

The Lamp

Vol. III.
No. 6.

TORONTO, JANUARY 15, 1897.

No. 30.

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A TRIAL YEAR.

A long chain lay before me. Considering it link by link, I saw that the strain was greatest wherever one link overlapped another; the point of junction was the point of trial. No two links were precisely similar in molecular structure and each must feel from this an added friction in their inter-connection. Yet the whole chain could only be strong with the strength of the weakest link and the uniformity of the pull increased the power of the whole by modifying the pressure upon any one single link.

So I fell to thinking of the cyclic chain. The memory of our teachings came before my mind, enhanced by the experience of all comrades and myself in and with them. Well we know that 1896-97 is that period which sees the overlapping of two cycles, but did we also consider that, because of this, it must be a period of intense interior strain, intense surface friction? Did we remember this? Or did we think that the dawn of a new cycle had made all things easy; that we should slip onward into a smooth way? Did we forget that the hour of dawning is chill, is a contested point, where the darkness battles fiercely ere it passes; where forces of light and warmth draw tensely to a point of culmination before they can expand with blessing into the waiting, the still dim world? Did we ignore that the opening moment of a new cycle did not witness the closing hour of the old, that this was relegated to a period further on, just as one link overlaps another and finds within its own circle the outer, the closing side of its fellow-link? Doubtless we remembered these things. Doubtless we foresaw a trial year for Humanity.

The expanding force of the new cycle meets, at a given point, the indrawing forces of the old cycle; this creates a point of struggle, of friction, which may be called a trial year. It is not a year according to human subdivisions of time, does not begin and end with our dates. Yet it has a definite beginning and ending according to real and occult time divisions. Also, its effects will come to an end earlier in the lives of some individuals than with others. For the world at large the time is precisely fixed. Call it the period within which the dark forces have most power over human nature, and this may be said, roughly speaking, to end with the century, with the last ripple of *effect* of the expiring energy of the old cycle. Effects outlast the latest indrawn breath, be it remembered, outliving for a short time the force which produced them. Finally, upon the energy with which the new force overcomes the old, upon the elasticity of its spring forward, much depends. The maintenance of that energetic propulsion depends upon ourselves, *in this case*. We shall bound joyously forward with Nature, shall we not? The great Mother, unimpeded by us, shall carry us on.

So, standing where the strain is most intense, facing the dawn indeed, but with the sights and sounds of night and storm still assailing us, how is it with us who entered with foreknowledge this trial year?

Is it not strangely well with us in the vortex of force where we stand, breasting the world stream, enduring the friction of the waters, the assault of the under tow? Strangely, I say, for here and there one has been sucked below by the under tow, and white faces, de-

spairing hands have swept past us in the night. The under tow of the Past was too strong for them. They have loosed their hold upon their comrades, and the long, living line has closed up again, has pressed forward, not without a tear for those who fell. But the great line is standing, is advancing, and the cause of its well being and its power is that "pull all together" which equalizes the strain. Because we are in brotherly unity—for this reason is it well with us. Our accord is our safety.

And yet it is a time of trial, interior and unremitting. Now should it not be so when the welfare of a Race is at stake? For the dying throes of the elder cycle have power to impair the vibrations of the new one and it is precisely for this reason that our unwavering hearts, our steadfast minds and rooted ideals create an atmosphere of strength about us filling the decadent hours of the old cycle with a calm and a harmony in which, as in the lap of a mother, the young cycle may gather its forces together: their dispersion will not be witnessed, their flight will be strong in this calm atmosphere which we provide.

Still is the strain felt by us. We whisper it not to one another. Each endures, and is silent, working on; or here and there a song of cheer arises as men sing at the hardest labour, to make that labour lighter by their lightsomeness of heart. That is the brave spirit. That is the true spirit. Yet, because the trial is everywhere so unremitting, in one or another way—sometimes in all ways—it is good to remind one another that we knew this provision of Nature, that we entered the trial year unafraid.

For did we not know too that more destinies than our own hung upon it? That heroes not yet incarnate hung above it, waiting, hoping, longing to descend? Did we not know that armed and turbulent nations paused, unawares, upon the brink of war, awaiting an issue foreseen by us, but to them unknown? And the little children the world over, tender-eyed and wistful, did not their future await decision while they played unconsciously

through all the trial? Yes; we knew it all. Knew it to be big with Destiny. Knew that we ourselves had, ages ago, with others, provided the trial, and could even now provide the triumph.

For all these possibilities we must supply the required conditions. Great events are in the air. Under existing conditions they cannot take shape and life here below. When we shall have transformed the present conditions, so that the necessary base shall be supplied, then shall these waiting potentialities become actual in the daily life of the world. There must exist—as a base on this material plane—an opportunity for the right development, the orderly unfolding of character under wise encouragement and with the stimulus of right contemporaneous thought, in order that the progress of the soul here in matter may be helped. This opportunity will be given through the children of every nation when in each nation right conditions of education are supplied. Theosophy alone can do this. That is to say, theosophists must do it, affording everywhere a base. As they pass through the trial year they not only give this base; they also find their own base; each one his own. Re-birth of heroes, peace of nations, help for the children, these shall follow on the Crusade work as that awakens the ancient fires of nations; and what are all these but a universal nearness to The Self?

For that triumph each soul of us, Comrades, has stood and stands ready to suffer the awful strain. To us it seems assured—that hour of victory. *To us.* But how about your country, mine, all the nations? Which stand? Do any stand? How fares it with the Race, too? Ah, we know not these things. And, not knowing, shall we not redouble the effort, both of work and for unity; shall we not clasp hands closer as we breast the foaming world stream? Our harmony of aim secures more than now we dream of. Our fraternal love, self-impelled, has reached forward until more centuries than we count are in its charmed hold.

But even were we not secure of this—and in hours of gloom who is secure?—then were it still wise to press forward

where solitary retreat is impossible save as self-destruction while the living line stands and will not turn back.

" Since then, to look behind is all in vain,
And all in vain to look to left or right;
Why face we not the future once again,
Turning stout hearts towards the shadowy main
And strong to bear ourselves in patient pain?"

Ye suffering hearts, each one is seen and loved! Ye brave minds, each one is upheld! Ye deathless souls, each one nears the hour of self-consciousness and power. Though the trial year be heavy, yet its gifts are many, are wonderful, its last hours are full of healing for the nations, if so be ye stand. Therefore stand; stand singing. Singing for joy that we have met and known this hour, whose trials spell Redemption, Freedom, Light.

J. W. L. KEIGHTLEY.



TRUST.

I am Thy grass, O Lord!
I grow up sweet and tall
But for a day; beneath Thy sword
To lie at eventfall.

Yet have I not enough
In that brief day of mine?
The wind, the bees, the wholesome stuff
The sun pours out like wine.

Behold! this is my crown;
Love will not let me be;
Love holds me here; Love cuts me down
And it is well with me.

Lord, Love, keep it but so;
Thy purpose is full plain;
I die that after I may grow
As tall and sweet again.

Lizette Woolworth Reese.



EVOLUTION AND REINCARNATION.

(Concluded from page 60.)

But grant that the consciousnesses of the several changes, occurring within a given organism, could, somehow, by some unthinkable means, synthesize themselves, thus co-ordinating the experiences of its existence from birth to death, what becomes of this co-ordination when the organism is disintegrated? Suppose that the consciousnesses produced by the changes which had occurred during the lifetime of a crystal had succeeded in getting themselves well co-ordinated, how could this co-ordination of experiences be added to the sum of evolution at

the death of the crystal? By no conceivable means. As the crystal disintegrated all record and recollection of its experiences would be blotted out, and the molecules which composed it would be left at the same stage of evolution which they had reached when they first became part of the crystal. They might enter other crystals at the same stage of development as the one which they had left, and again be disintegrated. Similar cycles of integration and disintegration might be repeated for an eternity but the mind can conceive of no development of consciousness, no evolution. But it is admitted on all hands that evolution is a fact; and, perhaps every one will agree with Spencer's recognition of the fact that it is the consciousness which evolves. If these two facts are conceded, then it follows that consciousness cannot be the result but the cause of any phenomena represented by the term change. For it has been shown (1) that results of changes could not consolidate themselves, without which there could be no co-ordination of experiences, hence no evolution; and (2) were it granted that the changes occurring from birth to death in a given organism could get themselves co-ordinated, then we are met with the further impossibility of conceiving how this co-ordination of experiences could be added to the sum of evolution at the death of the organism, for that co-ordination having begun with the integration of the organism it must end with the disintegration of the organism. The first difficulty cannot be met without supplying a medium capable of cognizing and co-ordinating the changes occurring in the organism. The existence of consciousness, or soul, apart from change, is an intellectual necessity to account for the phenomena of evolution, quite as much as the existence of ether is an intellectual necessity to account for light and other phenomena. If the existence of consciousness, or soul, be granted the second difficulty also will be overcome. For if its existence is once conceded, neither its beginning nor its ending can be conceived. It must have existed before the integration of the organism

and it must persist after the organism has disintegrated. It must in fact be the essence of the organism, the power which produced it. How the experiences of any organism can be added to the sum of evolution is then easily conceivable. When the consciousness has gained all the experience it can get in one organism it leaves it and builds for itself a new form.

The experience which it gathers through the building, operating, and life-time environment of one form makes it wiser and abler to build a higher organism. Thus the gradual perfection of type goes on; slowly, imperceptibly; but still there is progress. As Plato puts it, "The soul weaves ever her garments anew." Without this idea of reincarnation evolution is positively unthinkable. Everyone who has looked within himself knows that his consciousness is not any one of the experiences of his life nor the sum of all of them but is something independent of and apart from all experience. It is his very being which has neither beginning nor ending, but is.

To follow the progress of the consciousness, step by step, from mineral to man, there must be a continuous and unbroken chain. If there is anywhere a single break, the two ends could not be united by any process that can be represented in thought.

If the development and persistence of the consciousness is once admitted then the degrees of development must extend almost to infinity in both directions. Though the mind can trace it back till the degrees of consciousness become almost infinitely small, yet it cannot trace it back till it becomes no consciousness at all. Between the smallest conceivable degree of consciousness and no consciousness at all there is an infinite gulf. On the other hand there must be degrees of consciousness above the human which have almost reached the absolute, for they must have been progressing throughout the eternities of duration. That there are States of consciousness far beyond the normal human there can hardly be any doubt. Here we have *a priori* proof of their existence; and in such books as "the Secret Doctrine,"

"The Growth of the Soul," etc., we actually hear from them. Those who have advanced but one stage beyond normal mankind know from actual observation that reincarnation is a fact. Man has reached that stage of evolution where he can and must take hold of his own development if he is to progress at all. Up to a certain point he can advance himself as fast or slow as he wills. This power of self-development is reached when he becomes self-conscious, that is, when he can turn his reason upon his inner consciousness and cogitate upon the purposes of his own being—a process which Spencer has proved to be a logical impossibility. He says: First Principles, § 20, "The mental act in which self is known, implies, like every other mental act, a perceiving subject and a perceived object. If then the object perceived is self, what is the subject that perceives? Or, if it is the true self which thinks, what other self can it be that is thought of? Clearly, a true cognition of self implies a state in which the knowing and known are one—in which subject and object are identified; and this Mr. Mansel rightly holds to be the annihilation of both." This indirectly proves the occult position which declares that man is not only one centre of consciousness, but several.

In the mineral kingdom, when the crystal dies, its consciousness persists in an astral form-body which again seeks to express itself physically. The Astral form is the prototype of the crystal and it draws into itself the physical molecules, which, as it were, make the form-body objective. But each of these molecules is built upon a principle similar to the crystal itself. Each of these has a consciousness and astral form of its own. These are co-ordinated or synthesized by the higher consciousness of the crystal, and thus co-ordinated they form the life of the crystal. This applies to all living forms whatsoever, from atoms to planets. When the higher consciousness of the organism ceases to co-ordinate the centres of consciousness in the molecules it is said to be dead.

Centres of consciousness are never absolutely separated. There are merely

greater and lesser degrees of affinity. The universe in the ultimate is one. There is differentiation but not separation. To illustrate crudely. Each centre of consciousness is united to every other centre of consciousness by threads that stretch infinitely and pass through each other.

When a higher centre of consciousness comes into physical manifestation it draws in the threads of lower centres of consciousness and forms itself as already described. When disintegration takes place the threads are let loose. This is what is meant in the opening quotation where it is said: "The spark hangs from the flame by the finest thread of Fohat." Fohat is force or cosmic will.

States of consciousness may be differentiated as follows: The crystal may be said to live, though some of the higher ones may be said to live and vegetate. Plants live and vegetate or function, and some higher ones may be said to feel. Animals live, vegetate, feel, cognize, and some of the higher ones may be said to cogitate. Mankind live, function, feel, cognize, cogitate, and reflect upon the purposes of their own existence. This last may be called the intellectual or ratiocinative faculty, the mind; which is divided into the higher and lower. There are two states of consciousness beyond these—the Soul and Spirit: the intuitional and divine consciousness; but these are latent in normal humanity. This explains how it is possible for one to analyze his own consciousness. Although a centre of consciousness cannot perceive itself, the mind and higher states of consciousness can perceive all below themselves.

There are seven states of matter which may be named the solid, liquid, gaseous, radiant, etheric, atomic and akasic. Each state of consciousness seems to have some sort of relation to a particular condition of matter. Thus the mineral consciousness is related to the solid, the vegetable to the liquid, the animal to the gaseous, the intellectual to the radiant, the higher mind to the etheric, the mental-psychic to the atomic and the psychic to the akasic.

The radiant state of matter is cogniz-

able by normal humanity. Men who have developed the higher mental consciousness are called clairvoyant and can perceive the forms of life pertaining to the etheric state of matter. They are called elementals and mineral noumena or disembodied crystals and other noumena ascending or descending to higher or lower planes. Higher states of consciousness can cognize higher states of matter, and can see the states of consciousness existing in them. There the process of reincarnation can be directly observed. It is said that higher states of consciousness can be attained simply by a concentrated determination to get there. The universal human desire for positive self-consciousness in higher states of matter after death is the very force which makes that self-conscious existence after death possible. This is perfectly reasonable. Every one knows that desire is a force, and every one knows that there are higher states of matter. Now that desire-force—no matter how small it may be—if it acts constantly for a certain purpose, that purpose, unless it is infinite—must ultimately be accomplished.

Each desire for self-consciousness on higher planes is a step towards that end and if the desire is continued, self-consciousness on higher planes must, in a longer or shorter time, be attained. But those who have already acquired the power to pass at will from plane to plane advise all who desire to reach higher planes to make themselves intellectually acquainted with the possibilities and laws of those planes before attempting to reach them. There are, they tell us, many dangers to be encountered. The power for good or evil being immensely greater, one entering upon higher planes, ignorant of their laws, is almost sure to bring immense trouble upon his own head. The surest preparation is to live according to the highest principles of ethics, and to cultivate an earnest endeavour to get at the truth of all things, and to get rid of all fear. To reach these higher states of consciousness is what Christ meant by his doctrine of regeneration, or being born again.

WM. SCOTT.

INTERNATIONAL S. S. LESSONS.

January 24. Acts iii : 1-16.

The author of "Supernatural Religion," after a searching examination of the Book of the Acts, concludes: "The Acts of the Apostles, therefore, is not only an anonymous work, but upon due examination its claims to be considered sober and veracious history must be emphatically rejected. It cannot strengthen the foundations of Supernatural Religion, but, on the contrary, by its profuse and indiscriminate use of the miraculous it discredits miracles, and affords a clearer insight into their origin and fictitious character." So far as the mere narrative is concerned it would be difficult to add anything further and avoid platitude. There is nothing extraordinary in the healing of a physically lame man to those who are familiar with the intereffectiveness of natural elemental forces. A dwarfed or blighted plant may be made to flourish by a change of soil, temperature, or other conditions, but there is nothing supernatural about the process. Something akin to the relation between the plant-lover and the plant should exist between the healer and his patient: knowledge of causes and conditions, independence of resource, familiarity with means and methods of cure, absence of *personal* interest. "Silver and gold have I none, but what I have give I thee." Nor did the lame man make any return to his benefactors other than gratitude. More substantial returns are sought at present. The compiler of the Acts takes the narrative, which is similar to if not a copy of one of the class of anecdotes to be found in all religious folk-lore, and hangs a little rhetoric upon it in the report of Peter's speech. This speech, in more elaborate form, is afterwards delivered by Stephen and by Paul, and it is noted by the author of "Supernatural Religion" that the fisherman Peter, who spoke Aramaic, quotes the Psalms from the Greek Septuagint version, "and bases his argument upon a mistranslation of the psalm." Dr. Plumptre, who is a sufficiently orthodox authority, somewhat

artlessly remarks: "The absence of chronological *data* in the Acts, as a book written by one who in the Gospel appears to lay such stress on such matters (Luke iii: 1; vi: 2), is somewhat remarkable. The most natural explanation is that he found the informants who supplied him with his facts somewhat uncertain on these points, and that, as a truthful historian, he would not invent dates." But we must not limit our scruples to dates! May we not see in the lame man that impotent humanity whose healing it was the mission of the Master to accomplish? As halt and maimed humanity lies at the gate Beautiful of the Temple of the Higher Life who but John and Peter, the Intuition and the Understanding, can work the wonder? Atma, the Christos, working through Buddhi-Manas is only to be reached by faith in and knowledge of the Name.

January 31. Acts iv : 1-14.

The most important point in this passage is that involved in the statement that it was the Name of Jesus Christ, than which there is none other name under heaven wherein we must be saved, by which the lame man was healed. Church people generally understand Jesus Christ to be the name referred to. To begin with, Jesus Christ is not a name, but a title. As we have seen, Emmanuel is his name, and that is somewhat nearer the truth. The true name is the Lost Word of Masonic and other mysteries. It is the "Name of the Lord," and is spoken of in Isaiah xiv : 21-25, in terms identical with the present. It is, as "E" sings:

"The word which Brahma at his dawn
Outbreathes and endeth at his night,
Whose tide of sound so rolling on
Gives birth to orbs of pearly light:

"And beauty, wisdom, love and youth,
By its enchantment gathered grow
In a long wandering to the Truth,
Through many a cycle's ebb and flow."

February 7. Acts iv : 32—v : 11.

There are strong grounds for believing in the reincarnation of Ananias and Sapphira, and it is equally a matter for congratulation that there are not more Peters, whose impetuous character often

betrayed a bloodthirsty tendency, as Malchus might testify, or many of us would be cut off in the flower of our fabrications. Peter, if the narrative be true, proved himself an unworthy custodian of the occult powers he had been entrusted with, for it could only be through the agency of Peter that the death of the unfortunate couple could have been brought about. To suppose that the ETERNAL directly visited with death a petty deception about a real estate deal is more than even the average Toronto Christian believes in his heart. That death may have occurred in both cases as described is perfectly credible, but to seek to establish a relation between the falsehood and the fatality is not only misleading but immoral. If death occurred it was for deeds worthy of death wrought in that or previous lives. Lying will be visited on the plane of the deception in every case. "He that doeth wrong shall receive again the wrong that he hath done: and there is no respect of persons" (Colossians iii: 25). If Peter wrought the death of Ananias and Sapphira he thereby incurred the death penalty which he is said to have endured. "Vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord."

February 14. Acts v: 17-32.

The anecdote in this passage owes its picturesque Sunday school quality to the general impression that the "Angel of the Lord" of verse 19 was one of the white-winged denizens of another sphere who came to earth for the purpose described. An "angel" simply means a "messenger," and there is nothing in the context to indicate any more extraordinary intervention than the usual Eastern methods of jail-delivery. It is observable that Peter's example of breaking jail is not commended to the prisoners of the present day, even when they account themselves as innocent as Peter.

February 21. Acts vi: 8-15—vii: 54-60.

Stephen is one of the most romantic characters in the whole Christian history. Yet Paul, who apparently must have heard his last dying speech, never once refers to him in his preserved writings,

and by implication in Galatians i: 11-12, even seems to deny having heard him. Stephen means "crown," and he was the leader among seven who were chosen to represent the church or society in their business. His career sums up and parallels the career of the Master in his work, his teaching, his martyrdom, and even his last words "Lay not this sin to their charge." His transfiguration, verse 15, is also significant. That Saul was consenting to the death of Stephen, the "crown," if it be interpreted as the mystic death, may also be suggestive, but the mysticism of the Acts certainly appears to be somewhat far-fetched.

February 28. Acts viii: 1-17.

The appearance of Simon Magus in the story of the Acts is an interesting testimony to the existence of the science of magic in Apostolic times. The English translation says Simon "used Sorcery." The Greek says he "was practising magic." The word *Magos* is rendered "wise men" in Matthew ii: 1. The version of the Acts is naturally a garbled account of Simon's life, which must be investigated in independent and unprejudiced records to be appreciated. A perusal of the surviving fragments of his philosophy will indicate the exceeding improbability of the story of verses 18-23, though the spirit exhibited in verse 24 can hardly be objected to. As the chapter stands it affords a valuable contrast of the different estimation in which the Raj and Hatha Yoga systems were even then regarded.



THE closer the approach to one's *Prototype* "in Heaven," the better for the mortal whose personality was chosen by his own *personal* deity (the seventh principle), as its terrestrial abode. For, with every effort of will toward purification and unity with that "Self god," one of the lower rays breaks and the spiritual entity of man is drawn higher and ever higher to the ray that supersedes the first, until, from ray to ray, the inner man is drawn into the one and highest beam of the Parent-SUN.—*Secret Doctrine I., p. 639.*

THE LAMP,

A Theosophical Magazine Published on
the 15th of Each Month.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION

Yearly.....25 cents.
Single Copies..... 5 cents.

The Theosophical Society, as such, is not responsible for anything contained in this magazine.

The editor will be responsible only for unsigned articles.

CONDUCTED BY ALBERT E. S. SMYTHE,

To whom all communications are to be addressed, at the Medical Council Building, Toronto.

TORONTO, JANUARY 15, 1897.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

1897—A Year of Promise.

“WISE IS HE who holds to the golden mid-point, who believes in the eternal justice of things.”

THEOSOPHY is the dark horse in the Human Race. There are quite a few who are able to spot a winner, however.

IT IS to be observed that St. Nicholas, Senior, is not above repudiating himself when expediency demands.

COL. GEORGE M. COFFIN, of Washington, D.C., lectured at the Court House in Sioux City, Iowa, to an audience of 300 on 15th Dec.

BOOKS on theosophical subjects may be procured from THE LAMP office, or through Mr. W. H. Evans, bookseller, 357½ Yonge Street, Toronto.

MR. AND MRS. HARRIS extend a cordial invitation to all enquirers for the theosophical study class at 76 Saulters Street on Tuesday evenings at 8 o'clock.

WE DESIRE to recommend Paul Deussen's “Elements of Metaphysics” to theosophical students who wish to read up on the subject. There is no better book for the purpose.

PARCELS of *back* numbers of THE LAMP, assorted copies, will be sent to Branches for free distribution at the rate, to cover postage, of 15 cents for 50. The quantity on hand is about 2,000.

THE BEAVER T. S. keeps its hall in The Forum, Yonge and Gerrard Sts., open daily as a reading room for visitors between the hours of 1.30 and 5. The library contains the leading theosophical books and magazines.

VOL. I. OF THE LAMP is entirely out of print and cannot be supplied. A few copies of Vol. II. have been bound and will be sold at \$1.50 each, post free. Back numbers of the second volume cost five cents each.

SEVERAL CORRESPONDENTS have written under the impression that “Aretas” was the editor of THE LAMP. We wish he was. “Aretas” is one of the oldest workers in the theosophical movement, and is attached to the New York Headquarters.

WHEN the theosophic lecturer rose to explain the symbology of Apollo's heptachord and the harpers harping on their harps, and declared all men to be seven-stringed lyres, the man in the back seat enquired if he meant to say it in his haste, like David.

PITTSBURGH BRANCH has started a Lotus Circle which will meet on Sundays at 3 p.m. A class of ten for the study of “The Key” has also been started, under the leadership of Mr. M. A. Oppermann. This class will be one of the most helpful features of the Branch.

THE GROWTH of the Theosophical Society is best illustrated in the progress of the various Branches. A general exodus into larger quarters is everywhere observable. During the past month Toledo and Fort Wayne have entered into new and more spacious rooms, and many other Societies are making arrangements to do so.

CAN some of our Canadian theosophic philatelists make up a complete set of Canadian postage stamps for the London collection? Mr. Adams makes the request, and THE LAMP will be glad to assist. With those rare old colonials in view we fear a complete set is hardly to be expected; however, let us try. Cancelled specimens are of course acceptable.

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THE CIRCUIT of the Crusade approaches completion. Even now with homeward prow ploughing the Pacific waves the steamer bears the little party downwards. On their arrival in California next month the site of the School for the Revival of the Lost Mysteries of Antiquity will probably be dedicated. It is understood that the building will be of Greek design.

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THE following copies of *The Irish Theosophist* are urgently wanted. Any one having them for sale please communicate with THE LAMP, stating price. No. 1, Vol. 1, October, 1892 (three copies wanted); Vol. 3, No. 1 (two copies wanted); Vol. 3, No. 5; Vol. 4, No. 1 (two copies wanted); Vol. 4, Nos. 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. We also want *The Path*, June, 1886.

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BY INVITATION of the Socialist Labour Party, Mr. Smythe addressed a large and most intelligent audience in Alice Street Hall, on Sunday afternoon, 3rd inst., on the subject of "Selfishness and what it has done for us." The selfishness of having and getting was contrasted with the Selfishness of being. The regeneration of society was shown to depend on the regeneration of the individual.

*

ON THE 20th inst. Mr. Smythe will leave Toronto on a tour among the Branches in New York and Pennsylvania. Among the places likely to be visited are Buffalo, Warsaw, Rochester, Syracuse, Rome, Utica, Corinth, Yonkers, New York and Brooklyn, Newark, Hackensack, California, Pittsburgh, Wilkinsburg, Warren, Corry, and Jamestown, returning to Toronto on the 13th February.

MRS. CAMILLE W. SEWARD is working up a centre in St. Joseph, Mo. Theosophists who have friends there would do well to write to them and suggest their taking an interest in the movement. This idea can and ought to be put in operation in other places. A copy of "Elementary Theosophy" or a similar tract enclosed will awaken interest among many who have never yet been brought face to face with theosophy.

*

IN HAMILTON on Wednesday evening, 6th inst., Mr. Smythe lectured in Green's Hall on "The Common Sense of Theosophy." The attendance was very good, an increase over the last occasion. Many questions were asked at the close, especially by one gentleman, who feared that occultism was simply priestcraft in a new dress. After the meeting some fifteen members of the study class and other friends remained for an hour for further discussion and questioning. Mr. Gatenby is president, and Miss Waugh secretary, for this centre.

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THE LAMP is only sent to paid subscribers, so that persons who receive it regularly and who have not themselves subscribed, have been paid for by some friend. THE LAMP need not be refused through fear of the U. S. newspaper subscription law. We drop subscribers' names from our list immediately on expiry of subscription. If you wish to receive THE LAMP regularly renew your subscription at once. Subscriptions are reckoned from the first number issued after receipt of order; if you want any back numbers, and very few remain, they will cost five cents each. We cannot include back numbers in yearly subscriptions. Remittances should be made in postage stamps (U. S. or Canadian) for sums under one dollar. Bills or postal orders are preferred for larger amounts. There is no sense in paying for a postal order for 25 cents.

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THE MULTIPLICITY of theosophic magazines in the present day has many times been forced upon our attention. THE LAMP, which was designed origin-

ally for local propaganda work, and has chiefly sought to fulfil that purpose, has acquired a circulation which is not large enough to sustain itself, and too large to be done justice to by the divided attention which can be given it by the present editor. It is probable, therefore, that on the completion of its 33rd number THE LAMP will hand its subscription list to one of its able contemporaries so as to complete its own obligations, and "leave more room for others." Last month's issue was greatly delayed by the editor's absence, and the next issue will not likely be out before the first of March. Correspondents are requested to exercise forbearance if their replies are not as prompt as they may wish. Our "Notes on the Magazines" have had to be abandoned recently for reasons indicated above.



SOMA, THE SACRAMENTAL CUP.

SOMA is the moon astronomically; but in mystic phraseology, it is also the name of the sacred beverage drunk by the Brahmins and the Initiates during their mysteries and sacrificial rites. The "Soma" plant is the *asclepias acida*, which yields a juice from which that mystic beverage, the *Soma* drink, is made. Alone the descendants of the Rishis, the *Agnihotri* (the fire priests) of the great mysteries knew all its powers. But the real property of the *true Soma* was (and *is*) to make a new *man* of the Initiate, after he is *reborn*, namely once that he begins to live in his *astral* body (See "The Elixir of Life"); for, his spiritual nature overcoming the physical, he would soon snap it off and part even from that etherialized form. NOTE. The partaker of *Soma* finds himself both linked to his external body, and yet away from it in his spiritual form. The latter, freed from the former soars for the time being in the ethereal higher regions, becoming virtually "as one of the gods," and yet preserving in his physical brain the memory of what he sees and learns. Plainly speaking, *Soma* is the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge forbidden by the jealous Elohim to Adam and Eve or *Yah-ve*, "lest Man should become as one of us."—*The Secret Doctrine*, II., pp. 498-499.

CAROLS TO THE LOTUS.

I.

O! thou, great Brahma's sacred flower,
Revered from ancient days,
We would to thee, this happy hour,
Our Christmas carols raise.

The glorious sign of peace untold
We in thy presence see,
And hail as hailed the sages old,
The Godhead throned in thee.

A blessed sign, the type sublime,
Of Him who life controls,
Thou wert from immemorial time
The light of myriad souls.

To thee, the wise their worship gave,
Where Egypt's glories dwelt,
To thee, by Ganges' sacred wave,
The priests of Buddha knelt.

The token pure of love and hope,
Since life's first germ began,
Thou symbollest the endless scope
Of God's progressive plan.

Outsprung from Brahma's sacred head,
O! spirit luminous!
Hope of the living and the dead,
Be ever more with us.

II.

Sing we of the Lotus bright,
Sing we of the mystic sign;
Emblem pure of God and light,
Type of all we hold divine.

Let us turn our Christmas chant,
While each heart its worship yields;
Hailing thus the wondrous plant,
Beauteous from the Solar fields.

More than India's wealth of gold,
More than all the gems of earth,
We the wondrous symbol hold
Of the re-incarnate birth.

Thus we tune our anthem high,
To the flower of perfect bloom;
Gift of Brahma from the sky,
That shall all the world inlume.

Providence, R.I. MRS. EMMA R. THURSTON.



"It is above everything important to keep in mind that no theosophical book acquires the least additional value from pretended authority."—*H. P. B., in Secret Doctrine, Intro. xiv.*

"THE 'King's Chamber' in Cheops' Pyramid is thus an Egyptian 'Holy of Holies.' On the days of the Mysteries of Initiation, the candidate, representing the solar god, had to descend into the Sarcophagus, and represent the energizing ray, entering into the fecund womb of Nature. Emerging from it on the following morning, he typified the resurrection of life after the change called Death. In the great MYSTERIES his figurative death lasted two days, when, with the Sun, he arose on [the] third morning, after a last night of the most cruel trials."—*S. D. II., p. 402.*

CYCLES AND KARMA.

The Secret Doctrine teaches that every event of universal importance, such as geological cataclysms at the end of one race and the beginning of a new one, involving a great change each time in mankind, spiritual, moral and physical, is pre-cogitated and pre-concerted, so to say, in the sidereal regions of our planetary system. Astrology is built wholly upon this mystic and intimate connection between the heavenly bodies and mankind; and it is one of the great secrets of initiation and Occult mysteries.—*Secret Doctrine II., p. 500.*

There is a predestination in the geological life of our globe, as in the history, past and future, of races and nations. This is closely connected with what we call *Karma* and Western Pantheists, "Nemesis" and "Cycles." The law of evolution is now carrying us along the ascending arc of *our* cycle, *when the effects will be once more re-merged into*, and re-become the (now neutralized) causes, and all things affected by the former will have regained their original harmony. This will be the cycle of our special "Round," a moment in the duration of the great cycle, or the *Mahayuga*. . . . But these cycles—wheels within wheels, so comprehensively and ingeniously symbolized by the various Manus and Rishis in India, and by the Kabiri in the West—*do not affect all mankind at one and the same time*. . . . Hence, as we see, the difficulty of comprehending and discriminating between them, with regard to their spiritual and physical effects, without having thoroughly mastered their relations with, and actions upon the respective positions of nations and races, in their destiny and evolution. This system cannot be comprehended if the spiritual action of these periods—*pre-ordained*, so to say, by *Karmic law*—is separated from their physical course. The calculations of the best astrologers would fail, or at any rate remain imperfect, unless this dual action is thoroughly taken into consideration and dealt with upon these lines. And this mastery can be achieved only through INITIATION.

. . . In the West, since Pagan Wisdom has been repudiated as having grown from and been developed by the dark powers supposed to be at constant war and in opposition to the little tribal Jehovah—the full and awful significance of the Greek NEMESIS (or Karma) has been entirely forgotten. Otherwise Christians would have better realized the profound truth that Nemesis is without attributes; that while the dreaded goddess is absolute and immutable as a Principle, it is we ourselves—nations and individuals—who propel her to action and give the impulse to its direction. KARMA-NEMESIS is the creator of nations and mortals, but once created, it is they who make of her either a fury or a rewarding Angel.

. . . Karma-Nemesis is the synonym of PROVIDENCE, minus design, goodness, and every other *finite* attribute and qualification, so unphilosophically attributed to the latter. An Occultist or a philosopher will not speak of the goodness or cruelty of Providence; but, identifying it with Karma-Nemesis, he will teach that nevertheless it guards the good and watches over them in this, as in future lives; and that it punishes the evil-doer—aye, even to his seventh re-birth. So long, in short, as the effect of his having thrown into perturbation even the smallest atom in the Infinite World of Harmony, has not been finally re-adjusted. For the only decree of Karma—an eternal and immutable decree—is absolute Harmony in the world of matter as it is in the world of Spirit. It is not, therefore, Karma that rewards or punishes, but it is we, who reward or punish ourselves according to whether we work with, through and along with nature, abiding by the laws on which that Harmony depends, or—break them.—*Secret Doctrine I., pp. 641, 642, 643.*

✻

WHAT IS THE "DAILY INITIATION?"

It is supposed by some that initiation is always and in every case a set and solemn occasion for which the candidate is prepared and notified of in advance. While there are some initiations surrounded by such solemnities as these,

the daily one, without success in which no aspirant will ever have the chance to try for those that are higher, comes to the disciple with almost each moment. It is met in our relations with our fellows, and in the effects upon us of all the circumstances of life. And if we fail in these, we never get to the point where greater ones are offered. If we cannot bear momentary defeat, or if a chance word that strikes our self love finds us unprepared, or if we give way to the desire to harshly judge others, or if we remain in ignorance of some of our most apparent faults, we do not build up that knowledge and strength imperatively demanded from whoever is to be master of nature.

It is in the life of every one to have a moment of choice, but that moment is not set for any particular day. It is the sum total of all days; and it may be put off until the day of death, and then it is beyond our power, for the choice has then been fixed by all the acts and thoughts of the life-time. We are self-doomed at that hour to just the sort of life, body, environment, and tendencies which will best carry out our karma. This is a thing solemn enough, and one that makes the "daily initiation" of the very greatest importance to each earnest student. But all of this has been said before, and it is a pity that students persist in ignoring the good advice they receive.

Do you think that if a Master accepted you He would put you to some strange test? No. He would not, but simply permitting the small events of your life to have their course, the result would determine your standing. *It may be a child's school, but it takes a man to go through it.—Hadji Erinn in The Path, September, 1889.*



WITH right knowledge, or at any rate with a confident conviction that our neighbours will no more work to hurt us than we would think of harming them, the two-thirds of the World's evil would vanish into thin air. Were no man to hurt his brother, Karma-Nemesis would have neither cause to work for, nor weapons to act through.—*Secret Doctrine I, p. 643.*

GLIMPSES.

"Let not the work languish, for the time is short. The evil hour draws on apace. No man can foresee the end, for the stars themselves shall waver and fall, and the terror of a great darkness shall descend upon the earth. The day shall give place to night, and the dawn shall not come again until thirty days of anguish and horror shall have dragged their slow length along.

"Take heed therefore that thou failest not, for upon thee devolves the safety of many of our brothers, and to thee will they look for guidance, for to thee will be given the charts and directions that shall show thee how an escape from these perilous times may be had. Live faithfully and nobly till then, and follow the Star whose ray thou art."—Manustoe.

*

THERE IS NO REASON for any dilatoriness in representing the actual conditions that confront humanity; for the terrible and momentous events that are presignified by the unrest of mankind are already manifesting themselves in the wavering conditions of the body politic, and in a certain obscure and unknown perturbation that is now vexing the motions of certain planetary bodies, and that will burst upon the consciousness of the people like a thunder-clap before the sun is warmed again by his reception into the sign of himself.

The day and date are in the hands of fate, and shall remain until the day to tell them has arrived. There is no peace, no rescue, no salvation for the race until the change of conditions has prepared the masses for it, and brought in upon them a realizing sense of the necessity for a renovation of themselves and the purification of their inner natures.

This shall come by fire, sword and disease. Nature abhors a vacuum and so does the shell of man; and there must come a time when the inrush of forces, to fill the void in humanity, shall be so terrific that the vessels cannot contain them and must in part be shattered, and be received only where the place of rest has been carefully prepared.

Those who do the bidding of the wise ones shall not be forsaken in the hour of trouble, for their destiny is that of the elements and must perforce follow the lines of least resistance; and since the elements work in and through nature, so do the careful ones who have learned to pay that obeisance to her that she demands and that leaves a freedom of action to be obtained in the greater harmony that is the oversoul of nature's undertone.

Nothing is wasted in the last endeavour. The note of the down-singing is the response to the up-singing, and the aspiration for good is the force that develops the one and absolves the other.

The unseen spheres of the higher planes of force and thought are filled with the reverberations of the events of all past cycles, and when the currents that have been bending inwards from the experiences of long past ages have come to the junction of the old event and its new antitype, then the old rings the knell of the death of the present, and reflects in a flash of reminiscence the whole circle of events, and thus concentrates in a catastrophe the forces that have ever been operating; thus leaving the field clear for a new cycle and a further growth appropriate to the accumulated experience that has thus fruited and been transformed.

*

THE CONSUMMATION OF ENDEAVOUR is the growing out of the old principles of internal effort into a realization of the unity of the last word of the great master, who said, "There is but one world, all others are shadows." That world is the unseen spiritual region of eternal life and thought; the constantly manifesting, yet never manifested, prototype of all that has been, is, or is to be; the source of all illusions, the receptacle of all finite forms, and the regenerator of all the cosmic processes that disclose a new age and shut the door on the advance of a worn out impulse; burying in itself its own illusions and creating new forms that lie hidden in its processes of advancement in the realization of itself. There is no permanency except in the thought "I am;" and that thought creates worlds that

eventually realize the same idea and find therein their death and birth into the fullness of the eternal truth.

The cosmic and material is only a step toward the light that its impulse is intended to disclose, and the force of its manifestation is the negative pole of the self-existent thought that reaches out into space and calls dead matter to life and union with the constantly growing fullness of a universal conception. Space is non-existent and its illusion is to be conquered by the penetration of the infinite idea into its remotest bounds as a fact of experience, that, once obtained, discovers the centre of consciousness as being everywhere, and makes matter the mark only of a thought which resides eternally in itself. All finite processes are endeavours to obtain the infinite idea, and the successes and failures are distinguished by that universal canon of proportion called conscience, as good and bad, though the distinction is never so absolute as to disclose the hidden reason that calls both into manifestation and reduces all efforts to a conflict of qualities. This hidden reason, or cause, is the dual nature of the primitive will which contains the two elements of force, positive and negative, in its innate thought, and out of the interaction of this dual manifests that variety of itself that is the perfect expression of the fullness of its all-embracing infinity.

*

THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS of all nations furnish an instructive lesson of the parallel that exists between the forces that make the dual nature of the spiritual and material evolutions manifest; for the spiritual is the first to reach the consciousness that the native afterwards discloses in the necessary conflicts that matter always displays in its co-ordination with the impulses that lie in the manifestation of its experience, and which result in a destruction of the instruments it uses. When a feeling of unrest and apprehension has maintained itself for a certain length of time, usually measured in a minor solar cycle of 18 years, the conflict itself appears and the reconstruction process again begins; but when the earth lends its

strength to accentuate this same unrest then we have the accumulated force of many cycles to fortify the fear, and this brings on a general regeneration that sweeps away all barriers to the influx of the destiny of the planet and brings the new age that comes at the close of a great sidereal year. The inroads of science on the forces of nature are the partial opening of the doors of fate, and these powers when once released are like the Djins of the Arabian fable, that swell and grow to monstrous proportions and complete the union of the physical in matter and the mental in man, and thus synchronize the impulses of both planes, bringing into each consciousness the dire necessity that demands a union regardless of the crude material bodies that would check the result. Know now the day has come to visualize the divine demand and the tottering earth and foolish man must both seek release through terrible struggle, and be united in a general tumult that will make for higher destinies and be a complete renunciation of all the false concepts that have led to such a sad catastrophe.

This is the last opportunity for the old state to change within itself, and from the new era there comes the promise of the final end of all the ancient tendencies and a permanent spiritual regeneration. Those who read may learn. It is the law.

[The foregoing notes by a student are contributed anonymously, but their suggestiveness in regard to the question of cycles, and their possible bearing on the impending juncture, seemed to warrant their presentation to our readers—ED.]



THE voice of the Secret Wisdom says those who are looking for signs can have no other than that of the returning fish-man, Ichthys, Oannes or Jonas—who could not be made flesh.—*Secret Doctrine I., p. 654.*

THINGS are not true because they are old, but old because they are true. Immortality belongs to Truth and not to error. A thing is not true because God hath said it, or is *supposed* to have said it; God said it *because it is true*: and the whole manifestation of Nature is thus the UTTERED WORD OF DIVINITY.—*Mystic Masonry, p. 211.*

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Wednesday, Jan. 27, 8 p.m., "Ocean," pp. 45-48.

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Sunday, Jan. 31, 11 a.m. Scripture Class.

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Wednesday, Feb. 3, 8 p.m., "Ocean," pp. 48-51.

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