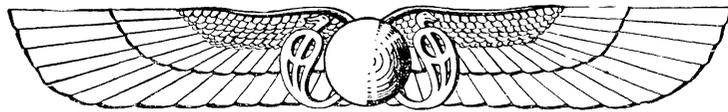


# THE VĀHAN.



A VEHICLE FOR

## THE INTERCHANGE OF THEOSOPHICAL OPINIONS AND NEWS.

ISSUED by direction and under the authority of the European Section of the Theosophical Society in convention, for free distribution to English-reading members. Members of Branches will receive copies through their officers. The Theosophical Society is not responsible for any statements contained herein unless set forth in an official document.—G. R. S. MEAD, *Gen. Sec'y.*

All readers are cordially invited to send in questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. All communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to the editor, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London, N.W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

VOL. V.

LONDON, APRIL 1, 1896.

NO. 9.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

### LITERARY NOTES.

*The Upanishads*, translated into English with a Preamble and Arguments by G. R. S. Mead, B.A., M.R.A.S., and Jagadīsha Chandra Chattopādhyāya (Roy Choudhuri). Volume I.

The most important book published this month (and indeed for many months), is the first volume of Mr. G. R. S. Mead's translation of *The Upanishads*. The reason of its importance is not to be found in its size, for it contains only 140 small pages, but in the fact that it represents absolutely the first attempt to render the Upanishads into English as they really are—reproducing as nearly as is possible in a foreign tongue the spirit and swing of the original, and leaving these grand hymns to speak for themselves without hiding their meaning behind the strained and artificial interpretations of the Indian commentaries. Mr. Mead has had the benefit of the assistance of a learned young Brāhman, Mr. J. C. Chattopādhyāya, in his arduous labours, and the greatest care has been taken to adhere as closely to the original as our English idiom will permit, every word which is not in the Sanskrit being enclosed in square brackets. Each Upanishad is preceded by a concise "argument" or epitome of its contents, which will greatly assist the reader in obtaining a comprehensive grasp of its meaning as a whole, and there is also an explanatory "preamble" or preface, which contains much valuable information. Another novelty is the introduction at the beginning of each Upanishad of the appropriate "Peace Chant"—the mantra which is always sung in India before the reading of any portion of these sacred Scriptures of the East. The very shape and manner of printing of the Oriental books has been followed, for the lines

run, not *across* the page as usual, but *along* it, precisely as they do in the Indian palm-leaf manuscripts.

This first volume contains six of the shorter Upanishads—the Īsha, Kena, Katha, Prashna, Mundaka, and Māndūkya—yet for the purpose of placing it within the reach of every one who is capable of appreciating these sublime teachings, it is issued at the nominal price of sixpence in paper covers, and one shilling and sixpence in cloth.

Although one of the objects of our Society is the study of the Aryan religions and philosophy, it but too frequently happens that our members know nothing of the subject at first-hand, because the books dealing with it are both expensive and difficult. It will now, however, be impossible any longer to make that excuse for unfamiliarity with the Eastern Scriptures, and all members of the Society should at once procure this quaint little volume and study it with the greatest care.

C. W. L.

*Euphrates, or the Waters of the East*, the seventh volume of the *Collectanea Hermetica*, edited by W. Wynn Westcott, M.B., a reprint of a curious old alchemical work by Eugenius Philalethes. The commentator, "S. S. D. D.," furnishes explanatory notes at the end of each paragraph, which are generally careful and judicious. By those who study on the lines of alchemy and like "sciences," such a book as this may be thought of value, but for the ordinary reader there does not appear to be much illumination. The book, as interpreted by the commentator, refers entirely to the "philosophy of nature" and the spiritual development of man, and not to physical alchemy or the transmutation of metals. Price 3s.

*Unpublished Letters of Éliphas Lévi*. The Letters which appeared in *Lucifer* under this title have been also run in book-form, and are now being bound. Kabalists and Rosicrucians have a

high appreciation of the works of the Abbé Alphonse Louis Constant, and should therefore welcome the appearance in book form of what were once the private instructions of the author of *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie, Histoire de la Magie, La Clef des Grands Mystères, La Science des Esprits*, etc.

A translation of D'Assier's *Posthumous Humanity* in Polish, which has just reached us, indicates some activity in the direction of mysticism in a country of which very little is known here.

In the March number of *Lucifer* are to be found several papers of great interest to students and also to the general reader. The fresh articles are "Folk-lore," by Mr. W. F. Kirby, "The Desire-Body," by Mr. Keightley, and a short reply to Dr. Wells' criticism of Madame Guyon, by Mr. Cuffe. A number of interesting stories and traditions is collected in the article on folk-lore. Mr. Keightley gives some valuable information respecting the astral body, which clears away several long-standing difficulties. The continued articles are: "Man and his Bodies," treating of the astral body; "Orpheus," containing the conclusion of the chapter "On the Mysteries and Symbolism," with the following sub-headings: "The Thyrsus," "Mystica Vannus Iacchi," "The Playthings of Bacchus," and "The Orphic Lyre," and Chap. ix., "Orphic Discipline and Psychology," dealing with "Morals," "The Inner Discipline," and "The Macrocosm and Microcosm"; "Early Christianity and its Teachings: The Christ"; and "Devachan," in which the human inhabitants, under headings of embodied and disembodied, are described.

*Lucifer* for April will contain the account of a strange dervish sect called the Aissaoui. In spite of the veneer of Mohammedanism, there is little doubt that the indigenous tradition of magic is the source of their curious practices. The traditions of Atlantean magic are clearly traceable along the north-western and northern coasts of Africa. A paper on the philosophy of Berkeley from a Theosophical standpoint will be interesting to lovers of transcendentalism. A dream story partially founded on fact will doubtless be welcome to fainter-hearted readers, while for students the important papers now in progress will be continued.

The papers on "Orpheus" will be concluded in the April number of *Lucifer*, and will shortly be issued in book form, in the series "The Theosophy of the Greeks," making a volume of some 350 pages with three charts and an exhaustive bibliography which will not appear in *Lucifer*.

These papers will be followed in *Lucifer* by a series on "The Lives of the later Platonists," in which Mr. Mead will incorporate his six lectures at the Pioneer Club with much further information.

Messrs. Mead and Chattopâdhyâya are proceeding leisurely with vol. ii. of their translation of the Upanishads.

The Theosophical Publishing Society have issued a new catalogue of new and second-hand books,

relating chiefly to Greek Philosophy. The list, which can be obtained post free from the Duke Street office, is an excellent one, and contains many valuable books at moderate prices.

*The Secret Doctrine*. Volume III. of H. P. Blavatsky's great work is already set up and will shortly be run off and placed in the binder's hands. The estimate of the author that enough material existed for two volumes has proved erroneous, for the whole of the MS. suffices for a single volume only. An index for the new volume is in course of preparation.

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## ACTIVITIES.

### Donations to the General Fund.

The following sums have been received since the acknowledgment in last month's VAHAN: E. Hardcastle, 5s.; E. J. Dunn, 5s.; Mrs. Sharpe, £1; Mrs. Haig, 5s.; H. E. Nichol, 10s. 6d.; Miss Bowring, £1; H. Brooke, 5s.; Miss Spink, £2; Mrs. Midgley, 2s. 6d.; North London Lodge, £1 10s.; Hull Centre, 5s.; Gilbert Graham, £1; Mrs. Wilkinson, £1; A. Slee, 1s.; C. Harvey, £2; G. R. S. Mead, £1; Stanley C. Bright, 10s.; O. Firth, 2s. 6d.; Miss Wheaton, 1s.; Miss Lowthime, 7s. 6d. Total £13 10s.

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### Headquarters' Reference Library.

The Library will be closed for cleaning on the Tuesday and Wednesday of Easter week. The following books are acknowledged with thanks: *Psychic Philosophy*, V. C. Desertis; *Substance and its Attributes*; *Divinity and Man*, W. K. Roberts; *Premature Burial*, F. Hartmann; *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, translated from the Slavonic by W. R. Morfil, M.A., 1896; *Collectanea Hermetica*, edited by W. Wynn Westcott, vol. vii. *Euphrates, or the Waters of the East*, by Eugenius Philalethes.

A. J. WILLSON, Librarian.

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### Headquarters' Lending Library.

The subscription to the Circulating Library, at 19, Avenue Road, is: one year, 10s.; six months, 6s.; three months, 3s. 6d.; postage extra. Catalogues on application to the Librarian.

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### The Lotus Circle.

The children now meet punctually at 2.30 p.m. every Sunday at No. 19, Avenue Road. All children are welcomed.

A. J. W.

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### Blavatsky Lodge.

The lecturers during the past month have been Dr. Wells, Mr. Sinnott, Mr. Mead, Mrs. Mallet, and

Mr. Bertram Keightley. On March 19th Mr. Keightley took the place of Mr. Glass, who was to have spoken on "The Land of Promise," and delivered a lecture on "Desire and the Desire Body." Mr. Sinnett's lecture was illustrated by maps in order to bring forward more clearly the evidence for the theory of a second rotation of the earth, with which he was principally concerned.

The Sunday evening meetings have dealt mainly with the psychic nature of man, Kāma, the astral body, and Manas. The attendances have been excellent, and it will be a matter of regret to many when this series comes to an end, as it will at the close of this month.

S. MAUD SHARPE, *Hon. Sec.*

### Death of Mr. Judge.

Mr. W. Q. Judge died at New York on Saturday, March 21st.

### Lecture List.

AMSTERDAM, DUTCH LODGE. Meetings at 34, Amstel Dijk, on Thursdays, at 8 p.m. : April 2nd, *The Two Paths*, Mevr. P. C. Meuleman van Ginkel ; April 9th, *Theosophy and Mistakes*, S. Gayan ; April 16th, *Confucius*, M. A. J. van Manen ; April 23rd, *Application*, C. D. Bazel ; April 30th, *Egypt and the Pyramids*, J. Lauweriks.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at No. 5 Room, Cobden Hotel, on alternate Sundays, at 7 p.m.

BOURNEMOUTH LODGE. Meetings at Avenue House, Avenue Road, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m.

BRADFORD LODGE. Meetings at Central Coffee Tavern, Westgate, on alternate Wednesdays, at 8 p.m. : April 8th, *The Building of Character* ; April 22nd, *Ancient Magic and Modern Science*.

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Meetings at the Council Chamber of the Mechanics' Institute, on alternate Wednesdays, at 8 p.m. : April 1st, *Food in Relation to Character*, Miss Pope ; April 15th, *The Building of Character*, Miss Shaw. Lodge meetings at Eldon Buildings, alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

BRIGHTON LODGE. The usual open meeting for study and interchange of thought takes place every alternate Sunday afternoon at members' houses. Information can be obtained from the Librarian, Mr. Lloyd, 15, Old Steine, or the Secretary, Dr. King, 30, Buckingham Place.

BRISTOL LODGE. Meetings at 48, Queen's Road, Clifton (near the Museum), on alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. : April 7th, *The Mission of Swedenborg*, Rev. W. Heald ; April 21st, *Man and his Creators*, Miss C. E. Woods. On the other Tuesdays a reading circle for the study of *The Secret Doctrine*, at 8 p.m. On Fridays a meeting for enquirers at 8 p.m.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 35, High Street, on alternate Fridays, at 8 p.m. : March 13th and 27th.

GLASGOW CENTRE. Meetings at Holton's Hotel, Glasgow Street, on Sundays, at 11.30 a.m.

HARROGATE LODGE. Meetings at No. 2 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m. : April 5th, *Food in relation to Character*, Miss Pope ; April 12th, *The Risen Christ*, Mrs. Bell ; April 19th, *Mesmerism*, A. Osborn Eaves ; April 26th, . . . Mrs. Besant. The meeting on April 26th will be held in the Saloon, Albert Street. Lodge meetings on Fridays, at 7.30 p.m.

HERNE BAY CENTRE. Meetings at "Glaisdale," Herne Bay, on Sunday afternoons.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings at No. 9 Room, St. George's Hall, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at 25, Park Square, on Mondays, at 8 p.m. : April 6th, no meeting ; April 13th, Questions and Discussion.

LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings at 18a, South Castle Street, on Thursdays, at 7.45 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings at 3, Hackins Hey, on Thursdays, at 8 p.m. : April 2nd, *Brāhmanism on the Constitution of Man*, W. B. Pitt-Taylor ; April 9th, *Zoroastrianism on the Constitution of Man*, Mrs. Gillison ; April 16th, *Germes latent in Man*, J. H. Duffell ; April 23rd, *Conversazione*.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings at the Buckingham Temperance Hotel, 40, Strand, W.C. (entrance in Buckingham Street), on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m. : April 13th, *Fragments of Philosophy*, H. J. Dyer ; April 20th, *Self-Knowledge and Self-Control*, Miss Burch ; April 27th, *A Great Teacher*, Alan Leo.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m. : April 2nd, no meeting ; April 9th, *The Upanishads*, G. R. S. Mead ; April 16th, *The Development of Consciousness*, C. W. Leadbeater ; April 23rd, *The Growth of Mind*, B. Keightley ; April 30th, *Liberation by Action*, Mrs. Besant. Sunday evening meetings at 7 p.m. : April 5th, *Reincarnation, Its Proofs* ; April 12th, *Reincarnation, How Effected* ; April 19th, *Karma* ; April 26th, *The Building of Character. Secret Doctrine Class*, Saturdays at 4 p.m. : April 11th and 25th.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8 p.m. On the other Mondays, at 8 p.m., class for study of *The Perfect Way*.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at Myddelton Hall, Almeida Street, Upper Street, Islington, on Wednesdays, at 8.30 p.m. : April 1st, *The Theosophy of the Vedas*, G. R. S. Mead ; April 8th, *Sufi Theosophy*, Hon. O. S. Cuffe ; April 15th, *The Development of Consciousness*, C. W. Leadbeater ; April 22nd, *Early Christian Views of the Soul*, A. M. Glass ; April 29th, *Conditions of Consciousness*, A. D. Cheyne. Class for study at 10, Park St., Upper Street, on Mondays and Saturdays, at 8 p.m.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings at 29, Grosvenor Chambers, 16, Deansgate, on Wednesdays, at 7.30 p.m.

MARGATE LODGE. Meetings at 39, High Street, on Thursdays, at 7.30 p.m.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at Co-operative Hall, on alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: April 14th, *The Making of Character*, W. H. Thomas; April 28th, *Nature's Picture Book*, Baker Hudson. On the other Tuesdays, study of "Man and his Bodies." Sundays, at 6.30 p.m., study of *The Secret Doctrine*.

NORWICH LODGE. Meetings are held at 41, Exchange Street, every Friday evening, at 7.30 p.m.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at the Co-operative Hall, on first and third Mondays in each month.

RAMSGATE CENTRE. Meetings at Boston Villa will be discontinued for a few weeks.

SHEFFIELD CENTRE. Meetings at Mrs. Bestwick's, Cambridge Arcade, every Thursday, at 7.30 p.m.

THE HAGUE CENTRE. Meetings on alternate Sundays: April 12th, *The Mind*, Mej. J. Vrendenberg; April 26th, *Theosophy and Materialism*, W. B. Fricke.

YORK LODGE. Meetings at No. 1 Room, Victoria Hall, Goodramgate, on Thursdays, at 7.30 p.m.

#### North of England Federation.

The tenth Conference will take place in the People's Hotel, Harrogate, on Saturday, April 25th, the date having been altered from the usual fixture in May, in order that Mrs. Besant's welcome presence may be secured.

The Conference will commence at 3 p.m., and will be preceded by the usual council meeting. Tea will be provided on the premises. In the evening it is hoped that Mrs. Besant will address the meeting.

Further particulars will be sent to secretaries of Lodges and Centres.

Communications from new lodges, centres, or unattached members of the European Section in the North of England, not hitherto affiliated with the Federation, will be welcomed by the undersigned, who will be pleased to forward any information.

EDITH WARD, *Hon. Sec.*

Eldon Buildings, Bradford.

### ENQUIRER.

QUESTION CCLXVI.

(Continued.)

M. K. S.—Where are the alleged passages bearing on reincarnation to be found in the works of Origen and Synesius?

G.—I question very much whether any positive evidence can be obtained from Origen's works showing that he held the doctrine of reincarnation in the commonly accepted sense of the word. That he regarded the pre-existence of the soul as a fact is well known, but it would appear from many passages that he conceived the soul as appearing for the first time on this earth, having, from the

beginning of all things, passed through a series of states in super-earthly regions. The soul fell into matter, or was born in a physical body, for one of two reasons—first, because of its previous sinful actions, or second, because its presence was required for the aid of those who were lower in the scale of evolution, for Origen clearly recognised the growth and development of the soul. In *De Principiis*, Book III., chap. v., he compares the future of the soul with the past, and argues that as there is no finality there can have been no beginning.

"I am, indeed, of opinion that as the end and consummation of the saints will be in those [ages] which are not seen, and are eternal, we must conclude (as frequently pointed out in the preceding pages), from a contemplation of that very end, that rational creatures had also a similar beginning. And if they had a beginning such as the end for which they hope, they existed undoubtedly from the very beginning in those [ages] which are not seen and are eternal. And if this is so, then there has been a descent from a higher to a lower condition, on the part not only of those souls who have deserved the change by the variety of their movements, but also on that of those who, in order to serve the whole world, were brought down from those higher and invisible spheres to these lower and visible ones, although against their will. 'Because the creature was subjected to vanity, not willingly, but because of him who subjected the same in hope.' . . . The hope indeed of freedom is entertained by the whole of creation—of being liberated from the corruption of slavery—when the sons of God, who either fell away or were scattered abroad, shall be gathered together into one, or when they shall have fulfilled their other duties in this world, which are known to God alone, the Disposer of all things."

Origen goes on to remark "that it was owing to preceding causes, originating in free-will, that this variety of arrangement had been instituted by God." The whole of the chapter from which these quotations have been taken deals with the subject.

Origen, in common with all Christian writers, objects persistently to the Greek conception of metempsychosis, but leaves it open to doubt whether the objection includes reincarnation in human bodies, or only the transmigration into animal forms.

In *Contra Celsum*, Book I., chap. xx., he writes: "The Jew is, in the opinion of Celsus and those like him, deemed inferior to him who degrades the divinity, not only to the level of rational and mortal animals, but even to that of irrational also!—a view which goes far beyond the mythical doctrine of transmigration, according to which the soul falls down from the summit of heaven and enters into the body of brute beasts, both tame and savage!"

In Book I., chap. xxxiii., he discusses the birth of Jesus, defending the idea of immaculate conception and at the same time introducing us to the doctrine of pre-existence.

"Now if a particular soul, for certain mysterious reasons, is not deserving of being placed in the

body of a wholly irrational being, nor yet in that of one purely rational, but is clothed with a monstrous body, so that reason cannot discharge its functions in one so fashioned, which has the head disproportioned to the other parts, and altogether too short, and another receives such a body that the soul is a little more rational than the other; and another still more so, the nature of the body counteracting to a greater or less degree the reception of the reasoning principle; why should there not be also some soul which receives an altogether miraculous body, possessing some qualities common to those of other men, so that it may be able to pass through life with them, but possessing also some quality of superiority, so that the soul may be able to remain untainted by sin?"

The other references which may be given are as follows: *De Principiis*, Book III., chap. iii., giving reasons why a man is acted upon by good or bad spirits, "the grounds of which I suspect to be older than the bodily birth of the individual"; *Contra Celsum*, Book I., chap. xxxii., and Book IV., chap. xvii. of Christ and his incarnation.

#### QUESTION CCLXVIII.

(Continued.)

V. Y.—*Is Kāma Loka, the abode of man after death, a definite region in the astral plane, or does it include the whole of that plane, so that ordinary persons who have passed from the body may be found in all parts?*

C. W. L.—The use of Sanskrit terms is so excessively uncertain that one hesitates to say exactly what the real meaning of any one of them may be, since no two schools of thought in India appear to agree about them. But there is no doubt that in Theosophical literature the word Kāmaloka has been used simply as a synonym for the astral plane, and there is also no doubt that ordinary persons who have passed from the body may be found upon all the subdivisions of that plane, as was stated in Manual No. V. Indeed, it would not be inaccurate to say that every one after death has to pass through all these subdivisions on his way to Devachan, though of course it must not be inferred that he would be conscious upon all of them. Precisely as it is necessary that the physical body should contain within its constitution physical matter in all its conditions, solid, liquid, gaseous, and etheric; so it is indispensable that the astral vehicle should contain particles belonging to all the corresponding subdivisions of astral matter, though of course the proportions may vary very greatly in different cases. Now it must be remembered that along with the matter of his astral body a man picks up the corresponding elemental essence, and that during his life this essence is segregated from the ocean of similar matter around, and practically becomes for that time what may be described as a kind of artificial elemental, which has temporarily a definite separate existence of its own, and follows the course of its own evolution downwards into matter without any reference to the convenience or interest of the

ego to whom it happens to be attached—thus causing that perpetual struggle between the will of the flesh and the will of the spirit to which religious writers so often refer. When the man passes away at death from the physical plane the disintegrating forces of nature begin to operate upon his astral body, and the kāmīc elemental thus finds his existence as a separate entity endangered. He sets to work therefore to defend himself, and to hold the astral body together as long as possible; and his method of doing this is to rearrange the matter of which it is composed in a sort of stratified series of shells, leaving that of the lowest (and therefore coarsest and grossest) subplane on the outside, since that will offer the greatest resistance to disintegration.

Now a man has to stay upon the lowest subdivision of Kāmaloka until he has disentangled so much as is possible of his Manas from the matter of that sub-plane; and when that is done his consciousness is focussed in the next of these concentric shells (that formed of the matter of the sixth subdivision), or, to put the same idea in other words, he passes on to the next sub-plane. It is therefore obvious that the length of his detention upon any sub-plane will be precisely in proportion to the amount of its matter which is found in his astral body, and that in turn depends upon the life he has lived, the desires he has indulged, and the class of matter which by so doing he has attracted towards him and built into himself. It is therefore possible for a man, by pure living and high thinking, to minimize the quantity of matter belonging to the lower astral levels which he attaches to himself, and to raise it in each case to what may be called its critical point, so that the first touch of disintegrating force should shatter its cohesion and resolve it into its original condition, leaving him free at once to pass on to the next sub-plane. In the case of a thoroughly spiritually-minded person this condition would have been attained with reference to all the subdivisions of astral matter, and the result would be a practically instantaneous passage through Kāmaloka, so that consciousness would be recovered for the first time in Devachan. Of course, the sub-planes must not be thought of as divided from one another in space, but rather as interpenetrating one another; so that when we say that a person passes from one subdivision to another, we do not mean that he moves in space at all, but simply that the focus of his consciousness shifts from the outer shell to the one next within it.

The only persons who would normally awake to consciousness on the lowest level of Kāmaloka are those whose desires are gross and brutal—drunkards, sensualists, and such like. There they would remain for a period proportioned to the strength of their desires, often suffering terribly from the fact that while these earthly lusts are still as strong as ever, they now find it impossible to gratify them, except occasionally in a vicarious manner when they are able to seize upon some like-minded person, and obsess him. The ordinarily decent man would probably have little to detain him on that sub-

plane; but if his chief desires and thoughts had centred in mere worldly affairs, he would be likely to find himself in the sixth subdivision, still hovering about the places and persons with which he was most closely connected while on earth. The fifth and the fourth sub-planes are of similar character, except that as we rise through them mere earthly associations appear to become of less and less importance, and the departed tends more and more to mould his surroundings into agreement with the more persistent of his thoughts. By the time we get to the third subdivision we find that this characteristic has entirely superseded the vision of the realities of the plane; for here the people are living in imaginary cities of their own—not, of course, each involved entirely in his own thought, as in Devachan, but inheriting and adding to the structures erected by the thoughts of their predecessors. Here it is that the churches and schools and “dwellings in the summerland,” so often described at spiritualistic séances, are to be found; though they would often seem much less real and much less magnificent to an unprejudiced living observer than they are to their delighted creators. The second sub-plane seems especially the habitat of the selfish or unspiritual religionist; here he wears his golden crown and worships his own grossly material representation of the particular deity of his country and time. The highest subdivision of Kāmaloka seems specially appropriated to those who during life have devoted themselves to materialistic but intellectual pursuits, following them not for the sake of benefiting their fellowmen thereby, but either from motives of selfish ambition or simply for the sake of intellectual exercise. Such persons will often remain upon this level for many long years—happy enough indeed in working out their intellectual problems, but doing no good to anyone, and making no progress on their way towards Devachan. It must however be clearly understood, as before explained, that the idea of space is not to be associated with these sub-planes. A departed entity functioning upon any one of them might drift with equal ease from here to Australia, or wherever a passing thought might take him; but he would not be able to transfer his consciousness from that sub-plane to the one next above it until the process of detachment described had been completed.

C. J.—If the questioner had read some of the Theosophic manuals before asking this he would have been able to find the answer himself. It has been made clear that Kāmaloka is only another name for the astral plane, except that the former is used chiefly when speaking of the habitat of a person after death. We describe a departed entity as living in Kāmaloka, but when we talk of a person going to that plane of the universe while still alive, either consciously or during sleep, we say that for the moment he is functioning on the astral plane. Hence it follows that just as many different kinds of departed entities are to be met with in the various stages of Kāmaloka as we might find of people on the astral plane who have

left their bodies during sleep. In both cases such persons might either be unable to move from the vicinity of their physical encasements, or might be confined to one sub-division of that plane, or might, on the other hand, if sufficiently developed, be able to range the whole plane—with, however, this qualification, that departed entities when on a particular sub-division of Kāmaloka are unable to move away from that region except to pass on to a higher one after the matter in their bodies belonging to the lower subdivision has been finally cast off.

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QUESTION CCLXXI.

(Continued.)

A. Y.—*Have the figures, apparently living and conscious, seen in dreams, any subjective or real existence of their own?*

F. A.—This question cannot be answered by a simple affirmative or negative, because the subject with which it deals is exceedingly complex, and many points have to be considered in its treatment. The answers given by C. W. L. and A. B., and others on Question CCLVII., will also give the clue to the answer in this case.

The figures may be “mere mental images floating through the gross and etheric brains.” In this case the figures with their apparent life are but the memory image of some past connection in life or the impression received from astral currents affecting the etheric double. In either of these cases the dream figures will have no real existence of their own. If, however, these dream figures represent the experiences of a more developed ego in his astral body, being the results transmitted through the physical brain to the waking consciousness, it is evident that the figures may have had a very real existence of their own. In many instances the memory becomes so confused, owing to the presence of mental and astral images mixing with the memory of real experiences that most incongruous dreams are the result.

G.—By “subjective existence,” I presume is meant a consciousness independent of the dreamer, so that the figures are not merely shadows or pictures, but, in however low a form, have an intelligence of their own, so that when we hear a person talking in a dream there would be a conscious entity besides ourselves speaking. This may in some rare instances be the true explanation. In the case of a person who is sufficiently developed to live actively during the sleeping condition of the body, though unable to remember clearly on awaking, the dreams may be detached and confused recollections of real events in which others took part.

Such an explanation will certainly not apply to the ordinary dream, which almost always occurs immediately before waking, or in a condition bordering on the waking. The question in such cases is whether the pictures exist only in the mind of the dreamer, or whether they may be perceived by another person. It is certain that they cannot be

seen by physical sight, but as it would appear that all our mental activity produces pictures and forms which are visible on their own plane, the images in dreams must have an objective reality of a like nature. But in dreams we see great expanses of country, scenery as vast as any we are acquainted with here, and as it is obvious that we cannot create or form objectively such vast objects, it may not be at first clear how we obtain such experiences. We know, however, that on this plane the large expanse we see on looking over a landscape, is really the result of a minute picture on the retina of the eye, the impression being then transmitted to the brain. If our mind then produces an impression on the matter of its own plane, the picture so formed would be extremely minute.

Suppose that such pictures, whether from his own or another's mind, impinged upon the dreaming consciousness, they would not act through the ordinary channels, but directly upon the brain, and produce by a kind of reversal of the usual sense process, the same effect as the original scene. The dreamer by his own activity would of course alter the picture, just as in waking he would change the current of his thought.

While ordinary dreams are illusive, there seems to me to be the element of reality indicated above. The pictures are the past production of the dreamer or of some other person, and have an independent existence, though in a form very different from that in the vision of the dreamer.

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QUESTION CCLXXII.

*N. M.—In the various religio-mythologic systems which is the more sacred number, seven or four ?*

G. R. S. M.—It is somewhat vain to enquire what is the most "sacred" number, or more "sacred" number. All ten numbers are of equal dignity and equal "sanctity" in their several ways. The fetishism of numbers in the West is the superstition of pythagorean and kabalistic ideas. "Numbers" among the Pythagoreans were the signifiers of the "ideas" among the Platonists, and "ideas" are identical with the "things in themselves" and the "laws of nature." All things come into being in orderly sequence, proportion and harmony, and no "number" can be really said to be superior to another, when all are co-eternal and co-equal together in the "Mind" whose creative laws they symbolize.

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QUESTION CCLXXIII.

*S. L.—Can the ordinary view of heredity, which regards bodily and other qualities as dependent on the parents, be reconciled with the conception of Karma ?*

B. K.—I see no reason why we should not regard the parents as, at second hand, the agents of the Lipika. The Mahārājahs form the model for the future body of an ego according to the "idea" thereof given to them by the Lipika, and also select the

race, nation, family and parent, which will supply the nearest available conditions for the working out of the Karma allotted for that life. The law of heredity (which is a phrase summing up in reality an extremely complex nexus of causes on the three lower planes) simply denotes the mechanism by which the needful conditions are provided for the working out of the ego's Karma. But it must be remembered that a quite considerable number of "small" things (things which do not seriously affect the ego's life) are incidental rather than consequent on the individual Karma of the ego. Thus colour of hair and eyes, mannerisms, little tricks and habits, complexion and so on, when they do not play any marked part in the subsequent life of the ego, are often rather merely incidental results of race, nationality and family, which accrue to the ego as a consequent of his being born in that family and of those special parents, than direct consequences of particular actions or tendencies of his own; also it must be remembered that the degree of development of the ego itself is important. A baby ego, *i.e.*, one of the undeveloped majority of our present mankind, is on its own plane so vague and uncharacterized that it is almost indistinguishable from hundreds of others, and scores of suitable bodies can be found at any time, any one of which would equally suit the needs and Karma of such an ego, because neither the ego nor its Karma is specialized or individualized to any marked degree. But the higher the development of the ego, the more both itself and its Karma become specialized, and consequently the more restricted becomes the possible field of selection wherein to find a suitable birth; and of course in such a case, it is the great and important lines of its Karma which have to be provided for, those which will really mould and influence the life and shape its destinies. Hence in such a case there may be, and often are, not a few "incidental" elements in the make up of the body, which have no direct relation to that particular ego or its Karma. The total Karma of an ego may be divided into two main lines: (a) that which is embodied in the ego itself, constituting its individual character, tendencies, faculties, etc., in short the actual nature and character of the ego itself; (b) that which is dealt with by the Lipika and their agents, and which determines the circumstances and surroundings of the birth and the model of the body. The first of these shows itself in the moulding work of the ego itself, and that becomes more apparent naturally as the child grows, and the astral body develops. It is the Lipika and their agents who build the house, using the parents as instruments. The ego only arranges the furniture and (in the case of a highly-developed ego) sometimes adds to or alters the building.

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QUESTION CCLXXIV.

*M.—Is any spiritual progress possible to us before we have reached our ideal of perfection on the lower planes ?*

G. R. S. M.—In the first place what is the meaning of "our ideal"? A prize fighter's ideal

of perfection on the lower planes would undoubtedly not connote spiritual progress; nor would that of a millionaire whose ideal is to gain the greatest sum of money possible; nor again that of a professional man who merely wishes to make a "name for himself." Spiritual progress depends on spiritual aspirations, and to manifest on this plane must be persistently fed with such aspirations. It is therefore evident that spiritual progress is not only possible before we realize our "spiritual ideals" here, but that the reaching of such perfection "here" is solely dependent upon that same spiritual progress "elsewhere."

I. P. H.—If it be not possible it appears to me that our chances of progress are small. A thing is physically perfect in so far as it is adapted to perform that for which it is intended. But if an animal is bred for—let us say—speed, the human being who breeds and rears that creature must first think of the physical attributes which will conduce to speed, *i.e.*, the physical creature starts as *an idea*. It appears to me that our actions must be translations of spiritual and mental activities; thus to have translated these into an expression of perfection, on the lower planes—*i.e.*, into daily action and thought—consonant with a high ideal would argue very considerable spiritual progress.

F. A.—It is a little difficult to know what is meant by an "ideal of perfection on the lower planes," but if we are to understand by these the moral and intellectual, any ideal of perfection could hardly be attained without some spiritual progress. For it must be remembered that the progress of development on any plane involves a certain unfoldment of the plane next above, for there is the latent potentiality of all planes within our nature, which is many sided, and development rarely proceeds entirely on one line. In most individuals we see that the emotional, intellectual and moral faculties bear a certain relation to each other, and that they accompany spiritual growth in a greater or less degree. It is true that we may observe a high standard of intellectuality with very little development of the spiritual nature; but this generally arises from the want of an ideal and the consequent limitation of development by the desire for personal gain. Whenever there is a true aspiration to an ideal of perfection on any plane, however humble may be the goal, the very fact that we place an ideal before us, as something to reach up to, is sufficient to call forth a certain development of the spiritual nature.

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QUESTION CCLXXV.

*M.—In seeking our own true progress, should we try to become indifferent to the influence of other minds?*

G. R. S. M.—Certainly not. A man might as well try to reconstruct the science of mathematics

unaided. Such a reactionary would have to be content with counting on his fingers or worse. The law of nature has ever been that higher minds develop lower intelligences. A man, therefore, can be indifferent neither to the influence of higher minds than his own, nor yet to lower minds, for as he receives from the higher so is it his duty to give to the lower. Perhaps, however, the questioner means that a man should shield himself against the pernicious influences of other minds. This is undoubtedly right and proper, and one of the conditions of true progress.

F. A.—By becoming indifferent to the influence of other minds, we must understand the being willing to pursue any course of action which we believe to be right, without being disturbed by the praise or blame awarded to us by others. In this sense indifference to influence is a necessary condition of spiritual progress. It cannot, however, be supposed that we can wish to become indifferent to the influence of those who are farther advanced on the spiritual path than ourselves, and through whose influence we may be better able to progress and in our turn help others forward. Neither should we seek to withdraw our minds from the influence that others may exercise upon us, if that influence takes the form of arousing our sympathy with their needs. Each one is a part of the great unity of humanity, and we cannot become indifferent to the influences that are pouring forth from other minds, without losing our power to sympathize and help. The indifference that we have the right to cultivate, is only the indifference that leaves the mind free from desire for results, indifference that makes us strong to work the right, although we may suffer in so doing from the judgment of others, indifference that will bear with equal equanimity the pain or pleasure that such judgments bring. But the higher we progress in the spiritual life, the more fully shall we respond to the slightest touch of another human being, the more we shall feel that we are not isolated indifferent entities, each pursuing a separate path, but a living unity in which the good of one influences the good of all.

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If the heart is narrow, what avail if the world is large.

The day can dawn without the cock's crowing.  
—*Armenian Proverbs.*

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The subscription to the VÂHAN for those who are not members of the European Section of the T. S. is 2s. 6d. per annum, post-free. Single copies, 3d. each, may be obtained from the Theosophical Publishing Society, 7, Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C. No back numbers can be supplied.

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*All communications must be in the hands of the Editor by the 20th of the month at latest.*

# THE VĀHAN.



A VEHICLE FOR

## THE INTERCHANGE OF THEOSOPHICAL OPINIONS AND NEWS.

ISSUED by direction and under the authority of the European Section of the Theosophical Society in convention, for free distribution to English-reading members. Members of Branches will receive copies through their officers. The Theosophical Society is not responsible for any statements contained herein unless set forth in an official document.—G. R. S. MEAD, *Gen. Sec'y.*

All readers are cordially invited to send in questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. All communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to the editor, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London, N.W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

VOL. V.

LONDON, MAY 1, 1896.

NO. 10.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

### LITERARY NOTES.

*The Story of Atlantis*, by W. Scott-Elliot, with a Preface by A. P. Sinnett (T.P.S., 3s. 6d. net) This is the outcome of some of the most interesting researches that have been lately made by a few of the more advanced students in the Society. It purports to be a geographical, historical and ethnological sketch of the once great Atlantic continent, and originally appeared as No. 29 of *The Transactions of the London Lodge*.

Appended to the volume are four large coloured maps, indicative of the variations of the land-distribution on the earth's surface owing to the great cataclysms which overwhelmed the Atlantean root-race. These are respectively entitled: No. I., "Atlantis in its Prime," or the world about one million years ago, during many previous ages, and up to the catastrophe of about 800,000 years ago; No. II., "Atlantis in its Decadence," or the world after the catastrophe of 800,000 years ago and up to the catastrophe of about 200,000 years ago; No. III., "Ruta and Daitya," or the world after the catastrophe of 200,000 years ago, and up to the catastrophe of about 80,000 years ago; No. IV., "Poseidonis," or the world after the catastrophe of 80,000 years ago and up to the final submergence of Poseidonis in 9,564 B.C.

In briefly referring to the source of the information, the recorder of the researches writes: "Among the [occult] records . . . there are maps of the world at various periods of its history, and it has been the great privilege of the writer to be allowed to obtain copies—more or less complete—of four of these." We believe, however, that the originals are not in the form of maps, but rather of the nature of globes moulded in terra cotta. Seeing that the bulk of the information is derived from the direct reading of the world-record, Mr. Sinnett in his Preface, puts forward a brief but

clear statement of the matter, explaining the possibilities of the higher clairvoyance.

Needless to say, like so much of the recent literature of this kind, *The Story of Atlantis* adds considerably to our information on the subject, and should prove of immense interest to all students of *The Secret Doctrine*.

The work of the Manu is referred to, and the seven sub-races of the great Atlantean race are distinguished and traced; there are also sections on political institutions, emigrations, arts and sciences, manners and customs, and religion. The political and social schemes attempted are of great interest. The polity of the ancient Peruvians was a sort of socialistic utopia, *minus* democracy. Plato's idea of the abrogation of marriage and the state-farming of children was also attempted by certain of the Atlanteans, but abandoned as destructive of all the noble impulses of motherhood.

But we must leave our readers to the undisturbed enjoyment of the perusal of the volume; for ourselves, we have read the treatise with the closest attention and interest, and only regret that it is not longer, for there is still, we are informed, a quantity of unused material already acquired by the investigators.

*Creencias Fundamentales del Buddhismo*, Versión Castellana por Vina (Madrid, 1896). Some two years ago Mons. Arthur Arnould, the late president of our French branch, wrote a booklet entitled *Les Croyances Fundamentales du Buddhisme*, which was an excellent little treatise to popularise theosophical ideas, but stepped far outside the official limits of Buddhism. Our colleague, Don José Xifré, has translated this into Spanish, and all that we regret is that he did not change the title.

*The System to which we Belong*, by A. P. Sinnett (T.P.S., 1s. net). This is the title of No. 30 of *The Transactions of the London Lodge*, in which Mr. Sinnett attempts the difficult task of giving a

concise outline sketch of our solar system. It is an exceedingly interesting paper, especially in its hints as to the interrelation of "planes," individual, planetary and solar—a subject fraught with great difficulty. Mr. Sinnett deals mainly with the general scheme, but also adds some new details of interest, in which he brings home to the mind the stupendous task of comprehending the evolution of the system. The last page deals with the conception of the divine ruler and emanator of the system, the Logos, and is written with deep feeling.

*The Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, translated from the Slavonic by W. R. Morfill, M.A., and edited with Introduction, Notes and Indices, by R. H. Charles, M.A. (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1896). This is a valuable find for students of so-called apocryphal scriptures. For more than 1,200 years this version of Enochian literature has been unknown save in Russia, and in Western Europe was not known to exist even in Russia until 1892. Those who have read the Ethiopic Enoch and marked such passages as the "thieves and robbers" incident, will eagerly peruse the Slavonic Enoch for further confirmation of the priority of a number of passages in the New Testament to the Christian era. The editor fairly establishes that the Slavonic translation comes from a Greek copy; the penultimate editor of the original document being a Hellenistic Jew writing in Egypt, probably in Alexandria, and the original document being undoubtedly in Hebrew. The Greek copy may be placed about the beginning of the Christian era. It is quoted by name in the Testaments of Levi, Daniel and Naphthali, cir. 1 A.D. The portions which have a Hebrew background are at latest pre-Christian. The editor quotes a number of striking parallels with the text of the New Testament, as, for instance, "I will swear by a sin gle oath, neither by heaven, nor by earth, nor by a 7y other creature which God made. . . . If there be no truth in men, let them swear by a word, yea, yea; nay, nay." And again, "For in the world to come . . . there are many mansions prepared for men, good for good, evil for evil."

The main doctrines elucidated are: death caused by sin; the millennium; the creation of man with free-will and a knowledge of good and evil; the Seraphim; the intercession of saints; and the seven heavens, to which the editor devotes sixteen pages of interesting commentary, showing that it was an early Jewish and Christian belief. Especially noticeable is the doctrine of kindness to the brute creation. Though the existence of souls even prior to creation is inculcated, we can so far find no reference to reincarnation. The creation-days are given as protracted time-periods. The intellectual creation prior to the physical is distinctly taught.

It is therefore abundantly apparent that *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch* is an important document, and so unexpected a find encourages us to hope that ere long the libraries of the Russian, Armenian, Syrian, and Abyssinian monasteries may be compelled to disclose even more important records of the times when the gospels were com-

piled, and so throw further light on the obscure origins of Christianity.

*The Transactions of the Scottish Lodge*, Vol. III., Nos. 4, 5, 6 and 7. (Redway: price 6d. each.) These four Transactions speak well for the industry of the Scottish Lodge, and consist of four short papers by the President, and one long treatise on the "Mythology of the Ancient Egyptians," which occupies the major part of the space of each Transaction. It is pleasant to see that some first-hand work is being done in the Society in the vast field of Egyptian research, and we congratulate the writer, and even envy him. For what can be a nobler task than such pioneer work; and what can be more enviable than the chance of rediscovering some of the theosophy of ancient Khem? Undoubtedly before many years are over Egypt will play as important a part in theosophy as India has already played; but its time does not seem to have come as yet.

The papers by the President are respectively entitled "The Tatwas on Four Planes," "Hermetic Philosophy as the Reconciler of Science and Religion," "The Interpretation of the Story of the Deluge on Four Planes," and "Norse-Egyptian Mythology." They display the wide reading and versatility of our colleague, though exception might be taken to some of the ideas.

We are glad to announce that the MS. of a new book of Mr. Sinnett, treating of *The Growth of the Soul*, has been placed in the hands of the printers. It will make a book of upwards of 300 pages of the same size as *Esoteric Buddhism*.

Mrs. Besant's last Adyar lectures, entitled *The Path of Discipleship*, have already appeared in an Indian edition. The printers are now setting up the English edition. The lectures treat of such subjects as Purification, Karma-yoga, the Probationary Path, and the Path itself, together with a general sketch of Evolution.

The April number of *Lucifer* contains much of interest. In addition to the papers announced in our last number, we may add that "On the Watch-Tower" deals with nomenclature, Buddhism, and the Röntgen discovery. The concluding paper on "Orpheus" proves beyond any possibility of doubt the identity of the ideas of the Greek and Vedantic psychologists with regard to the three vehicles, under the headings "The Subtle Body" and "Augeoides." The concluding chapter deals with "The Doctrine of Rebirth," and among other matters of interest gives several lists of the past births of Pythagoras. Mrs. Besant writes on "The Mind-Body," and Mr. Leadbeater on the lower sub-planes of Devachan, with many most interesting examples derived from first-hand observation. "The System of Chaitanya," a later school of Vaishnavism, dating from the end of the fifteenth century, will be of interest to students of religious enthusiasm.

(Copies of the above may be obtained from *The Theosophical Publishing Society*, 7, Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C.)

## ACTIVITIES.

## The Convention.

By resolution of the Executive Committee it has been decided to hold the Convention of the Section in London, on Saturday and Sunday, July 4th and 5th.

G. R. S. MEAD, *Gen. Sec.*

## End of the Financial Year.

Secretaries of branches and unattached members are reminded that the financial year ended on April 30th. Members who have not paid their subscriptions for 1895-1896 are requested to kindly do so at their earliest convenience.

OTWAY CUFFE, *Treasurer.*

## Donations to the General Fund.

The following sums have been received since the last acknowledgment: W. B. Pitt-Taylor, 10s.; L. Schlesinger, 11s.; E. Hardcastle, 5s.; C. J. Barker, 10s.; J. H. S., 2s.; Miss Cust, 5s.; Mrs. Judson, 2s.; W. Harnden, 2s. 6d.; Miss Bowring, £1; Mrs. Midgley, 2s. 6d.; C. Parsloe, 2s. 6d.; Gilbert Graham, £1; G. R. S. Mead, £1; O. S. Cuffe, £2; North London Lodge, £1 10s.; Miss Lowthime, 7s. 6d.; S., 5s.; A. Slee, 1s.; G. F. Leipold, 10s.; H. Saville, £1 1s.; Miss Wheaton, 1s. C. Harvey, £1. Total £12 8s.

## Headquarters' Reference Library.

The following books have been received: *Das Rätsel des Lebens*, Dr. Josef Klinger; *Ludzkość Posmiertna* (Posthumous Humanity) Polish translation by Dr. Józef Drzewiecki.

A. J. WILLSON, *Librarian.*

## Headquarters' Lending Library.

The subscription to the Circulating Library, at 19, Avenue Road, is: one year, 10s.; six months, 6s.; three months, 3s. 6d.; postage extra. Catalogues on application to the Librarian.

## White Lotus Day.

The meeting of the Blavatsky Lodge will take place at 8.30 p.m., on Friday, May 8th.

## Lecture List.

AMSTERDAM, DUTCH LODGE. Meetings at 34, Amstel Dijk, on Thursdays, at 8 p.m.: May 7th,

*The Lower Principles in Man*, L. J. Cliquant; May 14th, *Fire*, Mevr. C. M. Perk-Joosten; May 21st, *The Castes of India*, W. B. Fricke; May 28th, *The Reincarnating Ego*, H. Reynders.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at No. 5 Room, Cobden Hotel, on alternate Sundays, at 7 p.m.

BOURNEMOUTH LODGE. Meetings at Avenue House, Avenue Road, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m.

BRADFORD LODGE. Meetings at Central Coffee Tavern, Westgate, on alternate Wednesdays, at 8 p.m.: May 6th, *Thoughts on Karma and Reincarnation*; May 20th, *The Babel of Modern Thought*.

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Meetings at the Council Chamber of the Mechanics' Institute, on alternate Wednesdays, at 8 p.m.: May 13th, *A Rabbi of the Century before the Beginning of the Christian Era*, Rev. Dr. Strauss; May 27th, *Have Animals Souls?* Lodge meetings at Eldon Buildings, alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

BRIGHTON LODGE. The usual open meeting for study and interchange of thought takes place every alternate Sunday afternoon at members' houses. Information can be obtained from the Librarian, Mr. Lloyd, 15, Old Steine, or the Secretary, Dr. King, 30, Buckingham Place.

BRISTOL LODGE. Meetings at 48, Queen's Road, Clifton (near the Museum), on alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. On the other Tuesdays a reading circle for the study of *The Secret Doctrine*, at 8 p.m. On Fridays a meeting for enquirers at 8 p.m.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 35, High Street, on alternate Fridays, at 8 p.m.: May 8th and 22nd.

GLASGOW CENTRE. Meetings at Holton's Hotel, Glassford Street, on Sundays, at 11.30 a.m.

HARROGATE LODGE. Meetings at No. 2 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: May 3rd, *Idols and Ideals*, Miss Shaw; May 10th, *The Art of Forgetting*, F. Johnson; May 17th, *Vicarious Suffering*, Baker Hudson; May 24th, *Is Theosophy Practical?* Miss Woodhead; May 31st, *Individual Karma*, E. J. Dunn. Lodge meetings on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

HERNE BAY CENTRE. Meetings at "Glaisdale," Herne Bay, on Thursdays, at 7.30 p.m.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings at No. 9 Room, St. George's Hall, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at 25, Park Square, on Mondays, at 8 p.m.

LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings at 18a, South Castle Street, on Thursdays, at 7.45 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings at 3, Hackins Hey, on Thursdays, at 8 p.m.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings at the Buckingham Temperance Hotel, 40, Strand, W.C. (entrance in Buckingham Street), on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: May 7th, *The Limitation of Evil*, C. W. Leadbeater; May 14th, *Alchemy and the Alchemists*, A. P. Sinnett; May 21st, *Knowledge*

and Devotion, Mrs. Besant ; May 28th, *The Platonic Discipline*, G. R. S. Mead. *Secret Doctrine* Class, Saturdays at 4 p.m. : May 2nd, 16th, and 30th.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8 p.m. : May 4th, *The Later Platonists*, G. R. S. Mead ; May 18th, *Kāma and the Desire Body*, B. Keightley. On the other Mondays, at 8 p.m., class for study of *The Perfect Way*.

LONDON, EAST LONDON LODGE. Meetings at Balliol House, Toynbee Hall, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., for study of *The Voice of the Silence*.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at Myddelton Hall, Almeida Street, Upper Street, Islington, on Wednesdays, at 8.30 p.m. : May 6th, *Psychical Research*, Mrs. Hooper ; May 13th, *Occult Chemistry*, M. U. Moore ; May 20th, *Mesmeric Influence*, R. King ; May 27th, *The Growth of Mind*, B. Keightley. Class for study at 10, Park St., Upper Street, on Mondays and Saturdays, at 8 p.m.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings at 29, Grosvenor Chambers, 16, Deansgate, on Wednesdays, at 7.30 p.m.

MARGATE LODGE. Meetings at 39, High Street, on Thursdays, at 7.30 p.m.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at Co-operative Hall, at 8 p.m., May 14th, *The Message of Theosophy*, Miss Shaw ; May 28th, . . . Mrs. Macfadzean. On the other Tuesdays, study of "Man and his Bodies." Sundays, at 6.30 p.m. study of *The Secret Doctrine*. (The meetings are announced by the Lodge for Tuesdays, but the lecture dates sent in this month fall on Thursdays.)

NORWICH LODGE. Meetings are held at 41, Exchange Street, every Friday evening, at 7.30 p.m.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at the Co-operative Hall, on first and third Mondays in each month.

RAMSGATE CENTRE. Meetings at Boston Villa will be discontinued for a few weeks.

SHEFFIELD CENTRE. Meetings at Mrs. Bestwick's, Cambridge Arcade, every Thursday, at 7.30 p.m.

THE HAGUE CENTRE. Meetings on alternate Sundays.

YORK LODGE. Meetings at No. 1 Room, Victoria Hall, Goodramgate, on Thursdays, at 7.30 p.m.

#### Mrs. Besant's Lectures.

Mrs. Besant returned from India in the middle of April, arriving in London early on Sunday morning, April 19th, having had a good passage.

The small Queen's Hall has been taken for a series of thirteen Sunday evening lectures during May, June and July, beginning at 7.30 p.m., the doors opening at 7 o'clock. The following is the list of subjects for the present month :

May 3rd, "A General Outline."—Evidences of an original teaching ; its custodians, the Adept Brotherhood ; its leading truths,

May 10th, "The Physical Plane."—Matter and life ; man's physical body ; his relations with the physical world ; his waking consciousness.

May 17th, "The Astral Plane."—Its matter ; its inhabitants ; man's astral body ; his relations with the astral world ; his dream consciousness.

May 24th, "Kāmaloka."—Its subdivisions ; man's body in Kāmaloka ; the relations between Kāmaloka and the Earth.

May 31st, "The Mental Plane."—Its matter ; the Universal Mind ; man's mind-body ; its building and modifications ; the activities of the mental plane ; its higher regions ; the causal body.

A lecture will also be delivered at the Pioneer Club on May 11th, on "Reincarnation."

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#### Mrs. Besant's "At Homes."

Mrs. Besant will be "At Home" on Friday, May 1st, from 8 to 10 p.m., and will be pleased to receive members or friends interested in Theosophical subjects.

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#### "Secret Doctrine" Correspondence Class.

The questions relating to the third set of references on Mānasic Evolution, will be sent out to members of this class early in May. At the same time the fourth set of references will be supplied. Answers to the questions will be expected within a month from the time of receiving the paper.

ISABEL COOPER-OAKLEY.

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#### Blavatsky Lodge.

There is little to report in connection with the Lodge work, the regular course of lectures having continued, with the exception of a break in Easter week, no lecture being given on the Thursday of that week. Mr. Cuffe lectured on "Sufi-ism" on March 26th ; Mr. Mead opened the new syllabus on April 9th, with a lecture on the "Upanishads," followed by Mr. Leadbeater on "The Development of Consciousness."

On the Sunday evening meetings the subjects of Karma and Reincarnation have been discussed, under a number of sub-headings. The series is now concluded for the present.

S. MAUD SHARPE, *Hon. Sec.*

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#### East London Lodge.

Meetings are now held every Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock, for study of *The Voice of the Silence* in Harry Banbery's room, Balliol House, Toynbee Hall.

Last month's meetings have been very satisfactory, and numbers are increasing.

F. CUMBERLAND, *Hon. Sec.*

## City of Liverpool Lodge.

The progress of this Lodge during the last quarter has been very satisfactory. The meetings have been well attended, the average, including visitors, being equal to the whole number of members in the Lodge. This has been largely owing to the series of papers on the "Constitution of Man." Restriction to one subject has helped to clear up ideas, besides affording great assistance to those engaged in private study.

From the "Religions of the East," which were included in the series, the results have been rather unequal. Whilst in some cases it was comparatively easy to obtain a grasp of the fundamental tenets with regard to man, in others, the subject was so veiled, that a thorough acquaintance with the religion in question seemed necessary before any definite results could be arrived at.

The annual meeting was held on April 16th; all the officers of the Lodge were unanimously re-elected for the forthcoming year.

W. B. PITT-TAYLOR, *Hon. Sec.*

## ENQUIRER.

## QUESTION CCLXVI.

(Continued.)

*N. R.*—*Astral bodies are said to be connected with the physical by a "cord" which is visible to a clairvoyant. Does this exist only in the case of the etheric double or is it also found in connection with the true astral when projected?*

C. W. L.—The cord described exists only in the case of the etheric double, and is simply a stream of etheric matter (sometimes holding particles of denser physical matter in suspension in it) connecting that part of the double which is drawn out by the obsessing spook with that which remains within the dense body. For of course in all materializations some part of the medium's etheric double must remain within his physical body, as otherwise death would almost certainly supervene. Indeed, just as sleep might accurately be defined as the withdrawal of the man in his astral body from his physical vehicle (including of course in this case the etheric double, which is also left behind on the bed), so death might be defined as the complete withdrawal from the dense body of the man in his etheric double—this being the only occasion upon which this double is used as a vehicle. But in the case of a materialization the withdrawal of the etheric body is only partial, and consequently the connecting current is visible to anyone capable of seeing matter in the etheric condition. As above remarked, denser matter is sometimes also to be found in it, for a certain amount of both gas and liquid seems to be not infrequently withdrawn from the body of the medium to assist in materialization—an idea which

accounts for the loss of weight often noticed in that body, and sometimes, though more rarely, its absolute physical shrinkage.

In the case of the true astral body there is also an exceedingly close connection with the physical form, as is proved by the remarkable phenomenon called repercussion; but the method of that connection is entirely different, for nothing of the nature of a cord or current of astral matter joins the two forms. It is difficult to express in terms of this plane the exact nature and the exceeding closeness of the sympathy between them; perhaps the nearest approximation we can get to the idea is that of two instruments tuned to exactly the same pitch, so that whatever note is struck upon one of them instantly evokes a precisely corresponding sound from the other. Let it be supposed in addition that every man has, as it were, a peculiar musical chord of his own, which is the expression of himself, his disposition and his character—a chord to which his whole nature immediately responds whenever and wherever it is sounded—and the reader will have before his mind a very fair image of the facts of the case. Indeed, it would be accurate to say that the connection between the astral body and the physical, and also in turn between the mind-body and the astral, can be better expressed in terms of sympathetic vibration than in any other at present known to us on this physical plane.

## QUESTION CCLXXVI.

*M.*—*Is a feeling of indifference to the results of our actions possible to us, where others may suffer through our mistakes?*

G. R. S. M.—"Indifference" is a bad word to use in this connection. Unavailing regret, on the one hand, and callous indifference, on the other, are two extremes which should be avoided. The best "regret" is to avoid making further mistakes; but to do so requires all our strength, and therefore a wasting of energy by continually dwelling on the past, and continually living the old mistakes over again, is exceedingly unwise. The past mistakes were undoubtedly the result of carelessness and ignorance and indifference to others, and avoiding of such mistakes in the future depends on the eradication of such faults in the present. "Indifference" to the results of action, is a clumsy term for the Sanskrit *Vai-rāgya*, which signifies non-attachment to desire (*rāga*); that is, desire for sensation, or those things which are pleasing or displeasing to the elemental desire body or vehicle which is intermediate between the gross physical body and the mind vehicle. This is the root of selfishness in the human creature; to this we should be "indifferent" (non-attached) but not "indifferent" to (careless of) others.

F. A.—With the conviction that all action involves results there is also the knowledge that in no case can any result become connected with particular individuals unless they have themselves in

some way participated in the cause. There can be no injustice in the law of Karma, and if any entity suffers through my mistake, that suffering is one of two things, either the working out of an evil Karma or an opportunity for the exercise of spiritual progress. In either the result of my action can only affect another according to his own Karma. But indifference to the result of action does not mean that we are not to consider an act from the point of view of results, but that being convinced after due exercise of judgment that the act is right, we are not then to be troubled about the result to others, not even if in our ignorance we make a mistake. At the same time this indifference to result does not free us from the obligation to remedy our mistake as far as possible. This indifference is important to prevent the useless expenditure, in the feeling of remorse, of energy which may be employed in the endeavour to accomplish better results another time.

B. K.—“Indifference to the results of action” is, it must be remembered, a *technical* phrase, which has been employed in Theosophical literature as the nearest equivalent in English of a Sanskrit expression which recurs very frequently in the *Bhāgavad Gītā*. The condition which it denotes is *not* indifference in the sense of carelessness or insensibility as to what result comes from our actions; but a complete elimination of all *personal interest* therein. In other words a man who has attained that state will not be swayed or moved even in the smallest degree by any regard for the pain or pleasure which may accrue to *himself* in connection with the results of his action.

Understanding the phrase under discussion in the above sense, it will be plain that the “indifference” in question refers only to “indifference” to our own pain or pleasure, and by no means implies either that we should not consider most carefully what we ought to do, or still less that we should not consider the probable effect of our actions upon others.

To avoid possible misconception, it may be as well to remark that what is said above refers to the future. As to the past, what is done cannot be altered, and all we can do is to learn from it whatever it can teach us, and set ourselves to avoid similar mistakes in future. But to grieve, lament, and feel remorse over the past, whether it is we ourselves or others who suffer from our mistakes, is an absolutely futile and useless waste of the strength and energy which ought to be employed in doing better in the present.

A. B.—“Indifference to the results of actions” is a technical phrase, describing a certain attitude of mind; an attitude which differs considerably from what would be ordinarily regarded as “indifferent” to consequences. It does not imply that the consequences of an action are left out of account in choosing a course of conduct, nor that they are disregarded afterwards as a lesson from which experience for future guidance may be

gathered. The nature of the indifference will be best understood by studying the attitude of a mind that would be described by the phrase in question. When an action has to be performed a man who is indifferent to results will use his best powers to see clearly the whole bearing of the proposed act and to choose the most effective methods of performing it. At this stage he will very carefully consider the results that will be caused by his action, and will endeavour to avoid doing a thing detrimental to the welfare of others. But he will entirely eliminate personal bias, not concerning himself with the question whether the result of the action, its “fruit,” will be to himself pleasurable or painful; he directs his efforts to bring about the best, and disregards the effect of that best on his own separated self. The effect of this first indifference is to remove from his motive any personal desire as regards the result, and this leaves him to act impersonally, with vision cleared from that most disturbing medium, the personality, which distorts all objects seen through it. A careful consideration of the results of the action on others will be an element in his decision, and will be the more correct just because of his indifference to their pleasurable or painful effects upon himself. Having decided what ought to be done, he performs the action as a duty, his effort being directed to the perfect accomplishment of that duty, as part of the service he owes to humanity, to the law, to God—however he may phrase his idea of the whole, of that greater Self to which he gives his allegiance. Thus acting, he leaves the result to the law, content with whatever it may be; if success comes, well and good—he has wrought with knowledge as well as with good intent, and his service is taken up by the law and worked into the general evolution. If failure comes, well and good also—he learns his error by experience, and the law has destroyed that which was out of harmony, ill-adapted to bring about the good he willed to achieve. Here again indifference conduces to the general good, for had he desired a particular result, say a success, that desire would have tended to bring it about, and if his judgment were faulty his success would be injurious. His indifference leaves the law to work unfettered, and his simple will to serve, acting on the higher plane, throws a force on the side of the law. Otherwise put, his will to serve runs in perfect harmony with the divine will which “makes for righteousness” and introduces no disturbing element to bring about a disastrous success. The attitude of mind then is that of indifference to the results as they affect the separated self of the agent, the doing of the action because it ought to be done, and the contented leaving of the action to work out according to the law. None can suffer involuntarily from the action of another unless such suffering is within his own Karma, *i.e.*, comes to him from causes set going by himself. We suffer from ourselves, not from others, although others may be the external channels *through* which that suffering comes to us,

## QUESTION CCLXXVII.

*K.—In the light of retributive Karma, how should one view the action of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, in cases where the children are taken away from their parents ?*

G. R. S. M.—If we assume that the cruelties suffered by the children at the hands of the parents are owing to offences committed in past lives by the souls now occupying the children's bodies, we must equally assume that the interference of the Society which rescues them from their inhuman progenitors is owing to good deeds done in the past by the same souls. Such is certainly my own view, an all the more credible one seeing that both parents and Society are unconscious agents, neither the one nor the other having the slightest notion of Karma and rebirth. Conscious interference presumably opens up a fresh problem, and the knowledge of the causes would doubtless dictate a course of action with regard to the effects which would often be incomprehensible to the ordinary person.

I. P. H.—I cannot think that the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, or any other society would be able to stay the course of retributive Karma. I may very probably be wrong, but it appears to me, that in such a case those who strove to allay the pain inflicted, and stay the wrong done, would be introducing, in a perfectly justifiable manner, another stream of cause and effect, in the interests of harmony and righteousness.

A. B.—One of the first things the student should grasp as to Karma is that it is a law of nature, and that "a karmic result" is the outcome of *all* the forces which bring it about. Karma does not dictate a course of action to the Ego, but marks out the conditions under which he must act; anything he *can* do is within his Karma, and he may modify by fresh outpourings of energy any result which is not at the stage of complete ripeness. The person who steps in and saves a child from torture is as much an agent of Karma as is the parent who ill-uses it, and the very fact of the successful interference shows that that particular "retributive Karma" is exhausted. As Karma delivered the child to the tormentor, so does Karma set him free, and one way or another must be found through which that law can work on the physical plane. We need no more concern ourselves with the result of our action on "retributive Karma" than we need trouble ourselves as to the effect on "the law of gravitation" of our catching a cup as it is falling off a table. If we are able to catch it we may do so fearlessly; there is no danger that our interference will disturb the equilibrium of the universe.

## QUESTION CCLXXVIII.

*F. W.—If there is no persistent individual consciousness in animals, how can one account for the statement in the Light of Asia that Buddha*

*was able to remember his incarnation in a tiger's form ?*

G. R. S. M.—This incident probably occurs in the curious collection of folk-lore and moral fables called the Jātaka Tales or Birth Stories. The ordinary mortal is strongly tempted to believe that the collection is mainly composed of genuine pre-buddhistic folk-lore and buddhistic monkish academical exercises mingled with some slight tradition of the actual teaching of the Tathāgata. Such folk-lore tales are not the proper field for the exposition of subtle psychological mysteries, and therefore we should not look for more than a simple substructure of graphic ideas on which to hang moral precepts suited for the most part to the comprehension of children and rural audiences.

C. J.—We do not require the theory of a persistent individual consciousness in animals to account for the fact that the Buddha was able to remember what he did in a tiger's form. Strictly speaking it is inaccurate to imagine that the Buddha was the tiger, but rather that out of the monadic essence that was then evolving through the tiger's form the human being that was later to develop to a Buddha was individualized. In this lies the explanation. We are all familiar with the fact that it is possible for adepts to trace all their past incarnations right back to the beginning when they became men; and though previous to that there was not what we can call an individual (*i.e.*, with the higher principles) to trace the line further back, yet an adept's consciousness would find no difficulty in identifying itself with the consciousness of the block of monadic essence out of which he became individualized. And though there is no persistent individual consciousness in animals, yet there *is* such a persistent consciousness in the animal monadic essence; hence it follows that the Buddha was able to say that he remembered his incarnation in a tiger's form.

## QUESTION CCLXXIX.

*W. S.—In the essays on "Orpheus" appearing in Lucifer, it is stated that the Platonists divided the virtues into four classes; is there any more definite information to be gleaned on the subject ?*

G. R. S. M.—There is a large amount of information to be gleaned from the writings of the later Platonists on this most interesting classification, and when time serves I will endeavour to get the matter into shape. It will be sufficient, however, for the present to append a digest of the ideas of Porphyry in his *Auxiliaries* (ii.), a treatise which he wrote as an introduction to the study of the philosophical writings of Plotinus.

The virtues are of four kinds: (1) the political or social; (2) the purificatory; (3) the contemplative; (4) the ideal.

(1) The civil or social virtues consist in the moderation of the passions, and follow on the proper understanding of duty. Their aim being to

regulate our conduct with respect to our fellow-beings, they are thus called civil, or political, or social. In this class prudence has its source in the rational aspect of the soul; fortitude in the irascible or courageous; temperance in the agreement and harmony of the passional or desiderative with the rational aspect; and justice or righteousness in each of these performing its proper function both in ruling and obeying. On these virtues the perfect state depends, as Plato states in *The Republic*.

(2) The virtues of the man who dedicates himself to the contemplative life, consist in detaching himself from the bondage of earthly things, and are called purifications. Their object is to elevate the soul to true being. The social virtues are therefore the adornment of the ordinary man, and are the probationary step to the purificatory, which command a man to abstain from acts in which the body and its passions play the principal part. In such virtues, prudence consists in not following the impulses of the body, but in acting of oneself, under the guidance of the purest part of the mind; temperance in not being affected by the passions and feelings of the body; fortitude in not fearing a separation from body, as though death were annihilation; and justice in obedience to the behests of reason and the most spiritual intelligence.

The social virtues, therefore, moderate the passions, and teach us to live our lives according to the laws of human nature; whereas the contemplative or theoretic virtues, as they are sometimes called, are designed to make a man like unto God.

But the process of purification is one thing, and being actually pure is another. The purificatory virtues, therefore, can be looked at from two points of view; they both purify the soul and adorn the soul that is purified, because the end of purification is purity. And though purification and purity both consist in a separation from foreign matter, the good is something else than the soul that is purified. For if the soul that is purified had already been in possession of the good before losing its purity, it would be enough to simply purify it. But the soul is not the good; it can only participate in the good and have a similitude with it, or be like unto it; otherwise it would not have fallen into evil. Good for the soul consists therefore in a union with its source; evil in its being united with inferior natures.

Of evil also there are two kinds; the one consisting in its being joined to inferior natures, and the other in giving itself up to the sway of the passions. It is the social virtues which liberate the soul from the sway of the passions; whereas the purificatory virtues liberate the soul from its association with inferior natures. Further, when the soul is purified it must be united with its source; and its virtue then, after its conversion, consists in the real knowledge of true being; not that the soul is essentially without this knowledge, but without the principle which is superior to it, that is to say, without the true mind or spirit, it is not conscious of possessing it.

(3) There is, therefore, a third class of virtues superior to the former two classes, namely, the

virtues of the soul which has its spiritual mind in active operation. In this class, prudence and wisdom consist in the contemplation of spiritual intelligences; justice consists in the soul's performing its proper function, that is to say, uniting itself with the spiritual mind and directing all its activities to it; temperance is the internal conversion of the soul to that same mind; and fortitude is impassibility, or the not being affected by lower impressions, by means of which the soul becomes like to the object of its contemplation, namely, the spiritual mind.

(4) Finally, there is a still more sublime class of virtues, the ideal or paradigmatic, which pertain to the spiritual mind alone. They transcend the virtues of the soul, just as the type or paradigm transcends the image. For the spiritual mind contains at one and the same time all the essences which are the types of lower things. Therefore, in this case, prudence is direct knowledge, and wisdom is thought itself; temperance is the mind's conversion to itself, or self-reflection; justice or righteousness is the activity of its own nature; and fortitude is "sameness," or the perpetual identity of itself with itself, its persistence in remaining pure, concentrated in itself.

There are thus four classes of virtues: firstly the ideal virtues, belonging to the spiritual mind as its essential characteristics; secondly, the virtues of the soul turned towards this mind and illumined by it; thirdly, the virtues of the soul undergoing purification, or which has been purified from the animal passions of the body; and fourthly, the virtues which adorn the ordinary man and keep within bounds the actions of the irrational nature and moderate the passions.

He who has the greater virtues possesses also the less, but the opposite is not true. The practical or social virtues make a man worthy or virtuous in the ordinary sense; the purificatory render a man angelic, or what is called a "good dæmon," that is to say, equal to the angels or intermediate entities between gods and men; the contemplative virtues make of a man a god, that is to say equal to those highest spiritual intelligences between the Logos and the angels; whereas the ideal virtues unite man with the Logos, and make him "the father of the gods."

Porphyry then proceeds to explain the several classes in greater detail, but enough has been said to give the reader a general outline of this sublime scheme of morals.

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The subscription to the VĀHAN for those who are not members of the European Section of the Theosophical Society is 2s. 6d. per annum, post-free. Single copies, 3d. each, may be obtained from the Theosophical Publishing Society, 7, Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C. No back numbers can be supplied.

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*All communications must be in the hands of the Editor by the 20th of the month at latest.*

# THE VĀHAN.



A VEHICLE FOR

## THE INTERCHANGE OF THEOSOPHICAL OPINIONS AND NEWS.

ISSUED by direction and under the authority of the European Section of the Theosophical Society in convention, for free distribution to English-reading members. Members of Branches will receive copies through their officers. The Theosophical Society is not responsible for any statements contained herein unless set forth in an official document.—G. R. S. MEAD, *General Secretary*

All readers are cordially invited to send in questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. All communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to the editor, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London, N.W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

VOL. V.

LONDON, JUNE 1, 1896.

NO. 11.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

### LITERARY NOTES.

In the May number of *Lucifer*, Mr. G. R. S. Mead, after a short introduction to "The Lives of the Later Platonists," deals with the interesting subject of Alexandria and its schools, giving a bird's-eye view of the city and populace, a description of the famous Library and Museum, and some information concerning the schools of the sophists, the wisdom of the Orient, and the new religion, that is to say, infant Christianity. Mr. Glass concludes his articles on "Early Christianity" treating of "The Christ"; Mr. Knox raises some puzzling points as to the possibility of animal reincarnation; Mr. Cuffe writes interestingly on Sūfism, and Dr. Wells gives the second of his "Letters to a Catholic Priest."

Mrs. Besant is responsible for the Watch-Tower this month. In her continued article she deals most interestingly with the causal body, the spiritual body, temporary bodies, the human aura and "the man."

Mrs. Besant intends to make a book of the course of thirteen lectures now in progress at Queen's Hall.

Mr. Mead's *Orpheus* will be just out of the binder's hands when the present VĀHAN reaches our readers. It is a book of 302 pages, and the price is fixed at 4s. 6d. This is the second volume of the series "The Theosophy of the Greeks"; the next volume will be the "Lives of the Later Platonists" now in progress in *Lucifer*, and after that will in all probability come a volume on Pythagoras. In addition to the matter of the essay, *Orpheus* contains the most complete bibliography extant on the subject. The essay itself might be called an introduction to the Hellenic Religion.

The last page-proofs of Mr. Mead's translation of the Gnostic Gospel, *Pistis Sophia*, have been passed. The Introduction is finished and has been sent to the printers. The work will probably contain pp. xxx. and 390, large 8vo.

An Italian translation of portions of Mrs. Besant's *Karma* has just come to hand, entitled *La Potenza del Pensiero*, with a prefatory note by Decio Calvari, touching on the phenomena of hypnotism and thought-transference and the experiments of Richet and de Rochas. The sections included are those on invariability of law, the planes of nature and thought-forms. The pamphlet is well printed and neat in appearance.

### ACTIVITIES.

#### The Convention.

The Sixth Annual Convention of the European Section will be held in London on Saturday and Sunday, July the 4th and 5th.

The morning meetings, beginning at ten o'clock, will be held in the Cavendish Rooms, Mortimer Street, Cavendish Square, close to Queen's Hall.

On Saturday afternoon there will be a Reception at Headquarters at 3.30, when the photographic group will be taken.

In the evening the public meeting will be held at Queen's (small) Hall, Langham Place, at 8.30. It has been fixed for the first day, so as not to clash with Mrs. Besant's lecture at Queen's Hall, which will be given as usual at 7.30 p.m. on Sunday.

Besides the routine agenda, the only business matter of importance is the consideration of the report of the Committee of Revision appointed by the last Convention. Copies of this report have already been sent out to all members; any member who has not already received a copy

may obtain one by sending a stamped and directed envelope to the General Secretary.

The above may therefore be regarded as the general agenda of the Convention, and unless some important resolution is submitted, it is not proposed to send out any additional information before the next VĀHAN, when a separate printed programme will be enclosed.

All delegates (except presidents of branches present in person) and proxies should bring their credentials in writing.

All branches, according to rule, should send in a correct list of their members seven days before Convention, for the revision of the registers.

It would be a great convenience to have all reports sent in at least ten days before convention, to aid in the drawing up of the general report.

With this number of THE VĀHAN, the balance sheet of the section goes to all members.

G. R. S. MEAD, *Gen. Sec.*

#### The Theosophical Publishing Society.

The continued growth of the business of the Theosophical Publishing Society necessitates a removal to larger and more commodious premises, and we therefore wish to announce that on and after June 24th, the address of the T. P. S. will be 26, Charing Cross, London, S.W.

"Charing Cross" is the name of the Trafalgar Square end of the street more generally known as "Whitehall," and number 26 is situated on the left-hand side as approached from Trafalgar Square.

A new and complete catalogue of books relating to Theosophy and kindred subjects will be issued shortly, and will be sent post free on receipt of card.

#### North of England Federation.

The Tenth Quarterly Conference of the North of England Federation of the Theosophical Society was held on Saturday, April 25th, at Harrogate, Mrs. Besant presiding, and Mr. Leadbeater, the Assistant Secretary of the Section, being present. The reports from the various towns showed growing activity and some increase of interest on the part of the general public. In the evening Mrs. Besant spoke on "The Work of the Theosophical Society," and on Sunday she delivered two lectures, which were well attended. On the following Sunday Mr. Leadbeater lectured to a good audience, and he also lectured to the Harrogate Lodge on May 1st and 8th.

#### Headquarters' Reference Library.

The following books have been received: *Essays on Social Topics*, Lady Cook; *In the Volume of the Book*, the Rev. G. F. Pentecost; *The Idolatry of*

*the Church of Rome*, Francis Brough; *Creencias Fundamentales del Buddhismo*, Arthur Arnould; *Christ and the Scriptures*, the Rev. Adolph Saphir, D.D.; *The Spiritual Magazine*, vol. iii., 1862; *Human Nature*, vols. iii., iv., v., vii., 1869-1873; *Woman's World*, vol. iii., 1887-8; *Novum Testamentum Græcum*.

A. J. WILLSON, *Librarian.*

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following sums have been received since the acknowledgment in last month's VĀHAN:—Mrs. Sharpe, £2; W. H. Thomas, £1; Mrs. Wilkinson, £2; Mrs. Holland, 5s.; Miss Mallet, 5s.; Mrs. McDouall, 10s.; G. R. S. Mead, £1; W. Harnden, 5s.; Miss E. Fowler, 16s.; F., £2; Miss Bowring, £1; Miss M. Stowell, 5s.; Miss Blackwell, £6 15s.; W. Davies, 2s. 6d.; Miss Marsden, 10s.; S. Romaine, 5s.; C. S. Bright, 10s.; Miss F. E. Wilson, £1 1s.; Mrs. Kilburn, 2s. 6d.; A. Slee, 1s.; Miss Wheaton, 1s.; Miss Tisdale, £1; A. F., 5s.; Stanley C. Bright, 15s.; Hull Centre, 5s.; A. J. W., 3s.; G. R. S. Mead, £1; Anon. (Sweden), £2 os. 10d.; A. F. P., £5; W. J. Long, £9 15s.; Alan Leo, £1 1s.; M. U. Moore, £2; Mrs. Jeffcock, 5s.; Baroness Blome, 15s.; North London Lodge, £1 10s.; Mrs. Bowack, £1 10s. Total, £47 18s. 10d.

#### Lecture List.

AMSTERDAM, DUTCH LODGE. Meetings at 34, Amstel Dijk, on Thursdays, at 8 p.m.: June 4th, *The Phædo of Plato*, F. van der Beck; June 11th, *Yoga, the Science of the Soul*, Mevr. C. M. Perk-Joosten; June 18th, *The Mystical and the Historical Christ*, A. van der Laan; June 25th, *What is Evolution?* H. Wierts van Coehoorn.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at No. 5 Room, Cobden Hotel, on alternate Sundays, at 7 p.m.

BOURNEMOUTH LODGE. Meetings at Avenue House, Avenue Road, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m.

BRADFORD LODGE. Meetings at the Royal Hotel, Darley Street, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Astral Plane*.

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Meetings at the Council Chamber of the Mechanics' Institute, on alternate Wednesdays, at 8 p.m. Lodge meetings at Eldon Buildings, alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

BRIGHTON LODGE. The usual open meeting for study and interchange of thought takes place every alternate Sunday afternoon at members' houses. Information can be obtained from the Librarian, Mr. Lloyd, 15, Old Steine, or the Secretary, Dr. King, 30, Buckingham Place.

BRISTOL LODGE. Meetings at 48, Queen's Road, Clifton (near the Museum), on alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: June 2nd, *Pleasure and Pain*, J. Parsons; June 16th, . . . Rev. Joseph Wain; June 30th, *The Mission of the Theosophical Society*. On Wednesdays at 3.30 p.m., and Fridays at 8 p.m., informal meetings for enquirers.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 35, High Street, on alternate Fridays, at 8 p.m.: June 5th and 19th.

GLASGOW CENTRE. Meetings at Holton's Hotel, Glassford Street, on Sundays, at 11.30 a.m.

HARROGATE LODGE. Meetings at No. 2 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: June 7th, *Eternal Punishment*, Hodgson Smith; June 14th, *What do we Know?* Oliver Firth; June 21st, *Theosophy and Asceticism*, C. W. Goode; June 28th, *Swedenborg*, F. W. Richardson. Lodge meetings on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

HERNE BAY CENTRE. Meetings at "Glaisdale," Herne Bay, on Thursdays, at 7.30 p.m.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings at No. 9 Room, St. George's Hall, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at 25, Park Square, on Mondays, at 8 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings at 3, Hackins Hey, on Thursdays, at 8 p.m.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings at the Buckingham Temperance Hotel, 40, Strand, W.C. (entrance in Buckingham Street), on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: June 4th, *Vegetarianism and Occultism*, C. W. Leadbeater; June 11th, *Evolution as seen by the Occultist*, Mrs. Besant; June 18th, *The Root Races*, B. Keightley; June 25th, *Power, Knowledge and Love*, Miss Arundale. *Secret Doctrine* Class, alternate Saturdays at 4 p.m.: June 13th and 27th.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8 p.m.: June 1st, *The Book of Life—How its Records are made*, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley; June 15th, *Early Christian Views of the Soul*, A. M. Glass; June 29th, *Justice*, E. W. Bowes. On the other Mondays, at 8 p.m., class for study of *The Perfect Way*.

LONDON, EAST LONDON LODGE. Meetings at Balliol House, Toynbee Hall, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., for study of *The Voice of the Silence*.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at Myddelton Hall, Almeida Street, Upper Street, Islington, on Wednesdays, at 8.30 p.m.: June 3rd, *Paracelsus*, V. Lewis; June 10th, *Mesmeric Influence*, R. King; June 17th, *Psychic Powers of the Christian Saints*, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley; June 24th, *Social Evolution*, T. Jackson. Class for study at 10, Park Street, Upper Street, on Mondays and Saturdays, at 8 p.m.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings at 29, Grosvenor Chambers, 16, Deansgate, on Wednesdays, at 7.30 p.m.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at Co-operative Hall, on alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: June 2nd, *The Thornus of Life*, Mrs. MacFadzean; June 30th, . . . J. A. Jones. On the other

Tuesdays, study of "Man and his Bodies." Sundays at 6 p.m., study of *The Secret Doctrine*.

NORWICH LODGE. Meetings are held at 41, Exchange Street, every Friday evening, at 7.30 p.m.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at the Co-operative Hall, on first and third Mondays in each month.

SHEFFIELD CENTRE. Meetings at Mrs. Bestwick's, Cambridge Arcade, every Thursday, at 7.30 p.m.

THE HAGUE CENTRE. Meetings on alternate Sundays.

YORK LODGE. Meetings at No. 1 Room, Victoria Hall, Goodramgate, on Thursdays, at 7.30 p.m.

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### New Lodge.

May 21st, 1896. Charter issued under this date to Frank Dallaway, C. J. Barker, Richard Pexton, S. A. Ibbitt, Julia Godber, Louie Pexton, Elizabeth Moulson, Emma Ousman and Henry Torry, to be known as the Sheffield Lodge of the Theosophical Society.

G. R. S. MEAD, *Gen. Sec.*

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### Mrs. Besant.

Mrs. Besant will be "At Home" at 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, from 4 to 6 p.m., on the first and third Saturdays in June—June 6th and 20th—and will be glad to welcome any members of the Theosophical Society and their friends, and any who are interested in Theosophy. She will give three lectures in Paris on June 2nd and 3rd, and also hold a meeting of the Paris Lodge.

June 16th, 17th, and 18th will be spent in Holland, lectures being delivered at Amsterdam and the Hague.

The following is the syllabus of the lectures to be delivered in June at the Small Queen's Hall, on Sunday evenings, at 7.30:

June 7th. Devachan.—Its subdivisions. Man's life in Devachan. Its place in evolution.

June 14th. The Buddhic Plane.—The Monad. The development of the Buddhic vehicle. Its relations to the lower planes.

June 21st. Re-incarnation.—The process of individualization through mineral, vegetable and animal. The continuing entity. The factors in re-incarnation.

June 28th. Re-incarnation.—Stages of the Ego. The quickening of its vehicles.

Mrs. Besant will speak at the Blavatsky Lodge on June 11th on "Evolution as seen by the Occultist."

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### "Secret Doctrine" Class.

The third question paper on the references to mānasic evolution in *The Secret Doctrine* was sent

out early in May, and one or two answers have already been received. The sum of 6*d.* in stamps from J. H. McDougall is acknowledged.

ISABEL COOPER-OAKLEY.

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#### "Seven Principles" Class.

The following sums have been received: Miss Marsden, 10*d.*; J. McDougall, Esq., 6*d.*

ISABEL COOPER-OAKLEY.

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#### Blavatsky Lodge.

The Blavatsky Lodge will probably not be alone in counting Mrs. Besant's return to England as the most important event of the past month, although its members enjoy the privilege of having her more constantly with them.

Since her arrival, Mrs. Besant has already lectured twice at the Lodge, on April 30th and on May 7th, taking the latter date in the place of Mr. Leadbeater, who was away in the north of England. Mrs. Besant was able, therefore, to divide her subject, "Liberation by Action," into two parts, and so to treat it more completely. The first part she called "Renunciation," taking as the second part of her subject, "Sacrifice."

The second lecture was devoted to an explanation of the law of sacrifice, in so far as so exalted a theme is capable of explanation in human language.

On May 14th Mr. Sinnett gave an exceedingly interesting lecture upon "Alchemy and the Alchemists," conclusively showing amongst other things that these philosophers aimed above all at purity and unselfishness of life, and that the "making of gold" was only a power which, with many others, came to them in the course of their spiritual progress. Mr. Sinnett showed, moreover, that this power was never used by them for personal ends.

"White Lotus Day" was, as usual, held at the Lodge on May 8th, a fair number attending. Passages were read from *The Light of Asia* and *The Voice of the Silence*, and Mrs. Besant, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley, Mr. Mead and others, gave some personal reminiscences in a general talk after the more formal meeting.

S. MAUD SHARPE, *Hon. Sec.*

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#### Bristol Lodge.

The work of this Lodge has been going on steadily during the past few months, the attendance at the open meetings showing a satisfactory increase.

The formation of a federation of the South Western Branches, on similar lines to the Northern Federation, has been discussed, and a Conference will be held at Bristol in June for the purpose of furthering the arrangements. Mrs. Cooper-Oakley has promised to preside, and members from Bath,

Exeter, Tavistock, Plymouth and other parts are expected to be present.

ROBERT HANOVER, *Hon. Sec.*

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#### Middlesbrough Lodge.

The Annual Meeting of the Lodge was held on May 19th, when Mr. Thomas was re-elected President. It was reported that the Lodge, whilst having passed through a somewhat troublous time during the past year, was in a satisfactory condition, and although propaganda work had been less than usual, yet the energy utilized in the consolidation of the membership was bearing good fruit. The financial position was satisfactory. It was decided to render the Lodge Library more useful by permitting enquirers and others outside its membership to borrow books. Arrangements are being made to secure the services of Mrs. Besant, Mr. Bertram Keightley and others for public lectures during the summer.

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#### East London Lodge.

Meetings are held every Wednesday at 8 p.m. in members' rooms. The discussions on *The Voice of the Silence* are still continued. All enquiries respecting meetings should be addressed to Edwin Cumberland, 68, Pigott Street, Limehouse, E. Members and friends of the Lodge are making weekly visits to the Whitechapel Infirmary for the purpose of reading to the inmates. Any old magazines or papers would be extremely acceptable for distribution among them.

E. CUMBERLAND, *Hon. Sec.*

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#### Margate Lodge.

The Margate Lodge and Herne Bay Centre met together at "Glaisdale," Herne Bay, on "White Lotus Day," and had an interesting meeting. Mr. Johnson read from the *Bhagavad Gîtâ*, and a long discussion followed. Several enquirers were present, who have since announced their intention of joining the Society.

The ordinary Thursday evening meetings at 39, High Street, Margate, will be suspended during the summer months.

MARION HOLMES, *Hon. Sec.*

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#### Harrogate Lodge.

At the Annual Meeting of this Lodge the following officers were appointed for the coming year: *President*, Mr. Hodgson Smith; *Vice-President*, Mr. William Bell; *Secretary*, Miss Louisa Shaw; *Treasurer*, Mr. John Lumley; *Librarian*, Mrs. Hodgson Smith; *Auditor*, Mr. A. Osborne Faves.

LOUISA SHAW, *Hon. Sec.*

## ENQUIRER.

## QUESTION CCLXXVII.

*(Continued.)*

K.—*In the light of retributive Karma, how should one view the action of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, in cases where the children are taken away from their parents?*

C. W. L.—This question raises a point upon which there seems to be much misapprehension. Nothing could be more wildly absurd than the idea that anything we can do can prevent the working out of Karma. If a child is born under circumstances which lead to its being cruelly treated, no doubt such treatment is in accordance with its Karma; but if kindly intervention delivers it from the demons in human form who torment it, then that intervention also is in accordance with its Karma. If it were not, then the well-intentioned effort to rescue it would fail, as we know it sometimes does. Our obvious duty is to do all the good we can, and to render all the help within our power in every direction; and we need have no haunting fear that in doing so we are interfering with the work of the great karmic deities, who are assuredly perfectly capable of managing their business with absolute exactitude without help from us.

## QUESTION CCLXXVIII.

*(Continued.)*

F. W.—*If there is no persistent individual consciousness in animals, how can one account for the statement in The Light of Asia that Buddha was able to remember his incarnation in a tiger's form?*

C. W. L.—First of all, the statement in question is merely a repetition of an exoteric legend, which may or may not have some foundation in fact. Supposing however for the sake of argument that it really represents a saying of the BUDDHA, it must be remembered that in his case we are not dealing with what is ordinarily called an Adept, but with a Being whose powers are far higher even than theirs. It might well be possible, therefore, that he could look back and read the âkâshic record of a previous manvantara, when that monadic essence which is now himself was part of a block of such essence ensouling the bodies of many tigers, of one of which the story may be true. Or again, the conditions of individualization might possibly have been different in that long-past age, and the process of the subdivision of the monadic essence into masses might have been carried so far as to produce a definite re-incarnating entity at an earlier stage of evolution than is now the case. But it is little use speculating upon the meaning of what may after all be merely a fairy tale.

## QUESTION CCLXXX.

Z.—*After death the etheric double is separated from the dense body, and yet it is said to disintegrate with it. Why does this occur? If the dense body is burnt is the etheric double also burnt?*

B. K.—The etheric double is primarily the vehicle of Prâna, the co-ordinating machinery by which the organic life of the body *as a whole*, in contradistinction to that of its individual cells, is maintained. Now what we call the death of the body is simply the cessation of this co-ordinating activity, and it is the self-assertion of the individual living units which build up the body which causes its decomposition—each tiny life going on its own way regardless of the whole. Clearly, therefore, so long as the etheric double is united to the gross body so long can the play of Prâna through it go on, and so the gross body be kept alive. So if death is to occur, the etheric must be so separated from the gross body that Prâna can no longer act through it upon the latter. Hence the separation of the two at death, though in fact the etheric body even then never goes to any distance from the gross body. But when thus separated permanently, the etheric body has no longer any *raison d'être*, and Prâna no longer playing through it, it naturally disintegrates bit by bit. Since the two are thus separated at death, the etheric double is not affected by the burning of the physical.

C. W. L.—The etheric double disintegrates after death for precisely the same reason as does the physical body—that the co-ordinating force of Prâna is then withdrawn from it. It must not, however, be supposed that these two disintegrations depend upon one another. Whether the physical vehicle is burnt, or decays slowly in the usual and most objectionable manner, or is indefinitely preserved as an Egyptian mummy, the etheric double pursues its own line of quiet disintegration entirely unaffected. The advantage gained by cremation is that it entirely prevents any attempt at a partial and unnatural temporary reunion of the principles, or any endeavour to make use of the corpse for the purposes of the lower magic—to say nothing of the many dangers to the living which are avoided by its adoption.

The second part of the question is already answered by implication. It would be quite impossible to *burn* matter in the etheric state at all, in the ordinary sense of the word; though, being still physical and not astral, such matter is not entirely unaffected by cold or heat, but might be subject to a certain amount of contraction or expansion thereby. It is, however, absolutely certain that the fears of those who dread to have their physical bodies burnt, lest some pain should thereby be caused to the etheric double, are entirely without foundation. No such sensation could possibly be produced, except by the very magical ceremonies against the practice of which cremation guarantees them.

## QUESTION CCLXXXI.

*E. O.—There seems to be a great difference between spirituality and morality, so that a man may live a highly moral life, and yet be quite indifferent to religious matters. Would the ego, being spiritual, have any devachanic experience from such a life, and if not, what would be carried over to the next incarnation ?*

G. R. S. M.—My view of this subject would be that in the first place there can be no spirituality without morality, and in the second place that the man who lives a highly moral life in the ordinary sense, without a belief in religion, contents himself with the social virtues only. The probability is that such a man would spend most of his time after death on the highest plane of Kâma Loka, for he would most probably be a person of high intellectual development, and when he passed on to Devachan, though the period would be short, yet seeing that he was free from the misconceptions of popular religion, he would presumably pass his time on the highest of the rūpa levels of that state of existence. Of course the term "spirituality" has been used in many senses, especially in modern Theosophical literature, and therefore it is impossible to say exactly what the questioner means by the term. I have used it as a synonym of the "spiritual mind" in the answer to Question CCLXXIX.

A. B.—It is well clearly to recognize what is meant severally by morality and spirituality, and then we can easily follow each in their post-mortem effects. A man is moral when he recognizes his obligations to all around him, and fulfils them to the best of his ability. His accurate discernment of these obligations depends on the range and the use made of his past experiences by the Higher Ego, and on the receptivity of the personal Ego as regards impressions made on it by the higher. The mind, the lower Manas, in the moral man, exercises its powers to control the kâmic nature, and to impose on the body the discharge of all that is recognized as duty. The consciousness of the moral man is the personal consciousness; *i.e.*, he is not conscious of himself as an individual, he does not *realize* himself as a permanent entity who is merely for a time clothed in a personality; he may intellectually hold that such is the fact, but he does not consciously know it; he feels his higher nature by the help of the body, is conscious of its working in the body, and he so far identifies himself with it that he consciously rules the body, makes it perform the actions which he regards as right, and withholds it from performing the actions which he regards as wrong. His life is one, therefore, which is centred in the lower mind, and as that mind belongs in its constitution to the rūpa levels of the mânasic plane, it must inevitably gravitate thither when liberated from its physical and astral encasements, and it will thus "enter Devachan." His work on the rūpa levels of Devachan will very largely consist in the building of the moral nature, thus ensuring a better mental body for his next

personality. The spiritual man has his centre of activity on the planes above these rūpa levels, in the individuality illumined from the plane above the mânasic, and he acts under the influences which flow from the plane of Buddhi. At an early stage he feels himself as the individual beyond the personality, and is conscious of acting under the influences which come from above; later, as the spiritual nature develops, he feels himself in union with the Self of all, and his actions are no longer the meeting of obligations but the free giving of himself in service to the limit of his ability. He recognizes himself as the spiritualized Ego, Manas in union with developed Buddhi, and his motive power is from its plane.

## QUESTION CCLXXXII.

*M. E.—When an animal sleeps does the same process occur as in the case of man—does the astral body leave the physical? Is there anything analogous to this in the case of plants ?*

B. K.—When an animal sleeps, its astral body separates from and hovers over the physical body, just as in the case of a man, only the animal's astral body is still less defined and coherent, still more vague, nebulous and shadowy than that of the least developed human being.

With regard to plants—at any rate the plant world in general—I believe that nothing of the kind occurs. Nor would the careful student, it seems to me, expect to find anything of the kind. For we have been taught that the circling monadic essence reaches its lowest stage in the mineral, and there, passing the turning point of its evolution, develops upwards again *by the unfolding of consciousness* in the various sheaths which it has assumed. Thus in the plant, as we see, the unfolding of consciousness is still very slight, and can hardly be said to exhibit those kâmic activities which mark the activity of the astral sheath. Hence it cannot be supposed that the astral body of a plant has any stir of consciousness in it, and therefore it would seem probable that, being so inactive, it would not detach itself from the physical so long as the latter existed.

Another consideration may also be brought forward—that there is nothing exactly like sleep in plant life in general. There is of course the winter season of relative inactivity and repose in deciduous trees and in animals, as well as the alternation (general all through the vegetable world) between the inspiration of carbonic acid during daylight, and the expiration of oxygen at night; but there seems to be nothing exactly analogous to sleep in the animal to be found in the plant-world. And even granting that the condition of our northern trees and plants in winter presents a fair analogy with sleep, it will be obvious that the tropics can show nothing of the kind, and hence that the analogy will fail as being of only partial application, and therefore not true to the essence of the matter.

C. W. L.—Sleep in animals, as in man, appears to consist in the temporary withdrawal of the astral body from the physical, and in the case of the sleeping dog or cat the astral form of the creature may usually be seen hovering close above it. But generally this form is exceedingly vague, and it is only in the case of a specially advanced animal that it would be a passable representation of the physical shape. In the rare instances where a creature is already differentiated the form is a distinct one, and cases have been recorded in which such a form has been used as a vehicle at some distance from the physical body, and an apparition of the animal has taken place. Nothing analogous to this withdrawal of the astral body has as yet been observed in the case of plants, but this is a subject upon which information is lacking.

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QUESTION CCLXXXIII.

*E. T.—Are qualities, such as physical appearance and minor personal characteristics, which do not impress themselves on the causal body, transmitted from life to life?*

B. K.—I believe it to be the fact that peculiarities of physical appearance and minor personal characteristics do sometimes reappear in subsequent lives. But they can hardly be said to be "transmitted" from life to life. It would rather seem as if where such peculiarities were the expression of something in the Ego, they would be reproduced, more or less definitely, by the Lipika in their successive designs for the Ego's new physical bodies until such time as the Karma connected with them was exhausted. It has, I think, been observed that a certain general resemblance in face and feature can be traced in successive births, unless the growth of the Ego has been so rapid that the vehicle it merits in its new birth no longer resembles the one which suited it in the last.

C. W. L.—Physical appearance and personal characteristics could not be said to be transmitted from life to life, precisely because, as the questioner remarks, they do not impress themselves upon the causal body. But we have to remember that the personality is after all an expression, even though it may be a very imperfect one, of the permanent individuality, and the physical body in turn is an expression upon this plane of the personality within it; so that although it would be a mistake to say that physical characteristics were transmitted, the virtues or defects in the ego which give rise to them undoubtedly do pass over from life to life, and consequently it is by no means unlikely that in many cases the physical body of one life might bear a fairly close resemblance to that of the last, allowing, of course, for the probable difference of race and physical heredity.

QUESTION CCLXXXIV.

*L. A. E.—In Mrs. Besant's Manual, Karma, p. 8, it is said that: "The term Subtle Body covers a variety of astral bodies, respectively suitable to the varying conditions of the very complicated region indicated by the name psychic plane." Are these different and separable astral bodies?*

C. W. L.—The passage in question can hardly be intended to convey the idea that man has several astral bodies which are different and separable, but rather that the kâmic vehicle of man contains within itself matter of all the subdivisions of the astral plane, all interpenetrating one another, so that to a vision which could see only the matter of one of those subdivisions the man would appear to have a perfect body composed of that matter. When we say that a man is functioning on a particular sub-plane of the astral, what we really mean is simply that his consciousness is for the time acting only through that matter in his kâmic body which corresponds to the sub-plane in question. The term "subtle body" is often so used as to include the mind-body and the Mâyâvirûpa, so it is possible that the passage may refer to these, though they could not in strictness be spoken of as astral, except perhaps (in a sense) when astrally materialized in order to function temporarily on that plane.

A. B.—I intended the term "subtle body" to include the astral body well or ill-developed, and varying much in composition, as it exists during life; next, that same body as re-arranged after death, differing in constitution according to the sub-plane on which it is functioning; thirdly, the Mâyâvi Rûpa when it is densified by the matter of the astral plane, so as to make it perceptible to astral vision; lastly, the thought-likenesses of himself that a man might send out and clothe in astral matter for some special purposes.

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QUESTION CCLXXXV.

*G. L.—Can any approximate estimate be given of the number of people who believe in the ideas of Karma and Reincarnation as a part of their religious creed?*

G. R. S. M.—Speaking generally, the people who believe in Karma and reincarnation are the Hindus and the nations which believe in Buddhism.

The population of Hindustan numbers some 300,000,000, and from this must be subtracted, first of all, 50,000,000 Mahommedans, the Anglo-Indian population, the Eurasians, probably, French and Portuguese, and Christian converts, a comparatively inconsiderable body of people. There are also a small number of Hindus educated on western lines who have abandoned their ancestral faith. The hill tribes and Dravidian remnants also have in some cases to be eliminated. Let us, then, put down the number of believers in Karma and reincarnation in Hindustan as roughly somewhere about 240,000,000.

As to the Buddhists, their numbers have for long been reckoned at 400,000,000; but this is a mere guess, arrived at by lumping in the population of China. Now we know hardly anything definitely about this huge population and its religious census. The state functionaries and "scholars" are nearly all Confucianists, and despise Buddhism, and large numbers of the people are of this opinion. The population of Tibet is inconsiderable; of the Buddhist population of Siberia we know comparatively nothing. The populations of Japan, Siam, Cambodia, Burmah and Ceylon do not go far to make up the huge sum of 400,000,000. Nepaul and Bootan are also not very populous. In India itself there are, so to speak, no Buddhists.

The vague total of 400,000,000 must therefore be received with very great caution, and probably be discounted by 100,000,000.

This would make a grand total of 540,000,000, out of the probable 1,400,000,000 present inhabitants of the world. The number of people who hold a belief in Karma and reincarnation in the Western world and in the British colonies is of course inconsiderable.

The above is given from memory and is not intended as a definite answer to the question.

A. B.—It is exceedingly difficult to estimate the number of people belonging to each of the different faiths of the world, yet this is the only basis we have for computing the number of those who believe in reincarnation and Karma. We may take it that all who believe in a continuing entity passing from life to life are believers "in the idea of reincarnation," but the details of their belief vary, while all are at one on the main idea. Thus, among the Hindus, some believe that the reincarnating entity, the human Ego, is confined to the human kingdom, others hold that if it degrades itself to the level of the brute it may pass a life or lives attached to animals, but all alike believe that the Ego reincarnates, and their whole religion and philosophy are built on this fundamental idea. Of making quotations to prove this there would be no end, but I may refer to *Bṛihadāranyakopaniṣad* IV. iv. 4-6; *Śvetāśhvatarā*, i. 6 (in this wheel of Brahman which is the support as well as the end of all beings, which is infinite, roams about the pilgrim soul when it fancies itself and the Ruler different); *Kāthopaniṣad* iv. 4; *Mundakopaniṣad*, III. ii. 2. An immense part of the population of China are Buddhists, and reference to their sacred books, whether translated from the Chinese or the Pāli recensions, will show the student that, like those of the Hindus, they are built on reincarnation as a fundamental idea; in the *Udānavarga*, for instance (xxix. 37), we read that those who learn the law reach the other side "of the great sea of birth and death that is difficult to cross"; a Brāhmaṇa is defined by the Buddha as a man "having his last body" (xxxiii. 41), and He speaks of him as one "who has found the way to put an end to birth" (xxxiii. 55). The Taoists, whose tenets come down from Atlantean times, hold the doctrine in a very elementary form, if we may judge from the writings of Kwangtze (Bk. vi. Pt. i. Sec. vi.),

where it is argued that a man must not claim to choose his next birth, for the world is a melting pot and the Creator a founder, and "where can we have to go to that shall not be right for us? We are born as from a quiet sleep, and we die to a calm awaking."

The Hindus number about 250,000,000; the number of Buddhists is not very easy to ascertain accurately; Rhys Davids gives from census returns (those affecting Burma, Siam and Anam are based on military returns of males) 30,000,000 of Southern Buddhists; he gives the Northern at 470,000,000 (counting in the total population of China, and this seems excessive) thus making a total of 500,000,000 Buddhists. The article by Dr. Findlater in Chambers' *Encyclopædia* gives a majority of the Chinese population to Buddhism, and places the total number of Buddhists at "more than 340 millions, or nearly a fourth of the whole human race." The Hebrews, now, do not seem to accept re-incarnation, although it is taught in the Kabala, and belief in it in the old times peeps out from their Scriptures here and there. The same statement applies to the Parsis, with less support from their sacred books. Of later faiths Christianity now rejects it, though a good case may be made out for belief in it during the early centuries, while Mahomedanism never had it, though some of its Sūfis hold it. At the most, a few thousands among those reckoned as Christians believe it at the present time. Among the scattered remnants of old races on the American continent the belief is occasionally found, as among the Zuni Indians. Even at the present time it would seem that nearly half the human race believe in it, while in the past the proportion would be very much greater, as it was also current in the lands then dominated by Chaldean, Egyptian and Greek thought. If in addition to quantity we consider quality, the believers in reincarnation sweep all before them, all the greatest minds of the past being its maintainers. As Professor Max Müller says in his *Vedānta Philosophy*: "Of course, no Indian philosopher doubts the fact of transmigration. It is to him as certain as our migration through this life. The physiological details of this migration or transmigration are often fanciful and childish. How could they be otherwise in those early days? But the broad fact of transmigration remains unaffected by these fanciful details, and it is well known that this dogma has been accepted by the greatest philosophers of all countries."

Belief in reincarnation and Karma go together, Karma being but the name given to the law by which the soul reaps in later lives the consequences of causes set going in the earlier.

The subscription to the VĀHAN for those who are not members of the European Section of the Theosophical Society is 2s. 6d. per annum, post-free. Single copies, 3d. each, may be obtained from the Theosophical Publishing Society, 7, Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C. No back numbers can be supplied.

*All communications must be in the hands of the Editor by the 20th of the month at latest.*

# THE VĀHAN.



A VEHICLE FOR

## THE INTERCHANGE OF THEOSOPHICAL OPINIONS AND NEWS.

ISSUED by direction and under the authority of the European Section of the Theosophical Society in convention, for free distribution to English-reading members. Members of Branches will receive copies through their officers. The Theosophical Society is not responsible for any statements contained herein unless set forth in an official document.—G. R. S. MEAD, *General Secretary*

All readers are cordially invited to send in questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. All communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to the editor, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London, N.W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

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NO. 12.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

### LITERARY NOTES.

The Theosophical Publishing Society is to be congratulated on its new premises at 26, Charing Cross, S.W. Instead of a second floor in a back street the T. P. S. is now possessed of ground floor premises in one of the most crowded thoroughfares of London. No. 26, Charing Cross was formerly used as a bank, and extends back from the street some eighty feet; there is also a basement of the same dimensions for storage purposes, and the whole is fitted with electric light. Stands of shelves laden with books fill the place, and give the visitor the idea that Theosophy is not some narrow creed of modern growth, but a great subject of serious study with its roots in the best literature of many lands and ages. One of the windows is crowded with new publications, and the other is filled with rare and second-hand books. The new premises are situated on the left-hand side, near the corner as one turns out of Trafalgar Square to Whitehall; the second floor is occupied by the offices of *The Manchester Guardian*.

*The Growth of the Soul* (T. P. S., 5s. net) is the title of Mr. Sinnett's new work, the appearance of which all Theosophical students are looking for with much interest. It is promised for July 1st, and is to form the sequel to *Esoteric Buddhism*. Consisting of 454 pages, its contents are divided under the following headings: Introductory; Occult Science and Religion; Reincarnation; The Higher Self; Free Will and Karma; The Seven Principles; The Astral Plane; The Elementals; The Spiritual Plane; The System to which we Belong; The Elder Brethren of Humanity; The Ancient Mysteries; The Theosophy of the Middle Ages; Initiation in the Present Day; The Proba-

tionary Path; Irregular Psychic Progress; Individuality.

*Orpheus* (T. P. S., 4s. 6d. net.) by G. R. S. Mead. This book is intended as an Introduction to Hellenic Theosophy, and is the second contribution to the series "The Theosophy of the Greeks." It contains a mass of valuable information derived from rare books, and convincing proofs derived from first-hand authorities of a number of important statements made by H. P. B., but which have hitherto been for the most part supported by quotations from either second-hand sources or authors who are regarded by students as exceedingly unreliable. It is intensely gratifying to find how the original documents confirm many and many a contention of H. P. B., which scholars have scouted because the evidence was not put forward in their own orthodox fashion.

The book is divided into ten chapters with the following headings: Introduction; The Orphic Origins; Orphic Works; General Remarks on Orphic Theology; General Outline of Orphic Theogony; Some Cosmogonical Details; The Orphic Pantheon; On the Mysteries and Symbolism; Orphic Discipline and Psychology; The Doctrine of Rebirth. The work is completed with an exhaustive Bibliography of fourteen pages, and makes a volume of 320 pages nicely bound and excellently printed on thick paper.

With the exception of the chapter on Theogony, which is too condensed, the rest of the work is as simple as it is possible to make any work of the kind, and the reader is helped by the innumerable subheadings to the chapters. Moreover the subject is of the greatest possible interest, containing as it does the key to Grecian mythology and explanations of Hellenic theology as set forth by the best informed of the Greeks. The author weaves nothing out of his inner consciousness, but gives chapter and verse for every statement made, and it is to be expected that in time as many people will be interested in the ancient theosophy of the West as they are in the ancient and modern theo-

sophy of the East, for the general Western reader has at least heard of Pythagoras and Plato, and Zeus and Poseidon and Hermes, while as a rule he has never even heard the names of Kapila and Shankarâchârya, and Mitra and Varuna and Ganapati and the rest of the pantheon.

Mr. Redway has just published a new work by Mr. Waite on *Devil Worship in France* (price 6s.). It is necessary for the student of the various tendencies at work at the end of the present century to take notice of this gruesome subject, as exemplifying one of the dangers into which credulity, lack of moral balance, and ignorant psychism, can lead the strange compound called man. Precisely the same tendencies are at work in our own day as those which agitated the mind of society in the early years of the Christian era. It will require the greatest soberness, good sense, decency, and morality, to steer a straight course in all the strange delusions that invariably accompany any strong attempt to spiritualize humanity by the disclosure of a portion of the ancient wisdom. In order to understand all the factors and the imbecility of humanity, it is necessary to refer oft and again to the lessons which the mixed good and evil of the spiritual outpouring in the early centuries of our era have to teach us. Mankind is as credulous as it ever was, and now that the pendulum is swinging back from incredulity and scepticism in things occult to a belief in them, we have in our midst, and shall have in ever-increasing abundance, the strangest combinations of credulity, fanaticism and charlatanry, bred of ignorance and uncurbed desire, curiosity, and conceit. Against all of which it is incumbent that the serious student should be ever on his guard; and to be on his guard he must have some idea of the factors at work. Mr. Waite's book will give him a very good idea of this particular kind of topsy-turvydom, which has been treated of at length in the "Watch-Tower" of the January *Lucifer*.

The awful struggle of one who tries to free himself from the above psychic delusions and immoralities, and strives to live a pure life of religious contemplation is set forth in Huysmans' *En Route*, which has just been admirably translated and slightly bowdlerized by Mr. Kegan Paul (price 6s.). In it is described the psychological state of a man who goes for a week's "retreat" to a Trappist monastery after years of vice and a *liaison* with a woman devotee of Satanism. The hell he passes through when—in the midst of his devotions, and in spite of all his efforts to think pure thoughts and aspire to the highest—the hideous visions of his past rise before him like tormenting fiends, is told with horribly graphic force. This is of course an extreme case, but it serves to bring graphically before the public the horrors of not only ordered and conscious Satanism, but also irregular and hidden, and, so to say, unconscious vice and immorality and abuse, all of which is generically of the same nature, and, as we only too well know, is steadily

rotting the youth and manhood and womanhood of many in the Western world. M. Huysmans wrote his book for the youth and manhood and womanhood of Paris, and doubtless Mr. Kegan Paul has brought it before the English public because he knows that it is wanted here as well as on the continent. But we have already written on this sorrowful subject in *Lucifer*, and now that such books are being published in English, all we have to add is that the subject is being somewhat treated from our own standpoint, and is therefore less open to misunderstanding than some of the books which have appeared in French and which are treated from the looser standpoint of the French novelist.

Five of Mrs. Besant's Indian lectures have been issued by the T. P. S., at Benares, and can be had on sale at 26, Charing Cross, S.W. They are entitled "The Use of Evil," "Materialism Undermined by Science," "The Pilgrimage of the Soul," "The Place of Politics in the Life of a Nation," and "Eastern Castes and Western Classes." The price of each pamphlet is 2d. In the first, evil is considered under four heads—The origin of evil; The relativity of evil; The use of evil; The ending of evil—and the subject is more fully dealt with than in any other Theosophical pamphlet. The second contains many useful arguments for the consideration of Materialists. The third deals with evolution; the fourth with the functions of a politician, teacher and thinker in forming the national life; while the last examines the caste system of the East and the class system of the West in both their earlier and later stages, and also treats of their use and failure.

*Lucifer* for June begins with one of H. P. B.'s articles written in her well-known trenchant style and dealing with the subject of "spirits." After publication it was found to have already appeared in an early volume of *Lucifer*; but as even reprints of H. P. B.'s articles are superior to the vast majority of original articles in Theosophical magazines, no harm has been done by affording us the opportunity of a second reading. Mr. Mead deals with the Jewish and Christian Schools of Alexandria, and with the lives of Ammonius Saccas and Plotinus; Mrs. Besant deals with the real "man"; Mr. Leadbeater concludes his important series of articles on Devachan; Mr. Fullerton treats of "The Spirit of the Age," and the Hon. Otway Cuffe continues his painstaking essay on Sūfism.

Mrs. Besant's *Path of Discipleship* is going rapidly through the press, and when published will be priced at 2s. *Man and his Bodies* by the same prolific writer, and *Devachan* by Mr. Leadbeater, are being set as Manuals, and will be out as expeditiously as possible.

The translation of Vol. II. of the Upanishads is postponed until the autumn to give time for other work.

## ACTIVITIES.

## The Convention.

The Sixth Annual Convention of the European Section will be held in London on Saturday and Sunday, July 4th and 5th. With this number of THE VĀHAN, a programme of the meetings with the agenda of the Convention goes to all members.

A CONVERSAZIONE will be held at Headquarters on Friday evening, July 3rd, to welcome the delegates of the Convention. All members are cordially invited to attend.

G. R. S. MEAD, *Gen. Sec.*

## Donations to the General Fund.

The following sums have been received since the acknowledgment in last month's VĀHAN: Gilbert Graham, £2; J. Sponheimer, £1; Miss Charlotte Fisher, 5s.; Dr. Crow, 10s.; Mrs. Callendar, 5s.; E. G. W. Shipway, 5s.; Mrs. Wallis, £1; M. Dac, £1; S. B., 10s.; R. C. Minton, 10s.; F. W. Wright, 16s.; M., 2s. 6d.; P., 2s. 6d.; A. Lloyd Burrell, 10s.; Stanley C. Bright, 5s.; Mrs. Midgley, 5s.; Mrs. Marshall, £25; Mrs. Williams, £2; M. S., 10s.; H. L., £2 10s.; Miss Ethel Mallet, £5; Selby Green, 5s.; E. J. Geary, 11s.; Miss Holden, 10s. Total, £45 12s.

## Headquarters' Reference Library.

The following books have been received: *Karma*, Mrs. Besant; *The Birth and Evolution of the Soul*, Mrs. Besant; *Bhagavad Gītā*, trans. by Mrs. Besant.

A. J. WILLSON, *Librarian.*

## Headquarters' Lending Library.

The subscription to the Circulating Library, at 19, Avenue Road, is:—one year, 10s.; six months, 6s.; three months, 3s. 6d.; postage extra. Catalogues on application to the Librarian.

## The Lotus Circle.

The children now meet punctually at 2.30 p.m. every Sunday, at No. 19, Avenue Road. All children are welcomed.

A. J. W.

## Lecture List.

AMSTERDAM, DUTCH LODGE. Meetings at 34, Amstel Dijk, on Thursdays, at 8 p.m.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at No. 5 Room, Cobden Hotel, on alternate Sundays, at 7 p.m.

BOURNMOUTH LODGE. Meetings at Avenue House, Avenue Road, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m.

BRADFORD LODGE. Meetings at the Royal Hotel, Darley Street, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Astral Plane*.

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Meetings at the Council Chamber of the Mechanics' Institute, on alternate Wednesdays, at 8 p.m. Lodge meetings at Eldon Buildings, alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

BRIGHTON LODGE. The usual open meeting for study and interchange of thought takes place every alternate Sunday afternoon at members' houses. Information can be obtained from the Librarian, Mr. Lloyd, 15, Old Steine, or the Secretary, Dr. King, 30, Buckingham Place.

BRISTOL LODGE. Meetings at 48, Queen's Road, Clifton (near the Museum), on alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Wednesdays at 3.30 p.m., and Fridays at 8 p.m., informal meetings for enquirers.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 35, High Street, on alternate Fridays, at 8 p.m.: July 3rd, 17th and 31st.

GLASGOW CENTRE. Meetings at Holton's Hotel, Glassford Street, on Sundays, at 11.30 a.m.

HARROGATE LODGE. Meetings at No. 2 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: July 5th, no meeting; July 12th, *The Mission of Theosophy*, Mrs. Bell; July 19th, *The Light of Asia*, Mrs. Hodgson Smith; July 26th, *Reincarnation*, A. Osborne Eaves. Lodge meetings at 1, James Street, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

HERNE BAY CENTRE. Meetings at "Glaisdale," Herne Bay, on Thursdays, at 7.30 p.m.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings at 72, Prospect Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at 25, Park Square, on Mondays, at 8 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings at 3, Hackins Hey, on Thursdays, at 8 p.m.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings at the Buckingham Temperance Hotel, 40, Strand, W.C. (entrance in Buckingham Street), on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.; July 2nd, *Nature as seen by the Occultist*, Mrs. Besant; July 9th, *Bhakti Yoga*, Swāmi Vivekānanda; July 16th, *Indian Philosophies*, B. Keightley; July 23rd, *Our Relation to Children*, C. W. Leabeater; July 30th, *Prayer*, Mrs. Besant. *Secret Doctrine* Class, Saturdays at 4 p.m.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8 p.m.: July 13th, *Impressions of the "Secret Doctrine,"* P. C. Ward; July 27th, *Pythagoras*, J. M. Watkins. On the other Mondays, at 8 p.m., class for study of *The Perfect Way*.

LONDON, EAST LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 68, Pigott Street, Limehouse, E., on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., for study of *The Voice of the Silence*, and discussion on general subjects.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at Myddelton Hall, Almeida Street, Upper Street, Islington, on Wednesdays, at 8.30 p.m.: July 1st, *American Poets and Theosophy*, Mrs. Hooper; July 8th, *Invisible Helpers*, C. W. Leabeater; July 15th, *Social Evolution*, T. Jackson; July 22nd, *Animal Evolution*, B. Keightley; July 29th, *The*

*Law of Harmony*, Miss Burch. Class for study at 10, Park Street, Upper Street, on Mondays and Saturdays, at 8 p.m.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings at 29, Grosvenor Chambers, 16, Deansgate, on Wednesdays, at 7.30 p.m.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at Co-operative Hall, on alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: July 7th, *Vicarious Suffering*, Baker Hudson; July 21st, *Experience*, Miss MacKinnon. On the other Tuesdays, study of "Man and his Bodies." Sundays at 6.30 p.m., study of *The Secret Doctrine*.

NORWICH LODGE. Meetings are held at 41, Exchange Street, every Friday evening, at 7.30 p.m.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at the Co-operative Hall, on first and third Mondays in each month.

SHEFFIELD CENTRE. Meetings at Mrs. Bestwick's, Cambridge Arcade, every Thursday, at 7.30 p.m.

THE HAGUE CENTRE. Meetings on alternate Sundays.

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#### "Seven Principles" Correspondence Class.

The following have been received: F. S. Pitt-Taylor, 5*d.*; Mrs. E. Finnemore, 6*d.*

ISABEL COOPER-OAKLEY.

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#### "Secret Doctrine" Correspondence Class.

A number of answers has been received in connection with the last set of questions, and these will shortly be returned with notes. The following sums have been received for the expenses of the class: Miss Lowthime, 10*s.*; Miss Goring, 1*s.*

ISABEL COOPER-OAKLEY.

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#### Mrs. Besant's Lectures.

The subjects for Mrs. Besant's Sunday evening lectures at the Small Queen's Hall, Langham Place, during July, are as follows:

July 5th, "Karma."—The law; the Lords of Karma; the making of Karma; necessity and free-will; the ending of Karma.

July 12th, "The Law of Sacrifice."—The nature of sacrifice; the training of man; rites and ceremonies; duty as duty; action as sacrifice.

July 19th, "Man's Ascent."—The early stages; the probationary Path; the Path of Discipleship; the perfected man.

July 26th, "Building a Kosmos."—The Logos; the builders; the general scheme of our Kosmos; its outcome.

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#### Mrs. Besant's "At Homes."

Mrs. Besant will be "At Home" on Saturdays, July 11th and 25th, from 4 to 6 p.m., and will be

pleased to meet members of the Society and others interested in Theosophy.

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#### Sheffield Lodge.

This Lodge was last month officially opened by the General Secretary, who delivered an address on what a Lodge of the Society should be.

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#### "Then and Now."

On June 14th Mr. Mead lectured at Queen's Hall, in the absence of Mrs. Besant owing to ill-health. The subject chosen was a comparison between the state of affairs in the early centuries of the Christian era and the present condition of thought and society. The lecturer succeeded in thoroughly interesting the audience in what should be a subject of study for all who wish to have an intelligent comprehension of the present mystical movement in all its phases, good and bad.

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#### France.

The General Secretary recently paid a short visit to Paris in place of Mrs. Besant who was unable to fulfil her engagement owing to ill-health. There is a markedly increased interest in things theosophic in Paris, and Mr. Mead's time was filled from the first thing in the morning till the last thing at night with interviews and meetings. The well-known confrencier and writer, M. Jules Bois, who is deeply interested in Theosophy, though not as yet a member of the Society, gave two admirable lectures in place of those announced for Mrs. Besant, the first semi-private to an audience of about 100 people in a salon of the Champs Elysées, and the second a public lecture to a far larger audience in the Salle Rudy. Mr. Mead took the chair and introduced the lecturer.

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#### The Dutch Branch.

An excellent report has been received from the Dutch headquarters. The meetings have been well attended by members and visitors, and new members are being made at a most satisfactory rate. *The Secret Doctrine* is now being translated, and the stanzas are already in the press and will be issued shortly.

The Hague Centre holds its fortnightly meetings regularly, the attendance being good. At the Haarlem Centre the work seems to have been especially good, the attendance at the open meetings averaging forty to fifty. The press is disposed to be friendly, and has published good reports of the meetings.

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#### Bristol Lodge.

Miss E. Hastings has been appointed President of this Lodge, and B. H. Bedell, Secretary, in place of Dr. A. Richardson and R. Hanover,

## South Western Federation.

On Saturday, June 20th, a Convention of the South-Western Lodges was held at Bristol, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley being in the chair.

The following delegates were present, together with members of the Bristol Lodge: Miss Wheaton (Exeter), Dr. Nunn (Bournemouth), General Jacob (Tavistock), Mr. Parr (Barnstaple), Messrs. Hills and Cook (Bath).

Mrs. Cooper-Oakley opened the meeting and described the work done by the Northern Federation, the manner in which its meetings and business was conducted, and the advantages accruing from such an association.

It was proposed by Dr. Nunn (Bournemouth), seconded by Mr. Rogers (Bristol), "That it is desirable to constitute a South-Western Federation of the Theosophical Society."

The proposal was carried unanimously, Miss E. Hastings (Bristol) being appointed Secretary.

It was decided to hold an annual Convention in one of the towns represented, or oftener if the necessity arose.

Reports of work undertaken in the various centres were presented, and the best methods for propagating the objects of the T. S. discussed, the following taking part in the debate: Mr. Hills, Mr. Cook, Dr. Nunn, General Jacob, Miss Wheaton, Mr. Hanover, Mr. Parr and Dr. Richardson.

At the close of the meeting a vote of thanks to Mrs. Cooper-Oakley was proposed by Dr. Richardson, seconded by General Jacob, and carried unanimously.

## ENQUIRER.

## QUESTION CCLXXXVI.

*W. M.*—Are the ideas of "Mâyâ" and "Brahman," or "Illusion" and "Reality" to be found among the Greeks?

*G. R. S. M.*—The following quotation from Plutarch's *Moralia* gives a complete answer to the above question. Of course thousands of other passages could be adduced, but from one we can learn the nature of all. The quotation is from §§ xviii.-xx. of Plutarch's treatise "On the E at Delphi," and to save time I have employed C. W. King's translation (pp. 190-193), in Bohn's Classical Library:

"For we ourselves have in reality no part in existence; for all mortal nature being in a state between birth and dissolution, presents no more than an illusion, and a semblance, shapeless and unstable of itself, and if you will closely apply your thought, out of the wish to seize hold of the idea, just as the too strong grasping at water when it is pressed together and condensed, loses it, for it slips through your fingers, in the same way Reason, in pursuing after the *appearances*, so extremely clear as they look, of each one of the conditions of life as they pass along, misses its

aim; impinging on the one side against its coming into existence, on the other, against its going out; without ever laying hold upon it as a permanent thing, or as being in reality a power. It is not possible, according to Heraclitus, to step into the *same* river twice; neither is it to lay hold of mortal life twice, in the same condition; but by reason of the suddenness and speed of its mutation, it disperses and again brings together, or rather, neither *again* nor *afterwards*, but at one and the same time it subsists and it comes to an end; it approaches and it departs, therefore it never ripens that of it which is born into actual being, by reason that Birth doth never cease nor stand still, but *transforms*; and out of the seed makes the embryo, then the child, then the youth, young man, full grown man, elderly man, old man—obliterating the former growths and ages by those growing up over them. But we ridiculously fear *one* death, although we have already died, and are still dying, so many; for not only, as Heraclitus says, 'When fire dies is the birth of air, and when air dies is the birth of water'; but still more plainly may you see it from ourselves; the full-grown man perishes when the old man is produced, the youth had before perished into the full-grown man, and the child into the youth, and the infant into the child; and the 'yesterday' has died into the 'to-day'; and the 'to-day' is dying into the 'to-morrow'; and no one remains, nor is *one*, but we grow up many around one appearance and common model, whilst matter revolves around and slips away. Else how is it, if we remain the same, that we take pleasure in some things *now*, in different things *before*? we love contrary objects, we admire and find fault with them, we use other words, feel other passions; not having either appearance, figure, nor disposition the same as before? To be in different states, without a change, is not a possible thing, and he that is *changed* is not the *same* person; but if he is not the same, he does not exist . . . this very thing (the change) he changes—growing one different person out of another; but sense, through ignorance of reality, falsely pronounces that what appears *exists*.

"What, then, is really existing? The answer is, the eternal, unborn, undecaying, to which no length of time brings about a change; for time is a thing movable and making move, making its appearance conjointly with matter; leaking and not holding water, as it were, a vessel full of decay and growth; for is not the predicate 'After' and 'Before,' 'Future' and 'Past,' of itself an acknowledgment of non-existence? For to say that what has not yet been, or what has ceased from being, *is* in being, how silly and absurd! For in this way especially do we apply the notion of time, and predicate the terms 'Instant' and 'Present' and 'Now' . . . thus, in turn, Reason distributes too much, dissolves and destroys. For it (Time) is diverted, like a ray of light, into the Future and the Past, necessarily separated, when we attempt to see it. And if the Nature

that is measured is in the same condition as that which measures it, nothing is either stable or existing, but all things are either being born or perishing, according to their distribution with respect to time. Consequently, it is not allowable so much as to say of Being that 'it was,' or that 'it will be'; for all these modes are tenses, transitions, and interchanges of the thing formed by nature, never to stand still in existence.

"But the god *is*, we must declare, and *is* with reference to no time, but with reference to the eternal, the immovable, timeless, and indeclinable, that which there is nothing before, nor after, nor more, nor past, nor older, nor younger, but He being *One* with the one 'Now,' hath filled up the 'Ever'; and that which really *is*, alone *is* with reference to Him; neither born, nor about to *be*, nor growing, nor to have an end. In this way, therefore, ought we, when worshipping, to salute Him, and to address Him, or even, truly, as some of the ancients did, 'Thou art One!' For the Deity is not *several*, as each one of us is, made up out of an infinite number of different things in conditions of existence—a motley assemblage of articles of all sorts and gleanings. . . . But the One is single and pure, for the mixing of one thing with another constitutes pollution; as Homer somewhere calls ivory turned purple with a dye 'polluted,' and dyers call the running together of colours 'being spoilt,' and such mixture they term 'corruption.' Hence, to be one and always unmixed belongs to the Immortal and the Pure."

#### QUESTION CCLXXXVII.

S. L.—*In the Astral Plane much mention is made of "elemental essence" from which the thought builds "elementals," and on p. 15 it is said that on looking at a stone there can be seen its astral counterpart, the Jiva flowing through it, its aura and its appropriate elemental essence. In what way is the last distinguished from the rest? Is it astral or other matter?*

B. K.—"Elemental essence" is the name applied to the monadic essence, *i.e.*, *Ātma-Buddhi*, which is descending through the matter of the *mānasic* and *astral* planes into the mineral kingdom. *Ātma-Buddhi* clothes itself primarily in the atomic condition of each of these planes of matter in turn, but is of course distinguishable by the trained clairvoyant vision from the matter in which it thus vehicles itself; though without such a vehicle formed of the matter of the plane in question it could not manifest upon that plane at all. It thus constitutes the informing or ensouling life and sentiency of every form which can be built of the matter belonging to that plane. By this I mean the life and sentiency properly belonging to that form as such, whether or not that form is used as a vehicle by some conscious entity from the same or any higher plane. To take an instance. Suppose my thought builds a form out of the matter of the lowest astral sub plane. In building it my thought encloses in the shape made of this order

of matter a portion of the "elemental essence" of the astral plane, *i.e.*, of that *Ātma-Buddhi* which has clothed itself in atomic astral matter. This elemental essence then becomes the life and sentiency of the form my thought has built, receiving from my thought its direction, character and separate existence. When the form breaks up the elemental essence returns to the particular class of essence from which it was drawn. For although the astral elemental essence is *primarily* *Ātma-Buddhi* vehicled in atomic astral matter, yet as time proceeds it further differentiates itself, clothing itself in other orders of astral matter besides the atomic, and thus gives rise to the very numerous classes of astral elemental essence.

Speaking generally there are three great realms of "elemental essence" which in earlier Theosophic writing have been spoken of as the three "elemental kingdoms," which precede the mineral kingdom in order of evolution. These belong respectively to the *arūpa* levels of the *mānasic* plane, to the *rūpa* levels thereof, and to the astral plane; each again being sub-divided into many kinds, classes and orders.

From the foregoing the answers to the questions put will be clear. The elemental essence informing a stone is distinguishable from the astral counterpart of the stone and from the *Jiva* flowing through it, by its own peculiar characteristics, which are just as plainly visible to the trained clairvoyant sight as the peculiarities of the stone itself. The nature of the elemental essence has been explained above as far as can be done in words. But this explanation must necessarily be very imperfect, and will probably convey but little to the reader; just as a written description of the flavour of a strawberry would give but little idea of what that fruit really tastes like.

C. W. L.—The elemental essence is very readily distinguishable from the rest by those who are able to see it, but it is not so easy to make the distinction clear in a verbal description on the physical plane. First, let it be understood that elemental essence is merely a name applied during certain stages of its evolution to monadic essence, which in its turn may be defined as the outpouring of *Ātma-Buddhi* into matter. We are all familiar with the idea that before this outpouring arrives at the stage of individualization at which it ensouls man, it has passed through and ensouled in turn six lower phases of evolution—the animal, vegetable, mineral, and three elemental kingdoms. When energizing through those respective stages it has sometimes been called the animal, vegetable or mineral monad—though this term is distinctly misleading, since long before it arrives at any of these kingdoms it has become not *one*, but *many* monads. The name was, however, adopted to convey the idea that, though differentiation in the monadic essence had already long ago set in, it had not yet been carried to the extent of individualization.

Now when this monadic essence is energizing

through the three great elemental kingdoms which precede the mineral, it is called by the name of "elemental essence." Before, however, its nature and the manner in which it manifests can be understood, the method in which Ātmā enfolds itself in its descent into matter must be realized. Be it remembered then, that when Ātmā, resting on any plane (it matters not which—let us call it plane No. 1) wills to descend to the plane next below (let us call that plane No. 2) it must enfold itself in the matter of that plane—that is to say, it must draw round itself a veil of the matter of plane No. 2. Similarly when it continues its descent to plane No. 3 it must draw round itself the matter of that plane, and we shall then have, say, an atom whose body or outer covering consists of the matter of plane No. 3. The force energizing in it—its soul, so to speak—will however not be Ātmā in the condition in which it was on plane No. 1, but will be that Ātmā *plus* the veil of the matter of plane No. 2. When a still further descent is made to plane No. 4, the atom becomes still more complex, for it will then have a body of No. 4 matter, ensouled by Ātmā already twice veiled—in the matter of planes 2 and 3. It will be seen that, since this process repeats itself for every sub-plane of each plane of the solar system, by the time the original force reaches our physical level it is so thoroughly veiled that it is small wonder men often fail to recognize it as Ātmā at all.

Now suppose that the monadic essence has carried on this process of veiling itself down to the atomic level of the devachanic plane, and that, instead of descending through the various subdivisions of that plane, it plunges down directly into the astral plane, ensouling, or aggregating round it a body of atomic astral matter; such a combination would be the elemental essence of the astral plane, belonging to the third of the great elemental kingdoms—the one immediately preceding the mineral. In the course of its two thousand four hundred differentiations on the astral plane it draws to itself many and various combinations of the matter of its several sub-divisions; but these are only temporary, and it still remains essentially one kingdom, whose characteristic is monadic essence involved down to the atomic level of the devachanic plane only, but manifesting through the atomic matter of the astral plane.

The two higher elemental kingdoms exist and function respectively upon the rūpa and the arūpa levels of the devachanic plane; but the question probably does not refer to them. It should, however, be remembered that in speaking of this phase of evolution the word, "higher" means, not, as usual, more advanced, but *less* advanced; since here we are dealing with the monadic essence on the downward sweep of its arc, and progress for the elemental essence therefore means descent into matter instead of ascent towards higher planes. Unless the student bears this fact constantly and clearly in mind, he will again and again find himself beset by perplexing anomalies.

## QUESTION CCLXXXVIII.

S. L.—*In Mr. Leadbeater's Astral Plane, seven divisions are described, in each of which human beings after death can reside before passing to the devachanic region. What characteristics would draw the entities to these different sub-planes? Is it necessary to pass consciously through all the stages from the lowest one on which the man awakes, or may he miss any?*

C. W. L.—The first part of this question was exhaustively answered in the April number of the VĀHAN, to which the enquirer may be referred. With regard to the second part it must be remembered that a man's stay on any sub-plane of Kāmaloka depends entirely upon the amount of the matter of that sub-plane which he has built into his astral body. Some matter of each subdivision—even of the lowest—it seems to be necessary that he should have in its composition; but if during life he has refined his portion of the matter of, say, the seventh sub-plane to the highest possible degree, it reaches a kind of critical point at which the slightest further impulse would break it up into matter of the sixth sub-plane. The in-drawing by the Ego of all his forces after death furnishes this additional impulse; the shell of matter of the seventh sub-plane is at once shattered, and the man is upon the sixth. Obviously he may have applied the same method of refinement to the matter of that sixth subdivision, and in that case the process would repeat itself, and he would be almost instantaneously upon the fifth sub-plane. In the case of a highly developed person this would happen with every sub-division of the astral world, so that before such an one recovered consciousness after death he would be already in Devachan. Between this eminently desirable condition and that of the undeveloped person who lingers long on every sub-plane there are of course innumerable gradations, so that a man may have conscious existence on any possible combination of the sub-divisions so long as he takes them in regular order from below upwards. Even the conjunction of the seventh and the first, though naturally a very rare one, has been known to happen; and in that case the man, after spending a period of extreme discomfort on the lowest sub-plane, would sweep rapidly through all the intermediate ones and enter upon his life upon the highest.

## QUESTION CCLXXXIX.

V. O.—*I have often read in Theosophical books, that the "Path" of occultism is one which brings increased suffering, in fact it is sometimes spoken of as a "path of woe." Is there any foundation for such a belief?*

A. B.—The aspect taken of the Path depends very much on the standpoint from which it is regarded, and on the nature of the things which exercise attraction over the spectator. To begin

with, the man who treads the Path has definitely cast aside all the ordinary pleasures and ambitions of the world as mere worthless rubbish ; as these form the happiness of men of the world, their complete absence would convey to all such persons the idea of blankness and sadness. But the man on the Path has cast them away because he feels they can never satisfy him, they no longer afford him pleasure, and he does not therefore feel the blankness which the man of the world assigns to him in his imagination. All that he may occasionally suffer under this head would be from the temporary uprising of his lower nature, demanding the satisfaction of some, as yet, uneradicated desire, and this would give but a trivial suffering of a most transitory nature. More serious is the result of the quickening of karmic action ; if much unexhausted Karma lies behind the disciple, its rapid working out involves aggravated suffering during a limited time, and although on the whole more is not suffered than must in any case be endured, its concentration into a short period means a much intensified, because briefer pain. Here again the case seems worse to the onlooker than to the endurer, because the latter is upheld and encouraged by the knowledge that he is rapidly paying off his karmic liabilities. He knows that he is only paying in the lump a debt which would otherwise be paid in instalments extending over a long term of lives, and is ridding himself of a burden that would hamper him as long as it lasted. Similarly there is an uprising of whatever evil is left in his nature, and this implies a bitter and unceasing warfare until all his mental and moral faults are destroyed, and with the expansion of his consciousness he finds himself obliged to meet and conquer on planes beyond the physical the subtler forms of the evils long since annihilated in their grosser aspects. The personality, as such, has to be totally killed out, and suffering will be experienced so long as any of it remains ; but here again the man who is on the Path recognizes the suffering as the inevitable accompaniment of the destruction of the lower nature, and willing the destruction he wills the means. To the onlooker to whom the personality is the only self known, who sees the destruction and not the higher self set free, this process must inevitably give the idea of woe. Further, the disciple feels the sorrows of the world more keenly than does the ordinary man, and in training himself to respond to all human needs he increases his sensitiveness and suffers in the pain of others as, outside the Path, each suffers in his own ; this is a very constant source of suffering, and only disappears gradually in the light of fuller knowledge and deeper insight. Nor is this a suffering from which he can wisely try to escape until selfishness is completely eradicated, as any escape by not feeling another's pain while he still feels pain for his own personality would tend to callousness. There are keener forms of suffering voluntarily faced for the helping of the world by some on the Path, hinted at in *The Voice of the Silence* under the simile of the snow that bears the icy blast in order that the seed beneath it may be protected ; but the

nature and details of these are not matters for discussion in a public print. It may suffice to say that through all such sufferings there is a deep and abiding joy, for the suffering is of the lower nature and the joy of the higher. When the last shred of the personality has gone, all that can thus suffer has passed away, and in the perfected Adept, the Master, the Jivanmukta, there is unruffled peace and everlasting joy. He sees the end towards which all is working and rejoices in that end, knowing that earth's sorrow is but a passing phase in human evolution. That of which little has been said, is the profound content which comes from being on the Path, from realizing the goal and the way to it, from knowing that the power to be useful is increasing, and that the lower nature is being gradually extirpated. And little has been said of the rays of joy which fall on the Path from loftier levels, the dazzling glimpses of the "glory to be revealed," the serenity which the storms of earth cannot ruffle. To anyone who has entered on the Path all other ways have lost their charm, and its sorrows have a keener bliss than the best joys of the lower world.

C. J.—If we are to take into consideration what those who are on the "Path" themselves say, it would seem that it is by no means a "path of woe." As the questioner puts it he appears to imply that the books describe the path of occultism, apart from any bad Karma that the aspirant may have to work off, as by its very nature one which brings more suffering as he progresses. But whether the writers of the books meant this is doubtful—perhaps they meant only to point out that for the ordinary person who lives the life of the world, and has not freed himself from the lower desires, the path of progress might for a time be one of trouble and renunciation ; and we can easily see how true this might be. But after a certain point, when the student realizes for himself by actual experience that

"The soul of Things is sweet,

The Heart of Being is celestial rest,

Stronger than woe is will: that which was Good  
Doth pass to Better—Best,"

to call his progress a "path of woe" is surely misleading. It is true that no rapid progress is possible without strenuous exertion, and this perhaps has given rise to such a misleading view, by leaving out of consideration the newer realms of nature that are opened up, and the glorious possibilities that lie before the student of endless progress and opportunities to help in the great scheme of evolution of which he forms a part.

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*All communications must be in the hands of the Editor by the 20th of the month at latest.*