, is to empty oneself of self, becoming, through thoughtfulness, one with the whole. The world around is our opportunity; the Godhead made man the field of our labours; we must not speak in an unknown tongue—we must use the earth language, to be understood. It is the little human kindnesses and pleasures that we can bestow; the conscious thoughtfulness in absolute trifles that appeals to the men and women around us. If we can bring one added ray of sunshine into any human heart, we have led that heart a little nearer to the light; if we throw ourselves unselfishly into the daily interest of each we meet, we teach the Universal Love; and, above all, if we are ever to be counted upon, always the same, invariable in our moods, calm and steadfast, we show forth the power that is constant and enduring, and in this world of change and illusion we lead others to believe in the Unchangeable, the Eternal Rule.

We must begin very humbly at the bottom of the ladder; we must conquer Spiritual Pride, we must arm ourselves with Spiritual Patience before we can begin to rise. The pride that in our newly-attained knowledge makes us feel ourselves “not as other men” must be overcome; the patience that makes us bear with outward forms sacred to other men must be attained. It signifies not what creed they hold, let us lose ourselves in thoughtfulness for them; let us touch it gently, reverently—if not, we sin against the Highest.

“Unto all such,
Worship what shrine they will, what shapes in faith—
’Tis I who give them faith! I am content!”

We are not bound on an armed crusade—we must go weaponless to the warfare, and by the power of Silence we must overcome. The Spirit grows in silence, works by silence; so, working and growing in us, men “will have knowledge of us that we have been with the Christ.”

M. E. G.

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COMFORT.

WE are continually called upon to give comfort, and it is a problem to many what to say. For there are people who can see no outlet from their pain other than this, that they shall obtain that which they desire. The lover longs for the one who is absent or cold; the poor demand wealth;

the tortured cry out for relief from suffering; and so on through all phases of human life we continually meet such people. We, perhaps free from such afflictions, have schooled ourselves into a heroic mood. These are not things to sorrow over, we think; therefore, we are in a dilemma. We cannot aid them, for their ideals often seem ignoble to us—their wish accomplished would only bring on the renewal of old pain, and bind them closer to the weary wheel. Yet we cannot be cold, we who would identify ourselves with all life, for the soul must “lend its ear to every cry of pain, like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun.” In the many cases where the suffering is unavoidable, and cannot be otherwise received, what are we to do? Some, a little above the ignoble view that the only relief is in the satisfaction of desire, say reverently to those in pain: “It is God’s will,” and some accept it as such with dull resignation. But with some the iron has entered the soul—the words are empty. “What have I to do with God, or He with me?” they demand in their hearts. They join in the immemorial appeal and fierce revolt which at all times the soul of man makes against any external restraint. We who are disciples of old wisdom may touch some chord in them which may awaken eternal endurance.

It is not, we say, a pain imposed upon us by any eternal power; but the path we tread is one which we ourselves very long ago determined. To the question, “What have we to do with God?” we make answer that we are the children of Deity—bright sparks born in that Divine flame, the spirit in its primal ecstasy reflected in itself the multitudinous powers that throng in space. It was nourished by Divine love, and all that great beauty thrilled through it and quickened it. But from this vision which the spirit had, it passed to climb to still greater heights—it was spiritual, it might attain divinity. The change from the original transcendental state of vision to that other state of *being*, of all-pervading consciousness, could only be accomplished by what is known as the descent into matter where spirit identifies itself with every form of life, and assimilates their essences. This cyclic pilgrimage it undertook, forseeing pain, but “preferring free will to passive slavery, intellectual, self-conscious pain, and even torture, ‘while myriad time shall flow,’ to inane, imbecile, instinctual beatitude,” forseeing pain, but knowing that out of it all would come a nobler state of life, a divinity capable of rule, a power to assist in the general evolution of nature. It is true in the experience of many that going deep within themselves, an elemental consciousness whispers comfort; it says all will be well with us; it is our primal will which so orders. And so we justify the pain and hearts that break; and that old appeal and fierce revolt we make dies out in the inner light which shines from “the Goal, the Comforter, the Lord, the Witness, the resting-place, the Asylum, the Friend.” We can then once more go forth with the old, heroic, Titan will for mastery, seeking not to escape, but rather to meet, endure, and assimilate sorrow and joy alike; for so we can permeate all life—life which is in its essence one. This is the true centre on which all endurance must rest; this is the comfort the soul may take to itself; and beyond and after this we may say we struggle in a chaos indeed, but in a chaos whose very disorder is the result of law. That law is justice that cannot err. Out of confidence in this justice may spring up immortal hopes; our motives, our faith shall save us. We may dare more, give ourselves away more completely, for is not the root of this law declared to be beauty, harmony, compassion. We may trust that our acts shall have full fruition, and remain careless of the manner, nor seek for such results. We may look upon it if we will as the sweetest of the sweetest, the tenderest of the tenderest; and this is

true, though still it is master of the fiery pain. Above all it is the law of our own being; it is at one with our ancestral self. In all this lies, I think, such consolation as we may take and offer for pain. Those who comprehend, in their resignation, shall become one with themselves: and out of this resignation shall arise will to go forth and fulfil our lofty destiny. R.

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NORTH OF ENGLAND FEDERATION OF THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

MEETING AT HARROGATE, 5TH MAY, 1894.

THE fourth meeting of this Federation took place at Harrogate on Saturday, about sixty-five members being present, including delegates from the federated lodges and centres, and Annie Besant as representing the London headquarters.

Assembling at 3.30 in a comfortable room in the People's Hotel, A. B. was voted to the chair, and opened the proceedings with an address on the good of federation. Harmony being the first note of the T. S., united action is the first essential to its realization; and just as the whole society forms a circle composed of a number of sections or sub-circles in different parts of the world, so the uniting of smaller centres into spheres of effort, by means of local federations, has a great practical effect in promoting the brotherhood and union of action of the Society.

The first motion was a cordial vote of gratitude to Oliver Firth for his work in starting and managing the Federation during the first nine months of its existence.

Then short reports of the work done in the several lodges and centres were read.

An interesting discussion on methods of making the lodge libraries more useful arose from the Liverpool report. That lodge has accumulated a library of about 850 volumes, and hopes soon to make it a free public library of Theosophical literature. Circulation of books from one library to another was suggested, and also the advisability of trying to get Theosophical books into the free libraries of our towns. The value of definite lines of study, and the scope and methods of the Secret Doctrine class organized by Mrs. Cooper-Oakley, were next considered. Small groups were recommended for study and for collecting references, so as to elucidate particular points of teaching. A. B. cited the practice of the London Lodge as worthy of imitation. They study a subject for months, collecting all allusions, and discussing its aspects, and then one member collates the results into a paper or lecture.

The relation of Theosophy to the Christian Churches was then taken up. The difficulties of putting Theosophy before Christians without hurting their feelings was touched upon, and the great need for care and tact to put theosophical ideas into language they can understand, without in any way shirking the expression of the beliefs held by Theosophists.

The possibility of reviving the real meaning of such terms as Faith, Grace, Prayer, and Mercy was alluded to, and the great value that would result to Christianity from such revival of its spiritual essence and basis. Members were advised to avoid controversial argument, especially with those who are satisfied with their present beliefs, and have no desire to search elsewhere; also to remember that we can only reach relative truth, and cannot see the whole of any truth; therefore, let us be ready to supplement our views with those of others.

A. B. wound up the discussion by showing how the masters are trying to help us to see ; and what we have to do is to keep our spiritual eyes open, so as to receive their help, and thus promote the spiritual life of the world. The spirit speaks to every man in his own tongue, and all, whether Christians, Mahomedans, Zoroastrians, or Hindus, of can find a bond of union if they will try to sympathetically comprehend the aspects of truth as seen by others.

An adjournment for tea, talk, and tobacco, was then made, and at 6-30 the Federation re-assembled for the evening session. The greater part of the evening was occupied by an address from A.B. on her experiences in India, and the relations of East and West.

She shewed how propaganda work there differed from here, on account of the different atmosphere of thought and life. An Indian audience believes in the reality of mental potencies and in the possibility of separating spirit and body. It believes in Spiritual Life, Reincarnation, and Karma. What is required there is to make them realize the real original meaning of their sacred books, and their teachings. For instance, the doctrine of Karma has been degraded into a fatalistic idea that we are the puppets of destiny ; and she aught them that thought and spiritual effort can modify the currents of destiny so that we may by effort alter our conditions. Generally, the spiritual life there has become so encrusted with form and ceremony as to be almost dead, but even among the westernized Indians this crust may be broken through, and then the real belief in soul and spirit enables them to rise up, and grasp the higher idea of man and his destiny.

A great part of her work there was devoted to shewing the value of H. P. Blavatsky's teachings in reviving the appreciation and knowledge of the Indian religions and their spirituality. The Indian Scriptures contain Theosophy, and H. P. B. shewed it

Many interesting details of A. B.'s. life and work in India were given, but, as they have appeared in the *Theosophist* and elsewhere, they need not be repeated. But an important point brought out was the different view of phenomena there held. The fakeers and Hatha Yogis have made phenomena of very remarkable character familiar to Indians, and they look upon all phenomena workers with distrust. Not as doubling the phenomena, but because they know that the power to perform wonderful physical and psychic feats does not necessarily imply real spiritual power. And they also know that unless such feats are the results of purity of life they are dangerous to all who have anything to do with him.

The development of Hatha Yoga is a direct bar to spiritual progress.

The whole Yogi system of India witnesses to the dominance of mind over body, and of spirit over mind. Thousands who believe this throw aside all material aims such as form the guiding force of most Western lives—Wealth, Power, Learning, &c.

Afterwards a number of questions were asked, and many valuable hints and thoughts were brought out. A suggestion was made by A. B. that the Western Lodges should link themselves to Indian Lodges by exchange of literature, information, and ideas, so as to help the union of thought and brotherliness which the T. S. advocates.

It was arranged that the next meeting should be held at Middlesboro' on August 4, when it is hoped there will be another large and strengthening gathering.

On Sunday A.B. delivered two lectures at Harrogate to crowded audiences, and on Monday at York.

C. C.

A STRANGE AWAKENING.

By Æ.

CHAPTER III.

HARVEY rose up early; as he walked to and fro in the white dawn, he found the answers to every question in his mind: they rose up with a sweet and joyful spontaneity. Life became filled with happiest meaning: a light from behind the veil fell upon the things he had before disliked, and in this new light, pain, sorrow, and the old moralities were invested with a significance undreamt of before. In admitting into his own mind Olive Rayne's ideas, he removed something of their austerity: what he himself rejected, seen in her, added another and peculiar interest to the saintly ideal of her which he had formed. She had once said, peace and rest were inconceivable while there existed strife and suffering in nature. Nowhere could there be found refuge; drawing near unto the divine, this pain only became wider, more intense, almost insufferable, feeling and assimilating the vastness of divine sorrow brooding over the unreclaimed deep. This pity, this consciousness of pain, not her own, filling her own, filling her life, marked her out from everyone he knew. She seemed to him as one consecrated. Then this lover in his mystic passion passed in the contemplation of his well-beloved from the earthly to the invisible soul. He saw behind and around her, a form unseen by others; a form, spiritual, pathetic, of unimaginable beauty, on which the eternal powers kept watch, which they nourished with their own life, and on which they inflicted their own pain. This form was crowned, but with a keen-pointed radiance from which there fell a shadowy dropping. As he walked to and fro in the white dawn he made for her a song, and inscribed it

TO ONE CONSECRATED.

Your paths were all unknown to us:
 We were so far away from you,
 We mixed in thought your spirit thus—
 With whiteness, stars of gold, and dew.

The mighty mother nourished you:
 Her breath blew from her mystic bowers:
 Their elfin glimmer floated through
 The pureness of your shadowy hours.

The mighty mother made you wise;
 Gave love that clears the hidden ways:
 Her glooms were glory to your eyes;
 Her darkness but the Fount of Days.

She made all gentleness in you,
 And beauty radiant as the morn's:
 She made our joy in yours, then threw
 Upon your head a crown of thorns.

Your eyes are filled with tender light,
 For those whose eyes are dim with tears;
 They see your brow is crowned and bright,
 But not its ring of wounding spears.

We can imagine no discomfort while the heavenly light shines through us. Harvey, though he thought with humility of his past as impotent and ignoble in respect of action, felt with his rich vivid consciousness that he was capable of entering into her subtlest emotions. He could not think of the future without her; he could not give up the hope of drawing nigh with her to those mysteries of life which haunted them both. His thought, companioned by her, went ranging down many a mystic year. He began to see strange possibilities, flashes as of old power, divine magic to which all the world responded, and so on till the thought trembled in vistas ending in a haze of flame. Meanwhile, around him was summer: gladness and youth were in his heart, and so he went on dreaming—forecasting for the earth and its people a future which belongs only to the spiritual soul—dreaming of happy years even as a child dreams.

Later on that evening, while Olive was sitting in her garden, Dr. Rayne came out and handed her a bundle of magazines.

“There are some things in these which may interest you, Olive,” he said; “Young Harvey writes for them, I understand. I looked over one or two. They are too mystical for me. You will hardly find them mystical enough.”

She took the papers from him without much interest, and laid them beside her on the seat. After a time she took them up. As she read her brows began to knit, and her face grew cold. These verses were full of that mystical voluptuousness which I said characterised Harvey’s earlier productions; all his rich imagination was employed to centre interest upon moments of half-sensual sensations; the imagery was used in such a way that nature seemed to aid and abet the emotion; out of the heart of things, out of wild enchantment and eternal revelry shot forth into the lives of men the fires of passion. Nothing could be more unlike the Christ-soul which she worshipped as underlying the universe, and on which she had reliance.

“He does not feel pity; he does not understand love,” she murmured. She felt a cold anger arise; she who had pity for most things felt that a lie had been uttered defiling the most sacred things in the Holy of Holies, the things upon which her life depended. She could never understand Harvey, although he had been included in the general kindness with which she treated all who came near her; but here he seemed revealed, almost vaunting an inspiration from the passionate powers who carry on their ancient war against the Most High.

The lights were now beginning to fade about her in the quiet garden when the gate opened, and someone came down the path. It was Harvey. In the gloom he did not notice that her usual smile was lacking, and besides he was too rapt in his own purpose. He hesitated for a moment, then spoke.

“Olive,” he said tremulously, “as I came down the lanes to say good-bye to you my heart rebelled. I could not bear the thought: Olive, I have learned so many things from you; your words have meant so much to me that I have taken them as the words of God. Before I knew you I shrank from pain; I wandered in search of a false beauty. I see now the purpose of life—to carry on the old heroic battle for the true; to give the consolation of beauty to suffering; to become so pure that through us may pass that divine pity which I never knew until you spoke, and I then saw it was the root of all life, and there was nothing behind it—such magic your words have. My heart was glad this morning for joy at this truth, and I saw in it the power which would transfigure the earth. Yet all this hope has come to me through you; I half hold it still through you. To part from you now—it seems to me would be like turning away from the guardian of the heavenly gateway. I know I have but little to bring you. I must make all my plea how much you are to me when I ask can you love me.”

She had hardly heard a word of all he said. She was only conscious that he was speaking of love. What love? Had he not written of it? It would have emptied Heaven into the pit. She turned and faced him, speaking coldly and deliberately:

"You could speak of love to me, and write and think of it like this!" She placed her hand on the unfortunate magazines. Harvey followed the movement of her arm. He took the papers up, then suddenly saw ail as she turned and walked away,—what the passion of these poems must have seemed to her. What had he been in her presence that could teach her otherwise? Only a doubter and a questioner. In a dreadful moment his past rose up before him, dreamy, weak, sensual. His conscience smote him through and through. He could find no word to say. Self-condemned, he moved blindly to the gate and went out. He hardly knew what he was doing. Before him the pale dry road wound its way into the twilight amid the hedges and cottages. Phantasmal children came and went. There seemed some madness in all they were doing. Why did he not hear their voices? They ran round and round; there should have been cries or laughter or some such thing. Then suddenly something seemed to push him forward, and he went on blankly and walked down the lane. In that tragic moment his soul seemed to have deserted him, leaving only a half-animal consciousness. With dull attention he wondered at the muffled sound of his feet upon the dusty road, and the little puffs of smoke that shot out before them. Every now and then something would throb fiercely for an instant and be subdued. He went on and on. His path lay across some fields. He stopped by force of habit and turned aside from the road. Again the same fierce throb. In a wild instant he struggled for recollection and self-mastery, and then the smothered soul rushed out of the clouds that oppressed it. Memories of hope and shame: the morning gladness of his heart: the brilliant and spiritual imaginations that inspired him: their sudden ending: the degradation and drudgery of the life he was to return to on the morrow: all rose up in tumultuous conflict. A feeling of anguish that was elemental and not of the moment filled him. Drifting and vacillating nature—he saw himself as in a boat borne along by currents that carried him, now near isles of beauty, and then whirled him away from their vanishing glory into gloomy gulfs and cataracts that went down into blackness. He was master neither of joy nor sorrow. Without will; unpractical; with sensitiveness which made joy a delirium and gloom a very hell; the days he went forward to stretched out iron hands to bind him to the deadly dull and commonplace. These vistas, intolerable and hopeless, overcame him. He threw himself down in his despair. Around his head pressed the cool grasses wet with dew. Strange and narrow, the boundary between heaven and hell! All around him primeval life innocent and unconscious was at play. All around him, stricken with the fever of life, that Power which made both light and darkness, inscrutable in its workings, was singing silently the lovely carol of the flowers.

(To be continued.)

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"A VISIT TO A GNANI."

STUDENTS of Eastern treatises, such as that of Patanjali, or the sacred science of Raj-Yoga, or Union with the Higher Self, are apt to be repelled at first by the somewhat meagre and abstract style of the language employed. It is not easy to divine, behind the brief hints given, the serious, earnest, living

presence of the teacher, or to realise the actuality and deep significance of the process of training laid down. This is, of course, more especially true of students in the West, where the existence of such a science is practically unknown or unrecognized. But even in the East it would seem that true followers of the higher forms of Yoga are seldom met with—least of all by Europeans, and therefore it is with peculiar interest that we turn to the account given* by so competent and sympathetic an observer as Mr. Carpenter, the well-known Socialist and poet, of the personality and teachings of a certain Hindu Yogi of the Southern School, who seems, indeed, to have merited to a considerable extent the title of Gnani or Initiate, which Mr. Carpenter accords to him.

“These gurus or adepts,” he writes, “are to be found scattered all over the mainland of India; but they lead a secluded existence, avoiding the currents of Western civilisation—which are obnoxious to them—and rarely come into contact with the English or appear on the surface of ordinary life. They are divided into two great schools, the Himalayan and South Indian—formed probably, even centuries back, by the gradual retirement of the adepts into the mountains and forests of their respective districts before the spread of foreign races and civilisations over the general continent.”

With regard to the “outer man” of this particular teacher—his appearance, mode of life, etc., Mr. Carpenter gives the following account:—

“We found ourselves in a side-chamber, where, seated on a simple couch, his bed and day-seat in one, was an elderly man (some seventy years of age, though he did not look nearly so much as that), dressed only in a white muslin wrapper wound loosely round his lithe and even active dark-brown form; his head and face shaven a day or two past, very gentle and spiritual in expression, like the best type of Roman Catholic priest—a very beautiful and finely-formed mouth, straight nose, and well-formed chin: dark eyes, undoubtedly the eyes of a seer, dark-rimmed eyelids, and a powerful, prophetic, and withal childlike manner.”

“. . . He seemed to spend the greater part of the twenty-four hours wrapt in contemplation, and this not in the woods, but in the interior of his own apartment. As a rule he took a brief half-hour's walk mornings and evenings, just along the road and back again, and this was the only time he passed out of doors. Certainly this utter independence of external conditions—the very small amount of food and exercise, and even of sleep that he took, combined with the great vigour that he was capable of putting forth on occasion both bodily and mentally—all seemed to suggest the idea of his having access to some interior source of strength and nourishment.”

“Finally his face, while showing the attributes of the sun, the externally penetrating quick eye, and the expression of *illumination*—the deep mystic light within—showed also the prevailing sentiment of happiness behind it. *Sandósiam*, *Sandósiam Eppótham*—“Joy, always joy”—was his own expression, oft repeated.

* In his book entitled “From Adam's Peak to Elephanta.” London: Swan, Sonnenschein, and Co., 1892.

On his conversations with the holy man, carried on by means of an interpretation, and on the methods and aims of *yoga* in general, Mr. Carpenter writes with wonderful freshness and interest—wisely cautioning the reader, however, against drawing hasty or sweeping conclusions with regard to Indian teaching or religion as a whole. In a chapter entitled “Consciousness without Thought,” we have a well-drawn contrast between the ideals and aspirations of East and West.

“The West seeks the individual consciousness—the enriched mind, ready perceptions and memories, individual hopes and fears, ambitions, loves, conquests—the self, the local self, in all its phases and forms—and sorely doubts whether such a thing as an universal consciousness exists. The East seeks the universal consciousness, and in those cases where its quest succeeds, individual self and life thin away to a mere film, and are only the shadows cast by the glory revealed beyond.”

“The individual consciousness takes the form of *Thought*, which is fluid and mobile like quick silver, perpetually in a state of change and interest, fraught with pain and effort; the other consciousness is *not* in the form of thought. It touches, sees, hears, and *is* those things which it perceives—without motion, without change, without effort, without distinction of subject and object, but with a vast and incredible Joy.”

On the much-vexed question of *Nirvana*, Mr. Carpenter says excellently:—

“Great have been the disputes of the learned as to the meaning of the word *Nirvana*—whether it indicates a state of no-consciousness or a state of vastly-enhanced consciousness. Probably both views have their justification; the thing does not admit of definition in terms of ordinary language. The important thing to see and admit is, that under cover of this and other similar terms, there does exist a real and recognisable fact (that is a state of consciousness in some sense) which has been experienced over and over again, and which, to those who have experienced it in ever so slight a degree, has appeared worthy of lifelong pursuit and devotion. It is easy to represent the thing as a mere word, a theory, a speculation of the dreamy Hindu: but people do not sacrifice their lives for empty words, nor do mere philosophical abstractions rule the destiny of continents. No; the word represents a reality, something very basic and inevitable in human nature. The question really is not to define the fact, but to get at it and experience it.”

Proceeding then to deal with the “methods of attainment” pursued in the East, our author points out that these fade into two, or rather three, main divisions—the external physical on the one hand (*Karma Yoga*, or *Hatha Yoga*); and the mental and moral on the other (*Gnana*, and *Bhaktayoga*).

“The methods that are mainly physical produce certain results—clairvoyances and controls—which are largely physical in their character, and are probably for the most part more or less morbid and dangerous. They are, however, very widely spread among the inferior classes of *Yogis* all over India.”

In *Gnana Yoga* the main object is the absolute control and mastery of the mind, the power to completely efface or suppress all thought at will, in order to gain the state of *samadhi*, which is *above* thought. The first step in the process

shows, however, that by this control of thought no mere dreamy surrender of the thinking faculties to a condition of blank abstraction is intended.

“It is a doctrine much insisted on by the Gurus that in life generally the habit of undivided concentration of the mind on that which one is doing is of the utmost importance. . . . To concentrate at all times wholly and unreservedly in what you are doing at the moment is, they say a distinct step in gnānam.”

Again:—

“While at work your thought is to be absolutely concentrated in it, undistracted by anything whatever irrelevant to the matter in hand—pounding away like a great engine, with giant power and perfect economy—no wear and tear of friction, or dislocation of parts owing to the working of different forces at the same time. Then, when the work is finished, if there is no more occasion for the use of the machine, it must stop equally absolutely—stop entirely—no *worrying* (as if a parcel of small boys were allowed to play their devilments with a locomotive as soon as it was in the shed), and the man must retire into that region of his consciousness where his true self dwells.”

The Yogi himself seems to have exhibited this power in a remarkable degree. “Though exceedingly animated and vigorous, as I have described, when once embarked in exposition—capable of maintaining his discourse for hours with unflagging concentration—yet the moment such external call upon his faculties was at an end, the interest which it had excited seemed to be entirely wiped from his mind, and the latter returned to that state of interior meditation and absorption in the contemplation of the world disclosed to the inner sense, which had apparently become his normal condition.”

The faculty of concentration is attained by regular exercise and practice, the thoughts being resolutely fixed upon some one subject, to the exclusion of all else. Then follows:—

“The next step is the effacement of thought, a much more difficult one. Only when the power of concentration has been gained can this be attempted with any prospect of success. The body must be kept, as before (in concentration) perfectly motionless, and in a quiet place, free from disturbance, not in an attitude of ease and slumber, but sitting or standing erect with muscles tense. All will-power is required, and the greatest vigilance. Every thought must be destroyed on the instant of its appearance. But the enemy is subtle, and failure, over a long period, inevitable. Then when success seems to be coming, and Thought is dwindling, Oblivion, the twin-foe appears, and must also be conquered. For if thought merely gives place to sleep, what is there gained? After months, but more probably years, of intermittent practice, the power of control grows, curious but distinct physiological changes take place; one day the student finds that Thought has gone; he stands for a moment in Oblivion; then *that* veil lifts, and there streams through his being a vast and illumined consciousness, glorious, that fills and overflows him, ‘surrounding him so that he is like a pot in water, which has the liquid within and without.’ In this consciousness there is divine knowledge, but no thought. It is *Samadhi*, the universal ‘I am.’”

With regard to the more purely moral part of the Yogi's training and teaching, the key to it is found in the idea of non-differentiation, *i.e.*, of the one-ness, in essence of all life and Nature.

"The higher esoteric teachers naturally lay the greatest stress on the moral [element], but any account of their methods would be defective which passed over or blinked the fact that they go *beyond* the moral—because this fact is in some sense the essence of the Oriental teaching. . . . On no word did the 'Grammarian' insist more strongly than on the word 'non-differentiation.' You are not even to differentiate yourself in thought from others; you are not to begin to regard yourself as separate from them. Even to talk about helping others is a mistake; it is vitiated by the delusion that you and they are twain. So closely does the subtle Hindu mind go to the mark! What would our bald commercial philanthropy, our sleek æsthetic altruism, our scientific isophily say to such teaching? All the little self-satisfactions which arise from the sense of duty performed, all the cheese-parings of equity between ourself and others, all the tiny wonderments whether you are better or worse than your neighbour, have to be abandoned; and you have to learn to live in a world in which the chief fact is *not* that you are distinct from others but that you are a part of, and integral with them."

Such is the doctrine of the Adwaita (non-dualistic) philosophy of India. Its ideal is complete union with Nature—re-absorption into God. That there is a higher ideal still—one more actively philanthropic and compassionate—taught in the Esoteric Himalayan School, we have learned through the writings of H. P. Blavatsky, its messenger. The question, however, need not be discussed here. We conclude by recommending to our readers the perusal for themselves of the very interesting chapters from which the above quotations have been made. Were such travellers as Mr. Carpenter and such books as the present more frequent, we should find more appreciation for Theosophic teachings, and less of ignorant contempt amongst educated Westerns for the religious beliefs and aspirations of "heathen" India.

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DUST.

I heard them in their sadness say,
 "The earth rebukes the thought of God:
 We are but embers wrapt in clay
 A little nobler than the sod."

But I have touched the lips of clay—
 Mother, thy rudest sod to me
 Is thrilled with fire of hidden day,
 And haunted by all mystery.

G, W·R

NOTES ABOUT BOOKS.

Of recent books, interesting and useful to students of the Esoteric Philosophy, one of the most notable and almost invaluable is—"Thoughts on the Bagavad Gita"; a series of twelve lectures read before the Keembhakonam Branch, T.S., by A. Brahmin, F.T.S. (price 2/- net.) Unfortunately, the book is poorly printed and the spelling is faulty, but this, for the sake of the good matter, the students can well afford to overlook. The work is an attempt to interpret the "Bagavad Gita" in the light of the "Secret Doctrine," and those portions which relate to "Jagna" deserves serious study. In treating of Jagna, the author has occasion to touch upon the philosophy of sound, and in doing so recalls to us one important but often overlooked fact.

"Every sound that emanates from man, passes into the exterior world, and imparts its influence to the various classes of devas that exist in the etherial body of Nature, according to the nature of the sound and the part of the human body from which that sound is produced."

Speech is a dangerous weapon, double-edged, as apt to harm friend as foe, and it is ever wise to remember that idle gossip, careless and loose talk, and ungenerous criticism are not the means by which the Brotherhood of Humanity shall be attained.

The Theosophical Publishing Society has published a new edition of "The Pymander of Hermes," or, as it is more generally known, "The Divine Pymander of Hermes Trismegistees." Dr. W. Wynn Westcott has written a preface for the volume, which is reproduced in a convenient size, and at a much lower price than any previous edition—viz., 3s. nett. What the Bhagavad Gita is to the Indian, the Pymander may be said to have been to the Hermetic Schools of Ancient Egypt. It is one of the few fragments of the wisdom of Egypt which have been preserved for us.

There is a steadily-increasing demand for any works by Paracelsus; and we notice announced for early publication, The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Paracelsus, in two volumes. Subscription price, £2 12s. 6d.

The essence of the teachings of Paracelsus in relation to the science of medicine, has been embodied in Dr. Hartman's recent book, "Occult Science in Medicine," which has been favourably received, and is being widely read.

The new edition of "Nature's Finer Forces," by Rama Prasad, is ready for publication. The work has been thoroughly revised, and is finely printed in clear type. The price is 4s. 6d.

Students of Theosophy will extend a ready welcome to the new edition of that exceedingly useful book, "Five Years of Theosophy." The price has had to be slightly raised, and is now 10s. nett. A full index has been added to the work, and the glossary made more complete.

DUBLIN LODGE,

3 UPPER ELY PLACE.

The Public Meetings to the end of this month are to consider the following topics:—

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| May 16th, | - - | "Miracles." |
| „ 23rd, | - . - | "Harmony in Nature." |
| „ 30th, | - - | "The Soul in Relation to Experience." |

A Meeting of the Lodge will be held in June to elect Delegates for the Annual Convention in July. Members will receive due notice of the date of meeting, and a full attendance is most particularly requested, as questions of grave importance will come before the Convention in London.

FRED. J. DICK, *Hon. Sec.*