



MADAME H. P. BLAVATSKY.

[BY PERMISSION OF EURICO RESTA.]

WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?

A Handbook for Enquirers

INTO THE

WISDOM-RELIGION;

*Being an Outline of Theosophical Teachings Relating
to Man and the Universe, Occultism, etc.*

BY

WALTER R. OLD, F.T.S.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

ANNIE BESANT,

FELLOW OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

Portraits of Madame H. P. Blavatsky and Colonel H. S. Olcott.

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INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE gladly consented to write a few words by way of preface to the book of my friend Walter Old, for I believe that what he has to say is of vital importance to the world. The world stands in need of just the teachings that are roughly outlined in this little book, and many a one, I trust, perusing this, will rise from it with his hunger for Theosophy whetted rather than appeased.

The book does not pretend to be more than a mere summary, which the busy man and woman may quickly grasp. It is a volume fitted to the hurry of the day, when few will sit down deliberately with a view to patient and prolonged study, content if, after years of strenuous thinking, the "riddle of this painful universe" appears less hopelessly insoluble than it did at first. Now-a-days a man must make up his mind in a hurry, and he demands condensation in the arguments submitted to him; Mr. Old has met this demand, and has not, it seems to me, sacrificed clearness to concision. He puts into the hands of the busy an elementary handbook of Theosophical teachings, and anyone who reads it with reasonable care will obtain a fairly balanced, if an inadequate, idea of the scope of a great philosophy.

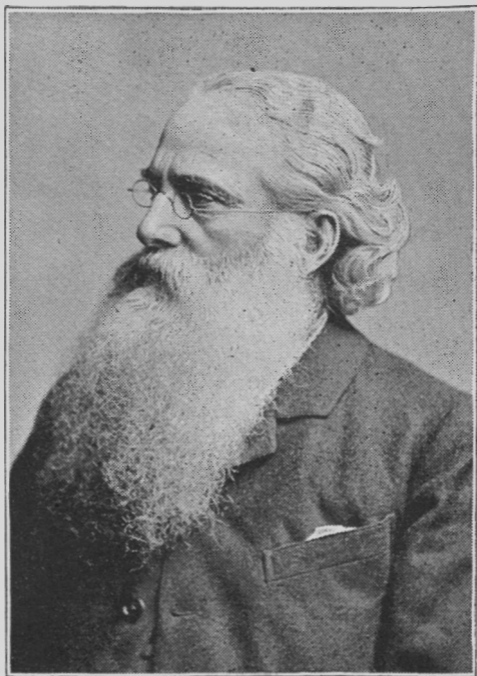
According to Emile Burnouf, Theosophy is one of the three significant intellectual movements of the day. At once a philosophy, a science, and a religion, it studies the three aspects in which Truth ever presents herself to the world. The philosophy is spiritual, and therefore opposed to the materialistic systems most in vogue. The science treads kingdoms unknown to Western investigation, kingdoms the borders of which Western thought is beginning to touch, kingdoms the conquest of which demands new methods and new apparatus ; it walks upright and open-eyed where Western science is only commencing to grope. The religion opens to man a destiny before which all dreams of the past grow dim and pale, unveiling sublime truths hitherto but partially expressed or hinted at by exoteric creeds. Such a philosophy, such a science, such a religion is that for which the modern human heart and brain are hungering, and this hunger explains the eagerness with which the public mind has lately been propelled in search of the teachings of Theosophy. Instinctively, as it were, the people have realised that here is what they want, a religion that is rational, a science which embraces the spiritual as truly as the physical. The restlessness of the human intellect will here find its rest ; the yearnings of the human spirit will here find their satisfaction. Subtle enough in its metaphysics to task the strongest and the keenest brain ; simple enough in its code of duty to be grasped by the lowliest in mind ; it brings to the modern world a sublime ideal and a noble motive, a secure foundation for ethics, a flame to kindle enthusiasm.

Those who understand, even in part, the constitution of man as taught in Theosophy, will find themselves beginning to fulfil the old precept, "Know Thyself." Tangled problems of self will begin to unravel, and light will begin to pierce into the shadowy corners of consciousness. Gradually will grow up a feeling of steady conviction that the clue which will guide through the labyrinth has been found, and that a persistent following thereof will lead to that self-knowledge without which self-mastery cannot be. Knowing and mastering self, man becomes capable of knowing and mastering external nature, for the without is the picture of the within, or, as said the ancient Hermetic axiom, "As above, so below."

Believing, as I do, that Theosophy, and Theosophy alone, can really and permanently satisfy the cravings of the intellect and the emotions, I rejoice that this little book is going out into the world with its message of reason and of love, and I earnestly hope that many a one into whose hands it may fall, will find it the first stepping-stone to the knowledge which gives conviction and the peace that is born of strength.

ANNIE BESANT, F.T.S.





COLONEL H. S. OLCOTT.

[BY PERMISSION OF MESSRS. ELLIOTT & FRY.]

WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?

CHAPTER I.

THE BROAD QUESTION.

WHAT is Theosophy? We paraphrase and repeat, What is Truth? Eighteen hundred or more years ago this question was put to one whose whole life was an effort at its pure expression in wisdom, love, and virtue. No answer was given. Yet ever and ever the question presses forward upon us, overwhelming many, amazing all. What the wise man hesitates to say, the dictionarian will attempt in half a dozen words, fully illustrating the statement that "fools rush in where angels fear to tread." We are no nearer to a solution of the mysteries of life and consciousness when we are told that Truth is the "true state of facts and things," which is equivalent to speaking of 'novel news' or 'saponaceous soap'. All real facts are truths, being consistent in themselves; but it is rather our human conception of these facts in the aggregate that constitutes our notion of the truth. But facts—what they are in themselves and not what they appear to us—are stubborn things; so stubborn, indeed, as to have thus far resisted all human persuasion, argument, or coercion. We may know some few things as they appear to be; the laws which lie behind such appearances are evasive as the *ignis fatuus*, and coy as Truth herself. We cover up our ignorance of the true nature of things by the application

of high-sounding terminologies; we perceive differences of function, of modes of life, the possession of distinctive qualities, and the application of different names more or less descriptive of these constitutes our "science." We are bewildered by the endless variety of appearances; of the homogeneous substratum of truth we know little or nothing. Can it then be said that the claims of Theosophy have come a day too soon? Theosophy seeks to cognise and to define those unchanging laws which lie at the root of every philosophy and religion, and which are the causes of the infinitely varied expressions of the One Eternal verity. Just as the sun's white ray is the synthesis of all colours and of all tones and shades of colours, so Truth is the aggregate of those laws and of their manifold expressions in all ages and nations. It is said that "Truth lies hid in a well." Theosophy may prove to be a well sufficiently deep and pure to satisfy the most thirsty and judicious of souls; but those who advocate its world-wide application, are most concerned with the fresh streams and broad rivers of thought which universally lead to the great ocean of Truth, and of which this well in the desert of life is but a standing witness—drops of truth that have filtered through the soil of the human mind in days gone by, and still are falling from the buried dripstones of ancient temples erected to the service of the One Great Truth.

Those who believe themselves to be in possession of the Truth cannot for that reason afford to ignore the claims that Theosophy has made and is making. There is always the liability to err in the human mind. All thinkers change or modify their first impressions, and orderly change is not inconsistent with growth and development. It is at least certain that no single religious or philosophic system can embody the whole range of human thought and knowledge, or present more than one aspect of the truth.

THEOSOPHY IN THE PAST.

Theosophy, as a synthetic system of Religion, Philosophy, and Science, is not to be found fully embodied in any one of the great world-religions, in any single school of either ancient or modern philosophy, or in any special domain of science. It embraces all that is true in every department of human thought and research, and is thus eclectic as well as synthetic. To give Theosophy its ancient name, we should call it the "Wisdom Religion," under which title it has been preserved and handed down from one generation to another of initiates and adepts of various orders in different countries all over the world, and has only now become in its broad outlines, and for the first time within historical record, a subject of common inquiry and discussion. Theosophy is to be found here and there scattered through the ancient Aryan literatures; remnants of it in the Zoroastrian and other ancient religions and philosophies; fragments in what remains to us of the Chaldean and Hebrew systems, and still more in the Greek pantheistic philosophy; but nowhere is the outline completely preserved, and it is not until the third century A.D. that the modern name is applied to a definite body of teachings. The school of Neo-Platonic philosophy, opened at Alexandria in 232 A.D. by Ammonius Saccas, elaborated a system of comparative philosophy and religion in which was embodied all the elements of theosophical teachings which had withstood the crucible of time. These philosophers, among whom we find Origen, Plotinus, Porphyry, and others of secondary note, were variously styled Eclectics, Theurgists, Analogeticists, Neo-Platonists, and Theosophists. They held three chief beliefs, viz. :—

1. Belief in a supreme, inscrutable, all-pervading, and absolute Deity, from which all nature, visible and invisible, has proceeded and into which it will return.
2. Belief in man

as an imperishable entity of Divine origin, and of infinite potentiality as a progressive manifestation of the Divine nature. 3. Belief in the existence of intelligent forces in nature, and psychic and spiritual powers in man, which were capable of development and use by him in the "Divine Work" or Theurgy. They enforced a life of purity and unselfishness upon their followers, and instituted degrees of initiation which they conferred upon such as could fulfil the conditions imposed, in this way following the example of the more ancient orders of India, Persia, Egypt, and Greece. Ammonius Saccas is said to have urged upon his disciples the necessity for sinking all minor differences of opinion, setting aside all class prejudices, and uniting for the purpose of uplifting and enlightening the world. He taught that all the philosophies of Greece, as well as those of other countries, were perfectly in unison on all essential points; and his interpretations and expositions of the numerous sectarian tenets, both in philosophy and religion, went to prove that they all originated in the same fundamental Wisdom-Religion of antiquity, and pointed to the same conclusions. Thus the philosophy of the Brahmins and Buddhists, the Vedantins, Ionians, Pythagoreans, Eleatics, and Gnostics, passed into a body of teaching which comprised all their essential elements. Later on we find this Eclectic system of philosophy torn as a page from the common manual of thought in Europe, and carried into the monasteries, whither many of its more devoted students repaired in order to escape from persecution. This, though a bold step, was not advantageous to the growth or perpetuation of the philosophy, and the only modern relic of its life within the cloister is its Christianised aspect in the Rosicrucianism of the fifteenth century. In the midst of the Papal persecution some few spirits caught the echoes of the old-world philosophy, and those who were bold enough to proclaim it suffered the penalty of their indiscretion by death.

Among these were Servetus, Bruno, and Vanini, whose Pantheism was but a half-uttered Theosophy destined to a more perfect enunciation by Spinoza in the seventeenth century. In the mystical writings of Jacob Boehme, Swedenborg, Paracelsus, Agrippa and others, traces of Theosophical root-ideas may be found, as also in those of St. Martin and Eliphas Levi, which bring us into close touch with the modern revival of mystical philosophy, occult science, and Theosophy, under the auspices of the

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

On the evening of the 17th of November, 1875, the Theosophical Society was founded by Madame Blavatsky and Colonel H. S. Olcott, in the presence of persons of known ability and good standing, whose disinterested love of Truth and impartial investigations into ancient and modern systems of thought had led them to consider it advisable to unite in a dispassionate study of the teachings which Madame Blavatsky was preparing to give out. A declaration of assent was therefore made upon three primary objects, viz. :—1. To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without regard to race, creed, sex, caste, or colour. 2. To promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literatures, religions, philosophies, and sciences; and to demonstrate the importance of that study. 3. To investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the psychic powers latent in man.

The publication in 1877 of "It is Unveiled; a Synthesis of Religion, Philosophy, and Science," dedicated to the Theosophical Society by Madame Blavatsky, fully justified the position as teacher in which she was regarded by those who came into the society as students of the Wisdom-Religion. It was claimed that the Theosophical Society was under the direction of certain Masters of the Wisdom-

Religion, adepts in occult science, who had instructed Madame Blavatsky in its mysteries and deep philosophy, and whose mouth-piece to the Western World she was. Concerning the nature of these Mahatmas, or "Great Souls," their place in the modern Theosophical movement, their special work and teachings, I shall require to speak more particularly in an appropriate place.

Under the guidance of Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, the Theosophical Society rapidly grew in strength and reputation. When, in 1879, the two co-founders of the Society went to India, the American work was placed in the hands of William Q. Judge, a well-known lawyer of New York City, and an original member of the Society. Much that relates to the growth of the movement must be kept for special treatment under separate heads, but it is interesting to mark the results of the united efforts of these pioneers of what was, until very recently, an unpopular cause in almost every sense. The general report of the 15th Annual Convention of the Society held at Adyar, Madras, on 27th of December, 1890, shows the following statistics of the formation of lodges, which place its increasing influence on record as a fact beyond dispute—

BRANCH CHARTERS ISSUED—

1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882
...	1	2	2	4	11	27	51
1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890
93	104	121	136	158	176	206	241

The motto of the Society is an adaptation of the family motto of the Maharajas of Benares: "There is no Religion higher than Truth." Consequently, it is not surprising to find persons of all sects and denominations within the ranks of the

Society, and taking an active part in its work and study. One object, Truth; one condition, Brotherhood; these are the simple considerations which have persuaded thousands to its teachings, and thousands more to their propagation. As a body, it claims for all its members perfect freedom of opinion and liberty of expression, advocating mutual tolerance between those of divergent beliefs; and strenuously opposing all dogmatism, bigotry, superstition, and credulity. While many of its more generally accepted doctrines are metaphysical and even mystical, the Society requires no submission of the intellect on the part of its members, nor does it as a Society impose any particular tenets as conditions of membership. The special teachings composing the body of philosophy and ethics known by the names of the "Secret Doctrine," the "Wisdom-Religion," and "Theosophy" are in no way unreservedly subscribed to by the members of the Society, and the sole condition of associateship is an avowal of the common platform of Brotherhood in everything that concerns the welfare and progress of humanity. It is generally held by Theosophists that a comparative study of the science and philosophy of the Eastern and Western worlds would be particularly serviceable at this day, when science has ceased to be religious, when religion is no longer scientific, and both are at variance within themselves. In connection with the Society there is a large body of literature in circulation, expressing the leading ideas of the philosophy under the single term which gives the Society its name; and although these ideas are generally accepted, yet they are not advanced as dogmas, being merely put forward as good working hypotheses; the Society as a body remaining neutral and uncommitted by any such expressions of individual opinion or prevailing belief.

But we must now say something concerning the Theosophists themselves, and foremost of all is

MADAME BLAVATSKY.

The early life of the renowned exponent of Theosophy is given by her sister, Madame Jelihovski, in Mr. Sinnett's "Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky." She was born at Ekaterinaslav on the Dneiper, in south of Russia, in the early morning of Friday, the 31st of July (12th August), 1831. She was the daughter of Colonel Hahn and Helene Fadeef, and grand-daughter of Privy Councillor Andrew Fadeef, and of Princess Helene Dolgorouky. Her maiden name was Helena Petrovna Hahn. Her young life was filled with adventures of a character so strange and romantic as almost to pass for fable, were it not that her relatives, persons by no means persuaded in favour of what was undoubtedly her special mission, have put on record, in the work above referred to, their personal testimony to the truth of those events.

"We who know Mdme. Blavatsky well," writes her aunt, speaking for herself and for another relative who had joined with her in the preparation of the notes I am now dealing with—"we who know her now in age can speak of her with authority, not merely from idle report. From her earliest childhood she was unlike any other person. Very lively and highly gifted, full of humour, and of most remarkable daring, she struck every one with astonishment by her self-willed and determined actions. Thus, in her earliest youth and hardly married, she disposed of herself in angry mood, abandoning her country without the knowledge of her relatives or husband, who, unfortunately, was a man in every way unsuited to her, and more than thrice her age. Those who have known her from her childhood would, had they been born thirty years later, have also known that it was a fatal mistake to regard and treat her as they would any other child. Her restless and very nervous temperament, one that led her into the most

unheard of, ungirlish mischief; her unaccountable—especially in those days—attraction to, and, at the same time, fear of, the dead; her passionate love and curiosity for everything unknown and mysterious, weird and fantastical, and, foremost of all, her craving for independence and freedom of action, a craving nothing and nobody could control; all this, combined with her exuberance of imagination and a wonderful sensitiveness, ought to have warned her friends that she was an exceptional creature, to be dealt with and controlled by means as exceptional. . . . Spoilt in her childhood by the adulation of dependents and the devoted affection of relatives, who forgave all to ‘the poor motherless child,’—later on, in her girlhood, her self-willed temper made her rebel openly against the exigencies of society. She would submit to no sham respect for, or fear of, the public opinion. She would ride at fifteen, as she had at ten, any Cossack horse on a man’s saddle. She would bow to no one, as she would recede before no prejudice or established conventionality. She defied all and every one. As in her childhood, all her sympathies and attractions went out towards people of the lower class. She had always preferred to play with her servants’ children rather than with her equals, and as a child had to be constantly watched for fear she should escape from the house to make friends with ragged street boys. So, later on in life, she continued to be drawn in sympathy towards those who were in a humbler station of life than herself, and showed as pronounced indifference to the nobility to which by birth she belonged.”

The foregoing, written by Mr. Sinnett, the President of the London Lodge of the Society, in his biography of Madame Blavatsky, is supplemented by an article from the same pen in the *Review of Reviews*, June, 1891, and by a *Memorial* written by several of her pupils and co-workers after her death, which happened on the 8th of May in the present

year. This latter record deals more particularly with her life and work since the formation of the Theosophical Society, and is valuable as a collective testimony of the devotion and untiring zeal with which she served its objects in America, India, and Europe, during sixteen years, up to the last hours of her life. Of the phenomena that attended her life from childhood to its close, and of which so much has been said and so little understood by the world at large, I shall have something more to say in another part of this book, when I come to deal more particularly with the subject of Occultism.

There are many persons who are apt to measure the value of any system of philosophy by the personal habits of its exponents, and consequently the Theosophist is asked to reconcile certain personal eccentricities observable in Madame Blavatsky with the ideals of human progress and perfection held out by Theosophy.

Personally I do not attempt to reconcile them. What is it to me as a disciple of the Truth, under whatever form it may present itself or through whatever channel it may come, whether genius is consistent or inconsistent with the ideals it conceives of in matters not so nearly connected with "beans and bacon," and the common things of life as the uninitiated may imagine? Is Tennyson's poetry less beautiful or inspiring because some few may know he smokes a clay pipe? Does the fact that Swedenborg's manuscripts are often found to be soiled and smudged by a too frequent contact with the snuff-box reflect anything of discredit on the system of ethics and philosophy which they are found to contain? Neither the poet nor the philosopher is the man as we see him. We must be content as servants of all that is good, beautiful, and true in life to be uplifted by the poet, to be guided by the philosopher, and to tolerate the *man* in all his mortal weakness. We can acknowledge the æsthetic beauty

of the one and the intellectual strength of the other without committing ourselves to an assent of their personal failures, habits, or peculiarities. The Truth has claims of its own apart from the idiosyncrasies of its exponents, and the gospel of Love is none the less true, and finally imperative to humanity, because the Christian has often found it impracticable in his own life, or because the world is not as yet persuaded to anything more than an intellectual acceptance of the doctrine. We are too much concerned with 'personalities,' and too anxious to reconcile the will of the gods to the ways of men. Rather let us reconcile ourselves to Nature, receive the truth as it comes to us, recognise that it is 'no respecter of persons,' and admit that the apparent inconsistency is more likely the result of our own attitude to the expressions of truth, than the method of working observed by the spirit of Truth 'whose ways are not our ways.'

A man must be the close and tried friend of Truth before he can be admitted to her secret councils, or understand correctly the conditions under which she is willing to serve the human race. We are understood only by our bosom friends, our critics know nothing of us. Those who do not know the Truth, criticise only their own false conceptions of its methods when they point with contempt at the outward disproportion of any one of its disciples. There is no greater delusion than to imagine one can make terms with Truth. We may not acknowledge her, but we cannot ignore her, and she will never be understood of the man who cannot see that the pipe, the snuff-box, or any other mortal inventions are as much her properties and her instruments as the perishable thing of human form that uses them !

COLONEL H. S. OLCOTT,

the co-founder with Madame Blavatsky of the Theosophical Society, is an American by birth, and is now

close upon 60 years of age. His career is not generally so well known as that of Madame Blavatsky, and I shall therefore make the outline of his life more complete than it is necessary to do in her case, consistent with the nature of this brief record.

When the Civil War broke out in America, H. S. Olcott threw up his legal profession, which he had been pursuing for many years, and joined the ranks of the Northern States. After passing through four successive encounters and the siege of Fort Macon, he was laid up on account of dysentery, which, like so many of his comrades, he had contracted in the field. His former activities in connection with various agricultural and other reforms, decided the authorities in making other use of his abilities as soon as he recovered. Consequently, he was appointed to the post of Special Commissioner of the War Department, in which capacity he distinguished himself, at the risk of his life; by tracing and exposing some enormous contract frauds upon the Government. The gang had made up a purse of a quarter of a million of dollars as a bribe to Colonel Olcott, but none of them was daring enough to convey it to him. Shortly afterwards he was appointed to a commission in the Naval Department at the request of the Secretary of the Navy, and carried with him letters of the highest recommendation from the War Department to facilitate the execution of his additional duties in the Government service. Upon his retiring from public service, after the close of the war, the various departments of the Government vied with each other in their testimonials as to his valuable services, as appears from letters in the Colonel's possession, from Commodore J. B. Hull, U.S.N. ; J. Holt, Judge Advocate-General of the War Department ; the Hon. P. H. Watson, Assistant-Secretary of War ; the Hon. G. V. Fox, Assistant-Secretary of the Navy ; the Hon. Wm. E. Chandler,

Assistant-Secretary of the Treasury ; and many others, all of which testify to the zeal, devotion, and integrity with which he discharged his duties in the midst of great personal dangers, and carried all his commissions to successful issue by force of his excessive courage, determination, and loyalty. Not long afterwards he resumed his legal profession, and was engaged in the direction of the National Insurance Convention, his compilations made during the two years' service in this capacity having since become a standard work on Insurance in the United States. It was at this time that he made the personal acquaintance of Madame Blavatsky, whom he met while on a commission from the *New York Graphic*, to investigate the famous spiritualistic manifestations taking place in the Eddy family, at Chittenden Farm, Vermont. The result of his investigations were published in his book, "People from the Other World ;" while his acquaintance with Madame Blavatsky subsequently led to the formation of the Theosophical Society. On leaving America for India with her in December, 1878, Colonel Olcott discontinued all secular work, and from that time forward has devoted himself entirely to the cause of Theosophy. When, in 1879, he and Madame Blavatsky were subjected, upon false report, to police surveillance, the American government testimonials were submitted to the Indian government, and an Order in Council was issued by the Governor-General that in future they were to be unmolested. The testimonials referred to were subsequently published in the *Supplement to the Theosophist*, January, 1881.

While in America, Colonel Olcott founded the Agricultural School on the Swiss model, and wrote three works on agriculture which passed through several editions. He also addressed three state legislatures on agriculture, by special request ; and had offers of the botanical mission to Caffraria by the American Government, and the Chief Commissioner-

ship of Agriculture in the University of Athens, by the Greek Government. The United States National Agricultural Society awarded him two medals of honour for agricultural reform, and he was also presented with a silver goblet by the American Institute. In addition to writing many original works of scholastic merit, he translated the "Posthumous Humanity" of Adolphe D'Assier, to which he added an appendix of his own researches; and during his literary career in America, he wrote as agricultural editor in Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*, and as United States correspondent for the *Mark Lane Express*. It is worthy of comment, that Colonel Olcott is one of the very few old soldiers of the Civil War who have never received or applied for pecuniary reward or pension for their services. In connection with his work as president of the Theosophical Society, he has been actively engaged in several important religious reforms, and is at the present time occupied in laying before the Council of Buddhist Priests in Japan, a statement of fundamental Buddhist beliefs, to which both the Northern and Southern churches can subscribe. This is an extension of a work begun in 1889, and will effect the cementing of two vast bodies of religious thought which have been at issue for hundreds of years, and constitute another and a very important step in the history of the Theosophical Society and of its devoted President.

CHAPTER II.

THE UNIVERSE.

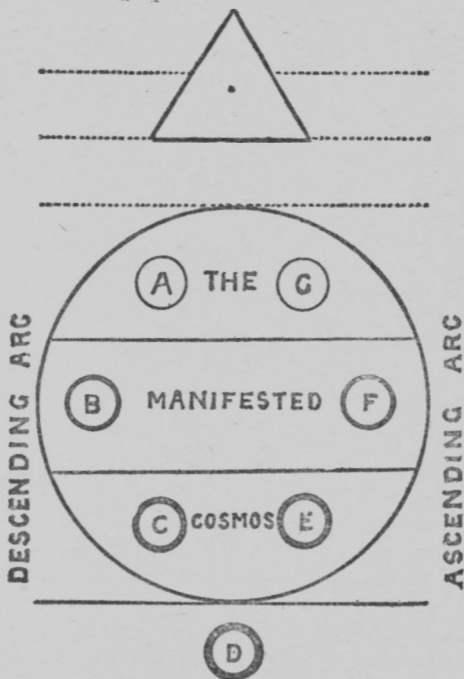
THEOSOPHY holds that the manifested universe, both visible and invisible, is the thought of the Divine Mind in expression. The common postulate from which all argument as to the origin and development of the universe proceeds, is that of a co-ordinate, eternal, inscrutable trinity of Consciousness, Life, and Substance, beyond which is the unknowable 'Rootless Root,' which defeats all speculations of the human mind. The trinity is studied by us in its physical manifestations as Intelligence, Force, and Matter. It is impossible to conceive of intelligible and orderly results, such as are everywhere seen throughout all the kingdoms of Nature, without first admitting the existence of a universal Consciousness continually guiding the operations of force within matter from first to last along the line of evolution. The process of 'differentiation' by which primordial substance is brought into objective existence, is called an "outbreathing," and is effected by means of the breath or life-impulse forming vortical centres, around which the universal substance crystallises. Hence we trace the formation of worlds, and the transmission of the life-impulse from one to another. Through all we see the action of a conscious, intelligent creative power, building the universe of worlds according to a plan already conceived of in the Divine Mind, and traced by its Thought upon the waters of the cosmic deep. Here there is no vacuum; no creation of something out of nothing; not even a "fortuitous concurrence of atoms." Consciousness everywhere, life everywhere, substance everywhere. The plenum or universal extension of matter, which the Newtonian philosophy

denies, Theosophy holds to be a logical necessity. Arguing from the *vis inertia* of bodies, "that innate power of *resistance* in matter" by which it is said to persevere in its present state, Newton leads to the conclusion that if a body at rest has no power to move itself, a body in motion has no power to stop itself; and he therefore assigns the resistance of atmosphere or any other medium through which a body has to pass as sufficient reason for that body eventually coming to rest. But when he comes to apply this theory to the motions of the planetary bodies, he is forced to deny the plenum which the ancient systems of philosophy had asserted. Yet while denying the existence of the plenum, he postulates the correlation of centripetal and centrifugal forces as the cause of the curvilinear orbits of the planetary bodies, clearly asserting the transmission of electric and magnetic forces through millions of miles in space without any substantial medium whatever. It is not 300 years since Giordano Bruno died at the stake for his religion. His heresy consisted in teaching that space is infinite; that it is filled with worlds both opaque and self-luminous; and that these worlds are inhabited. "Every production" said he "of whatever sort it be, is an alteration, the substance over remaining the same, for that is only one. . . . Why think of twofold substance, one corporeal and the other spiritual, when in sum these have but one essence and one root? If you think aright you will find a divine essence in all things." This is Theosophic teaching which he had gathered from a study of Plato, Pythagoras, Platinus, and others, all of whom were conversant with the secret science of the East.

For purposes of study, Theosophy considers the universe as existing on *seven planes* or in seven states of differentiation; the three highest of which are subjective and formless, the four lower being both objective and formative. Upon these latter the cosmos or visible universe is said to exist in

various stages of development and evolution. This will be seen by the following diagram.

THE UNIVERSE



A *Manvantara*, or period of activity in the solar system, consists of the passage of the life-wave seven times around the chain of seven globes. Every *visible* planet in the solar system is regarded as the fourth in its *own* chain, and

corresponds to Globe D in the diagram, on the seventh plane of the universe. The various globes indicate successive stages of the evolution of the Earth, or any other planet, during a *Round*, or one-seventh part of a *Manvantara*. The life-wave descends to Globe D, and then ascends to Globe G, passing on each globe through seven successive stages or states of matter. The evolution of living forms is concurrent with this progress, all development taking place from within outwards. Just as no change or action can take place in the body of man without internal impulse from thought, feeling, or volition, so it is with the material universe. The elemental forms of life are first developed, the igneous, gaseous, and fluidic to the mineral, from these, by a conversion of life forces into higher states of matter, proceed the vegetable, animal, and human forms. That aspect of the Universal Consciousness which is responsible for the evolution of these intelligent forces under specific forms, is known as the Cosmic Mind, and is quite distinct from *Mahat*, the Divine Mind, which evolves and emanates the centres of human consciousness called "Egos," that subsequently incarnate in the human forms already prepared for them. The Cosmic Mind and the Divine Mind are one in essence, but distinct in the manifestation of their functions, if such a term may be allowed; for the former directs the evolution of specific material forms out of the cosmic substance, while the latter is the source whence the involution of spiritual human Egos proceeds. Of these Egos I shall have to speak later on. Humanity passes from globe to globe, circling around them, so to speak, in constant process of incarnation and exarnation. As there are seven Rounds in a period of activity or *Manvantara*, so there are seven Globes or states of matter in each Round, and seven Races of Humanity on each Globe.

When the life-wave has passed three times round the earth chain, and has reached the Globe D on the fourth Round, a

new sense is specialised in man with the advent of every race. Each race is separated from the next preceding and following it by some great seismic cataclysm, in which the geographical surface of the earth is greatly changed, as well as the magnetic and electric conditions of its matter and atmosphere. The middle of the fourth round is the turning point of Cosmic Evolution, where the crystallising process in matter begins to give way to the subtilising power of spirit, for it is at this point that Nature has gained her densest limit, and action in that direction is followed by reaction in the reverse direction. It is with the fourth Race of the fourth Round that the "Sons of Mahat," the self-conscious Egos of humanity, are incarnated, for it is then that the physical evolution of preceding Rounds and Races have brought matter into that degree of organic quality when it can respond to the will of a conscious, incorporeal, intelligent power. The perfected physical man is henceforth the instrument of an immortal, self-conscious Ego or human entity. The Builders have been at work for so many ages, the building is completed, and the leaseholder now takes possession. The Secret Doctrine teaches that we are now in the fifth Race of the fourth Round, by which it will be seen we are upon the *ascending arc* of the whole Manvantara as well as that of this particular Round.

The present humanity of this globe is from the Aryan fifth Root Race; the fourth Race were the Atlanteans, and the third the Lemurians. The *physical remnants* of the third and fourth Races now only are to be found, the Egos have passed into the fifth Race of humanity on this earth. Each Race has its off-shoots, or sub-races, and the English belong to the fifth of such sub-races from the Aryan Root-Race; the physical germs of a sixth sub-race are developing in America, and with the advent of that Race, a sixth sense will be added to our present five.

CYCLES.

All the phenomena of this world, whether physical, psychic, mental, or spiritual, are subject to a cyclic law, or law of periodicity. Thus for each Race as to each Globe, Round, and Manvantara, certain periods of time are required in order to fulfil this law. Each Race has its seven ages, golden, silver, copper, iron, copper, silver, and golden, the conditions of the first three repeating themselves on the ascending arc of evolution, as is illustrated in connection with the globes. There is, however, this difference between the descending and ascending states on the same plane in each Race or Globe, viz., the *return* to the same state of material or external activity is accompanied and modified by the accumulated experiences of the preceding states; thus, life on Globe E, which is on the same plane as C, has, in addition, the experiences of Globe D.

As this is the fourth Round of the Manvantara, and humanity is on the fourth Globe, we are now in the midst of the Black or Iron Age; the cycle of 5000 years which closes with this century being the fourth minor cycle in the history of this Race, and the first of the Kali Yuga or Black Age. The Secret Doctrine gives the following divisions of a solar cycle:—

Golden Age,	-	-	1,728,000 years.
Silver	„	-	1,296,000 „
Copper	„	-	864,000 „
Iron	„	-	432,000 „
			Total,
			4,320,000 years.*

* This total is given as the least common multiple of the number of days required by the planets Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Earth, Venus, Mercury, and Moon to perform their revolutions round the Sun. At the end of this period they are all in conjunction.

The famous Naronic Cycle of 600 years, which is said to be the time during which each sign of the Zodiac successively influences the Earth, when multiplied by 12, the number of signs in the Zodiac, gives 7200 years, and this multiplied by 360, the number of degrees in the Zodiac, yields 2,592,000 years, or 100 times the period required for the precession of the Equinoxes. The declination of the Earth's axis is found to be decreasing at a uniform rate of 50" per century, or $\frac{1}{2}$ " per year, which gives for one revolution of the Earth's poles 2,592,000 as above. From this it is evident that some 239,520 years ago the axis of the Earth was in the plane of its orbit. If we consider the vast cosmical effects which would take place under this law of change in the Earth's body, we shall not be disposed to treat as fables the allusions frequently made in Oriental writings to stupendous seismic phenomena which are said to have occurred in past ages. Indeed, it is only reasonable to assume that since the angular distance of the North Pole from the plane of the Earth's orbit is gradually increasing, the presence of the Borean region in the tropic of Cancer some 240,000 years ago will satisfactorily account for the fossil remains of tropical mammalia and many kinds of tropical vegetation found in what are now the Arctic regions and the frozen deserts of Northern Russia. Synchronous with all these physical changes in the Earth's body, certain corresponding changes are going on in the body and mind of man; indeed, the one is the natural result of the other, for Theosophy teaches that all external changes have their origin in modifications of the creative power or mind. The points in time where these modifications in the Causal world tend towards specific and aggregate results in the world of effects, constitute the definitions of a cycle. We are now on the eve of such a one, as I have previously remarked. They form what may be called periods of twilight; of conflict between the forces of darkness and light, of good and evil

There are also certain periods in the history of each Race when the spiritual powers for good and evil are brought into conflict. It is not *always* possible for the Adepts to help forward the spiritual evolution of humanity; they have to work with the law, not against it. During the "golden age" the forces for good are continually and universally in operation; but as the ages grow darker the period grows shorter, as do the days on the approach of winter; so that in the "silver age" this period of spiritual acceleration occupies the last 75 years of each century, and in the "copper age," the last 50 years; while during the "iron age" in which we now are, the last 25 years of each century only are open to this influence. Consequently the year 1875 marked an epoch of exceptional spiritual activity in the present century, which will intensify up to the close of the year 1899, and will shortly produce a series of national cataclysms as the karmic fruit of the world's evolution during the century, already in process of gestation in the astral light.

Following the general law of analogies in relation to these cycles of time, we shall find that what takes place on the broad track of Nature also has place in its narrower paths.

DAY AND NIGHT.

The "out-breathing" of the universe (Manvantara) is called a "Day of Brahm" in Eastern Philosophy, during which the breath or life-impulse is incessantly active in the building up of worlds in the depths of cosmic space, differentiating, combining, and evolving the original substance into specialised forms of life. This period of activity is followed by a corresponding period of dissolution called a "pralaya" or a "Night of Brahm." There are two kinds of such days and nights of activity and rest.

A "solar pralaya" is that period of latency which follows upon the completion of the seventh Round of the planetary

chains we have been considering. It differs from the *Maha-pralaya*, or Night of Brahm, inasmuch as the worlds already formed remain in latency (*statu quo*); cold, lifeless, and depleted, but, for all that, in existence; whereas, in the *Maha-pralaya* (great death), they are dissolved and return to the state of primordial matter, from which, in the dawn of life, they were differentiated. If we compare the universe to a watch, the solar-pralaya would correspond to the stopping of the watch after it has run down, whereas the *Maha-pralaya* would correspond to the melting down of the whole of its materials and their resolution into a first element. In the Natural world these great periods have their correspondence in the alternation of summer and winter, day and night. The vegetation and other forms of life which died away in the winter, spring up into new activity at the first appearance of the summer season. Spring and autumn, standing in relation to the year as morning and evening twilight to the day, correspond to those epochs of birth and fruition, of which the Secret Doctrine treats in connection with the cyclic law of race-development.

In agreement with this law of "Opposites," by which action is followed by re-action, activity by rest, etc., we find that the life of man is divided into periods of work and rest, and throughout all, as a continuous thread through a string of alternate dark and light beads, runs the purpose of life, which is progress! Each new day is entered upon after the period of rest in a constantly differing manner, or from a modified point of view, due to the experience of each day preceding it; and this is the case even though the work may be the same. Similarly each manvantara is for the same purpose—*eternal progress*—and is successively upon a higher scale of manifestation, due to the cumulative aggregate of experience gained by humanity in preceding manvantaras. It is the same with Rounds and Races.

Each successive Race reaches any given point in its evolution in an advanced state to that held by the preceding Race at a corresponding point. Hence it is that the spiritual powers and intelligence attributed to the Atlanteans at the *end* of the fourth Race are not prevalent in these days, because we have not yet reached the corresponding point in the evolution of our present fifth Race. When the seventh sub-race of our Root Race is reached we shall be in a position to make a comparison of our relative states. There is thus a constant progress during these alternate periods of activity and latency throughout all the kingdoms of Nature and throughout the humanity of this earth, from the beginning of a manvantara to its close. It is interesting to note, however that this alternation of "days and nights," extending, as they do, from a moment of our time, to the "great day and night of Brahm," includes the fact, that while one nation may be in its ascendancy, another may be in its decline, and all the variations of political and social life in nations come under the same law of alternate periodicity. In the same way, the "globes" of which we have spoken in this chapter, have an alternate period of waking and sleeping caused by the passage of the life-wave from one to another. Thus, as the wave passes from C to D, the former lapses into obscurity, and at the point of time when D reaches its greatest activity, Globe E begins to awaken into life, and so successively with each one of the globes in a planetary chain.

It is in connection with this subject of the law of *alternation*, that the Eastern books speak of the ebb and flow of "tatvas" (forces) in connection with Nature and the body of man. Likewise the two breaths, the sun-breath and moon-breath, which normally alternate in regular succession. When these flow irregularly and out of their proper seasons, then ill-health

follows, and if the defect persists it ends in death. Very much on this subject that is of interest to the student of occult science is to be found in Rama Prasad's work on "Nature's Finer Forces." For the same reason certain occult processes are suspended during the decrease of the moon, and resumed at its increase, since greater progress can be made by working in harmony with nature than by indiscriminate action which is as often out of season as not.

This sketch of the more important ideas as to the constitution of the universe are necessarily very brief. They are worked out in marvellous detail in the "Secret Doctrine," by Madame Blavatsky, to which work, in view of my limitations, I must refer the reader.

CHAPTER III.

MAN—A SEPTENARY BEING.

THE constitution of man is considered in Theosophy as consisting of seven principles which, as centres of distinct modes of activity and consciousness, are related to the seven planes of the Universe. Indeed, Man is in all respects a perfect type of the Universe, which appears conspicuous enough when a study of his seven-fold constitution is properly made. All Theosophic writings put forward this central fact, from which a logical argument is made in favour of the possibility in man of a universal extension of Consciousness. To this end the Delphic oracle said, "Man know thyself," and it is from this standpoint alone that it can be said, "There is nothing great in the Universe save Man, and nothing great in Man save Mind."

The various principles of man are as follows:—

	1—ATMA; Spirit,	SPIRIT.
<i>Disinterestedness</i>	2—BUDDHI; Spiritual Soul,	—
	3—MANAS; Mind; Human Soul,	} SOUL.
<i>Selfishness</i>	4—KAMA; Desire; Animal Soul,	} —
	5—PRANA; Life Principle; vitality,	} —
	6—LINGA SHARIRA: Astral Body,	} BODY.
	7—STHULA SHARIRA; Physical Body, -	}

From this tabular view of the seven Principles of the human constitution it will be seen that there are certain classifications or groupings possible, which render the septenary scale identical with some more exoteric Western systems. Thus the highest principle is that of "spirit," the pure, all-comprising, impersonal basic principle of all manifested beings. It is the synthetic principle in the Universe, and

cannot be said to belong to man, except in common with all other forms or states of existence. It manifests in man and nature only through its vehicle, Buddhi, in conjunction with which it forms the Monad or Divine Spark of spiritual life, and in which are contained all the infinite potentialities of evolution in every particle of matter throughout the entire universe. It is the spiritual Atom; imperishable, indivisible, and homogeneous, because spiritual; the prime and ultimate of all degrees of life, both visible and invisible.

We now group the next three principles, and call them "soul." The triple nature of the soul is thus rendered evident. Buddhi, sometimes called the "perispit" and "over-soul," is in this relation the vehicle of all the purely divine qualities in man, and is hence called the "Divine Soul."

Manas (Mind) is the principle of self-consciousness in man. It is the human soul proper, the principle of Egoity. It has two aspects, because of its relationship upon either side to the principles of Buddhi and Kama. These two aspects, which give rise to the distinction of the Higher and Lower Egos, are respectively known in Theosophy as Buddhi-Manas and Kama-Manas, together embracing the totality of consciousness proper to the human mind. The Higher Manas is that imperishable, permanent principle which passes from one incarnation to another, and in which are stored up, as the sum total of spiritual evolution, all the higher experiences or fruitage of the past incarnations of its "rays."

The Lower Manas is the ray or expression of the Higher Manas in its association with the four lower principles in man and the four cosmic planes of the universe. It is the informing principle of the natural man, and when incarnated it is called the "individuality," in contradistinction to the merely psycho-physical organism or animal man. It is sometimes called the "Natural mind." Acting in connection with the physical organism by means of Kama (desire) and

Prana (the vital breath), it manifests as the "brain-mind," the degree of intelligence expressed thereby being largely dependent upon the adjustment of brain function to mental faculty. In proportion as the consciousness of man resides in the Higher Manas, it gains an extension of power over the limitations of the lower physical man, and hence over its perceptions of time and space.

Kama (desire) is the lowest of the three aspects of the general term "Soul." It is the instinctual, passional principle in the animal man. We see it at work throughout nature in the propagation of the species, in the instinctive effort to protect and sustain physical forms of life, in the discriminative power of selecting the means to these ends, and in the impulse by which the organic functions are carried on in man's body.

There are thus three "Souls," the Divine, Human, and Animal. The mind, which is the real Ego, has therefore a twofold extension upwards into the realm of spiritual principles, and downwards into the world of effects; itself being neither one nor the other, yet in a sense dependent on both. Its upward extension is called "intuition," its downward extension "instinct."

We now group the three lowest principles and call them "body."

The principle of Prana is not in reality a personal principle, but it becomes so by crystallisation into physical conditions of matter and modes of force. Prana means "breath," and it is this breath which enters into the germ-cell from the first moment of its inception, and by means of elemental forces it builds up the physical structure of man. It has no qualities *per se*, but it gains them in association with matter by function or use. Its specialisation gives rise to the principle of Kama (desire), just as the sun's rays, which in the diffused state are scarcely warm, when drawn to

a focus by means of a lense (concentrated), are found to burn intensely. This vital principle, which really permeates all planes of life from highest to lowest, is called *Prana* only in its differentiated condition on the four lower planes, in contradistinction to *Jiva*, which is the same "breath" acting upon the three formless and subjective planes of being.

The *Linga Sharira* (astral body) is the vehicle of *Prana*, and is the means by which the vital principle is related to the gross matter of the physical body, acting as a reservoir for the absorption and distribution of *Prana*. It exists before the physical body and dies away after it. Primarily it is the model or type around which the elements of the physical body crystallise, and the mould into which the vital principle is poured. It is capable of a certain extension and contraction of its form, and from its plastic nature is often called the "fluidic body." It is thus capable of appearing in the form and size of a full-grown man, and also of existing within the embryo in the inter-uterine state.

In connection with the abnormal functions of this principle of man's septenary nature, some of the most interesting phenomena of modern psychological science and spiritualism have their origin. In order to fully understand some of these phenomena, it is necessary to distinguish between three forms of spectral appearances, all of which are loosely called "astral." There is then (1) the vital-astral which is distributed throughout the body as the common link between the pranic (vital) and physical principles; (2) the astral form proper, which is the "model" of the physical man, and the vehicle of the kamic principle after the death of the physical body; and (3) the thought-form which crystallises in the astral-light and may be seen under such conditions by others in the flesh at a distance. The first of these cannot be detached or projected from the physical body; but after death it may be seen by clairvoyants hanging about the

carcase and gradually fading away as the body decomposes. The second, which during the life of the body has its special seat and function therein, may be projected to a short distance from the body, either at the will of the individual or unconsciously; the latter in mediumistic cases, or by reason of ill-health. The third, the "thought-form," is projected by strong desire, and being correlated with the astral-light, is made visibly present by sub-conscious or internal impression, in the thought-sphere of those who see it. There are many kinds of thought-forms or thought-bodies, however, to which consciousness may be related and through which it may function; but whereas in the case of the ordinary man, whether living or dying, this projection is an unconscious, *though perhaps not an involuntary* process, yet in the case of an adept in occultism the individual consciousness is for the time being centred in the thought-body, so that he is *consciously present* in whatever place to which the projection is made.

One of the most interesting facts in connection with the astral body is that of "repercussion." If, during the temporary projection of the astral "double," any injury is inflicted upon it, such as a blow or wound, that injury will repercuss upon the physical body point for point; and it is possible to carry this fact to the extremity of inflicting death. This idea, which seems to supply the link to the understanding of some of the mysterious crimes of quite modern experience, is curiously worked out in the story of "Dorian Grey." To it we may not unreasonably refer the violent attitudes frequently seen in exhumed bodies, and which does not, therefore, argue burial while in trance, as is so often supposed to be the case. The action of evil thought and feeling on the part of living persons upon the image of the dead, is such as to exert a direct harmful influence upon it, and thence on the still undecayed body; and on the astral

plane thoughts are *living things* having substance and form, as will be shown later on. For this reason, cremation, which destroys at once all these elements in the physical body which form the link between it and the astral, is recommended by occultists, and pursued in Eastern countries.

It is only when we come to know the powerful influence exercised by the thought and imagination of living persons upon this shadowy counterpart of the deceased, and understand the subtle links of connection which exist between these cast-off vestments of the excarnated Ego and those still in earth-life, that we are able to fully estimate the importance of the crematory process.

The physical body (Sthula) is the basic principle of the septenate of man's constitution, and during life is the vehicle of all the other principles, reflecting them as it were in the sense that an ultimate contains all the effects, causes, and principles from which it is derived, and of which it is the final expression.

We have thus a spirit, soul, and body comprising the full sevenfold human being, and it is only necessary to add that consciousness which is primarily centred in the third or Manasic principle, is capable of an extension into the full septenate. This is only now the case, however, with those "Elder Brothers" of the Human family who have attained consciousness in the two highest planes, in advance of the Race. Upon each of the four lower planes, or in each of the corresponding principles, the Ego (Manas) has its appropriate and deputed centres of activity, and in the physical body the brain is such.

MICROCOSM AND MACROCOSM.

It is necessary that I should now trace the relation of Man, the Microcosm, to the Universe or Macrocosm. The relation of Man to the Universe, to Nature in all her kingdoms, and of man's thought and consciousness to the things

of sense, feeling, thought, and aspiration, has been the central idea and the ground plan of Theosophic teachings in all ages. On this conception also is based the whole doctrine of correspondences. As the Divine Intelligence traces its mystical forms of beauty upon the substance of the Universe, so the mind of man figures out itself upon its own little world, revealing in the lineaments of face, and trunk, and limb, something resembling to the Archetypal Form. Spirit and Force are co-ordinate, and also are Matter and Form. Matter is the ultimate expression of Spirit, as Form is that of Force; hence, for every spiritual force there must be a corresponding material form. What appertains to the constitution of the Universe upon the great scale, appertains also to the constitution of Man upon a lesser scale.

2. We have already seen that the three highest planes of the Universe are arupa (formless), and purely subjective, and that despite the dissolution of the Cosmos at the end of its Manvantara these spiritual planes endure. In the same way the three highest principles in man, Atma, Buddhi, and Manas, are formless spiritual principles, and they in like manner endure after the dissolution of the four lower principles; for each principle in man is related to the corresponding plane of the Universe, and therefore follows after the law operating upon that plane. The Divine Spiritual Monad (Atma-Buddhi) in man is of the same essence as the Universal Soul manifesting from the two highest planes in the Universe. Manas in man corresponds to, and is of the same nature as, Mahat, the Universal Intelligence. It is by the development and expansion of the lower aspect of this centre of consciousness in man, that adeptship is attained; while its union with and absorption in the Divine Monad (Atma-Buddhi), corresponding to the Universal Pralaya or Night of Brahm, constitutes what is called Nirvana or "final liberation."

In order to gain some idea of what follows upon the unifying of the lower and higher aspects of the mind in man by which entrance is made into the spiritual realms wherein our conceptions of time and space do not exist, we may have recourse to a familiar illustration. Light is said to travel at the rate of 184,000 miles per second. The sun, which is about 92 millions of miles distant from us, will, therefore, have risen 8 mins, and 20 secs. before its rising becomes visible to us. The planet Jupiter will have risen 52 minutes before we perceive it as upon the horizon, and a telescope directed to the planet Uranus, is really pointed at the place where the actual planet *was* nearly two hours previous to the observation. A star of the twelfth Magnitude emits a ray which could only reach our telescopic lens after a lapse of 4000 years! From the standpoint of the natural mind, which judges of things according to the perceptions of the senses, and to which time and distance are necessary terms of thought, these celestial bodies seem real things present to its consciousness whenever the eye receives impressions from them; whereas in reality they are only "appearances" and delusions, for we do not see the stars as they *are*, but as they *were* so many hundreds or thousands of years ago; since when they may have risen and set over one million of times, or have disappeared entirely from the constellations in which we perceive them to be—and all unknown to us!

Now the Universal Consciousness is simultaneously present throughout all the infinite depths of space (in which the whole known stellar universe is but as a speck of light against the sun), and is capable of instantaneously entering into the consciousness of all its perceptions; whence it follows that it will include *at one and the same moment* a perception of the universe as it was, as it is, and as it will be when the Great Night shall throw its mantle over all—and that moment is NOW! What, then, our conception of things in time and

space may be to that Higher Mind of ours which is a self-conscious centre of that Universal Mind, we can hardly say; but it is well for us if we can sometimes correct our over-certain senses by a philosophy which shows them to be at once a delusion and a snare.

The Lower Mind (Kama-Manas) is essentially of the same nature as the Higher Mind, and is only distinguished from it by its association with matter during incarnation. This idea may be conceived of by taking a ball of the same substance throughout, and floating it in a fluid into which half its bulk sinks. The water will then indicate the formative (rupan) and material world, embracing the four lower principles of man, surrounding and saturating the Lower Mind.

The atmosphere, in which the superior hemisphere of the ball is, will denote the formless (arupan) and spiritual world. The centre of Consciousness or "Ego," which simultaneously is related to both these worlds, will be indicated by that point within the sphere occupying its centre at water-level. Into this sphere of consciousness are transmitted all things of both worlds, spiritual and material, subjective and objective.

From the foregoing it will be seen that the Higher Triad of Atma, Buddhi, and Manas, is related to the three higher planes of the Universe.

In the same way the Lower Quaternary, consisting of Kama, Prana, Linga Sharira and Sthula Sharira, is related to the Cosmic world or four lower planes of the Universe. It is these principles which go through a sevenfold evolutionary process, during the progress of the Human Races along the Planetary Chain, falling into their most material states on this earth, and again emerging and sublimating into higher conditions of manifestation.

Very little is taught concerning the Kamic Plane, chiefly on account of its great force and seductive power when known to weak-minded and morally diseased persons. Viewed,

however, in relation to the kamic principle in man, we see it as the plane whence the two poles of "desire" have their operation. In Globe A, the first of the descending arc, we see the impulse towards material life, the desire to incarnate impelling the Monads which are carried in the Great Breath, just as the fall into matter is made by the re-incarnating Egos. In Globe G, we see the conversion of this impulse towards matter into attraction towards spirit; a law followed by man in his evolution after a certain point is reached, just as it is in the Cosmos after the middle of the fourth Round.

The Pranic Plane is in reality the substratum of all the four cosmic planes. As "life" it interpenetrates and vitalises all the degrees of matter existing in the Cosmos. On all of these planes it has its appropriate centres which are called "Suns;" innumerable upon any one plane. Through these it falls from one plane to another, being by them distributed throughout the entire Cosmos, the life thus received being stored up in the various forms of matter, converted into various "forces," and finally surrendered on the dissolution of these forms. In its intensified aspect Life becomes desire, in its concrete aspects it becomes, by conversion, the vital principle of the astral and physical planes or principles.

Exhaustion, sleep, and various forms of illness arise from a superabundance of this vital principle running riot in the body. The effort sustained in the process of cerebration or other physical action, gives rise to an enormous liberation of the life-principle in us, by combustion of tissue. Practically the system gets overcharged with life. Health consists in the conservation of life in appropriate physical centres and its gradual and economic liberation. From its profuse and inordinate liberation arise pain, disease, and death. It has been argued by some modern schools of physiology, that the border-line between the initial processes of organisa-

tion in the physical plasm, and what for a better term we may call "vital substance," as yet unorganised, is occupied by a certain protoplasmic bacillus, a species of organic interpreter. When these become too numerous or too few, physical derangements follow.

The Astral Plane is related to the Astral Body of man. It is the "sensitive-plate" of the cosmic camera, and receives and records all the impressions made upon it from the world of Causes above and from the world of Effects beneath. Instead of "above" and "beneath," I might have said with equal truth, "within" and "without," for we are now dealing with planes of matter, and a *plane* is only a *state*. The Astral Light of the Earth is, as it were, an envelope or photosphere, wherein psychic causes make towards physical effect, and physical causes pass into psychic effects. Its highest aspect is called Akasa. Like the astral body, the astral-plane is of a subtile, plastic material whereon the thoughts and feelings of humanity, as well as all actions and all words or sounds have a *direct* and *indelible* effect. In this sense it is the *Memoria Mundi*, or "Book of Life." As all events are produced, occultly speaking, by the thoughts and feelings of men, certain sets of images in the Astral Light stand for the causes of future events. It is out of this storehouse of impressions that the history, not only of this world, but of each human being that has ever existed in it, can be faithfully reproduced by the Adept. On this subject of the Astral Light, however, more will be said when I come to treat of the law of "Karma."

That the Physical Plane of the Cosmos is related to the physical body of man needs scarcely any comment. Certain orders of bacteria in the body correspond to the "Builders" and "Elemental Spirits" in the physical plane of the Cosmos. There are four chief orders of these elementals commonly known by the names of Salamanders, Sylphs,

Undines, and Gnomes ; the intelligent forces known as the igneous, gaseous, fluidic, and mineral elementals in the Cosmos, corresponding to them. Every molecule in the physical body is ensouled by a pure "life-atom." In the constant wasting and building up of the physical organism, innumerable molecules are continually taken on and given off, but for all that these indestructible "life-atoms" remain. They are lesser "lives," incarnating and ex-carnating continually, but always remaining in association with the other atoms of the same pranic organism, which is the solar body of the man. The molecules of gross matter when taken into the body receive the impress and seal of the presiding intelligence, and by association with other molecules in the same organism, as well as by the psychic impulses which play through them, they obtain certain characteristics of a pure or impure nature. When those molecules are finally given off they enter into new combinations, passing into other organisms in which they endeavour to express the characteristics which have been induced upon them. As a general law, molecules of certain characteristics cannot be ensouled by "life-atoms" of a different nature. "Like attracts like" all the universe over, and evil persons attract molecules of a vicious nature because their solar bodies are vicious. The study of this question from an ethical stand-point would clearly show the moral duty of our keeping the atoms of our body free from impulses of anger, impurity, and other vicious tendencies. The subject bears a very close analogy to that of *Re-incarnation*, with which I shall have to deal in the course of the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

AFTER DEATH.

HAVING spoken of Manvantaras and Pralayas, both in the Cosmos and in the Universe, and of Man's relationship to the Universe, it will be in proper order now to speak of Man's *post-mortem* state, which corresponds to the pralaya, just as his activity in the body corresponds to the manvantara.

When a man dies his three lower principles are separated from him ; that is to say, his physical body, vital-astral, and life principle are dissipated and restored to their respective elemental conditions. Then the Kamic principle, taking form, becomes the Kama-rupa or "spook," and, with such intelligence as it has acquired by association with the Lower Manas, finds itself in Kama-loka, there to await the "second" death. Kama-loka is, as the name suggests, the place of Kama, or that place and state where it is the dominant active principle. As a place it exists within subjective space, and is not visible or cognisable through our physical senses. It is the common receptacle of the eidolons of men, animals, and all sentient beings that have had physical existence. In the case of man, the Kamic principle after separation from the physical body coalesces with the matter of the astral plane, attracting to itself certain classes of elementals, and so takes upon itself a form corresponding to its particular nature. As far as the Kamic plane it is the vehicle of the excarnated trinity of the formless principles, Atma, Buddhi, and Manas. These pass on into the Devachanic state as soon as the connecting links are severed, leaving the Kama-rupa or "spook" nothing more than an irrational, irresponsible, but for all that passional, and therefore dangerous entity. Under certain conditions it can assume objective form and solidity.

This it often does by coming within the physical aura of a highly mediumistic person, whose exhalations serve to it as a "developing medium" to a photographic negative. Under these circumstances it is capable of transmitting to the physical brain of the "medium" all the astral impressions which it had accumulated during earth life. The more vicious and earth-bound of these "spooks" are continually striving towards earth existence for the gratification of their animal passions, and hence are all the horrible facts connected with obsessions, frenzy, incubi, and succubi, etc., which befall those unhappy persons who supply by their lives, and especially their thoughts and secret desires, the requisite conditions for such psychic and physical disasters.

The state of Devachan (lit. : the abode of the gods) is one of supreme bliss in which the individual enters into the realisation of all the highest aspirations of his nature in a condition of vivid dreaming. It is the highest state of consciousness possible to mortal man ; *i.e.*, to one subject to eventual re-birth into physical life. It is a state of spiritual refreshment and adjustment, corresponding to the state of sleep after the activity of each day of earth life ; its "dreams" are not chaotic and vague, however, but real and living in the consciousness of the Devachanic entity. The spiritual and moral nature in man requires re-inforcing and conserving just as much as the physical life principle in his body, for during earth-life there is a continual drain upon the moral and spiritual energies of the Ego—and who can say that his moral strength is an inexhaustible quantity?—so that Devachan is able to afford refreshment to a certain part of our nature which merely physical sleep can in no way supply. From this it will be seen that the state of Devachan is that in which the Lower Ego, separated from all consciousness of its personality, yet retaining the full consciousness of its own egoity, is capable of entering into the

realisation of its own higher thoughts and aspirations, at least for a time ; and of re-inforcing and refreshing its moral nature by association with other entities existing in the same plane of being, which is indeed all but spiritual in its nature.

In this state the incarnating Ego assimilates the spiritual essence of its earthly experiences. As to the period which is required for this purpose, it may be reasonably shown to depend very much upon the nature of the individual. The more active natures would take less time in which to recuperate their forces and to assimilate the experiences of the past life. If we compare Devachan to the state of sleep, and the Devachanee to the personality, we shall have a very fair analogy. According to the intensity of the personal feelings, the dreams will be vivid and real, so that consciousness may, in a few moments of time, pass through years of pleasure or pain. But an active nature is not always the most susceptible to pain or pleasure, and it is the degree of activity in the nature which determines the duration of sleep. A man who is by nature very active, will do his work quickly, and his rest will be effected with the same rapidity. A sluggish nature, however, will require a longer period of sleep, although its day is no longer than that of others, and its work far less. The duration and quality of Devachan therefore would from this analogy, depend upon (a) the activity of the nature, and (b) the intensity of the feelings of each Ego. As, however, no two natures are exactly alike in their characteristics, no two Devachanic states can be exactly alike nor of the same duration in consciousness, though all are determined by Karma, and therefore exactly adapted to the case of each Ego. Of course there are exceptions to this general analogy, but these cannot be here discussed.

On this point one of the Masters of the Wisdom-Religion has written, . . . "this dream lasts until Karma is

satisfied in that direction, till the ripple of force reaches the edge of its cyclic basin, and the being moves into the next area of causes. This it may find in same world as before, or another, according to his or her stage of progression through the necessary Rings and Rounds of Human development.

. . . No, there are no clocks, no timepieces in Devachan, though the whole Cosmos is a gigantic chronometer in every sense. . . . I may remind you also that *time is something created by ourselves*; that while one short second of intense agony may appear, even on earth, as an eternity to one man, to another more fortunate, hours, days and sometimes whole years may seem to flit like one short moment. Time is not a predicate conception, and can therefore neither be proved nor analysed according to the methods of superficial philosophy, and unless we learn to counteract the negative results of that method of drawing our conclusions as agreeably to the so-called system of pure reason and to distinguish between the matter and the form of our knowledge of sensible objects, we can never arrive at correct, definite conclusions. . . . The stay in Devachan is proportioned to the unfinished psychic impulses originating in earth life. Those whose attractions were proponderatingly material will sooner be drawn back into re-birth by the force of Tanha. . . ." Just as in physical sleep the dream-consciousness does not include the objective consciousness of the waking state, so Devachan does not include a consciousness of the earth-life in itself. There is, however, a subjective *rapport* between the Devachanee and the internal principles of such persons still in earth-life who are related to the entity in Devachan by similarity of state. On this fact is based the teaching of Swedenborg and others who affirm that in the "heavens" a change of *place* is a change of *state* merely. On this point the "Key to Theosophy" gives an apposite illustration. "A mother dies, leaving behind her

little helpless children—orphans whom she adores—perhaps a beloved husband also. We say that her ‘Spirit’ or *Ego*—that individuality which is now impregnated, for the entire Devachanic period, with the noblest feelings held by its late *personality*, *i.e.*, love for her children, pity for those who suffer, and so on—we say that it is now entirely separated from the ‘vale of tears,’ that its future bliss consists in that blessed ignorance of all the woes it left behind. Spiritualists say, on the contrary, that it is as vividly aware of them, *and more so than before*, for ‘Spirits see more than mortals in the flesh do.’ We say that the bliss of the Devachanee consists in its complete conviction that it has never left the earth, and that there is no such thing as death at all; that the *post-mortem* spiritual consciousness of the mother will represent to her that she lives surrounded by her children and all those whom she loved; that no gap, no link, will be missing to make her disembodied state the most perfect and absolute happiness. The Spiritualists deny this point blank. According to their doctrine, unfortunate man is not liberated even by death from the sorrows of this life. Not a drop from the life-cup of pain and suffering will miss his lips; and *volens nolens* since he sees everything now, shall he drink it to the bitter dregs. Thus the loving wife, who during her life time was ready to save her husband sorrow at the price of her heart’s blood, is now doomed to see, in utter helplessness, his despair, and to register every hot tear he sheds for her loss. Worse than that, she may see the tears dry too soon, and another beloved face shine on him, the father of her children; find another woman replacing her in his affections; doomed to hear her orphans giving the holy name of ‘mother’ to one indifferent to them, and to see those little children neglected, if not ill-treated. According to this doctrine the ‘gentle wafting to immortal life’ becomes without any transition the way into a new path of

mental suffering!" Theosophy teaches that during this state of Devachanic bliss between any two incarnations, the Ego is surrounded by the living images of all that is good, beautiful, and true in the aspirations of the past earth-life; that these subjective images are created from the consciousness of the Ego; and that through them all the unfulfilled aspirations of the individual are satisfied. Thus the spiritual causes set going in the past existence on earth, expend themselves in effects in the Devachanic state, at the conclusion of which the Ego is again carried into earth-life. The Ego enters into and emerges from Devachan by falling into a temporary state of unconsciousness. As action is followed by re-action, waking by sleeping, and sleeping by waking, so earth-life is followed by Devachan, and that by re-incarnation; temporary states of unconsciousness being the zero-points or "nodes" through which transition from one state to another is made.

Water
Latter

RE-INCARNATION.

This doctrine is, and always has been, one of the fundamental teachings of Theosophy, and as such it deserves the fullest possible consideration. Apart from the actual knowledge of this truth, which can only be obtained by retrospective intuition corroborated by historical and other practical research, it is claimed that this doctrine is a logical necessity with all those who believe primarily in the existence of the human soul apart from the body, and in the law of universal progress. The argument for Re-incarnation rests primarily upon the views held as to the nature and origin of what we term "soul." As the causal power of all purposive action in man, the soul is regarded from the materialistic standpoint as a by-product of living organic matter; by orthodox Christians, as a special creation coming into existence first of all with the new-born child; and by others, including Theosophists, as a pre-existent and immortal entity.

Looking at the first of these, we see nothing but a purposeless, aimless effort on the part of Nature to evolve organisms capable of manifesting individual sentient consciousness. If the soul is a by-product of living organism then it can have no individual existence after the death of the body, and all the energy put forth towards self-development and the evolution of the organism, can have no fruit unless transmitted to another organism through procreation. But even here there is the difficulty of "quantities." If the aggregate powers of each of the two lines of heredity, along which this transmission was made, are held to be represented by the quantities $4x$ and $6x$, then the production of an organism which is capable of expressing an aggregate of powers equal to *more* than $5x$, is an anomaly which must be accounted for by the materialistic hypothesis. In connection with this objection of "quantities," the following are the chief facts not included by the physical theory of soul-origin:—(a) the appearance of new characteristics in a hereditary line; (b) the birth of idiots in families of education and mental training; (c) the birth of men of genius from parents of obscure origin and slight education, and of little or no originality of mind. In regard to this latter anomaly, an appeal is generally made to the theory of *cumulative* heredity, but it has yet to be shown that, in cases where genius thus spontaneously appears in any family, there was any such inherent quality to accumulate; and even then the causes which affected its suppression until the point is reached where it suddenly manifests as "genius" would not be accounted for. If the materialistic hypothesis is consistent in itself, however, mental characteristics can only be developed by physical function, and particular characteristics by special function, so that the argument from cumulative heredity cannot account for the *sudden* appearance of *special ability* in any particular family.

The Christian idea of "special creation" embraces two fallacies of a most significant nature. The first of these is an imputation of injustice against the Creator; the second, an imputation of obliquity.

When we are told that it is a man's life in this world that determines whether he shall hereafter suffer an indefinite period of torture or enjoy an eternity of bliss, it becomes an important consideration as to what conditions we are born into. If, therefore, it is the Creator who places one child in an environment where from the first moment it breathes a physical, psychic, and moral contagion, and another in conditions where all that ministers to the education of the higher instincts and aspirations of the child is present, then it is manifestly the Creator who makes it easier for one to gain heaven than another. Then again, with regard to the imputation of obliquity, Christian objectors to the Doctrine of Re-incarnation do not appear to have considered that their tenet of "special creation" implies complicity of the Creator to an offence of the moral law in all cases where unbridled lust is attended with fruitful results. Under this theory, too, all our ideas of what constitutes lawful and unlawful marriage fall to the ground, since it would appear that the fruits of one as much as of the other are sanctioned, nay more, *blessed* by the endowment of "soul." It is for the Christian to choose between his 'God of Justice,' and his theory of "special creation."

Now with regard to the Theosophic position. It is argued that if the "soul" is not the body, nor a product of its co-ordinated functions, but has separable existence therefrom (a fact proved by occultism), then if it exists *after* the body it must have existed *before*; and there is no more difficulty in a soul incarnating twice or a thousand times than once. The doctrine of Re-incarnation, accepted merely as a working hypothesis apart from any facts that

might be adduced in proof of it, appears the most logical facing of the anomalies of life, for while it answers to the laws of cyclic periodicity, the conservation of energy, and the correlation of forces; and while it covers the greatest number of observed facts, it likewise leaves us free to entertain the quality of *unswerving justice* as an attribute of that unseen and incomprehensible, but universally efficient Principle which we call variously Karma and Providence.

The act of dying does not change the essential character of a man or add anything to the sum of his individual acquirements, and, indeed, any such sudden change would destroy individuality. If dying conferred goodness or wisdom, then all men would be the same after death, both wise and good. But this cannot be, because individuality does not consist in the mere habitation of one body or another, but in the aggregate of essential characteristics inhering in the soul. It is further seen that if, during one earth-life a man does not attain to the full complement of experience possible from such existence, then there is no adequate reason for his finally quitting it; in addition to which it is evident that no *post-mortem* state of a progressive order could satisfy the nature if it be material and sensual in its tendencies. Hence it appears that a law which makes for the perfection of the individual, and through individuals of the whole Human Race, cannot be fulfilled by a series of *post-mortem* states which are just as likely to be incomplete as is a single life on earth. If a man has not conquered all the lusts and delusions of the flesh while on earth, and if death does not change his essential character, then his unfitness to enter permanently upon a life of spiritual activity wherein only a truly god-like nature can endure, is not overcome by a lapse from earth-life. Furthermore, if tradition and history were the only means of accumulating knowledge, and if every new-born child entered for the first time upon

existence, retracing the steps already taken by its progenitors, and bringing nothing of innate power to bear upon the problems of life, then the human race would make no progress, except through physical heredity, and even there the law of Atavism would constantly cancel results.

In Theosophy it is claimed that the progressive entity, Manas, attains perfection of consciousness only through simultaneous experience of two opposing conditions or states of being, spirit on the one hand and matter on the other; the diffused and the concrete, the illimitable and the defined; in fact, all the pairs of *opposites* in nature which are simultaneously within the radius of cognition *during earth-life alone*. The particular conditions of earth-life which afford individual progress are various according to the state of the Ego, *i.e.*, its degree of enlightenment, and hence its needs.

In the process of incarnation two main causes are at work: *necessity*, as appertaining to conditioned life, and *desire*, as the product of individuality. The laws which include and direct these causes into effect are *Karma* and *Affinity*. Individual Karma cannot transcend the law of Universal Life manifestations. We are told that each manifestation of the universe is "successively on a higher scale," and if there be a universal evolution, then there must of necessity be an individual evolution, for whatever we conceive of the universe as a whole, we necessarily are forced to regard as applicable to the human Ego as an integral part thereof. Thus, forced to incarnate in obedience to the law of periodic manifestation, the Ego is guided by the law of affinity to incarnate under certain conditions and into certain psychic and physical environments, for, according to the law of the conservation of energy, it operates along the lines of least resistance, which in a psychic sense is "affinity."

We have already seen that upon entering Devachan, the Ego leaves behind it the Kama-Rupa or "spook." This

eventually dies, and if it be not reinforced from the physical plane by mediumistic persons, it fades out, and the elementals which made up its constitution become scattered in the Astral Light. Upon emerging from the Devachanic state, the re-incarnating Ego attracts to itself these scattered elemental "lives," which afterwards become the Kamic principle of the forthcoming personality. By means of this vehicle the Ego is attracted to some psychic vortex instituted by persons in marital relationship, and so passes into incarnation. And now

" Fresh

Issues on the Universe that sum
Which is the lattermost of lives. It makes
Its habitation as the worm spins silk
And dwells therein. It takes
Function and substance as the snake's egg hatched
Takes scale and fang; as feathered reed-seeds fly
O'er rock and loam and sand, until they find
Their marsh and multiply."

It is from this point that the Ego begins to contact its instrument as one awaking from a sleep, and to take a gradually increasing control over the residue of unexpended propensities brought over from the past earth-life. Into the physical plasm are woven all the elements of the lower psychic nature of the past personality. The Ego—who eventually takes the newly formed personality for a habitation, as one would take a house built upon his own plans from materials largely supplied by himself—is the same that lived on earth before, but modified; the same, *plus* the assimilated experiences of the past earth-life.

The mere fact that he does not remember the physical circumstances of that past life is no argument against the doctrine of Re-incarnation, for we have to remember that it is the physical brain that takes the impressions of physical events, and the Ego that stores up the subjective knowledge resulting from the experience of those events. Now,

the physical brain is not the same in any of the Ego's successive bodies; but the psychic propensities which *are* the same, having been brought over from the past life, manifest at a very early age in so many tastes and inclinations, frequently giving the individual a distinct bias to particular modes of life. The dissimilarities of character existing in families where education and environment have been identical, points strongly in proof of this. Although it is a fact that most persons do not remember anything of their past lives, yet it is equally a fact that certain others do remember partially or entirely, while many more have what are called "reminiscences" of a past life.

The argument from "memory" against Re-incarnation is, however, a very weak one at its best. Can any of my readers remember all the events that have taken place in their *present* life; or even those which happened on a particular day several years back; or the particular experience that first taught them that fire burns, etc.? The knowledge which resulted from the experience of these events remains, for the individual is wiser with each day's life that is assimilated, but the facts themselves have been wiped from the tablet of the waking memory. They have passed as impressions on to the astral plane, and will be recollected at the moment of death.

I have not exhausted the arguments which cluster around this most interesting subject, for to do so would require large volumes. A recital of all the great men who have given both belief and teaching to this doctrine would add only the weight of opinion in its favour; the argument would still remain on its own merits, and, as I have said it is by no means exhausted in these pages. To the inquiring reader I would recommend a perusal of E. D. Walker's "Re-incarnation, a Study of Forgotten Truth," where all those who have taught this doctrine are chronicled

CHAPTER V.

KARMA.

THE law of re-adjustment, of retributive justice, by which every causal action is directly, though not immediately, related to its effect, is called in Theosophy 'Karma.' It is the ultimate law of all life, inclusive of all other laws throughout the universe. The effort of Nature to establish equilibrium gives rise to action and re-action, and were it not that there is a constant causal impulse given to life by every thought, feeling, and action of ours, as well as by the forces at work in every geometrical point in space throughout the universe, Nature would find its centre of gravity, and the world of effects would cease to be, just as a pendulum would come to rest were the mainspring of its impulse removed.

The balance of causes which make for good and evil in the world is that which determines its condition, moral as well as physical, at any given moment. Yet Karma is neither Cause nor Effect, but both, for it is the law which relates Cause and Effect, the continuity of creative impulse by which are established the conditions of equilibrium, and hence freedom ; or bias, and hence necessity. Applied to humanity, it is said to be the unerring law by which perfect justice is maintained in all the affairs which make up the life of every individual, and thus that of nations. In its origin it is inscrutable, in its methods of action we can discern it by its effects alone. The laws of cohesion, attraction, gravitation, etc., are established in our science by a knowledge of a certain series of observed facts ; the effects, not the causes, are what we name. In the treatment of this subject, however, it is necessary that it should be understood at the outset what is meant by "effect" in the Karmic sense.

Take the case of a child who from the earliest years of its life shows the vicious instinct which finally conduces to murder. According to the law of Karma, "instinct" must here mean the result of habitual action in past lives. All purposive action tends to become habitual, inasmuch as every action tends to repeat itself; and when any process passes from the strictly volitional faculty of the mind, it becomes automatic, and therefore, to the same extent, instinctive. If from these vicious causes within himself the individual were to commit murder, the sentence of death and its execution would not be the direct *effect* of the crime in a Karmic sense; it would merely be the punishment of the criminal from a code of laws in force at the time in the country to which he belonged. Murder of every kind is going on around us daily, but without punishment by death. Therefore the Karmic effect of murder is not death in our use of the word. Karma is not an avenging Nemesis tracking the heels of the criminal and the unrighteous; it is the wide sweeping law of inviolable justice, which, obtaining in the moral world equally as in the physical, has regard to motive quite as much as action. The causes of good and evil are *within* the man himself, not *outside* of him; they arise in him, and find their effects in the mental, psychic, and physical worlds in which he lives, and of which he is a part. Every act is a child of life, and motive is its soul. Our thoughts are creations, which incarnate when they fall into effect as deeds. If a man could escape away from himself, he could escape from the inevitable effects of his own evil thoughts and deeds; the cause does not die in giving birth to effects. The cause is *Ego*, and a man cannot destroy Ego though he flee to the utmost limits of the universe. Ego cannot be destroyed, but it can be *changed*. Causes for evil may become causes for good, because they are, in their essence, merely living forces; they become evil or good by

motive, and through motive, by action. While the sense of the "I am I" inheres in the human soul, the man who commits suicide in order to escape from misery, defeats his own end. Happiness does not consist in the mere gratification of individual desires, nor in the events of life, but in a selfless devotion to the good of the whole human family, of which we are but individual members, and in our attitude towards the affairs of life, morally as well as intellectually. Our world is but *ourselves*. Things are as we make them by use; events as we see them by thought; in everything around us we see nothing but *ourselves*.

"There is no good, nor any evil, but thinking *makes it so*." Good is that which makes for harmony; harmony unites, and unison endures; Evil is that which makes for self, disunion, and destruction; both are but *conditions* of life, the life itself is one. To desire good is the germ of a future omnipotence.

"Behold, I show you truth! Lower than hell,
Higher than heaven, outside the utmost stars;
Farther than Brahm doth dwell,
Before beginning, and without an end,
As space eternal, and as surety sure,
Is fixed a Power divine which moves to good,
Only *its* laws endure!"

All pain and suffering is the result of transgression of some law in nature, and in order to alleviate suffering it becomes necessary to learn the laws of Nature and to abide by them. Pain and suffering are effects, their root cause is ignorance. Goodness alone will not save us from pain, but it will give us contentment even while we suffer. If, however, a man desires to make that progress which will place him in a position to help others and to work with Nature for the betterment and uplifting of the human race, then to his goodness he must add knowledge, not only of Nature's laws but also of Self. Purity, honesty, and unselfishness will

bring opportunity for progress, while knowledge will enable us to use that opportunity. - Nothing is so likely to fall short of efficiency as goodness unallied to knowledge, and hence indiscriminate charity assists vice as much as virtue, and prolongs the fierce struggle for existence in this world.

The law of Karma is so intimately related to that of Re-incarnation in Theosophic thought, that a separate treatment of either is not entirely possible. The merit or demerit of any one earth-life cannot find effect in the short time and the restricted environment of any single incarnation; and as the law of Karma, as that of Re-incarnation, has a final application for Progress, it hence becomes necessary that the causes for good or evil accumulated by the individual in one life must have the opportunity for expression in another in the same plane of existence, otherwise experience, and hence progress, could not be secured to him. Now, progress is only possible to the individual by and through his association with humanity as a whole, and because of this fact the solidarity of the race is maintained. Where humanity is, then, there is the school; the lesson is Self-knowledge. The limitation in the choice of environment is the chief cause of a man not being able to work off all the effects of his past Karma in a single re-birth. Till the equilibrium of causes for good and evil, generated by the individual in past lives, is attained, he is under a bias of necessity. Moral good will not counteract physical evil, nor *vice-versa*; hence evil generated on the physical plane can only be nullified on that plane, and that by the generation of good causes. The action of Karma being uniform on all planes of existence, moral causes will produce moral effects; mental causes, mental effects; and so on with each plane. But because the physical world is produced from and depends upon the astral world, and that upon the psychic, there is hence an extension of mental and psychic causes into physical effects. Both

these lines of direction are embraced by the law of Karma, but the former has regard rather to the fulfilment of individual Karma; the latter to continuity of collective or Racial Karma. Thus, a man may start physical causes for good or evil, which will have continuous and cumulative effect on the physical plane until arrested and overpowered by other physical causes of an opposite nature. The impulse in him which gave rise to action arose first of all in his mind as a thought; from the mental plane it falls into the psychic, giving rise to emotions; thence, gaining impulse, it falls into the astral plane, where it takes subjective form, and so proceeds into ultimatum on the physical plane, where it becomes a discharge of his own immediate Karma. But the cumulative effects of the action set up thereby on each of the subjective planes of life, will have an influence, for good or evil as the case may be, upon the whole of the human race. Now it is possible that the initial thought may have been good, while the ultimate action proceeding from it may have been a cause for evil; and he, as the centre of action, would therefore experience a reaction for good upon the mental plane, and one for evil on the physical plane. Left to itself, re-action would be equal to the original impulse; but the continual play or interaction going on between different sets of causes admits of the possibility of a convergence of their various lines of action, by which the return of the original impulse may be entirely checked or annulled.

With regard to the particular environment into which an individual is drawn upon re-incarnating, this has been already partially explained in the section on 'Re-incarnation.' The law of 'Affinity,' however, is not final or imperative. The law of Progress demands that every Ego shall have the greatest possible variety of experiences possible to the unit, within the lines prescribed by the degree of evolution reached by the Race as a whole.

As regards the body in which the Ego is required to function, however, this is more directly conditioned by the Ego itself. It is the occult teaching that the kamic "elementals" generated during the past life of the lower Manas in its association with matter, are responsible for the fabrication of the new vesture from the materials supplied by the physical parents. These "elementals" are the germs of all that enters into the new personality in the shape of selfish propensities, animal instincts, appetites of the lower nature, etc., which, by hindering the free circulation of the life principle (prana) throughout the organism, breeds confusion and disease in the body. Any unequal appropriation of prana in the organism results in congestion, inflammation, and similar disorders of special functions, and corresponding atrophy in others.

Every organ is the centre of some special propensity of the animal soul (Kama-rupa) and is expressed by separate functional power, and every brain-centre is the seat of a particular faculty of the mind. Thus the unconquered desires of the past life enter into the structure of the new personality as so many passions clamouring for satisfaction, and are specialised as so many functions of greater or less power. So it is said in the book of Enoch, chap. xiv. :—"They use the materials which are at hand, fabricating organs for themselves by instinct, and in the appointed hour are born in the shape which they have formed for themselves. For man giveth not life to man, but the means only of developing life, and every man now living was the sculptor of his own body and organs. And this one maketh himself comely, and this one formeth himself unto learning, and this one fabricates organs that degrade him, and this one is imperfect because he is unskilful."

When it is understood, therefore, that every man is the maker of his own destiny ; that he is daily and hourly making

from himself that subtle thread which will be woven into the fabric of his next robe, and the next ; when it is understood that he is the child of his own past, the spouse of his present, and the father of his future life ; it will be seen that this doctrine of the law of Karma is neither a law of fatalism, nor of revenge, nor of chance, nor of indulgence, but of absolute, unswerving, inviolable *justice*, whose methods are corrective and whose path is Infinite Progress ! Then, too, it will be seen that every faculty that is used and developed, every noble aspiration that is followed, every virtue encouraged, and every victory won, will afford future opportunities for further progress, greater powers, greater service, and increased responsibility. For what are we, if not candidates for responsibility ?

The law of Adaptation, which relates faculty to its instrument through function or use, requires time for its working out. How much longer then must be the cycle of time required to relate consciousness to law through experience ? Yet the end of all human progress subserved by Re-incarnation under the greater law of Karma, is that man may learn the Law which binds him to the cycle of necessity, and emerging therefrom purified, wise, and strong, he may become ' a law unto himself.'

From what has been said it will be seen that the working of the law of Karma is one of the most complex studies in which the human mind can engage. This is so even in the case of individual karma ; it becomes even more so when we extend our inquiry into the destinies of Nations.

As, however, it is not within the province of this little treatise to introduce problems which it has not space to explain, I must leave the more intricate aspects of this subject as an extension of Theosophic inquiry for the reader.

ETHICS.

The ethical system put forward in Theosophical teachings is based upon the central fact of the solidarity of the Human Race, and has its application in the law of universal progress.

There is no such thing as *isolation* possible within our conceptions of a Universe; no such thing as action which has respect to self alone; no such thing as thought in which self is the only object. Physical science has long held the opinion that every atom exerts a direct influence on every other atom in the system to which it belongs, and what may be said of an atom as an integral part of a composite body, applies equally to every such body on a larger scale. Man is a composite being, subject to the limitations of time and space in all that appertains to his existence on earth, and the great Theosophic fact of the Interdependence of the Human Race is shadowed forth in the inter-atomic action of the material bodies to which man is related. The relation of man to the universe has already been touched upon in the course of these pages. I have now to say something more particularly to the point of the relationship of man to man, upon which the purest ethical inquiries are based. "When mature years have taught our hearts the sorrows of life," says Carcano, in his "Memories of a Child," "when the beautiful hopes that have decked our path like flowers, are seen to be childish fantasies and disenchantments; when the infinite spectacle of the world—what it is truly, and not what we believe it may be—has dissipated before our eyes the haze of first illusions; it is then that we have need to consider once again what we were, and what we have power to be; the past and the future stand before us as two days of our life, as two moments of eternity." Who that has

thought and felt and suffered does not know that there are moments in life wherein even the heart seems to beat from an impulse not its own? When the intensity of pleasure and pain mingle in the bitter sweetness of a powerful and speedy potion, we feel more than mortal minutes can sustain; we break away from the broad stream of life, and fall, like a broken cloud rent by the force of the lightning flash, in a torrent of dream-tears upon the breast of our Mother Earth. Such hours of joy and pain are not described but only mocked with words. The heart is like an æolian harp on which the wind plays fitfully; the brain like a naked nerve which starts and thrills in strange disquietude like the sea which surges at our feet, so dark and cold and dreary, rushing with the wind along the broken shore, and resting never. And yet we feel at rest within ourselves, as if we were but a drop in that great sea of noisy strife which knows only the harmony of its own ceaseless commotion; a drop hidden in the bosom of that One Ocean of Life which breathes and pulses with its ebb and flow as if a giant slept! It is at such moments as these that the awaking to a sense of the unity of life comes upon our souls as a deep moral conviction, and we arise in greater strength to fulfil a new and higher sense of duty.

True felicity is a stranger to the heart of this world, parched by the fever of passions, or flooded with the tears of sorrow, and to many it may seem that its only hope is "uncertainty;" the possibility that the day may come which shall bring the illusion of forgetfulness upon the mind whose whole knowledge lies in the memory of days misspent, and of nights of feverish unrest; the chance that the day may come which shall find the world other than it is. But happiness comes not by possibility, but by *power*; not by hope, but by *fulfilment*; and we, who have the day with us

in all its hopeful possibilities, need not to wait upon the day which *may* come, we have but to make what we will of the day which *is*. There is a happiness peculiar to innocence; and ignorance has a happiness that is all its own. But the fresh innocence of the green and softly-scented spring will change under the glare and intoxication of a summer sun into a sweetness that cloy, a fulness that disgusts; and the winter comes and carries all away! Innocence and ignorance are but the roots of purity and knowledge, hidden away in the silence and darkness of the 'yet unborn.' There are times when one is tempted to envy their happiness, but the Great Law of Progress sweeps us onward towards something that is more enduring still; something that, when attained, will be *ours by virtue of the price that is paid*; I mean the happiness of purity and truth, bought at the cost of many lives of suffering and of pain. It is thus that we lay down our lives to save them, and part with the happiness of ignorance to gain the bliss of truth.

The solidarity of the Human Race is a *fact* in Nature; not something to be brought about, but something to be recognised. Theosophy teaches that every action is like the dropping of a stone in the still waters of a lake, taking effect in every direction and in ever widening circles; that very thought is a seed sown in the soil of the human mind, 'bringing forth fruit after its own kind, whose seed is in itself.' It maintains the importance of an ethical system based upon natural law and having its extension into every plane of human life and consciousness. It therefore asserts the ideal of Universal Brotherhood as the only conception possible to man which is at once inclusive of all objects worthy of human endeavour and attainment, and capable of increasing and preserving the integrity of the Race. It has its basis in the philosophical conception of humanity as a Unit. The difference that it is noted in the evolutionary

scale is one of degree, not of kind. That man has a common origin no one will deny; for the solidarity of the Human Race is not the peculiar tenet of any one system of philosophy, ethics, economy, or science; it is a common postulate; and on this basis alone can humanistic teachings be applied to the problems of life. It therefore follows that whatever may arise out of these premises, as philosophical and ethical considerations, must have a universal application. A common origin, a common nature, common necessities; and here the stream divides, for we look in vain for any thing which seems to indicate that mankind has a common cause. Nevertheless, the Universal Brotherhood is not a hopeless desire, nor a project that is finally impossible to man. Neither is it a sentiment which proclaims against the existing order of national and class governments as the natural and karmic results of the neglect of this ideal in past constitutions, and which as such must run their course; but it is a truth which strikes at the very root of Human nature, comprehending at once the cause of its failures, its necessities, its progress and final liberation. The past cannot be undone; modern institutions must stand the test of time as former schemes have done. Meanwhile religious, social, and political *tolerance* must be our safeguard; and while we seek to institute a system of healthy reform based on the central doctrine of Universal Brotherhood, we cannot hope to escape the effects of causes that are already sown. 'While men are in ignorance of the inviolable laws which hedge them in as offenders like prison walls, and which become to the truth-seeking lover of justice wings of beauty and of strength, what can we hope for but a continuance of those evils for which we have no better remedy than evil itself?' A knowledge of the laws of Karma and Re-incarnation, when applied to the concept of the Unity of Life, would supply every man with a motive for

action based upon the soundest ethics. "There is one power which knowledge gives us," said Lord Palmerston, "which is more important than all others; it is the power of man over himself. It is by knowledge that men are enabled to control their passions, regulate their conduct, and devote their energies and exertions to the welfare of their country." Knowledge would take man further; it would teach him that his "country" is the wide world, his countrymen humanity. The distinction of race and caste and creed and sex would disappear under the influence of a true knowledge of what is implied by the terms 'Re-incarnation' and 'Karma'. In the broad application of these laws to the progress of humanity he would see that the above distinctions are not final, for so long as difference of form, of function, or any other specific quality is only an equivalent for *limitation of faculty*, we must not look for perfection in any one of these expressions of the One Life, nor consider that the ideal of human perfection can be attained by an accentuation of effort along any one of these divergent lines. In the present stage of human progress they are necessary channels of experience; the means of evolution, not the end; for the final readjustment of differentiating causes will lead to their unification.

With the ideal of Universal Brotherhood before us, the evolution of the race and the aspiration of its units become a more and more inclusive bond of sympathy. As one by one the selfish desires and petty ambitions of personality give way to the more absorbing objects of the enlightened mind, the heart of man expands, his arms open wide in fervent welcome to his fellow-man, and his day of attainment draws near. It is only when man has conquered his personal desires and ambitions that he can find it in his heart to entertain a desire for the welfare of those who do not immediately conduce to his comfort and well-being. But many who are

willing to do all they can for the alleviation of suffering and misery in the lives of others, find their hands tied by karmic cords which they are powerless to break, or already fully occupied in the discharge of imperative duties. To such Theosophy would say: Action is not the whole of life, there is will, and there is thought. Goodwill is that which sweetens life and helps the world along. The will of man is the mightiest factor in the world. Collectively it is responsible for the constitution of nations, communities, empires, kingdoms, and powers; the laws which govern and sustain them; the tyranny and oppression of the worldly great; the abject slavery of the hunger-hunted crowds; the strife and stress of their daily life; the intellectual and religious institutions of all nations; the ignorance and depravity of their dregs; all of virtue and vice, of happiness and misery that make or mar their people; that helps or hinders the progress and peace of the Human Race as a whole. The goodwill of man is a thing to be desired; the richest thing in all the world, and of rich things, the rarest. One thing a man can do even though he is powerless in all other directions to help others; he can *will* that which is good. The silent aspiration towards the ideal of a Universal Brotherhood will establish a centre of activity in the mind, around which living thoughts will cluster; and 'thoughts are things.' The universe was Thought before it came to be. Thoughts as well as diseases are "catching." Who knows how far a thought may reach? So far I set the boundary of a man's possible influence for good or ill. The consciousness we have of the limitations of time and space should not enter into the calculation of the *ultimate value* of a kind thought, a word in season, the impulse of a fellow-feeling, or a well-intentioned act. These fruits of life bear their own seeds and may endure indefinitely. Every thought takes its own form and desire

gives it life; and hence it is that man is able to create a world in advance of his time. A man need not be a great scholar to think what is beautiful and true. Much as the grandeur of a massive intellect may impose upon us the feeling of wonder, we are not attracted to it on that account. To command our sympathy and devotion, intellectual strength must be tempered with the beauty of a fervent compassion and love for all that is human. By this I do not mean that wisdom should countenance weakness and sin, but that it should regard them with tolerance while it seeks to correct and uplift them, to change them into rectitude and strength. The truly wise do not suffer the head to divorce the heart; the perfect man is symmetrical. When the head has no thought which the heart does not prompt; when the heart has no feeling which the head does not approve; when thought and feeling blend in the life of man grown beautiful and strong, then only can it be said that 'wisdom is justified of her children.'

I have said: "A man stands in relationship to the whole human race as an atom to the body of which it is an integral part. No other unit can effectively take its place until, under the law of Evolution, the changes going on in the constitution make the necessary adjustment possible. The idea of solidarity includes that of harmony, and also that of cooperation, from which we argue that, whether consciously or unconsciously, every man is subserving some purpose, and fulfilling some special function in the economy of the universe and in the human constitution." Let every one, therefore, be himself. Half the energy of human life is expended by men trying to persuade themselves that they are the equals of others in all respects, and by coercing themselves into methods of action quite foreign to their natures. Let everyone be true to his own keynote, adding the full value of his peculiar sound in quality as well as volume to the symphony

of life, and he will have done all that is required of him. "This, above all, to thine own self be true; and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."

Another prevalent cause of the waste of energy in human life is *regret*. We live too much in the memory, and not enough in hope. "Our age is retrospective," says Emerson in his introduction to "Nature." "It builds the sepulchres of the fathers. It writes biographies, histories, and criticism. The foregoing generations beheld God and Nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe?" There is health, and hope, and happiness in these words, for they are the offspring of a mind that knew the law of life is *Progress*.

A single day may be fuller of real life, more pregnant with experience, stronger in good, and fuller of hope than all the rest of the year preceding. But this depends solely on the attitude of the mind towards the affairs of our daily life. One day's *real life* is all we can do with at a time. To-morrow may find us younger than we are to-day; younger in the sense that life grows fresh and green, sunny and hopeful, as we feel the quickening power of Nature in our souls. Save in the conception of one who thinks his body to be himself, we do not grow old with years. Yet how many there are who approach the autumn of their life with empty hands and nothing but regrets and sorrows; haunted by the spectral forms of buried hopes; chilled by the passing memories of a forlorn yesterday. And this is life? It is a premature death that seizes on the soul that turns for consolation to the past, or looks back with regretful longing upon the fading form of some cherished but perishable idol. There is no progress in the life which feeds on Memory, only stagnation and death. *Memory is the lumber-room of a constructive mind.*

Scenes change continually around us, bringing new hopes and new possibilities to willing hearts and hands; but memory does not change, and heartaches and sorrows are its only fruit. The good that was is better, what need to look behind? To be happy we must change with life itself; we must grow as the flowers grow, and live as Nature lives, passing calmly from one day into another without a sigh of regret or one backward anxious glance. Theosophy teaches only a doctrine of Hope that is grounded on Reason; it affirms that the conceivable is the possible; that the possible may become the actual, that there is no work too great for man to fulfil; no ideal too high for human endeavour to attain; and that the progress and perfection of the Human Race lies in the faithful discharge of present duties, and the tireless quest of the ideal good by each and all of its units.

CHAPTER VI.

STATES OF MATTER.

ON the physical plane modern scientific researches lead us ever nearer and nearer to an understanding of the close relationship existing between the different sets of vibrations known as light, sound, etc., and recent experiments have demonstrated the relationship of sound and form. Electricity, light, heat, sound and other physical phenomena occurring in the different degrees of matter known to science, are in Occultism regarded merely as modifications of the one Motion or Great Breath in the universe. The varying rates of vibration to which the degrees of differentiated matter can respond, are in science called by so many names as comprehending as many sets of phenomena, distinct and separate from one and another in the gauge instituted by the physical senses. Occultism shows these rates of vibration, and therefore the attendant phenomena, to be convertible, for it teaches that the different states of matter, in which these vibrations are set up, are but differentiations of one homogeneous cosmic substance, capable of transmutation by any one possessed of the secret of the solvent. "That the molecules of ether are smaller than those of air, is evident from the fact that bodies which exclude atmosphere are freely traversed by the former. The rapidity of the vibrations of any matter depends upon the minuteness of its molecules, and as caloric or heat rays are below the red of the solar spectrum, and those of magnetic and electric ether are above the violet, it is evident that electrical ether is more rarified than light, and the latter more than fire. Sound travels from 1200 to 1400 feet in a second, while the most violent wind does not travel more than 60 miles in an

hour, from which it is evident that there are many degrees of molecular subtlety in atmosphere, and how near the finest of these approaches to the plenum existing within solid bodies may be inferred from the fact that if the ear be applied to the end of a beam of timber, the scratching of a pin's point at the other end can be distinctly heard ; so that as the coarse air does not traverse the pores of the wood, we must conclude that the sound is transmitted by vibrations of atmosphere in a highly attenuated condition ; (*i.e.* if atmospheric vibration is alone responsible for the propagation of sound). Now if wind is propagated by the grosser particles of air, and sound by the finer ones, it is plain that their vibrations do not interfere with one another.'

This brings me to a consideration of the fourth characteristic of matter known as *permeability*. In a philosophic sense it answers to the fourth dimension of space now so much in vogue as a problem among students of the higher mathematics. When we consider that our physical perception of the highest state of matter known to science is limited to what is called etheric vibration, we can easily conceive of the vast range of possible science that lies before the race in the unexplored regions of ultra-etheric existence. But, as said by Madame Blavatsky, "The turn of a four-dimensional world is near, but the puzzle of science will ever continue until their concepts reach the natural dimensions of visible and invisible space. . . . When demonstrated, the four-dimensional conception of space may lead to the invention of new instruments to explore the extremely dense matter that surrounds us as a ball of pitch might surround, say, a fly, but which, in our extreme ignorance of all properties save those we find it exercising on our earth, we yet call the clear, the serene, and the transparent atmosphere !"

It has already been said that every geometrical point in space is replete with life and consciousness. Occultism

further teaches that nowhere throughout the depths of space are there any intervals where habitable worlds similar to our own do not exist. They assert, moreover, that such worlds may interpenetrate those existing on the plane of our physical perception ; and that without in any way interfering with the constitution of the visible cosmos. This statement, however wonderful and seemingly improbable to the unscientific mind, need not for that reason be rejected as visionary by those who make claim to a stricter knowledge of what constitutes a limit of perception in the scientific sense. Our sense of sight is limited to the narrow range of the solar spectrum, yet the existence of states of matter capable of responding to higher and lower rates of vibration than those included within the chromatic scale of colour, is proved by the fact that the photographic plate can record impressions from the ultra-violet and ultra-red regions of the spectrum. Moreover, as science affirms the co-existence of matter and force, the electrical current is nothing less than a passage of matter through a body whose molecular structure is coarser and more permeable. Difference of vibration being due to difference of state in that which vibrates, it follows that any number of distinct modes of motion may co-exist within the same geometrical limits, provided that the same number of distinct states of matter are present within those limits ; and up to a certain point this is scientifically demonstrable.

When, however, we come to apply these facts to the question of the co-existence on our earth of other human beings beside corporeal man, we are told that the inquiry is 'insanely wild and absurd and altogether unscientific,' although the point of departure from scientific lines is not indicated, however daring may be the extension of these lines in the direction of the unknown ! So if we affirm from the standpoint of Occultism that many orders of invisible worlds in different stages of evolution exist within the apparently empty

spaces of the solar system, how can we expect to gain a hearing from presumably scientific men who still doubt the habitability of worlds that are visible? "Nevertheless," says Madame Blavatsky, "such invisible worlds do exist. Inhabited as thickly as our own is, they are scattered throughout apparent space in immense numbers, some far more material than our own world, others gradually etherialising until they become as breaths. That our physical eye cannot see them is no reason to disbelieve in them; physicists can see neither their ether, atoms, nor forces. Yet they accept and teach them. But while the degree of spiritual development attained by the race is that which prescribes the limits of its consciousness, we cannot expect that fifth-race men, with their limited five senses, will accept as final, teachings which can only be proved by an appeal to sixth-sense consciousness." Occultism thus opens out a wider view of what is intended by the word 'Universe' in the Theosophic sense, and if by the term "plane of existence" we understand *state of matter*, in which both life and consciousness are correlated, then we shall see that all planes of existence other than those to which our consciousness is related by means of the five senses, cannot be perceived or explored by us except by an extension of the *media* of consciousness through systematic and prolonged training in practical Occultism.

No aspect of Theosophic teaching seems to attract so much attention as that which deals with occult forces and powers. That the latter are commonly denied as possible to man in his present state of development is a fact which seems to presume upon two things, viz.:—That the possible limit of human evolution in our day is represented by those who are regarded by the Western world as the leaders of science and philosophy, and who must therefore be regarded as the "flower of humanity," and, that the nature of the powers

laid claim to is understood by such men, and by them pronounced to be impossible of human exercise. But is not this making the possible to be defined by the actual? For, if the only reason for disbelieving in the possible exercise of powers unknown to science in the West is that such powers are not common property, it is quite evident that any assertion of their actual existence includes the idea and the statement that the forces known to science are still better known to the Adept of Occultism, or that other forces, unknown to science, are controlled to use by him. It matters not which of these two statements is the one intended by what is called the exercise of occult powers. That unknown forces exist in Nature there can be no dispute; and as forces are but "modes of motion" there are hence unknown states of matter. Electricity, light and heat, are all due to different modes of etheric vibration, yet the phenomena would not be scientifically considered as one and the same. Force, therefore, is variously designated according to its manifestations, yet the force is radically one. Similarly, matter in its various manifestations is differently known and named, though it is the aim of modern scientific research to show that it is essentially one, and that all its differentiated forms have a common homogeneous substratum. To this end is the hypothesis of protyle. Now, as science has not determined the ultimate essence of matter even on this terrestrial plane of existence, it cannot therefore be known what is the ultimate nature of force, nor can the limit of their possible correlations be stated. Yet while it is admitted that these are possibly discoverable, and even while lines of research are extended in this direction, yet the statement made by Theosophists as to their positive experience of the existence of such knowledge among Adepts of Occultism, are treated by presumably scientific men as either intentionally deceptive or irresponsible. But while the scientist may be perfectly satisfied with his own methods of

research and his conclusions, is it wise on his part to deny off-hand the possibility of even greater knowledge under other conditions and by other means than those employed in the laboratory? And if this knowledge be admitted as possible, why not then to that particular school of science and philosophy which has made a continuous study of the finer forces in nature, as well as other aspects of metaphysics and occultism, through successive generations for indefinite centuries?

The disintegration and re-integration of material objects, and the transmission of solid bodies through others still more solid, are facts in occultism of which science has at least some illustrations under observation. Take for instance the following curious experiment:—Three glasses are provided and placed at a short distance from one another upon a table. Let us call them A, B, and C. Into A a solution of sodium sulphate is poured; into B, diluted syrup of violets; and into C, pure water. These contents are now connected by means of two moistened strands of asbestos, one passing from A to B, the other from B to C. The line of communication between A and C will therefore be through the syrup of violets in glass B. The negative pole of a battery is then placed in A and its positive pole in C. The electric current passing through will decompose the contents of A, leaving the soda base, and carrying the acid through B into C. The action of the acid upon the syrup of violets would normally be to change it from violet to red, but it is significant to note that no such change occurs. It is therefore an important inquiry as to what molecular structure is adopted by the acid during its transition through B. If, instead of the negative pole, the positive pole of the battery had been inserted into A, then the acid would remain in A and the alkali pass to C. In this case the passage of the base through B should turn its contents green, but again we find

no change occurs. The statement of Theosophy in regard to this class of phenomena is included in the postulate that all matter is essentially one and homogeneous, and in its various manifestations capable of responding to different rates of vibration; the rate of vibration of any substance being exactly commensurate to its atomic structure; whereby a change of vibration infers a change of state, and at a certain point in the scale of vibrations, a change of substance in a chemical sense. It might be objected, however, that a single homogeneous element could not produce an indefinite number of complex variants without the introduction of a second element, since simple bodies only change their specific properties in combination with other substances; but in view of the unexplained variations in what are accepted as simple bodies—variations known, but not explained, by the name of allotropism—we should hesitate to say what Nature can and cannot do. Charcoal and diamond; the one amorphous, the other crystalline; one soft, the other hard; one dull and opaque, the other brilliant and translucent; they are yet the same pure element. Oxygen and ozone again differ in their properties, though they are one and the same element essentially; and many other elements are capable of similar modifications of their properties without the admixture of another element; all of which go to show that the question of the permeability of matter, and also that of the disintegration and re-integration of solid bodies, and the transmission of such bodies along the magnetic currents of the earth by occult means, is not to be decided offhand merely because the phenomena are not included in modern Western science. The principle which lies at the back of all differentiation from the one *living substance* (called in Eastern philosophy *Swabhavat*), and by which the one becomes cognisable as the many, is Manas, than which there is no

greater mystery in the universe, for in it are comprehended all the potencies and potentialities of man himself, since mind is pre-eminently and finally the very man. Hence the oracle, "Man know thyself." Some of the primary distinctions of consciousness recognised in Theosophy as mental states common to human Egos I may now put before the reader.

CHAPTER VII.

STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

IT is not my intention to engage here in any attempt at a definition of Consciousness, much less to presume upon its cause, or the conditions under which, in our conception, it is dissociated from Unconsciousness. I must leave such problems to the metaphysicians, whose special ability in this direction has been exercised to such little advantage, that none of less ability can feel much encouragement to entertain the problem. I shall assume the position as being a self-evident fact, that all manifestations of mind have their origin in Consciousness, and turn at once from the idea of abstract consciousness to the subjective and objective relations which naturally depend therefrom.

Human consciousness is, under whatever conditions, related either to the noumenal or phenomenal universe; and though there are wide distinctions between sensation and perception, thought and consciousness, yet the relationship of the human mind to the abstract on the one side and the concrete on the other, entails the conception of abstract things under concrete forms when thinking in the terms of limited consciousness even of subjective things. Thus, when we speak of Beauty, or Virtue, we are unable to think of these as existing apart from that which is beautiful and virtuous, because beauty is the property of that which is beautiful, and virtue of that which is virtuous. In the same way, although we may speak of Consciousness in the abstract, yet inasmuch as it is the property of Mind we shall be obliged when speaking of States of Consciousness to refer not alone to that which is conscious of these states, but also to concrete things which are an index to them. As to whether such things have any

essential and separate existence apart from our Consciousness, is a question with which we are not at present concerned. A pertinent quotation from the Gnyana Kanda on this point may not be out of place. "That Intelligence which excites the functions in the path of virtue or vice am I; all this Universe, movable and immovable, is from me: all are absorbed into me, because there exists nothing but Spirit. I am that Spirit and nothing else exists. As in immovable cups full of water many reflections of one thing are seen, but the substance is the same: similarly, the individuals, like cups, are many, but the Vivifying Spirit like the sun is ONE. As in a dream one substance appears many, but in awaking everything vanishes but the one; similar is this Universe. As through error a rope appears like a snake, or a cockle-shell like silver; similarly all this Universe exists in the Universal Spirit. As through knowledge of the cord the serpent appears a delusion; similarly through spiritual knowledge, the world. As through jaundiced eyes white appears yellow; similarly through the disease of ignorance this world appears in the Spirit—an error very difficult to be removed."

There are three primary divisions of the States of Consciousness normally proper to the Lower Manas, and each of these is again sub-divided into three stages, as follows:—

Jagrata—Waking . . .	{	Active.	
		Passive.	+
		Neutral.	
Swapna—Dreaming . .	{	Active.	
		Passive.	-
		Neutral.	
Sushupti—Sleeping . .	{	Active.	
		Passive.	○
		Neutral.	

I have already shown in the course of this work that the Lower Manas is capable of uniting itself successfully, and in a greater or less degree independently, to the physical body, the astral body, the kamic principle, the creations of its own thought, and to the Higher Mind.

In the purely waking state, the consciousness resides in the physical senses by means of Kama, Prana, and Linga Sharira. In this state the mind is externalised to the fullest possible extent. Every nerve is wide awake and on the alert for impressions; the eyes are bright and intent; the ears receptive of the slightest sounds; the muscles and sinews are in full play, and the blood courses freely throughout the whole body. This is the active stage of the waking state of Consciousness. We tire at length of our activity, and sit down to contemplate those around us, or we may resort to some spectacle where we lose ourselves in passive contemplation of the perception of a single sense; or find similar diversion by listening to music. This is the passive stage of waking consciousness. Gradually, however, sleep overpowers the senses; one after another they become dull; the mind draws in upon itself; perception becomes chaotic and indistinct; the blood flows more and more feebly to the brain; a moment of unconsciousness supervenes; and the man is asleep. Consciousness is now in its neutral stage of the Jagrata state.

We have, then, three stages of what is called the "waking" state of consciousness. To the first of these we may attribute all kinds of wakeful activity in which for the time being the mind is identified with the physical body. The second stage would include the waking dream or "brown study," the reverie, all kinds of passive perception, and abstraction. The third stage would embrace all degrees of unconsciousness depending upon external causes; it is, in fact, that *node* into which the sense vibrations of waking

consciousness fall before returning, or opening out into a higher plane of activity.

When sleep succeeds, consciousness is removed to the dreaming state called *Swapna*. The environment is changed; what was imaginary and seemingly illusive to us in our waking moments, is now the one reality. Not only are our sensations and actions changed, but also our reason and methods of thought. In the first stage of Dreaming, the slumbering mind feels itself, although a formless entity, to be taking an active part in a life to which it is somehow related as if by the experience of years. It wills to move, and is instantly transported to a new scene, and stays not to consider how it came there; it wills to see, and doors and walls become alike transparent; it wills to hear, and can understand with equal facility any known language, living or dead, and can reply in a vernacular never heard within the waking memory of man; it wills to think, and takes an enviable delight in proving to itself how 'perpetual motion' can be demonstrated by means of a piece of green cheese and a barrel organ, or other like absurdity.

The second stage of Dreaming is analogous to the same stage of the waking (*Jagrata*) state; but in this the mind views itself under an image to which its consciousness is related, while it remains separate. This image of itself it contemplates with a passive consciousness, as one would watch the actions of a central figure in a drama, while taking no other part in the play than that of 'leader's prompt.' It is in this stage of the Dreaming State that the moral sense enjoys full powers. The mind is then able to say that a thing is well or wrongly done; and even while it seemingly has no power over its active image, yet its consciousness is so far united thereto as to feel a sense of remorse or pleasure in its evil or well-doing.

When neither the active nor passive stages of Dreaming

are present to the consciousness, Swapna is then said to be in its neutral or third stage; and by this node or transition centre the consciousness passes into the State called Sushupti, or pure sleeping; where Devachanic activity becomes the proper life of the Ego. This Sleeping State has its three sub-divisions, active, passive, and neutral, like the preceding States of Dreaming and Waking. It is through the highest of these that the consciousness of the Lower Manas passes from the realms of illusion into the active spiritual perceptions of the Higher Ego; a state to which the Adept rises in sleep immediately, instead of meandering about in the shades of the astral plane; or in death, fancying himself in heaven amid the beautiful but illusive scenes of Devachanic life, as men do who are as yet only candidates for his immortal state.

I have thus briefly gone through the stages of consciousness peculiar to the Lower Manas, which, as the informing principle of the perishable man, is related to the four lower planes of the cosmos; the physical and astral worlds, Kama-loka, and Swarga or Devachan. I must now turn to the consideration of some of the more phenomenal aspects of these three states of consciousness.

If we begin with the physical Waking State we may perceive many abnormal features in its stages. Thus we have all the phenomena of the illusions of the senses, the consequent delusions of the mind, and the hallucinations of both. These are mostly produced from nervous affections or the psycho-physical results of extreme emotions, so that the brain is rendered peculiarly receptive of impressions from the Astral Light. Then we have the "brown study" or sense-abstraction, in which the unconscious projection of what is called the 'thought-form' or 'wraith of the living' is not an unfrequent occurrence. It is difficult to say whether the thought and consciousness of the individual

who creates this image of himself is united to it for the time being, or not.

All we can say from observation is that these 'thought-forms' or 'wraiths' appear to act as if in a state of thoughtful abstraction, giving no evidence of any interest in what may be going on around, yet moving and acting with sufficient intelligence to suggest that they are at least partially conscious of what they are doing. Nevertheless the persons whom they represent do not know on awaking that they have been to this or that place. The state is therefore called an 'unconscious' one. As this spectral form, however, assumes the appearance of solidity, and may be seen at a great distance from its original, we are precluded from considering it as identical with the *Linga Sharira* or Astral Body, which can never go beyond a very limited distance from the living body. The probability is I think, that the mind during these states of abstraction throws off thoughts in all directions, and some one of these, crystallising in the Astral Light, and gaining power by association with elementals, becomes energised into a semblance of life, and having direct psychic relationship with some person or persons in actual physical existence, is, nothing preventing, immediately materialised in the presence of such persons. The explanation, however, is one which I need not press too far in this place as it properly belongs to the domain of Occultism. It is sufficient if we note the state of consciousness in which the mind is when the thought-form appears to others at a distance; and this seems to be at a point between the passive and neutral Waking. The state in which one is able to unite his consciousness to these thought-forms and to receive and retain impressions through them, projecting them when and wheresoever he will, is one that pertains to Adeptship. This power of *Kriyasakti*, which was the common property of men of the later half of the third and fourth Races, belongs to the Higher Manas, to

which all things are immediately present in its radiant thought by means of this mysterious power which instantly transmutes ideas into visible forms.

To this sub-division of the Jagrata State, we may also refer the waking vision, where the consciousness is abstracted from sense-perceptions of a purely physical and external nature, and the brain, being brought into a state of momentary quiescence, becomes closed to all external impressions, and open to internal stimuli from the Astral Light.

When this state is actively induced by intention of the seer, the consciousness is directed to the object of its search by means of the imagination, which puts it *en rapport* with the true impression of that image already existing in the Astral Light. The state is then described as the first or active stage of neutral Jagrata, which is a sub-stage of the third general division of the Waking State.

The involuntary waking vision belongs to the succeeding, or passive stage of the same general division. The subject of this stage of consciousness is all but insensible to the impulses from the physical plane, and not unfrequently unconsciousness succeeds to the experience of visions in this stage, on account of its close relations to the neutral stage of Waking. It will thus be seen that the possible sub-divisions of these sub-stages of consciousness are progressively more and more complex in their natures, and thus more difficult to define. A close study of the definitions of the three main divisions of Waking, Dreaming, and Sleeping, will, however, serve as a guide to a closer analysis, since the sub-divisions follow the same general laws. The phenomena of psychometry, and some phases of mediumship, are included in these sub-stages of passive and neutral Waking.

When we come to consider the abnormal dream states or those which enter as sub-stages of consciousness in Swapna,

we are treading upon ground far less known to us, or perhaps we should say, more imperfectly defined and chronicled. The seven classes of dreams within the limits of Swapna consciousness are :—

1. The chaotic, monstrous, and troubled dreams ; arising from physical disorders, indigestion, mental troubles, and similar external causes.
2. The vague and undefined dream ; in which pictures only half formed, impress themselves in rapid succession upon the brain, and hence appear quite obscure and confused on awaking.
3. Warning dreams, which occur to the mind as pictures, in the astral light, of events about to happen—or they may appear as living scenes in which the dreamer either takes an active part or remains a passive spectator. These are not necessarily connected specially with the life of the dreamer, for they frequently have reference to the lives of others known to him but who are not themselves susceptible to these subjective impressions.
4. Retrospective dreams, having reference to events which have already taken place in this or preceding incarnations.
5. Dreams resulting from the will of others, good or bad, who desire to impress the sleeper with thoughts, towards future action. The ordinary man must be wide awake and equipped with a very powerful will in order to effect these impressions upon a sleeping person ; but the adept need not necessarily be awake in order to produce this result, because his state when away from the body is above the states of either Swapna or Sushupti, as has been said. With regard to the reception of thoughts during sleep

which afterwards have effect in the waking life of the individual, this is a fact not sufficiently well known to most people ; but it is nevertheless a potent factor in daily life, and more will be said on this point when we come to speak of the interaction of these states of consciousness.

6. The next kind of dream is the allegorical, which, under more or less beautiful and spiritual imagery, is intended to convey to the mind some idea of a subjective reality or truth. The impression of that truth clings to, or more properly speaking, is held by the consciousness of the waking person, although the brain may not retain the images under which it was conveyed.
7. Prophetic dreams are the highest class of conscious impressions received in the Swapna state. They are impressed upon our consciousness by the Higher Self, and as such are plain and clear. Many instances of this kind of dream appear in the various scriptures, and are spoken of as being received by means of a voice, a vision, or both.

It is presumed that all dreams would come under one or another of these heads, though sometimes they may partake of the nature of two or even more of them on account of the interaction of these states of dreaming.

One of the most interesting phenomena of the Dreaming State is that of somnambulism or sleep-walking. What medical evidence and personal experience we have upon this subject would seem to point to the fact that intelligence and volition of a high order are both actively at work in a body whose brain if awake at all, can only be so in some remote centres. Action is not set up in response to sensation from the physical, but from the internal plane,

i.e., the astral or psychic. At first sight it would be difficult to dissociate this phase of Dreaming from the Waking reverie, but on close examination there are some very marked differences. Thus, while in the waking reverie there are evidences of mechanical defects, the hands moving over objects in an aimless way, the feet subject to be tripped by interposed objects, the whole body showing at most but a dull sensitivity; in the somnambulic state it is quite the reverse of this, for although the senses of hearing and sight are closed externally, the sleep-walker will avoid in a marvellous manner every object in his way, he will trust his feet to the most hazardous paths, his body to feats of equilibrium which could only be emulated under the most favourable conditions, if indeed at all, in his waking state. Then again, the sleep-walker surpasses himself, or rather his waking self, in any intellectual matter in which he may engage. Things which had slipped the memory of his waking brain are faithfully performed in the sleep walk; problems with which he could not cope in the light of day, are accomplished *a finissimo* by the light of a candle to which the eye of the somnambulist appears to be absolutely insensible. There is yet another distinction between this state and that of the waking-reverie. It lies in the fact that the subject of thought in the latter state is not forgotten on the return to active, wakeful consciousness; whereas the somnambulist remains quite unconscious, after awaking, of all that he has been doing, and apparently thinking.

It is only when we come to consider the intimate relationship of these states of consciousness with one another, that the more phenomenal aspects of them can be adequately conceived of and explained.

Another phase of this state of Dreaming (Swapna) is the induced sleep of hypnotism and mesmerism. The facts

however are so generally known as to need no special comment in this place ; but the higher states of induced trance and ecstasy are aspects which lead us immediately into a consideration of the third general division of consciousness which I have dealt with partially in the chapter on 'After Death,' in the passages devoted to an explanation of Devachan.

The pure Sleeping State (Sushupti) is one into which every incarnated Ego passes for a brief time during each night. In it the Lower Manas, temporarily freed from all external influences induced through the brain and its association with the lower principles generally, enters into the light of its own Higher Self and to a certain degree shares with it the experiences of the spiritual life ; in short, it now enjoys a temporary Devachan and 'a foretaste of better things to come.' The return to Waking consciousness, however, can only be made through the Kamic and Astral planes, and unless fixed centres or nodes of consciousness have been already established on these planes by concentration while in the Waking State, the mind drifts hither and thither in these planes, and no recollection of the Sushupti State is brought into waking life. Concentration upon these subjective planes of activity is therefore necessary to those who intend progress in spiritual and occult development. The state of consciousness proper to the Higher Manas is called Turya, a state of spiritual cognition in which the limitations imposed upon the Lower Manas by incarnation do not exist, and where the mind is above even the subtle attractions of Devachan, with all its apparent realities and, comparatively speaking, its supernal beauties. But we have now gone through a brief review of the three main divisions of consciousness, and have used some illustrations, of more or less common experience, to illustrate their sub-divisions ; and it is now only necessary to add that these states are all properties of the Lower Manas, the thread of consciousness penetrating

the four lower planes of existence. This thread of consciousness being an unbroken line of greater or less vibratory and responsive power in each man, establishes the interaction of the states of consciousness we have been considering.

So, as it has been shown that a want of concentration in our Waking state produces confusion in our Dreaming state, and hence prevents the mind from bringing back its memory of the Pure Sleep, the necessity for concentration in all our waking hours must be at once apparent. And by concentration I mean the bending of all our efforts towards the Ideal Good, into which they may flow as the rays of light to a focus in a lens. Through this focus we may thereafter come and go, without dissipation of consciousness in the process of waking and sleeping; thereby opening up a road which will place us beyond the necessity of the *post-mortem* experience of Devachan, and finally lead to Adeptship by an extension of consciousness above all power of the great illusions which men call Life and Death.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MAHATMAS.

THE name 'Mahatma' means literally '*Great Soul*,' and is used as a title of respect to certain Adepts or Sages belonging to the Eastern Brotherhood of Occult hierarchies. The equivalent of this name in the Vedas is *Rishi*, a word primarily used to designate seven ancient sages who founded the seven occult Orders in the school of Raj-yoga. The word is very often compounded with others to signify the different orders, such as *Devarshi*, a divine sage; *Rajarshi*, a kingly sage; *Maharshi*, a great sage, etc. Although for the Western world they must remain under their Eastern names by which they are now commonly known as an Order, yet it is not claimed that they are all of oriental birth, or that they have only lived and taught in Eastern countries. On the contrary, they are known to have existed in all parts of the world and to have carried out their special work after methods in accord with those of the country and period in which they successively moved. As workers for and with humanity, they have been guided by their exact knowledge of the cyclic laws to extend their observations and teaching into all parts of the earth; and nowhere is a great centre of psychic, mental, or spiritual activity to be found where they are not, by one means or another, represented.

There are seven primary classes of Adepts comprehended in the great occult Order to which I have referred, and this number is consonant with the nature of every perfect body or organisation, since Nature works by septenates and completes all her series by sevens, as will have appeared conspicuously in the preceding chapters without special reference to the latest concepts of physical science. Every

Manvantara of the seven included in the universal cycle of Evolution has its creative presiding and informing Logos or Spiritual Sun, which in its initial manifestation evolves or sends out Seven Rays, and these again and again sub-divide into septenates. Every human Ego belongs to one or another of these Rays, and thus comes under a specific spiritual hierarchy. The Seven Rishis referred to above as the heads of the Seven Orders of Sages, are the highest embodied manifestations of these Logoi. Beneath them come successive orders or classes of Adepts. Of the seven grades, however, only five are commonly spoken of, and their heads are known in Thibet as the Chutuktu ; the other two orders are known to the highest Initiates only, and have a special significance in reference to the sixth and seventh Races of humanity yet to manifest on this globe in the present Fourth Round. These five Chutuktu are not confined to any particular Lodge of Adepts, we are told, but visit the different Lodges from time to time in succession ; their operations, however, are centralised in Thibet. All grades of Adepts owe allegiance to one of these five great Teachers, although the different Lodges have their separate and distinctive methods of carrying out the work induced upon them by the study of the same general system of teachings. The Adepts themselves owe no allegiance, however, to any exoteric order of religion, nor to any religious movement, whether in the East or West ; for on reaching a certain stage in their initiation they forego all distinction of nationality, caste, and creed, and are sworn only to the Brotherhood of Humanity and to the whole of their own Occult Fraternity. There are several orders of Initiation previous to the attaining of the adeptship, and below these Initiates are different grades of Chelas, or pupils, belonging to one of two classes, viz. : probationary and accepted Chelas. The latter class are under the teaching and training of

Adepts, and are candidates for Initiation into the Brotherhood. The Adepts are of all nationalities, and have attained their states from different grades of society. Neither are they all of one sex. In an article by Madame Blavatsky, which appeared in the "Theosophist" for March, 1882, it is said that the pious Chinese Princess who introduced Buddhism into Thibet in the seventh century is an adept who has re-incarnated in a succession of female Lamas and was known to Bogle as the "Superior of the Piate-Lake Nunnery." In Nepaul there is a high female Adept, and in Southern India also there was recently another female Initiate named Ouvaiyar whose Tamil work, "Kural," on Occultism, is still to be obtained. There is also another Adept in Benares whose photograph I have myself seen, and who is credited with a marvellous knowledge of the Eastern Shastras in addition to occult powers. Indeed there is no reason why women should not attain Adeptship providing their individual Karma affords the necessary opportunities, for sex in itself is no disqualification. Adeptship is but the crown of spiritual progress and development, of mental and moral evolution, and this ideal of human perfectibility can be attained by women as well as by men. What the whole human race will eventually attain to in the ordinary course of evolution, the Mahatmas (Adepts of the higher orders) have already attained by special training and spiritual education. A Mahatma does not consist of the mere body through and in which he temporarily functions any more than in the garments he wears on one or another occasion, hence the oft-repeated wish to "see" a Mahatma would result in but poor satisfaction to one who looks to external appearances for indications of internal perfection. A true recognition of all that is implied in the words, 'there is a natural body and a spiritual body,' would lead the thoughtful to understand that the Mahatma cannot be seen with the

physical eyes any more than a man's character can be known by the clothes he wears : *how* he wears them is entirely another matter. Mahatmaship consists in the Spiritual Enlightenment of the Manasic principle and its consequent freedom from all illusions common to the natural mind, the whole consciousness being centred in the Higher Manas, which absorbs the light of the Divine Monad. A Mahatma can therefore be seen only by those who have attained the same plane of consciousness. From that plane the whole human family is simultaneously apparent to the consciousness of the Mahatma, but as one viewing the whole vault of midnight heaven does not take special notice of one star more than another except its peculiar brilliancy attracts the attention, so he cannot be expected to concern himself specially with each individual Ego, until such time as its evolution brings it to that stage where its distinctive qualities render it a subject worthy of particular attention. Thus, while they are absolutely impartial in their work for humanity, they are not indifferent to the special claims to their attention which individuals may create for themselves ; but the strain must be set up on our side before any response can be hoped for, and when we are ready they will be found *waiting*.

But the existence of the Mahatmas is yet a matter of question in the minds of many, especially in the West. It is taken for granted that the scientific knowledge of Western attainment is the highest output of human evolution up to date. I see no reason for accepting this ; and in view of the doctrine of Re-incarnation, the existence of the Mahatmas would be a *logical necessity*, even if direct evidence on the subject had not been forthcoming. I should need to know what had become of the exalted spiritual teachers of ancient philosophy, who are nowhere represented in our modern intellectual aristocracy whose great achievements have their foundations in premises already established by the philosophy

of those whom they are at pains to deny. Who will stand for a modern Pythagoras, a Socrates, a Plato, a Euclides, among our many Professors of science and philosophy? Or shall we accept that they have gone back upon the law of Evolution, the law of Progress, and have found a habitat in the bodies of some well-fed Oxford Dons? As Re-incarnation is a logical necessity to me, because Progress is a logical necessity, so the existence of the Mahatmas becomes to me equally necessitous of acceptance. Moreover, as there is a difference of type between an ape and a Hottentot, between a Hottentot and a European scholar, why need the scale end here, may there not be an equally wide distinction of type between the highest European and—shall I say a Mahatma? Why not? Who among our great of intellect and soul would undertake to say, our Western egotism even considered, that the Evolution of the Race had found its consummation in this or that modern expression?

But the existence of the Mahatmas is asserted as a fact by those who have seen and conversed with them; not by Fellows of the Theosophical Society alone, but by other persons who give their independent testimony, and who have reassured the thoughtful of the truth of Swedenborg's remark, "Search for the Lost Word among the Hierophants of Tartary and Thibet." The statements made in "Five Years of Theosophy" will stand upon their own merits as independent testimony from several individuals which is mutually corroborative. Damodar K. Mavalankar relates his own experience with the Mahatmas, to whom he has now gone over. Sundook, the pedlar from Thibet, who visited the house of some Theosophists staying at Darjiling, gives his testimony as to the existence in Thibet of certain persons beside the great Lamas who are possessed of extraordinary powers. On being shown a photograph of Mahatma Kuthumi, "he looked at it for a few seconds and then, as though suddenly

recognising it, he made a profound reverence to the portrait, and said it was the likeness of a *Chohan* (Mahatma) whom he had seen accompanied by a numerous body of *Gylungs* about the beginning of October, 1881, at Giansi." The name of the Mahatma being asked, he said that "They are called Koothoom-pa," of whom there were many, but there was only one chief over them. "On being shown a peculiar rosary of beads belonging to Madame Blavatsky, the pedlar said that such things could only be got by those to whom the Tde-shu Lama presented them, as they could be got for no amount of money elsewhere." One of the Chelas of Mahatma Kuthumi, who was staying at the house in Darjiling, put on the sleeveless coat belonging to his order and the pedlar, recognising him as a *Gylung*, bowed down to him and "took the whole thing as a matter of course." Rajani Kant Brahmachari, a young Bengali, tells how, not being a Fellow of the Theosophical Society, and ignorant of the existence of such a body, he made his way into the Himalayas, and there came in contact with some Thibetans, called *Koothoompas*, with their Teacher, or Guru, who was reading from the Rig Veda. Brahmachari had been without food for some time and was hungry, which fact the *Guru* discovered soon after saluting him. Some ground grain and tea was therefore ordered for him by the *Guru*, but as there was no fire in the place Brahmachari was at a loss how to prepare his food. The Mahatma therefore asked for a cake of dry cow-dung, which is used for fuel at Thibet, and ignited it by simply blowing upon it. This phenomenon had been often performed in the presence of Brahmachari by another Chohan at Gauri, who also instantly cured a case of rheumatic fever by giving the patient to eat a few grains of rice which he had crushed out of paddy with his own hands.

Now this, as disinterested evidence from a devotee of one of the most truth-loving religious bodies in the world, far

outweighs all the uninformed assumptions of Western sceptics to the contrary. The evidence as to the existence of men endowed with such powers as described above and with others yet more wonderful to the European mind, is still further supplied from the independent witness of such men as Jacolliot, Abbé Huc, and Ser Marco Polo. Sriman Swami writing on this subject, says:—

“Madras, August 7, 1889.

“DEAR SIR,—In reply to your inquiries I may say that I certify on my word as a *Sanyassi* that I have twice visited Thibet since the year 1879; that I have personally become acquainted with several Mahatmas, among whom were the two known to the outside world as Mahatma ‘M.,’ Mahatma ‘K. H.’; that I spent some time in their company; that they told me that they and other Mahatmas were interested in the work of the Theosophical Society; that Mahatma ‘M,’ told me he had been the (occult) guardian of Madame Blavatsky from her infancy.

“ (Signed) SRIMAN SWAMY.

“Hon. Sec. Cow Memorial Fund of Allahabad.”

The following evidence of Mr. Eglinton on the subject of the astral appearance of the Mahatma Kuthumi under eminently satisfactory conditions is given as a test case for those who are clever at explaining things they do not understand. Mr. Eglinton affirms that while on board the steamship *Vega*, and a long distance from land, the Mahatma suddenly appeared to him in his cabin, and after conversing with him, as suddenly disappeared, taking with him a letter which Mr. Eglinton had written, the contents of which were as follows:—

“S.S. *Vega*, Friday, 24th March, 1882.

“MY DEAR MRS. GORDON,—At last your hour of triumph has come. After the many battles we have had

at the breakfast-table regarding K. H.'s existence, my stubborn scepticism as to the wonderful powers possessed by the 'Brothers,' I have been forced to a *complete belief* in their being living, distinct persons, and just in proportion to my scepticism will be my *firm, unalterable* opinion respecting them. K. H. *appeared* to me in person, and what he told me he dumbfounded me."

Up to the time of this event, Mr. Eglinton had been an entire sceptic as to the existence of the Mahatmas. This letter of his was received the same day, Friday, 24th March, 1882, under the following conditions, as related by Mrs. Gordon, the wife of Colonel (now General) Gordon :—

"At nine o'clock on Friday, 24th, Colonel Olcott, Colonel Gordon, and myself, sat in the room which had been occupied by Mr. Eglinton. We had a good light, and sat with our chairs placed to form a triangle. In a few minutes Colonel Olcott saw outside the open window the two 'Brothers' whose names are best known to us, and told us so. He saw one of them point his hand towards the air over my head, and I felt something at the same moment fall straight down from above on to my shoulders and saw it fall at my feet in the direction *towards* the two gentlemen. Colonel Olcott and Colonel Gordon both saw and heard the letter fall. Colonel Olcott had turned his head from the window for a moment, to see what the Brother was pointing at, and so noticed the letter falling from a point about two feet from the ceiling. When he looked again, the two 'Brothers' had vanished. There is no verandah outside, and the window is several feet from the ground."

But yet we are informed, on the authority of certain Western Sages, that even the *name* of Kuthumi is "gibberish"! It would have been better for their reputation, however, had they first of all consulted the "Vishnu Purana," Book III., ch. 6., though the name of the

Rishi Kuthumi is mentioned in more than one Purana, and his *Code* is still preserved, among eighteen written by various Rishis, in the library of the Asiatic Society at Calcutta. The name of another Mahatma, known to many members of the Theosophical Society, is mentioned in Book IV., chap. 4 of the "Vishnu Purana," who is said to be still living in the village of Katapa in the Himalayas, and who, in the future, will restore the Kshetrya Race (Book IV., ch. 24). Now it is well known that the Mahatma referred to as now living belongs to the tribe of Rajputs, the proudest warrior race of ancient Aryavarta, and is, therefore, a Kshetriya as well as a Brahmin by natural descent.

But it is objected by some, 'If the Mahatmas exist why then do they not come out among us and give us some evidence of their powers? We might then believe all that has been said of them, and who knows if we might not thereafter become Theosophists!' As to their appearance in the work-a-day world we can confidently say with Madame Blavatsky, "The world is neither ready to recognise them, nor to profit by their teaching." Let the experience of those who *have* come forth, and essayed to raise the world by their teachings and example, stand in witness of the truth of this statement! First let us justify Socrates, Bruno, Vanini, and the rest of their teachings; and then we may be within hearing of the Mahatmas. At the present day and as the world now stands in point of spiritual development, the attempt to preach their doctrines broadcast would be like sowing corn-seed in mid-ocean, while an exhibition of their powers would constrain the simple-minded to slavish worship, and even the intellectual sceptic to muttering wonderment.

In "Isis Unveiled," Madame Blavatsky says, "Travellers have met Adepts on the shores of the sacred Ganges, brushed against them in the silent ruins of Thebes, and in

the mysterious deserted chambers of Luxor. Within the halls upon whose blue and golden vaults the weird signs attract attention, but whose secret meaning is never penetrated by the idle gazers, they have been seen but seldom recognised. They have been encountered again on the arid and desolate plains of Great Sahara, as in the caves of Elephanta. They may be found everywhere, but make themselves known only to those who have devoted their lives to unselfish study and are not likely to turn back."

Plotinus, whom I have already cited as a pupil of Ammonius Saccas, the Alexandrian Theosophist, says that knowledge of Theosophy consists in three degrees—"opinion, science, and illumination. The means or instrument of the first is sense, or perception; of the second, dialectics; of the third, intuition. To the last, reason is subordinate; it is *absolute knowledge* founded on the identification of the mind with the object known." It is this latter knowledge that leads to, and in its highest aspect constitutes, adeptship. But this degree of spiritual insight is only attained by *Discipline*, which, although practised in certain details by every spiritually-minded man, is capable of an indefinite extension when referred to planes of existence other and higher than this. And with what result? "His insight refines him," says Emerson. "The beauty of nature shines in his own breast. Man is greater that he can see this, and the universe less, because Time and Space relations vanish as laws are known." And on the subject of *Discipline* the same gifted writer says:—"The exercise of the will or the lesson of power is taught in every event. From the child's successive possession of his several senses up to the hour when he saith, "Thy will be done"! he is learning the secret, that he can reduce under his will, not only particular events, but great classes, nay the whole series of events, and so conform all facts to his character. Nature is thoroughly mediate. It is

made to serve. It receives the dominion of man as meekly as the ass on which the Saviour rode. It offers all its kingdoms to man as the raw material which he may mould into what is useful. Man is never weary of working it up. He forges the subtle and delicate air into wise and melodious words, and gives them wings as angels of persuasion and command. More and more, with every thought, does his kingdom stretch over things, until the world becomes at last only a realised will—the double of the man.” It is thus, by means of discipline, that one after another the steps in the long ladder of life are surmounted ; thus that the eager feet of the dauntless warrior devour the path—*which is himself*—by which he goes to victory. By motive, effort, and result, enduring, he attains. And to what end? “Shall he not use the gifts which it confers for his own rest and bliss, his well-earned weal and glory—he, the subduer of the great Delusion? Nay, O thou candidate for Nature’s hidden lore! If one would follow in the steps of holy Tathagata, those gifts and powers are not for Self.” The *Voice of the Silence* speaks to him, and says: “Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry?” To what end, then, is this attainment? What is known as the “moment of choice” happens for him who ~~leaves~~ comes to the seventh and last portal as for him who essays the first step on the Occult Path. To the Bodhisattva (Enlightened Excellency) at this point there is a choice of three “vestures” or states, called Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Nirmanakaya.

In the first of these the Adept goes into Nirvana and is said to have “crossed the stream” which finally separates him from all association, however remotely, with embodied humanity and prevents all thought for human welfare. The second is of the same nature as regards its relation to humanity as a whole, but instead of the Adept going into

Nirvana, he becomes a Deva or lesser god, endowed with the "three perfections." The third vesture is assumed by the 'Master of Compassion' who, having won the right to Nirvana, renounces the bliss of that great ocean of peace and "remains on earth as an Adept and when he dies, instead of going into Nirvana, he remains in that glorious body he has woven for himself, invisible to Uninitiated Mankind, to watch over and protect it." His state thereafter is described in "The Seven Portals:" "Self-doomed to live through future Kalpas, unthanked and unperceived by man; wedged as a stone with countless other stones which form the 'Guardian Wall.' Built by the hands of many Masters of Compassion, raised by their tortures, by their blood cemented, it shields mankind, since man is man, protecting it from further and far greater misery and sorrow." This superlative sacrifice is called the Great Renunciation, and is and must ever remain the most godlike ideal possible of conception in the human mind. But in view of the fact that with the choice before them, the Masters of Compassion can only take that which appears the best and therefore the only one possible to *their* natures, it may not conspicuously appear in what the choice or special sacrifice consists.

From the moment the aspirant sets his foot upon the path that leads to final liberation, the "vesture" he will adopt at the end of his journey is in process of weaving. The thread of motive is caught up by the shuttle of effort, and the loom of life runs rapidly on. The Great Renunciation is but the final outcome of many sacrifices made in numberless existences, and, therefore, the direct expression of that principle of selflessness which They have confirmed themselves in by much suffering, and a ceaseless effort towards the attainment of that divine life which lives for all, except itself. Self-sacrifice is a virtue difficult to attain to even in

the small things of this transient existence, and how much greater, then, must be the virtue of entire renunciation of self for the sake of an ideal? "For this thou hast to live and breathe in all, as all that thou perceivest breathes in thee; to feel thyself abiding in all things, all things in Self." The distinction lies in the nature of *self* referred to. It is evident that if we trace things to their origin, we shall find a certain self-centred germ of consciousness lying at the root of all phenomenal existence, which exists because it cannot help existing, and which acts in such and such a way because that particular way is the only one possible to its nature under given conditions. Therefore, the man who sacrifices himself to an ideal is in reality only satisfying his own nature, to which the aimlessness of common life is not even a satisfactory cause for mere existence, much less for effort. The human mind conceives of such a life as would afford the means of satisfying the undefined aspirations of the upward yearning for something that alone would make life worth the living; and knowing as it does that Nature does not exert herself in any direction without a purpose, the mind of man learns to think that the ideal life is within a possible grasp of the practical; for it is not plausible that Nature would evolve a soul-function which could not be used, nor a desire which could not be satisfied. And from desiring to thinking, and from thinking to striving, he passes into more and more of possession, sacrificing much, enduring much, hoping ever, "till hope creates from its own wreck the thing it contemplates."

CHAPTER IX.

OCCULT STUDY.

THE teachings of Theosophy include certain rules for the guidance of those who have determined to try the Occult Life, by adherence to which the student is enabled after a certain period, determined by his Karma, to find a practical application for his philosophy.

The following rules, taken from the "Epitome of Theosophical Teachings" are in the spirit of all others given by various teachers to an aspirant :—

(a) The entire eradication of selfishness in all forms, and the cultivation of *broad, generous* sympathy in, and effort for the good of others.

(b) The absolute cultivation of the inner, spiritual man by meditation, by reaching to and communion with the Divine, and by exercise of the kind described by Patanjali, *i.e.*, incessant striving to an ideal end.

(c) The control of fleshly appetites and desires, all lower, material interests being deliberately subordinated to the behests of the spirit.

(d) The careful performance of every duty belonging to one's station in life, without desire for reward, leaving results for Divine law.

By a faithful obedience to these rules of conduct in daily life, the candidate will not fail to attract the attention of Those who watch the entrance to the Path, and means will be provided for him to place himself as a probationary chela or pupil under one who is qualified to direct his first steps. But, says Madame Blavatsky, "To offer oneself as a candidate is easy enough, to develop into an Adept the most difficult task any man could possibly undertake. There are

scores of "natural-born" poets, mathematicians, mechanics, statesmen, etc., but a natural-born Adept is something practically impossible. For, though we do hear at very rare intervals of one who has an extraordinary innate capacity for the acquisition of occult knowledge and power, yet even he has to pass the self-same tests and probations, and go through the self-same training as any less endowed fellow-aspirant. In this matter it is most true that there is no royal road by which favourites may travel." Hence the saying, well known to all students of Occultism, 'The Adept becomes, he is not born.'

But once the candidate has offered himself for acceptance as a pupil, he is brought under the tests which apply to all probationary stages, and upon his natural qualifications or Karmic endowments, and his determination to persist in the effort begun, depends his hope of success in attaining whatever stages may lie beyond. Sometimes he has to wait for years before his fitness to be accepted as a Chela is proven; for the mere affirmation of his desire to progress is not allowed to be sufficient to warrant the Teacher in opening up to his untried feet, paths that might lead to his destruction. Therefore, he has to prove his innate powers, to test his latent strength, and to show, by his adherence to preliminary rules, that he is qualified to pass on. This being established, and his desire unabated, he is accepted as a Chela.

From the moment of acceptance, the Chela stands entirely on his own merits, the Teacher not compelling him in any way, nor giving him other assistance than to point out the Path along which he must go; every step of the long, uphill path has to be travelled by the self-conscious effort of the aspirant himself.

"And does the path wind uphill all the way? Yea, to the very end."

TO KNOW, to WILL, to DARE, and to KEEP SILENT ; these are the precepts with which he starts, having assured himself of the worthiness of his object and the purity of his motive. Not unfrequently persons of a fantastic spirit are led to take the initial steps in this direction, from motives which are of an entirely selfish or perhaps of an inquisitive nature. The motive power in such cases must be very strong to enable them to endure for any considerable length of time the conditions which chelaship entails. The progress of a neophyte depends on his unselfish devotion to the Truth under whatever aspect, on his desire for spiritual progress, on his love for Humanity, and on the intensity of his motives. No definite orders are given to him to fulfil until he has proved his trustworthiness and qualifications. If progress merely depended on the unquestioning obedience of a chela to the orders of his Teacher, then success would be within measurable reach of many who have not yet attained other essential qualifications. The light on the pathway reveals but one step at a time ; the by-ways are many, and the allurements great. Every step brings new difficulties ; fresh experience ; greater need for courage and patience ; and haply, additional strength to the ardent pilgrim. The task is such as to discourage at the outset any false ambition bred of vanity or unhealthy sentiment. Nevertheless there is the Path for those who care to tread it, and there a height for those who shall attain. The summit reached, the citadel can only be entered by scaling its lofty walls. "The ladder by which the candidate ascends is formed of rungs of suffering and of pain." Along the whole pathway he encounters one after another the Karmic deposits of his past lives, which now bar the way and trip him at every step if he be not continually on his guard ; for it has to be remembered that he is now attempting to complete in a few brief incarnations what the race collectively will require cycles

of ages to effect, and one after another the mortal vestments acquired in the descending arc of human evolution, have to be rent asunder and cast off by him. Unselfishness, self-sacrifice to the higher interests of others, gentleness, purity of body and mind, patience and fortitude, have all to be attained at an early stage in his progress, if success is to crown his efforts. It may be, however, that in a particular incarnation his feet are not treading the path for the first time, although, as previously stated, he has to enter it in each incarnation by the one and only way possible to even the most worthy, until in some one life his efforts shall attain their goal and place him beyond the necessity of re-incarnation. If he has been upon the path before, a recognition of the fact will occur at an early stage in his development, and up to the point reached by him in his last attempt, the road will seem familiar and easy of passage; and this process becomes easier with each new effort during his progress, because of the cumulative experience which he brings to it. In the "Voice of the Silence" it is said: "Once thy foot hath pressed the bed of the Nirvanic stream in this or any future life, thou hast but seven other births before thee, O thou of adamant Will." These seven births are seven degrees of attainment, and carry the disciple to the end of the first stage of his progress. During any one of these "births" he may fail, and in that case the whole path has to be retrodden, the opportunity for which may not recur to him until after many incarnations; according to the individual Karma in relation to the law of cyclic impulse. By 'failing' is not meant the mere stumbling or falling which is followed by renewed effort, but a conscious backsliding, breach of trust conferred upon him by the Order, or entire resignation of effort. The second stage in the Path confers but one more birth; in the third stage he is not again incarnated unless his desire to help mankind induces him to make the sacrifice,

and in the fourth stage he attains Arhatship. In this stage he sees Nirvana during his life and makes the *final choice* to which I have referred in the previous chapter, and adopts one of the three "vestures."

But all along the Path, from first to last, the followers of the Good Law find progress only in the execution of duty; duty to the Higher Self, to Humanity, to the Order. It is this that makes the progress so difficult to all, and impossible to the man whose only motive-power is fevered enthusiasm, or desire for recognition and glory; for these will not carry one far along the Secret Path where self is the great enemy, Self the only hero, and SELF the single witness. If liberation of Self, and the day of the Precious Choice could happen to us by one great deed of heroism, by one most awful death, then many would be tempted to try, and, possibly, many would succeed. But when the sole hope of outstripping the race for the race's greater good, lies in an unmurmuring discharge of every duty without recognition or reward; the sacrifice of one after another of earthly joys, of temporal hopes and life's most cherished idols; and when, in the silent, gloomy path the pilgrim moves *alone*, unseen, unheard by men—"where, torn by thorns, the hands drip blood, the feet are cut by sharp, unyielding flints, and Mara wields his strongest arms"—ah, then, enthusiasm pales, and the 'hero of the moment' looks on glory that is bought at such a price as one whose listless eyes have chanced on something very far away.

Along the path of chelaship there are four chief accomplishments; the first of which is discrimination or true appreciation. This consists not alone in discerning the relative value of the various objects of life, but also in discerning between the real and the unreal, the eternal and the evanescent. The former Emerson calls "the perception of differences." "The wise man," he says, "shows his

wisdom in separation, in gradation; and his scale of creatures and merits is as wide as Nature. The foolish have no range in their scale, but suppose every man is as every other man. What is not good they call the worst, and what is not hateful they call the best." And not only is it necessary to distinguish in this way between the relative value of things in the phenomenal world, but also to discern between that which is essentially real and true, and its evanescent appearance or reflection in the world of material forms which, to the extent that it is evanescent, is also illusive. In doing this, however, there is no need to disparage the true use of things, nor the importance of their place in our life and consciousness as means of education and progress. As our first impressions of the absolute existence of nature give way under the eye of Reason, so our first conceptions of the value of things undergoes a corresponding and simultaneous change. Effects give way to causes, matter to spirit, and form to force. A true discernment and appreciation of the relation of things to one another, and of these as effects to their causes, constitutes the first step or accomplishment.

The second step consists in the rejection of the fruits of action and the performance of every duty. The chela is expected to perform those duties which fall to his hand in the walk of daily life; and from the first he has to recognise that the highest duty he can perform is that which comes *nearest* to hand, for in no case is progress encouraged by the Teachers except in accord with Nature's laws, and along the lines of individual karma. Hence it is said by Krishna to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita: "It is right to die in the performance of one's own duty; the duty of another is surrounded with dangers" And duty, moreover, has to be performed without the hope of reward, for it is impossible to identify oneself with any work without stimulating personal

motives and ambitions, and this entails the necessity of further incarnations in which to satisfy them. Therefore all worldly ambition or desire for reward, which would lead the disciple astray into side paths, has to be overcome at the beginning of the great task of self-conquest; for such desires, natural enough in their place among the worldly, would be disastrous if carried on to the spiritual plane.

The third accomplishment is the renunciation of all religious ties, *i.e.*, the giving up of all interests vested in the welfare of any one particular church or sect. This is but an extension of the qualities induced upon the mind by the attainment of the first and second accomplishments, and its use consists in the extension of one's sympathies and assistance to all aspects of the truth; and hence a widening of the paths of usefulness to include the higher interests of the whole human family. At the same time, however, the unsettling of another's faith who is sincere in his devotions to what he believes to be true, and to whom for the time that faith is all-sufficient, is strictly forbidden by the rules of chelaship.

The fourth accomplishment is the overcoming of temporal desires, and the readiness to part with anything and everything in the world that occasions identification of interests with temporal existence. From this accomplishment arises the invulnerability of the individual to all affronts or injustices, which would naturally elicit feelings of disappointment, resentment, grief, or anger. Having no desires which the world can satisfy, he is no longer subject to disappointment; seeing all injustice to be grounded in ignorance, he is free from all feelings of resentment; and doing all that comes to his hand as a duty, without the desire for reward in this or any future life, he is incapable of grief or anger. From these attainments he passes on to others, successively higher and higher in their reach, and wider in their service

to mankind in all that concerns the worthier objects of life. And here it is well to remind the reader that the qualifications implied by the course of self discipline I have been describing, are required of all chelas before they are entrusted with any teachings which would place them in a position to divert natural forces into dangerous channels, were they so disposed, and thus to strike at the truest interests of the mass of mankind. For it is truly said, "the Brothers can consider none but public interests, in the largest sense of the words, in throwing out the first experimental flashes of occult revelation into the world. They can only employ agents on whom they can rely for doing the work as they may wish it done—or, at all events, in no manner which may be widely otherwise."

But it will be asked by some, 'What has all this to do with one like myself who is not prepared, at present at all events, to undertake the task of self-discipline to the extent mentioned? Has the study of occultism no benefits to offer to the world at large?' To such the answer is: The study of occultism has fruits for all to the extent of their power to sacrifice personal interests to the interests of others, or even to those of one's own higher nature. Were it not so, it would have been useless to mention it at all; but as there may be some to whom even the name of 'Occultism' acts as a distraction from duties which properly lie to their hands, it is right that the conditions of its study should be fully known. Yet at the same time it is a fact that the study of occultism affords an infinite variety of means for self-improvement, self-discipline, and spiritual development, inasmuch as it is approached from an infinity of positions, mental and moral as well as merely psychic. Hence it is held to be false teaching that the Path is barred to all those who are not capable of fulfilling *at once* all the conditions imposed upon those who are qualifying for the higher grades

of occult study. As progress, even for the most advanced, depends upon the fulfilment of the conditions pertaining to the state already attained, so, as progress is not immediately possible to an unlimited extent, we cannot expect it possible that one should spontaneously and perfectly comply with all the conditions. Self-discipline and progress run side by side along the whole path, the stream of occult knowledge flowing freely to the extent that the channel is opened out to it. Hence, while the Brothers do not discourage advancement to the greatest length possible to the individual, they do not lose sight of the broader basis of minor possibilities born of humbler aspirations to the world at large. Between the highest and lowest achievements in Occultism there is an indefinite scale of possibilities, as infinite indeed as the gradations by which the midnight darkness proceeds into noonday light; and between the first upward aspiration, and the attainment of the highest perfection possible to human beings, there is no point at which we can draw a line and say, 'On this side is all that is good, worthy, and desirable; on that side all that is puny and impotent.' In *all* upward effort the character of the consequences is the same; there is a difference of degree merely, due to the inequality of exertion. Hence, as I have already said, 'To desire good is the germ of a future omnipotence.' The first result that is sought, therefore, in the world at large, by the knowledge of ultimate possibilities of upward progress as typified in the Adepts of any Race of human beings, is the stimulation of a desire for such achievements; next, a tendency in that direction by the awakening of latent faculties; and then a self-induced and determined effort. As results are in all cases proportioned to effort, not only as regards this life, but also in regard to post-mortem existence, it follows that the minor possibilities to which reference has been made must, as results, include the full capacity to satisfy

the individual nature that can only put forth a minor effort. Hence it must not be supposed that occult teachings, as far as they have been given out to the present generation, are necessarily intended to produce great results in individual cases ; though it is impossible to over-estimate the immense leavening effect that these teachings will have upon the world at large, when spread over a wide area. And this latter has always been considered as the intention of the Adepts ; for although they are willing to give any person the full opportunities for development to the extent of his power, along the lines already indicated and in agreement with the time-honoured rules of the Order, yet they are too fully conscious of the immense difficulties entailed by such an attempt in most cases, to encourage anyone to take steps which can never be retraced without grave consequences. For when once a man undertakes occult study and development, he heightens the pressure of all innate tendencies to an enormous degree, and practically engages to ripen and reap the fruits of his Karma by a process which would best be described as "forcing" ; and hence he is bound to meet, at short notice, Karmic debts which, in the normal course of development along with the race, would require cycles of ages to discharge. Whatever latent propensities for evil there may be in the nature, will rapidly develop and come to the surface, for the process of occult development is necessarily a purifying one of very rapid action. Corrupt propensities cannot be stifled back any more than impurities can be thrown back into the blood, without dire results which would effectually check all further progress. Therefore, the weeds that lie beneath the soil of the earthly nature have to be forcibly and entirely plucked out by the roots, while the growth of the higher nature has to be carefully and assiduously fostered. It need not, then, be a matter of surprise to the reader when it is stated, as a matter of fact that, despite the importunity of some persons

who have essayed to tread the Path, they have only been met with a firm refusal. Not knowing the wisdom, or the love of the Masters of Compassion, whose benevolence sought to forefend the weakness they foresaw, the inherent beauty and grace of this intervention has more than once suffered misinterpretation; which fact, to say the least, clearly justified the Adepts in their decision.

Before closing this subject, I feel it a duty to state as plainly as possible, that, so far as the Theosophical Society is concerned in the dissemination of teachings which lead up to, if, indeed, they do not actually tread upon, occult lines, it is responsible for affording to all persons, without distinction of any kind, the opportunity for occult study, and can in no sense be held responsible for disastrous results in individual cases, since, from the commencement of its publications, it has warned students against undertaking *practical work* in this direction without the help and advice of an experienced person; while it confidently affirms that nothing but good can accrue to anyone who endeavours to conform his life to the spirit of its broad teachings.

CONCLUSION.

THE ideas that I have been able to put forward in the preceding pages must be accepted as defining but a mere outline of some of the more important features of a vast body of teaching known in its entirety as the *Secret Doctrine*. This arcane Wisdom-Religion, coming into existence with the first descent of our divine ancestors into human form on earth, has been preserved to this day through an unbroken line of Hierophants. Through various centres, established from time to time in different parts of the Earth in accordance with the cyclic law of racial Evolution, certain aspects of this archaic doctrine have been given out, and the many exoteric religions now in existence have their origin in the common stock of root-ideas derived from these sources. Hence it is confidently asserted that the prevailing disputes and differences of religious bodies, which affect the deepest interests of the Human Race, can only be settled by referring all exoteric creeds back to their common esoteric basis in the 'Secret Doctrine.' This has been effected to a very large extent in the works by Madame Blavatsky quoted in these pages, and in confining myself more immediately to the question of my title, I have taken up only a thread here and another there, with the intention of indicating the lines along which a more complete answer might be effected did opportunity afford. The argument along these lines is necessarily incomplete, for a mere dogmatic assertion of their full extent and value would require a large volume, perhaps many.

In the selection of my subjects, from the wide range of Theosophic thought, I have been guided by my own experi-

ence as a student to take up those which appear most likely to meet the initial needs of inquirers; and while I have divested them of their side issues, keeping their more complex aspects in abeyance, I have endeavoured to preserve the connecting links of thought, and to show their application to the problems of modern science as well as to those of our daily life. How nearly the former are leading to the position already held by Theosophy may be seen from the following statement made by Professor Oliver J. Lodge to the Mathematical and Physical Section of the British Association at Cardiff:— . . . “If once we grasp the idea that past and future may be actually existing, we can recognise that they may have a controlling influence on all present action, and the two together may constitute ‘the higher plane,’ or the totality of things, after which, as it seems to me, we are impelled to seek, in connection with the directing of force or determinism, and the action of living beings consciously directed to a definite and preconceived end.” Yet this is but an echo of Emerson’s “Idealism,” which “beholds the whole circle of persons and things, of actions and events, of country and religion, not as painfully accumulated, atom after atom, act after act, in an age creeping past, but as one vast picture, which God paints on the instant eternity, for the contemplation of the soul.” And even agnosticism inclines to our position in these words:—“Strictly speaking,” says Professor Huxley in the ‘Agnostic Annual,’ “I am unaware of anything that has a right to the name of an ‘impossibility’ except a contradiction in terms. There are impossibilities logical, but none natural.” He admits that certain so-called “miracles” are therefore “plainly not impossibilities,” although for certain physical and biological reasons he thinks them improbable, at present, at all events; yet clearly not indefinitely so as regards time, for he says:— . . . “It is sufficiently obvious, not only that we are at

the beginning of our knowledge of nature, instead of having arrived at the end of it, but that the limitations of our faculties are such that we never can be in a position to set bounds to the possibilities of nature."

Now, what Professor Huxley admits as *possibilities*—however improbable under conditions which in these days must be defined as normal, because pertaining to the large majority—the occultists affirm to be *actualities*, under conditions that are none the less natural because outside the range of orthodox science. In the above statement of the Agnostic position in regard to certain orders of so-called "miracles," we see only a repetition of the saying of Agassiz: "Outside of mathematics the word 'impossible' should never be pronounced." Occultism teaches that the possible in thought is the possible in act, and under the training induced by its complete study, the 'miracle' passes from the realm of speculative probabilities into the domain of actual science. It develops in man what is called 'direct cognition' of facts which, transcending as they do the possible range of the five senses, are nevertheless included in the natural scale, and therefore capable of study under proper conditions.

No field of research offers more attractive objects, gives greater scope for the exercise of human faculties, or presents more sublime ideals of attainment than Occultism; while none requires greater mental and moral stability, or sets so great a strain upon the inherent capacity of its devotees; and it has been truly said that before a man can safely enter upon its practical study he has to know the power of his own soul in the universe.

There are many who still believe that the range of occultism is embodied in the Rosicrucian mysteries of the Middle Ages, and who assiduously rake together all the mystical symbols they can find in the much-copied fragments of that cult; others, again, who fancy the whole road is opened up

by a study of the Kabala, with its very flexible anagrams and computations, and still more elastic methods of interpretation ; while others, who can only see in Alchemy a possible means of gaining for themselves a permanent terrestrial position of physical and financial competence, transmute themselves by the aid of retort and crucible from beings of useful capacities to impotent monomaniacs. In fact, it is, as said by the author of "Theosophy and Occultism" :— "How many are those who think they are students of Occultism simply because they can cast a horoscope or see a picture in the Astral light, or psychometrise the contents of a letter, or hold their breath a little longer than other people, or even investigate 'spooks' at first hand ! And yet they are not within a thousand leagues of the portals of the very infant school of Occultism where the 'children' learn the letters of the elements and spell out the *mantras* of the universe. But few will 'become as little children,' few care to enter the school in the lowest class of the 'innocents.'" The whole effort of natural evolution seems to be in the direction of converting merely mechanical and automatic action into self-conscious and purposive action ; consequently the phenomena of modern spiritualism are not regarded by Occultists as constituting anything more than one step forward made in the dark. The various phenomena reported by the Dialectical Society are seen to be in no way under the conscious control of the medium, who is yet the *sine quâ non* of their manifestation. Thus we have report of the movement of heavy bodies by means of contact without mechanical action, phenomena of percussion, and similar sounds, alteration in the weight of bodies, movement of heavy objects at a distance from the medium, levitation of tables and chairs without contact by anyone, levitation of human bodies, the movement of small bodies without contact by anyone, luminous appearances, appearance of hands

self-luminous or visible by the usual light, direct writing, forms and faces of phantoms ; and all these phenomena are produced under conditions from the psychic side, over which neither the medium nor the witnesses have any power whatever.

Occultism, on the contrary, reduces all these phenomena to their proper order in the scale of psychic and noëtic effects, and brings them under the conscious control of the volitional faculty. The various *Siddhis* or powers conferred by the study of occultism may be found in the Introduction to Patanjali's "Yoga Philosophy," by Tookaram Tatya, F.T.S. Want of space forbids their mention here.

Had space permitted, it would have been an easy matter to extend the application of these subjects, to include a comparison of their basic ideas with the fundamental concepts of the several great world-religions that sway the thought and belief of modern times. This would have been peculiarly interesting as regards the doctrines of Re-incarnation and Karma, on account of their ethical bearing ; but I have had to satisfy myself with merely showing their practical value, as teachings, upon our daily life and conduct. It is a matter of regret that these doctrines, which found their place in the creed of the Church Fathers, as in the teaching of Jesus and of others before him, should have been replaced by a purely exoteric conception of the 'vicarious sacrifice,' and a theory of the origin and destiny of the human soul, for which no authority can be claimed from the mouth of the teacher himself. I say it is a matter of regret, because if human progress and ultimate perfection is to be attained, according to the teachings of the holy Nazarene, only by human endeavour, then the compromise between the law of the world and that of Christ, instituted by the acceptance of the doctrine referred to, can have only a fictitious existence in the minds of those who apply them to their own lives, and none at all in reality, since *law*

is law. But the law of Re-incarnation has a universal application, not of necessity confined to human Egos, and if corruption has not already set in, there is yet a hope that the Spirit may return to the body from which it has been so long divorced. But this must be left to Karma, which anticipates, as it also follows, the path of possibilities.

In all essential points of doctrine Theosophy will be found to harmonise with exoteric faiths, when the occult meanings of the latter are properly understood. That this is so, may be seen from a comparative study of the symbolism of the churches and that of the ancient hieroglyphical writings; as also from the identity of modern ecclesiastical rituals with those of more ancient origin in Egypt and even Thibet, as witnessed by Abbé Huc and others. Indeed, a proper study of Theosophy entails a certain knowledge of the occult nature of form and sounds, while in occultism it is indispensable. The symbolic hieroglyphs of the ancients was a picture-writing based upon the occult science of correspondences. That many distortions of the original symbology have been made in the course of time is only natural. Errors, both of form and interpretation, would be sure to creep in during its transmission from one to another, and hence the more complex writings are difficult to decipher: and, for the same reasons, philologists have their difficulties even with modern languages. If we consider language in its primitive sense and use as being the expression, by any living thing, of its own particular nature, it is not unreasonable to suppose that to the spiritualised ear a simple sound would indicate, by its pitch, intensity, and quality, the nature of that body which emits it. Moreover, the form of a natural body, following the lines of action which move to sound, would present yet another index to its character. In an extended sense it will be seen that language is as evident in what are called non-intelligent creatures and lifeless bodies as in man, since all natural

forms are but the externalised aspects of internal spiritual forces, which must ever be living and active. In the inmost nature of everything there is a symbol which is called its *signature*, and which it impresses upon all its vestments. Such a symbol exists in the heart of man, and is the secret glyph and ideal signature of his being, indicating the power of his soul in the universe and his special function in the body of Humanity. So in the "Voice of the Seven Watchers," it is said: "The first letter and the first sound of the universal language is to be found in the Heart of Nature; its form in the outer world; its sound in the world within. All other sounds are contained in this one sound, all other forms in this. To know and understand this single *form of sound* is to comprehend all other things. The desire of man's heart is that he shall be understood; for the world has too long been a stranger to itself. The confusion of tongues began in disorderly affections and in confusion of thought, for men had forgotten their heart language and lost their pristine purity. But ever since man has been striving to hear that one sound, to see that one form; and some went this way and some that, in search of the lost language, and the race was divided and scattered. A few looked into their own hearts; these saw and heard, and in due time learned again the language of their heavenly progenitors."

As every form contains within itself the signature of that Intelligence which produces it, and as all forms are contained within the Universe, it follows that man, who is the image of the Universe, must therefore contain all forms within himself. Hence, not only the animal, but also the vegetable, mineral, and elemental forms are represented in him, and are, in an ultimate sense, the kingdom and property of man. To this unity of type in the Universe, Swedenborg speaks in his "Angelic Wisdom," when he says,

“All things that have been created, represent man in a certain image;” as also Jacob Boehme in his “*Signatura Rerum*.” It was for this reason, too, that the ancients represented mental states in man under symbols taken from the Kingdoms of Nature; and we ourselves make use of such symbols in common language, though we have ceased to use them in writing. The names of all things primitively expressed their special properties and characteristics: the qualities of things, and not the concrete things themselves. The essential nature of all language consists in the *communication of states of consciousness* by means of objects of thought; this was its primitive use, and is its only true and final purpose. The nearer we get to the roots of language the closer do we come to this element of poetic analogy by which the human mind compares its various states to the objects of its perception, or as the idealist would say, to the subjects of its creation. Root ideas are expressed by radical forms and sounds, and the root of all things is therefore represented by the root of all forms, the circle to which no centre can be assigned. As all numbers proceed out of Zero by means of unity, so all letters proceed from Silence, by means of the alpha of the natural alphabet, as forms of sound. The first of numbers and the first of letters is *Ego*, the power of the “unit of consciousness.” From this unit all other numbers, and hence all other forms proportioned to the power of numbers, proceed in regular succession; all complete numbers and forms being but variants or combinations of four root integers which collectively represent the manifested universe and “the measure of a man.” From the imperishable trinity of Consciousness, Life, and Substance proceeds a quaternary of four powers denoted by the figures $1+2+3+4=10$, which are related to the four elements spoken of in occultism under the names of fire, air, water, and earth; each of which veils a purely subjective truth. Represented in geometrical forms, the collective power of 10, or the universe

in its complete cycle of manvantara and pralaya, becomes transmuted into 12, a number signifying collective humanity, to which reference is made in the Apocalypse as the foundation number of the New Jerusalem; a purely allegorical image. The philosophy of Pythagoras, which viewed the Universe as founded upon order and number, was communicated by him to his tried pupils first of all by means of hieroglyphs and cyphers, and it thus became possible for them to correspond with one another at great distances in characters quite unknown to the uninitiated. He taught that force and form were inseparably linked together in our consciousness by number. His disciples were, moreover, instructed in the properties and powers of *sound*, and had a thorough knowledge of the laws of harmony, by which they were enabled to view all forms as concrete sounds, and to *see* as well as hear the language of Nature and the "music of the spheres." Looking at material forms from this standpoint, we are able to understand and explain, without divesting phrases of their poetical beauty, what Goethe meant when he called architecture "frozen music," and what taught Coleridge to call a Gothic church "a petrified religion." The intelligent life-forces of the unmanifested world are in themselves independent of form; but in manifestation they are expressed in forms peculiar to the plane of their activity and operation, and are defined by the modes of their manifestation. It is therefore by means of forms that we are able to seize upon the nature of the forces expressed by them, and through their variations, to perceive the underlying basic note or Great Tone, which is the key-note of Nature sounding throughout the complete period of manifestation, and into which will finally be resolved all those elements of unison and discord which make up the grand opera of phenomenal existence.

There is one other point which I have to deal with before bringing this sketch to a close, and that is, the view taken of

Theosophy by the outside world. The fragmentary aspects of the subject which have from time to time appeared in the public press during the last years are, no doubt, the basis of a good deal of prevalent misconception. Letters of the kind referred to are necessarily brief, and to the point of some special aspect of the philosophy; and hence, being detached from their logical dependencies in the complete system, they necessarily leave the reader to supply the corollary and to make his own application of the statements, which is more often wrong than right from the Theosophic standpoint. A good deal has been said, in answer to inquiries, upon the subject of Occultism, precipitated letters and the rest, and many persons have gone away with the idea that occult phenomena are the alpha and the omega of Theosophy, and that the latter, as a system of philosophy and ethics, derives all its value from them. Nothing could be farther from the actual truth, for no Theosophist of any standing would base the claims of Theosophy upon occult phenomena, since the latter can only be properly tested and understood after a long course of study along the lines laid down in the published writings of Madame Blavatsky, supplemented by other teachings of a more pointed nature. The Theosophist finds the value of his philosophy in its universal application to the problems of human life and thought. What may hereafter be determined in regard to the investigation of occult phenomena in connection with the Theosophical Society, does not rest with its members as a body, but at present it is certain that the opportunity will not be given to any person qualified to undertake the matter on behalf of any other body, or the public generally; and for this reason it is folly for anyone to suppose that Theosophists insist upon the superlative value of any phenomena that may incidentally have had public mention.

Another prevalent misconception of Theosophy is the supposition that it is in any way connected with such systems

of refined sensualism as the *Sympneumata* of Laurence Oliphant, and the *Esoteric Science* of T. L. Harris. This supposed rapport is, like so many other things laid to the charge of Theosophy, a gratuitous and malicious aspersion. No one acquainted, even partially, with the two positions could so far desert the standard of truth and reason as to suggest even a remote connection between them. Up to the time of the publication of Madame Blavatsky's "Isis Unveiled," T. L. Harris's writings had consisted of a highly-spiced *rechauffé* of the teachings of Swedenborg, but no sooner had the Theosophic work appeared than, curiously enough, the "prophet" of Fountaingrove breaks out in purely Theosophic terminology, speaking of "planetary chains, Rounds and Races, manvantaras and pralayas," distorting to his own purposes a scheme of cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis quite unknown to the Western world before the publication of Madame Blavatsky's book. But Theosophy claims a hearing upon its own merits and along its own lines, and, divested of the misinterpretations above referred to, it will meet the inquiries of an unprejudiced mind with a fulness and satisfaction which its inherent truth secures to it.

To those who are prepared to undertake a deeper study of Theosophy, various roads are open. There is a large literature in connection with the subject published in England, America, India, and elsewhere, which can be reached through the Theosophical Publishing Society, at 7 Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C.; and the Theosophical Society affords the opportunity of study through its various Lodges and Centres in all parts of the world, which are at stated times open to inquirers, either by introduction from Members or from the General Secretaries of the Sections in India, Europe, America, and Australia; so that there is no lack of means by which those who desire to pursue their inquiries in this direction can do so.

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