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THE OCCULT REVIEW

EDITED BY RALPH SHIRLEY

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OCCULT REVIEW

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE INVESTIGATION OF SUPERNORMAL PHENOMENA AND THE STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS.

EDITED BY RALPH SHIRLEY

"Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri"

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

CERTAIN scenes of our early lives tend to form themselves into thought-pictures, which remain with us long after many subsequent events of apparently much greater significance have become totally obliterated from the recollection. One of these memory-pictures with me is that of a boy of thirteen sitting with his schoolfellows in a country church while prayers were being offered by the vicar of the parish for fine weather to save the crops from the effects of the inclement conditions prevailing in the disastrous summer of 1879. As we sat in church the deluge, which never seemed really quite to stop throughout the whole summer, came down with redoubled violence and with such fury as effectually to drown the voice of the speaker, whose intercession, if audible to the Deity, was at least not so to his congregation. At every church in the country such prayers went up from large or small congregations, but the thoughtful mind was bound to draw the conclusion that the effect produced on the climatic conditions

A MEMORY-PICTURE.

was altogether incommensurate with the effort made. It was clear, then, that if meteorological conditions were subject to modification by the intercession of the people, there was something radically wrong with the form which these intercessions took, or with the spiritual attitude of the intercessors. It did not seem so much that they had actually failed to catch the ear of the Deity as that some higher Power was actually mocking at them for their futile efforts to divert him from his foreordained purposes.

Those who have taken up the position that prayer is without effect, and therefore no better than a waste of time, have used the argument of the inefficacy of prayers for fine weather, or alternatively for rain, as a valid argument to support their contention, while others, who have been ready to admit that prayer in certain cases may produce corresponding results, have taken up the position that prayers of the kind mentioned do not come within this category. The elements, they say, are subject to certain laws of nature, which will follow their usual course whether people attempt to influence them by prayer or the reverse, and it is, in fact, they will argue, almost profanity to solicit of the Deity the alteration of His immutable laws for the benefit of suffering humanity. Men, they tell you, can be influenced by prayer; their hearts can be changed; their feelings turned from hatred to kindliness; they may be rendered willing to help those in need by the outpouring of the Spirit of Grace upon them. Events, too, as far as they depend on the action of man, can be modified by solicitation of the Deity. But you might as well implore Divine intervention to cause the earth to rotate on its axis in twelve hours instead of twenty-four as to pray that climatic conditions may be altered for the benefit of the year's harvest. There is a third school who, while unwilling to allow that any actual response from Heaven to human supplications can be logically admissible, still argue in favour of the validity of prayer on account of its reaction upon the individual by way of auto-suggestion. This school at the present time is an extremely large one, and it is probable that the view they support is being adopted by ever-increasing numbers among the more thoughtful members of society. Which of these schools is right? Or are any of them entirely so?

OUGHT WE TO PRAY?

The problem of prayer and the answering of prayer is one of those which goes to the very root of occultism. It is at the same time one with which almost all of us have been brought face to face at one period or another of our existence. There are prob-

ably very few among the readers of the OCCULT REVIEW who were not taught in their childhood to say their prayers, though doubtless a very considerable percentage have subsequently abandoned the practice. I recollect the most brilliant football player at my school invariably said his prayers before the most important matches, but not otherwise. Another early recollection is that of a sermon by the Archdeacon who used to preach in the cathedral to which we went once every Sunday. He told the story of a boy who had died somewhat suddenly at school under rather tragic circumstances. The reports of the masters as to the boy's general conduct and behaviour had been by no means such as to satisfy his anxious parents, and they would gladly have found some indication, however slight, that his thoughts during his lifetime had been directed in a religious channel. Their search proved vain, the only recognition of a higher Power being found in the shape of a scrawled line in the boy's school exercise-book, "May God make me good—at cricket!"

PRAYERS FOR CRICKET AND FOOTBALL.

The times are past when Abraham, the favourite protégé of Jehovah, could be thought of as he is depicted in the Bible story, hobnobbing in homely fashion with the Almighty, or Enoch walking with God—the phrase was doubtless intended literally, though the modern reader is wont to interpret it as an allegorical expression—but even as late as the days of the Reformation we hear of Martin Luther adopting an argumentative attitude with his God, and taking Him to task for indifference or inattention towards his righteous demands. The whole conception is now transformed by the adoption of a more rational, if not a more scientific attitude, and those who expect a response to their petitions look to receive it through bringing influence to bear on the active agencies of the spiritual world—those celestial hierarchies whose intervention, subject to the permission of some still higher Power, may be contemplated as a practical possibility without undue outrage on reason or common-sense. Thus much has the Spiritualist movement done for the world of Christendom in bringing it back from the cruder conceptions of Protestantism to one of the main tenets of the ancient Catholic Faith. In spite of this the prayers of Christians outside the Catholic and Greek Churches still almost invariably take the form of direct appeal to the Deity, and this very fact tends to invest the petitions offered up with a certain atmosphere of artificiality. The Jew could pray to his

TO WHOM SHOULD WE PRAY?

tribal divinity, Jehovah, and hope for a hearing with less of a stretch of the imagination and a less glaring sense of unreality than one who now appeals to the ultimate Source of Life, whether immanent in the myriad manifestations of an infinite universe, or unthinkable to human ken as the transcendent Cause and Architect of a Cosmos in which He is Himself the only Reality. Man may attempt in feeble-wise to relate himself to the Source of all, but without a Jacob's ladder he cannot even commence the first humble beginnings of this more than stupendous task.

If the Catholic and the Spiritualist are right, we are justified in holding that these eternal powers may employ our intercessions as a lever to obtain for us that which we ask, within certain limits imposed by spiritual law. We may further be justified in holding that without such intercession on our part the hands of the said powers would be tied.

Be not impatient in delay,
But wait as one who understands;
When Spirit rises and commands,
The Gods are ready to obey.

How often, we may wonder, do the gods wait long and vainly to fulfil the prayer that is never offered up! The old proverb tells us that it takes two to make a quarrel. How do we know but that it may take two, one on this side of the "Great Divide" and one on the other, working in unison, to effect the help needed in the day of darkness and distress? Christ found it so of old. "He could do no mighty works there," we are told, "because of their unbelief." The occult law that required co-operation to ensure success in the case of Christ's miracles may well demand as much for the granting of human prayer.

I throw out these ideas far from dogmatically, but rather as suggestions to encourage new lines of thought. The problem of prayer is one that ever confronts us. Is it not well that we should face it squarely? If we do so we must not lose sight of the fact that the evidence, at the first glance, is by no means any too strong in its favour. We hear indeed of remarkable answers to prayer, but how about the millions of petitions offered up week by week in our churches and our homes, to which there is no apparent response? I sometimes think that the art of praying is one of those things that appear to be extremely easy and are in reality extremely difficult. I doubt if one man in ten thousand of our population has any very clear idea how he ought to pray and I question if the average parrot prayer is not better left unprayed.

RARITY OF ANSWERS TO PRAYER.

There are children who know how to pray instinctively, but there is a danger that when we outgrow the simplicity of childhood the art of praying, if we ever possessed it, may be lost through the growth of the critical spirit and the increasing artificiality of our daily life.

> Prayer is the simplest form of speech
> That infant lips can try.
> Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach
> The Majesty on high.

I should be far, then, from saying that it is only the parrot prayer that remains unheard. Those who have had any considerable experience in such matters whether on their own account or on account of others with whom they have been brought into religious sympathy, would admit, I am sure, if they were frank, that a vast percentage of earnest and genuine prayers remain, at least to all appearance, unheard. Why is this? As has already been indicated by me, there is an art, or may we not even call it a knack, of praying. The prayer must indeed be a wish and an aspiration; but it must be something more as well. It must be the expression of a concentrated purpose and determination coupled with a faith in its own fulfilment. In addition to this there should, I think, be a certain impersonal attitude or spirit of selflessness about the prayer, without which it can hardly expect to be taken seriously. It is obvious that the man who prayed for a ten-pound note to go out "on the bust" would not be justified in expecting a favourable response. There is, on the other hand, the instance of Müller's orphanage which its founder claimed to have run most successfully on the voluntary principle entirely by laying the needs of his institution in his daily intercessions at the feet of the Divine Love. There are again cases where danger threatens and the prayer has been rendered specially urgent (and in consequence efficacious) by the sense of supreme need. Take the well-known instance recorded by himself in the life of John Wesley. As a young man, the celebrated divine happened to be riding one night through a dark wood carrying with him a large sum of money, the funds of a society with which he had been entrusted. A sudden feeling of apprehension, not unwarranted by the circumstances, seized upon him, and the fear that he might be waylaid presented itself vividly to his mind. Acting on the impulse of a naturally religious temperament, he dismounted from his horse and, kneeling on the ground, offered up a fervent prayer for divine protection. He then

INSTANCES OF PRAYERS ANSWERED.

JOHN WESLEY'S STORY.

arose feeling strangely reassured and comforted, and proceeded to his destination without further adventure. Many years later, at an advanced period of his ministry, he was called to the death-bed of a notorious criminal who expressed the desire to make a private confession to him. Wesley went in answer to the summons, and the man recalled to his memory the incident above narrated, and admitted to him that he had been lying concealed in the wood waiting to rob him, having learned of the sum of money which he held in his possession. He told Wesley how he noticed him descend from the horse and offer up a prayer, and, on his resuming his journey, he stated that he observed the appearance of an armed attendant riding beside him, and so abandoned his projected robbery.

I have alluded in an earlier number to the case of the discovery of the body of Miss Hickman, the lady doctor, in Richmond Park, but it is so appropriate an instance of answer to prayer that it may be well to recapitulate it here. Archdeacon Wilberforce, it may be remembered, at the time of Miss Hickman's disappearance, when her family were distracted with uncertainty as to her fate, appealed to his congregation at St. Margaret's Church to join him in a general prayer that the secret of what had happened might be brought to light, and expressed the conviction that if they did this the prayer would be answered, and a prompt result would follow. Within two hours of the offering of the prayer, Miss Hickman's body was discovered, apparently quite accidentally, by a boy playing in the Park. It is clear that an incident of this kind could not be explained by auto-suggestion. We have to look further afield than this, or regard it as a coincidence.

Jesus Christ emphasizes a further essential point not to be overlooked by those who expect an answer to their prayers, in the parable of the unjust judge. The woman, it will be remembered, who came to him to be avenged on her adversary, had her request complied with purely on account of her importunity. The moral that Christ intended is obviously, "Pray early and often," and do not take it lying down if you do not happen to get your prayer answered at the first time of asking. Many people are a great deal too humble and do not get what they desire because they do not will for it sufficiently intensely and sufficiently continuously. When nothing comes along, "It is the will of God," they say with a sigh, when in reality it is merely the weakness of man.

"BECAUSE OF HER IMPORTUNITY."

I have alluded already to the value of prayer as a means of

auto-suggestion. Whether prayer acts otherwise or not, its auto-suggestive efficacy will, I think, to-day be very widely admitted. But we must not lose sight of the fact that there are negative as well as positive forms of auto-suggestion, and often the suppliant, quite unconsciously, neutralizes the whole value of his prayer by a fatalistic belief in the immutability of Nature's laws. The sense of the inevitable weighs upon him as it did on Mycerinus of old, and Fate looms before him like some huge Juggernaut-car. The gods may be willing enough to come to the aid of poor mortals, but are not they no less than mankind itself in reality but puppets in the hand of Fate?

FATALISM AS A BUGBEAR.

Is it that some Power, too stern, too strong,
Even for yourselves to conquer or beguile,
Bears earth and heaven, and men and gods along,
Like the broad volume of the insurgent Nile?

And the great Powers we serve themselves may be
Slaves of a tyrannous necessity?

Goethe.

This brings us back to the question of the weather and how far the prayers on such subjects offered up in our churches are a piece of folly. Without giving a very decided answer to this question, I think it is pertinent to observe that we are too fond of talking of laws of nature as if they were absolutely immutable. As a matter of fact, practical experiments have been made in the direction of modifying the weather, and by no means altogether unsuccessfully. It was confidently affirmed that the enormous firing of guns in the Russo-Japanese War had a very marked effect at the time on the climate of that country, and produced an abundant rainfall at a period when drought might confidently have been anticipated. If prayer can act upon the human heart by bringing to bear upon it the influence of higher spiritual powers, is it not conceivable, is it not, in fact, almost certain, that *rightly directed* prayer might also, if only to a limited extent, affect the weather?* A story appeared recently in a Colonial paper (I am afraid I have not the copy by me for reference) of a farmer who for urgent financial reasons found it imperative to thresh and deliver a stack of corn at a moment's notice. The weather conditions were highly unfavourable, and as he was attempting to complete the operation a deluge of rain swept over the neighbourhood. According to his own account, he prayed

CAN PRAYER INFLUENCE THE WEATHER?

* See also some remarks in an article by R. B. Span in the present number on occult influences on the weather.

earnestly that his stack might be spared, and as he maintained, in answer to his prayer, the rain, which fell all around him, left the spot occupied by his stack quite untouched and dry, and he was accordingly able to fulfil his obligation and effect the much-needed sale. I give the story for what it is worth, but it at least tends to show that the evidence, even on a point like this, is not quite all on one side.

It may be suggested, again—and this is a point which reincarnationists in especial will appreciate—that there is a fatality in the past lives of many which imposes a veto on those higher Powers who would willingly help if such help were permitted. There are times in the lives of many—the more religiously-minded will realize this the most—when the face of Divine Compassion is averted, and in response to the earnestly offered prayer "there is neither voice nor shadow of hearing." There are psalms in the Psalter which express this sense of being forsaken by the Deity with an almost matchless force and intensity. May I suggest, in regard to this, without seeming profane to the earnest Christian, that there is a danger in being too dependent upon prayer.

THE DIVINITY OF JOHN JONES.

There is a danger, in fact, in being too dependent upon anything. There is a sense in which it is of more importance to character to have faith in oneself than to have faith in God; and the opportunity offered by unanswered prayer is frequently, if taken at its true value, the turning point of many a life. "There is not," said the Athenian general, addressing his soldiers in the Peloponnesian War, "much difference between man and man. It is the discipline of stern necessity that moulds the victor." Just in this way the need to act for himself without apparent help from either man or God has taught many a one who would never have learned it otherwise to discover in the hour of need the God within himself, and in rallying John Jones to his own rescue he has awoken unexpectedly to know himself divine.

Most of us are (I am afraid) still content to go on with the old stereotyped prayers that did duty for the narrower conceptions of a narrower age, and all our books of prayer bear the impress in places of beliefs which we have mentally abandoned. The idea of the Deity as a bullying tyrant is one of these, and it has given the cue to many phrases in our intercessions which are far from honouring to God and are certainly degrading to man. There is no necessity to *grovel* when we pray. If we recognize that we are one with the Divine Unity, we shall cease by degrees

THE VICE OF SELF-HUMILIATION.

to beat our breasts and call attention with wearisome iteration to the fact that we are "miserable sinners," unworthy of the smallest divine consideration. There were two chaplains at my school-chapel (if I may be forgiven one further reminiscence) who intoned the Litany on alternate Sundays and voiced the self-humiliation of the congregation in the familiar refrain: "Have mercy upon us, miserable sinners!" One of these worthy clerics invariably laid the emphasis on the first syllable of the word "miserable," and the other on the last but one, and I used to reflect, as my knees ached on the hard boards, whether the expression "*meezer*-able sinner" or "mizzer-*rubble* sinner" was the more appropriate to my own spiritual condition. How much more beautiful was the attitude of Christ, who saw in the joys and troubles of life the ever-present hand of a loving Father! People cannot "rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves" if they will not let their "dead selves" die. We should not be perpetually resurrecting our dead past by vain regrets. There is nothing so paralysing to action as a too protracted repentance. Paul did not stop to worry over his early career of persecution, but "laboured more abundantly than they all." This is the true spirit of repentance.

THE MAZDAZNAN ASSOCIATION.

I have received a pamphlet from the British Mazdaznan Association which claims to inculcate "the Eternal Religion that stands behind all other religions." The pamphlet practically summarizes the *credo* of the association, which embraces not only the essentials of religion, but a complete system of education as well. Mazdaznan "recognizes in their proper place all (sacred) books as results of the demands made at certain times, but accepts as its infallible guide none other than the open Book of Nature." The religion apparently owes its title to the Zoroastrian conception that "throughout space moves the ever-creative thought of Mazda expressing the designs of intelligence through complex manifestations, and verifying its limitlessness through the variety in matter." Devotional services according to the Zoroastrian philosophy are conducted every Sunday at 11 a.m., and in addition to this a series of Lectures has been arranged for at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, commencing September 30. Mr. Gilman Beeler (86, Seymour Street, London, W.), who, I understand, conducts these, is the President of the Society. Those who are interested should write and inquire at this address.

BANSHEES

By ELLIOTT O'DONNELL

PRACTICALLY all old Irish families have their Banshee. When I say "old families," I mean clans, the clans that existed prior to the coming of the Norman and of the infusion of foreign blood —blood no Irishman asked for or wanted—blood that was thrust upon him. When England was writhing and groaning under the iron hand of the Conqueror, Ireland had its recognized chieftains. In the wild North were the O'Neills, O'Donnells, and O'Carrolls; on the West, the O'Rourkes, O'Reillys, O'Flahertys; in the East, the O'Connors and O'Moores; in the South, the O'Donoghues, the O'Sullivan Beares, the O'Mahonys, and the MacMahons.

Most of these clans, as may be seen from the Neill or Nell in the names, were descended from one and the same person, namely Niall of the Nine Hostages, the King Arthur of Irish knight errantry.

Whilst some of the clans, in all probability, date their banshees to about this time, others would have theirs go back much further, even to the days of Niall's Milesian forefathers, when his ancestors were supposed to have held very close communication with the Unknown, either directly, or through the medium of their sorcerers and magicians. Be this as it may, one thing is certain, and that is that the banshee is invariably the phantom of a woman of an old type—a type that might very well have existed several thousand years ago. Sometimes she is beautiful, a creature with golden hair and large blue eyes—"Irish" blue eyes—a type that well agrees with the beautiful and gifted Meave, daughter of King Yeoha, surnamed the "Sigher" for his many troubles, by his fairy bride. This Meave, whose looks gained her great renown, was none other than the famous Queen Mab, who was typical of everything Irish—unsurpassably fair to look on, generous, impulsive, quick-witted, a born ruler, but, alas, quarrelsome. She married three times and could not agree with any of her husbands! All through her reign were troubles and misfortunes. Her wondrous beauty—the heritage of the fairies—instead of bringing peace only brought discord, and the deeper

the impressions of her face and personality sank home in the hearts and minds of all who saw her, the greater the subsequent wranglings and disquietude. One might even suppose that it was she who first stamped Ireland with the influence of woman—that fatal influence that has so invariably shattered all hopes of Irish Union and independence at the critical moment. Queen Mab's ascendency over her subjects was certainly out of the normal. It was, as might be expected from her genealogy, marvellous. Every chieftain became enamoured of her, and as a sure consequence had no little trouble with his own women folk.

This then is assuredly a fitting period to which to affix the date of Ireland's great curse—the curse of Love of Woman—for no other individual is so likely to have brought it about as fair, fateful Meave. None other than she—this queen of the Fays—could have generated in the Irishman his keen susceptibilities to feminine beauty.

More significant still, in her time lived Deirdri, the beautiful daughter of the bard Felemi, who brought nought but woe to Ulster and the clans of the North. Deirdri was adopted by Conor MacNessa, a forefather of Niall; seen by Naesi, son of Usna, she was voluntarily abducted by him. The two fled away together, and lived happily with one another, till they were persuaded by Conor to return. Placed under the escort of Fiachy "the faithful," they were being escorted to the home of "the MacNessa," when a strange chieftain called Durthact rode up with an armed force, and stated that he had Conor's orders to bring Deirdri back by force. This act of treachery was resented by Fiachy. A battle ensued. Fiachy and Naesi were killed, and Deirdri was dragged, broken-hearted, into the presence of her adopted father. Shortly afterwards she committed suicide, and Conor's land was said to be laid under a ban.

There was, of course, no direct association between this affair and Queen Mab, but so many domestic tragedies of a similar nature occurred during her reign that one can only attribute them to her influence. Her régime, then, seems a very appropriate period for the introduction of the banshee; sometimes winsome and lovely as Deirdri and herself; and sometimes old and ill favoured, as were no doubt many of the matrons whose sons experienced the bane of their fatal beauty.

In Meave's time more than ever previously men held communication with the superphysical. Gnomes, sylphs, elves, pixies are all reported to have frequented the Irish woods and dales, and to have held common intercourse with human beings. And

this state of things lasted almost intermittently down to the days of Niall. But it was not until Queen Mab's time that we read of the great susceptibility of the Irishman to woman—not until her days that we hear of curses in the land—up till then with the exception of tribal quarrels all had run smoothly and ordinarily enough. It was she—this daughter of the fay woman—who brought the great sadness to the land and made the Irish the strangely fated race that they are.

And after her time what have we? Nothing but curses, nothing but troubles.

The Attacotti twice rise and seize the kingdom from the Milesian dynasty.

During their usurpation a dark shadow rests on everything, the fields refuse to yield their corn, and the rivers their fish. Then comes a champion of the royal Meavian blood, Tuathal, who retakes the throne and once again brings prosperity to the land. And after him comes the famous Conn of the Hundred Fights Conn after whom so many of the O's and Macs are named. And after Conn had passed away came Cormac MacArt. During his reign many are said to have been the adventures with the Unknown; indeed, no other period of history, whether in Ireland or abroad, was fuller of them.

Strange, elemental-like figures haunted the forests and boglands; and castles and cabins, rocks and turrets echoed and re-echoed with their dismal cries. Here for the first time we hear of the Feni, phantoms typical of the great bare hills of Wicklow and Connemara, and of the bare, wind-bitten cliffs of Galway, and exclusively the property of Ireland.

Contemporary with these nature spirits may well have been the banshees, who, attaching themselves for divers reasons to various chieftains and sons of chieftains, eventually became recognized as family ghosts or "familiars."

As I have said before, some of the banshees are fair to look at, and some old, and foul, and terrifying; but their mission is always the same—i.e., to announce a death or some great family catastrophe.

It is never joyful, always sad or malevolent. Sometimes they wail, once, twice, or thrice, the noise like, and yet unlike, that of a woman in great trouble, or agony, or in the act of being murdered; and sometimes they groan—a series of groans, as of a woman dying.

In some clans the demonstrations are both visual and auditory, in others only visual, and in others again only auditory. There

is no really old clan but has its banshee, and few members of that clan who are not at some time or other of their lives made aware of it.

How well I recollect as a child being told in accents that chilled my blood that a terrible wailing had been heard, in the fields outside the house, on the night one of my very near and dear relatives had met with a violent end some thousands of miles away. I inquired what made the wailing, and was informed "the banshee," or the ghost woman that never fails to announce the death of an O'Donnell. Years later, when in the West of England, my wife and I were awakened one night by a terrible wail that sounded just outside our door. Beginning in a low key it rose and rose until it ended in a shrill scream, that in time died away in a hollow moan. The idea of the banshee at once flashed through my mind, for I felt none other but the banshee could have made such a noise. Still, to satisfy my wife, I jumped out of bed, and went on to the landing; all was dark and silent, and outside their bedrooms were assembled the rest of the household, terrified and eager to have an explanation of what had happened.

We searched the whole house, and the waste land outside, but there was nothing that could in any way account for the noise, and in the morning I received news of the death of some one very closely related to me. After a lapse of years, once again I was aroused by a cry, the same cry as of a woman in direst pain. Again no physical explanation, and again on the morrow news of a death—the death of one of the clan. I commented on this to a kinsman of mine in the House of Commons, and asked him whether in his branch of the family there had been any recent evidences of the banshee.

"Yes," he replied, "when my brother and I were sitting together one evening in one of the reception rooms in our house in Co. D—— (close to the original home of the clan) we both heard the same wail as you have described, and that night our father died—he was the only one in the house who did not hear the sounds."

Another kinsman told me that the banshee had been heard by the Tetuan branch of the clan in Spain; whilst I have been informed it has also visited my kinsmen in France and Austria.

Indeed, the banshee may be heard in any land where there is a member of the family. It is the same, of course, with the O'Neills, O'Carrolls and the other families I have mentioned. The Highland clans being so closely allied to the Irish—as all the world knows, they originally came from Ireland, the Mac-

Neills, MacDonnells, etc., claiming the same descent as the O'Neills, O'Donnells, etc.—it is scarcely a matter of surprise they possess their family ghosts, though the latter take rather a different form to the banshee.

According to Mr. Dyer, in his *Ghost World*, the family of Grant Rothiemurcus was haunted by the Bodach an Dun, or ghost of the Lhamdearg, or spectre of the Bloody Hand (compare this with the various Bloody Hands of Ulster).

Sir Walter Scott, in the MacFarlane MSS. says, " There is much talk of a spirit called " Lyerg " which frequents the Glenmore. He appears with a red hand, in the habit of a soldier, and challenges men to fight with him. As lately as the year 1669 he fought with three brothers, one after another, who immediately died therefrom."

The family of Gurlinberg, states Mr. Dyer, are haunted by Garlin Bodacher, and the Tulloch Gorms by Mary Moulach, or the girl with the hairy hand.

The phantasm of an ancestor of the McCleans of Lochbury always announced the death of a member of the clan by galloping along the sea shore. The banshee of Loch Nigdal flitted to and fro (and very possibly continues so doing) in a green silk dress. A tree warns the original owners of Gordon Castle of death or catastrophe. The family of Airlie, whose headquarters are at Cortachy Castle, is haunted by the phantasm of a drummer that beats a tattoo before the death of a member of the clan. Other families have pipers that pipe a dismal dirge, and skaters that are seen skating even when there is no ice, and always before a death or great calamity.

As is well known certain old English families—such as the Arundels of Wardour—have their ghosts, too, which, although in a few instances bearing close resemblance to the Highland clan boggle, possess little in common with the Irish banshee, and date their origin from much later periods.

Whilst some English writers, inflated with a sense of their own superiority—a national characteristic—are inclined to treat the subject jocularly, and attribute the banshee either to obviously absurd physical causes or to the abnormally imaginative powers they insist are the birthright of " all " Irishmen ; others, anxious to appear more knowing and up-to-date, dive into the pseudo-profound compilations of modern Theosophy, and re-appear with the would-be startling dramatic announcement that banshees are not spirits at all—not entities hailing from the superphysical world—but mere thought germs created by some remote ancestor

of a clan, and wafted down, to and fro, from one generation to another of his descendants; an idea as nonsensical as extravagant, and one which will not, for an instant, hold water, when looked into by any one who has had any bona-fide experience of such Banshees or other similar ghostly phenomena.

Indeed, it is the latter only who are capable of making any observations of value on such a subject. One simply cannot understand the superphysical without experiencing it, and all efforts to describe or account for it by those—no matter whether they are Theosophical Savants, Bond Street Occultists, or S.P.R. Professors of Chemistry—who have never encountered it are, in my opinion, futile, colourless and weightless.

A geologist may describe the hydrosphere, and an astronomer the moon, and their descriptions may be swallowed with tolerable composure and assurance, because we know that the law of similarity and analogy, when applied to the physical, generally holds good; but no scientist can teach us anything about spiritual phenomena, because such things are entirely without the realms of science, just as much as the game of marbles is without the province of theology. It is our sensations—and our sensations only—that can guide and instruct us when dealing with the superphysical. I have heard the dying screams of a woman murdered beneath my window, I have heard on hill and plain the cries of coyotes, panthers, jackals, hyænas, etc. I have many times listened to the dismal hooting of night birds, when riding alone through the seclusion of giant forests, but there is something in the banshee's cry that differs from all of these. To hear the banshee is to hear something which at once impresses one with the fact that it is nothing human or animal; nothing that can possibly belong to this world. Other sounds appeal to the nerves solely, the banshee appeals to one's whole being—to one's soul and nerves. It fills one with a fear and strikes one with an awe far, immeasurably far, beyond the limits of any physical sound. Have one experience in a haunted house—an experience with some type or other of genuine ghost—and then some comprehension of the banshee may begin to dawn upon you. Without that experience you can have none. Imagine then what it is to be stalked all one's life by such a grim harbinger of woe. To have it ever hovering in one's wake, always ready, and maybe eager, to make itself heard the moment it detects, by its extraordinary and unknown powers, the advent of death.

Some time ago, when I was lecturing at a hall in the West End,

a lady electrified the audience by suddenly getting up and exclaiming, "Mr. O'Donnell, there's a figure behind you. It is a woman who looks as if she belonged to some very remote period"—and she forthwith proceeded to describe my banshee, which I had been familiar with all my life, but of which I do not think she could possibly have had any previous knowledge As it happened, a near relative of mine was very ill just then but happily recovered, and at a subsequent lecture, some three weeks later, the same lady came forward, after I had finished speaking, and informed me that she could see nothing behind me now.

There is a story told of one of my kinsmen, an O'Neill, that will, I think, bear repeating. It took place in Italy on one of the lakes. A party of visitors were gathered together on the deck of a small private yacht, and one of them, after a brief lull in the conversation, remarked—

"Count, who's that queer-looking woman you have on board?"

"Queer-looking woman?" The Count, who was the owner of the yacht, exclaimed, "Whatever do you mean? Apart from the ladies present and the stewardess, who is ordinary enough, there is no woman on board."

"You are mistaken, Count," the visitor protested. "One of those sly dogs of sailors of yours must have slipped aboard their sweetheart unbeknown to you. O, my God, what a face!"—and uttering a scream of horror he put his hands before his eyes and beat the air, as if trying to ward something off.

Fear is always infectious, and at that hour of night, for it was close on midnight, and on those dark, still waters, it needed very little to excite one's terror. Still the company were usually very sceptical where ghostly matters were concerned, and as a rule were flippant and frivolous. A sudden metamorphosis took place now, however, and a cold shudder ran through one and all.

The Count was the only one who appeared composed.

"What is it, Colonel?" he inquired. "What is it you see? I can see nothing."

But the Colonel could not be prevailed upon either to reply or to look up. He sat in a crouching posture, his face buried in his palms, gasping and panting, and showed no signs of recovery, till one of the crew, summoned by the Count, arrived on the scene with a light. He then very reluctantly raised his head, and, glancing fearfully at the Count, cried out—

"Thank Heavens, it is gone!"

"What was it?" the Count demanded.

"Nothing human!" the Colonel said, "nothing belonging to this world. It was a woman of no earthly type with a queer shaped, gleaming face, a mass of red hair, and eyes that would have been beautiful but for their expression, which was hellish. She was hooded!'"

"Hooded!"

"Yes! She had on a green hood, or at least what looked like a hood, worn after the fashion of an Irish peasant!"

"It was the banshee!" an American lady who was present put in. "The description you give tallies exactly with the account of it I heard when I was visiting Tyrone two summers ago. How extraordinary! I thought it only came to the O'Neills."

"I am an O'Neill," the Count remarked, "at least I am descended from one. My family name is, as you know, Neilsini, which, little more than a century ago, was O'Neill. My great-grandfather served in the Irish Brigade of Louis XV and Louis XVI, and on its dissolution at the time of the French Revolution, had the good fortune to escape the general massacre of officers, and in company with an O'Brien and Maguire fled across the frontier and settled in Italy. On his death his son, who had been born in Italy, and was far more Italian than Irish, changed his name to Neilsini, by which name the family has been known ever since. But for all that we are Irish—and when I visited the home of my forebears in Ulster last autumn, I assure you I felt very Irish indeed!"

"The banshee was yours then," the Colonel ejaculated with an air of relief. "Thank God! I have no such heritage! What exactly does it mean?"

"'It means," the Count replied solemnly, "the death of some one very nearly associated with me. Pray heaven it is not my wife or daughter!"

On that score, however, his anxiety was speedily removed, for within two hours he was seized with a violent attack of angina pectoris and died before the morning.

"I ought to have known the banshee came for me," were his last words, "because I was told in Ireland that the doomed person never sees or hears it—and I did not!"

What the Count said is perfectly true, the banshee never manifests itself to the person whose death it is prognosticating. Other people may see or hear it, but the fated one never, so that when every one present is aware of it but one, the fate of that one may be regarded as pretty well certain.

And now once again, whence comes the banshee? From Heaven or from Hell? What is it?

It is impossible to say; at the most one can only speculate. Whereas in some cases the banshee only appears to be mournful, in others it is unquestionably malevolent; and whereas, in some instances, it very closely resembles a human woman, even though of a type long passed away; in others it differs so much from our conception of any earthly race, as to suggest that it must be some spirit that has never been human, and that it belongs to a genus wholly separate and distinct from the genus appertaining to this material plane, and only brought in contact with the latter through the medium of certain magical or spiritual rites practised by the Milesians, but for some unknown reason discontinued by their descendants. This appears to me a feasible explanation of the origin of the banshee. One realizes in dabbling in spiritualism to-day one of the greatest dangers incurred is that of attracting to one certain undesirable, mischievous, and malignant spirits—call them elementals if you will—which, when once attracted, stick to one like the proverbial leech. And what happens to-day may very well have happened thousands of years ago; in all probability the Unknown never changes, its ways and habits may be as constant as those of Nature, guided by laws and principles which may at times vary, but which, nevertheless, undergo no material alteration. The superphysical, attracted to the Ancients as it is atracted to us to-day, would adhere to them as it now adheres to us. I cannot surmise more. Supposing, then, that this theory accounts for the one class of banshee, what accounts for the other—the other that so nearly tallies in appearance with the physical?

Are the latter actual phantoms of the dead—of those that died some unnatural death, and have been earth-bound and clanbound ever since? Maybe they are. Maybe they are the spirits of women, prehistoric or otherwise, who were either suicides or were murdered, or who very possibly themselves committed some very heinous offence; and they haunt the clan to which they owed their unhappy ending; or, in the event of themselves being the malefactors, to which they belonged. From all this we can therefore conclude that, whilst the origin and constitution of banshees differ, their mission is always the same—they are solely the prognosticators of misfortune—they never prophesy happiness. A sorry possession for any one; and yet, says the Englishman, how truly in accord with the nature of the country—with its general air of discontent and barrenness, with its rain-

sodden soil and gloomy atmosphere—could one imagine the presence of cheerful spirits under such conditions?

But the banshee has the one admirable trait which the Englishman refuses to recognize in the Irish—the trait of loyalty and constancy. It never forsakes the object of its attachment, but clings to it in all its vicissitudes and peregrinations with a loyalty and persistency that is unmatchable. It is thoroughly Irish, essentially Irish; the one thing, apart from disposition and character, that has remained exclusively Irish through long centuries of robbery and oppression; and which never has been nor ever will be shared by other than the genuine clansman. The banshee will have none of the pseudo-Irishmen of the North —of the Joneses, Browns, Thompsons, Barretts, Smiths, etc. They may talk of it, they may write of it, but they can never claim it. It belongs solely to the O's and Macs—and them it will never cease to haunt so long as there is one of them left.

ON THE SCIENCE AND ART OF PRAYING*

By FRANCIS MAYER

"Ora et labora."

SAYS the Zohar (III Sect. Hugath): "Everybody goes to church to attract the spirit from above, but few only know how to invoke it in an efficient way." Why? Because few only know that efficient praying is a science, which can and ought to be studied theoretically, but the practical application of which is an art, rather inborn, but capable of great development by practice. This science and art is worthy the serious consideration of every student of occultism, for the ability "to attract the spirit from above" is the only basis on which the Great Work of Regeneration may be successfully founded and built up. This is the reason why occultists of every era and nationality treat the question of prayers so carefully; and, even in our times, when praying seems to be out of fashion, there are still occultists who claim that prayers are not only of high efficiency, but that praying is the only means to attain high degrees in spiritual perfection, and to gain results not obtainable in any other way.

Here are two modern opinions concerning our subject. Both selections are taken from writings of practising physicians. Dr. Hippolyte Baraduc, well known and appreciated by scientists in this country for his strictly scientific investigations into the physiology of the human soul, states in his *Les vibrations de la vitalité humaine* (Paris, 1903): "All orientations of cosmic forces of spirituality open up in answer to an invocation, made in faith, and with sufficient intensity, and bring the psychic, mental and spiritual faculties of the human brain—which makes a telepathic appeal an effort for spiritual union or Yoga—into communication and communion with the plan of the cosmogonic spirit." And, he adds, prayers are "a special dynamism, permitting each evolved being to come *en rapport* with certain cosmic forces," because, by praying, "we do not assimilate the gasified substance as oxygen, nor the electro-magnetic forces which we accumulate, nor the etheric vibrations which are usually individualized by us, but our highly elevated mentality may influence some subtle vibrations and forces, called generally spiritual forces, which, as Crookes recognizes, have power and intellect." He proves his statement with cases from his own medical practice, also with photographs and experiments on a specially constructed instrument. But let us keep in mind that he applies all this only to the spiritually well developed, to "evolved beings."

* By kind permission of the Editor of *The Word*.

The other physician is Dr. G. Encausse, usually known by his pen name of Papus. In his last work (*La Reincarnation*: Paris, 1912) he goes so far as to claim that, with prayers, fate or karma may be changed. "We find in the Gnostic doctrine, just as well as in the Catholic Church (also in the Brahmanic Church), Mary, the Virgin of Light, the Virgin Mary, Maha Mayah, as the living celestial piety and the great reformer of the judgments of fate; she bruises with her foot the head of the serpent Karma, Nahash, Shanah, otherwise time, the past and its fatality."

But it is noteworthy that both these modern opinions are to be found in the Zohar. Concerning the high spiritual connections to be attained by prayers, says the Zohar (II. Sect. Va-yaghel): "Up to the eighth heaven we can conceive the mysteries, but not further, except by attaching ourselves to our Master and praying fervently." As to the changing of karma, it is written in the Zohar (Raajah Mechemnach): "The temperament of the man is formed according to the constellation under which he was born. But with penitence and the study of the Law, man may change his natural dispositions."

Concerning prayers as instrumental in the work of regeneration, we shall find as a characteristic among all alchemists the strong insistence that for a good beginning of alchemical operations a prayer is necessary; and with them the oratory and laboratory were inseparably connected. The adept who wrote under the pen name Basil Valentine, was in the first rank among the Alchemists. Now, right at the beginning of his most important work, *The Triumphal Chariot of Antimony* (translation of A. E. Waite, p. 15), Basil Valentine writes: "The first head of our teaching then must be prayer, which we call Invocation of God, and see that it comes not forth out of feigned lips, but is the fruit of faith and confidence . . . in humility and contrition . . . in charity . . ." Shortly afterwards he repeats (p. 20): "It (the Invocation) is the most important aspect of our Art and is expressed in the following words: Seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice—by Invocation—and all other things . . ." And in the last chapter of the book, where the climax of the alchemical work is reached, he says again that he prepared himself by prayer to "yield his soul to spiritual inspirations," to "furnish himself with wings." To the Alchemist these few quotations furnish sufficient insight into the *modus precedendi* of this prayer called invocation, but even to the general reader it shows clearly that by prayer the author understood some regular operation, the purpose of which is to bring the mind *en rapport* with spiritual powers, as was similarly stated by Baraduc. The very word "invocation" will remind us that the great poets always started their work with an invocation, in order to get inspiration, to put themselves into the condition of sacred frenzy, holy madness, in which state, their minds being freed from earthly bondage, they are enabled to see with the eyes of the spirit; to see Beauty in different manifestations, and Truth unveiled.

The essential thing in prayers is to establish a condition *en rapport* with higher planes. The soul *attracts* by its expansion and exaltation, and unites itself in the equilibrium of communion, or Yoga. Advice as to how to reach the proper condition of body, mind and spirit for such telepathic communion is given in that which Jesus designated as the first of all commandments (Mark xii. 29–30): "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength." Do not forget the emphasis on "all," "all," "all"; it is important. Put your best into the prayer. Also (Matt. vi. 6) "enter thy closet and shut the door"; and (Mark xi. 24–25) "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying forgive . . ." It is indeed simple instruction. But try to penetrate its real meaning, and afterwards put it into practice according to the degree to which you are able to understand these simple words with their quadruple meaning; and you will find to your great advantage that in their simplicity they contain more than a whole library of standard esoteric books. For these are instructions of the Master of Masters! These contain all; everything else is auxiliary paraphrasing. The formula He has given us is also the most perfect. The Lord's Prayer is the prayer of prayers.

The Zohar offers abundant examples for the study of the science of praying. A few quotations will elucidate. Zohar, I. Sect. Vayetre, says: "The prayer, addressed to the Holy One, blessed be He, ought to be made with joy and mirth. It is at first necessary to establish solidarity with the Community of Israel, and afterwards proclaim in a perfect way the unity of God." This is exactly what Jesus did when pointing out the first of all commandments: "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord" (Mark xii. 29). This is not only the customary formula of the Jewish *Credo*, but a highly potent invocation, closely related to the Aum. The student will find in the Zohar its analysis (too involved to be reproduced here) as well as instructions for the correct pronunciation of the Name, the way to proclaim in a perfect way the unity of God. He will find also that "Israel" means the Collective Entity of beautified souls or abstract minds (*mentes abstracti*), which Entity is, according to the Zohar, the brain of the supreme world, the first in the thought of God. This, on the one hand, explains how hard it is to establish connection between our mind and this Entity; and, on the other hand, that when even a short *en rapport* condition is established, the possibilities of spiritual advantages to be derived from this connection are unlimited. To begin such communion we have to follow the indication given in Zohar, I. Sect. Lekh-Lekha: "Note that nothing is done above without an impulsion from here below. . . . For the union of the black flame with the white flame it is necessary that the black flame, which is inferior, should begin to tend upward; only then appears the white flame above it. . . To provoke actions above, a start should be made below. . . . Likewise,

as when the prophets desire to attract on themselves the celestial Spirit, they have to start by preparing themselves and let soar their imagination."

Further elucidation may be gained from the often-repeated statement of the Zohar that prayers ought to be real substitutes for the burnt offerings. Now the Kabbalists, in accordance with Ezekiel xliv. 15, claim that the chief parts of the burnt offerings are the fat and the blood; and accordingly, the man who makes penance by fasting, really offers his blood and fat, which are burnt up by the fever provoked by the deprivation of food and (Zoh. II: Midrash ha Nealam) "this fire which burns in the veins of a man is the convenient offering for a sacrifice to God." And the Raajah Mechemnach adds, "Those who sacrifice their own body, diminishing the fat and blood, ascend every night in spirit near to God, up to Kether, with the help of work and the Law." This is the preparatory training of the prophets, just mentioned. To one who knows the alchemical sense of the words fat and blood, the instruction is clear. Of course, it would be a mistake to take these statements in their literal sense only.

Notice the deep esoteric meaning of the two words with which the priest exhorts the assistance of the congregation just before offering his prayers: "*Sursum corda!*" (Lift up your hearts). And be able to answer with the congregation: "*Habemus ad Dominum!*" (We have it with the Lord). For then, and then only, no door is closed before the prayer, because (Zoh. I. Sect. Chaye Sarah) "the supreme King enters into a union with the prayer, like the male with the female." This archaic simile expresses a fundamental religious mystery, confessed by all important esoteric systems and—an important circumstance—expressed by the same simile. Compare it with the Gayatri (holy verse of the Veda) contained in the confession of Faith (*Credo*) of the Brahmins (C. W. King, *The Gnostics*, p. 268): "This new and excel ent praise of thee, O splendid playful Sun (*Pushan*) is offered by us to thee. Be gratified by this my speech; approach this craving mind, as a fond man seeks a woman." Again, in a manual for the perula of the Third Order (*Manual du Tiers—Ordre de la Pênitance*, publié par les Pères Franciscans. Caen, 1893. Sec., "Le voile d'Isis," Nr. 222): "The mental prayer is said to have three parts: the preparation, the body of the prayer, and the conclusion. The body of the prayer contains: the exercise of the spirit, called considerations; the exercise of the heart, called affections; the exercise of the will, called resolutions." This esoteric instruction continues: "The Affections are the centre of the prayer, the essential part of it, and it is necessary to provoke them *à tout prix*." And further: "This second point of the body of the prayer is also called communion vir, union with God. In fact, the affections are the raptures of the soul when in possession of the supreme good, of the bride reposing on the heart of her divine Bridegroom; these are her songs of joy." Therefore this is the moment which the soul ought to select to formulate her wishes.

The sameness in the statements of these three great esoteric systems, each apparently so far removed from the others, should induce the student to weigh carefully each word in these quotations. They indicate a right way. Here is the reason why the love of God is the first of the commandments, and why the affections are to be provoked at all costs. By the way, the insight of the good Franciscans into marital relations, in the pointing out the moment for wishing, ought not to surprise. They simply borrowed it from the Zohar (II. Sect. Va-yaghel). "In the moment when the supreme King unites himself to the Matrona in a kiss, we ought to express all that we desire, because this moment is propitious." As to this moment, meditate on the following instruction of the Zohar (II. Treatise on the Palaces): "The prayer ought to unite the thought, the will of the heart, and the voice or word, to represent thus the union above." In other words, Love thy God with all thy heart.

The purpose of the prayer in the first place is the establishment of a connection with higher planes, and prayers are most efficient in the seasons and hours when the proper vibrations are most open to approach. "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near," says Isaiah (lv. 6). "My prayer is unto Thee, O Lord, in an acceptable time; O God, in the multitude of Thy Mercy hear me" (Ps. lxix. 13).

The discovery of the seasons and hours when the Lord is near, when the tide of ether, called multitude of Mercy, is at hand, has to do with the strictly scientific part of our subject. It really is more certain than is our present-day meteorology, which with regard to magnetic and electrical currents is as yet only in its infancy. The science of prayer belongs to the most carefully veiled mysteries of Occultism, and for good reasons. Only once the Zohar touches the question (I. Sect. Toldsth Isaac), "The celestial breath follows the same course as the sun, the course of both forms but one mystery." The Hebrew divine names, especially the group of seventy-two names, contain much of this mystery concerning the expansion and concentration, flux and reflux, high and low tides, of the ether. These should be studied closely, and also the Zodiac. The ancients were admirably well informed on these matters, which determined the hours of prayers in the different religions and also the orientation of the church buildings. By such uniform hours and orientations they effected, more perfectly than do our modern associations, the fluidic communication between human minds; and also a very important matter which modern associations disregard—the communication with higher planes.

Sunrise and sunset were and are the best moments for prayers in most religions; but esotericists have always regarded midnight as a very important time. At midnight the ethereal currents, called winds, coming from the North and from the South; that is, the currents called "severity" and "mercy," or *geburah* and *chesed*, unite, and make the time especially favourable "for the study of the Law."

Accordingly, not only David used to "sing at midnight," and the masters of the Kabbalah left their beds for study, but even in our time the two contemplative Catholic Orders, the Carthusian and Trappist monks, go every night after midnight to church, to pray and sing. Church buildings should be so oriented to the ethereal currents over them, that not only the congregation and the priest at the altar face the east, but that the priest, when bowing low at the altar, may expose the door of Brahma, the top of his head, shaved specially for this purpose, to the current from the east. This is based on practical experience and observation, as it is now generally known that some persons sleep best with their heads pointing to the current from the north; though others are not sensitive to the north current, but to other orientations. This depends on their "complexion" or "temperament." Modern psychological research has made investigation into this, and found that the observations of the ancients were correct. Dr. Baraduc oriented and exposed patients with nervous disorders at the times of certain ethereal currents, which gave them relief, or effected cures.

No wonder that every esoteric ritual, whether written for magicians or masons or priests, gives attention to the proper times and orientations which are essential. Every detail relating to the whole helps to construct consciously a favourable milieu, and reinforces and increases the efficiency of the rites. Every word, every turning, inclination, movement of the arms or step, each colour, sound, perfume, has its proper significance and purpose, well adapted to the harmony of the whole.

The basic idea, the type, is the same in all rituals. Every arrangement serves only to promote the result, and the rituals are different only because time, place and actors differ. Church services best typify this. By meditation and fervent prayers, helped by the milieu and assisted by the Levites (called by whatever name), the congregation emits the attractive fluid, the sweet-smelling odour of the ancient burning sacrifice. The officiating high priest offers it on High, receiving in return the blessings from above, which he distributes as benediction on the congregation. The idea is always the same; but between then and now there is a great difference in the externals and in the realization. How many priests, rabbis or brahmins have ever penetrated the deep significance of their rituals? Where is the zealous churchgoer who knows the real reason why he has to stand up or to sit down at certain times during the mass? Where is the orthodox Jew who can tell the reason for the rule—though it is strictly observed by him—that when he prepares for prayer he is not allowed to pause even for a second while attaching the phylactery on the left arm and on the forehead? also, that during prayer he is not to mention the name of God in the first part of any sentence, because he may be interrupted, and the name be pronounced without finishing the sentence. Anyhow, he ought not to interrupt a

prayer for any reason whatever, "not even if a serpent were rolling around his heels."

Do you smile at such nonsense? Well, if you do, you are not initiated into practical Yogi breathing; otherwise it would be evident to you that in such nonsense good and practical advice concerning pranayama is veiled. But they have an even deeper meaning; as, for instance, that there is danger in interrupting the already evoked current, for in such case the serpent may really bite. Catholics, too, are advised not to interrupt a prayer. The above-quoted manual for the members of the Third-Orders states: "Never become discouraged or stop meditation, when during the prayer distractions, spiritual dryness, disgust or whatever temptations are felt." This evidently refers to the tempting serpent of the Kabbalists. A modern French mystic, Sédir, and also an M.D., writes on this subject (*Conférences sur l'Evangile*, ii. 71): "The true prayer is a total externalization of the being, which state is reached by perfect calmness and profound attention; consequently, it is entirely natural that during this time we feel special sensations in the heart or in the spirit, or even physically. This is a rock of danger, because our nature carries us toward such touches which are agreeable to us, and which we may consider, perhaps by mistake, as a sign of divine favour. In such case we quickly forget the aim of our prayer, which is God, and tend by our own will toward a phenomenal accident. And from here we fall into illusions, called by hermetists 'illusions of the astral.'"

All this should give to the reader at least a general idea concerning the essential nature of prayers, but a further important question requires elucidation. In what consists the answer to an efficient prayer? The answer is the same in each and every case. It is an enlightening, an illumination. Of course, this spiritual light is like the light of the sun, one in itself, but useful to many purposes, for it carries power. *In lumine numen.* "The benedictions or blessings that descend from God," writes E. Philaletes in his *Euphrates* (Par. 18), "are not a form of words like the benedictions of men; they are all spirit and essence, and their Deferents are natural and visible substances, and these are the blessings which the Patriarch wished to his son: 'God give thee of the dew of Heaven from above and of the fatness of the earth from beneath.'" Fortunately, the man who for an answer to his prayer receives this light, this all potent power, receives usually at the same time also the intuition how to use it best. Such illumination penetrates not only the conscious but also the unconscious mind, which is nature in man, and works in it. For instance, in cases in which health was restored in a seemingly miraculous way in answer to prayers, we are justified in supposing that the light acts on the subconscious, and this on the body.

But is it absolutely necessary to perform magic, observe times and rituals, in order to come into contact with the highest vibrations and receive illumination? Yes and no. The only essential point for efficiency is the exaltation of the mind or soul, or mind

and soul, to its highest capacity. Consequently much depends on individual ability, just as in the practice of any other art. With some a well-concentrated inner effort alone is sufficient, an effort in aspiration in which intellect, will and desire are united. Do not forget the desire—the purest desire, of course, for without emotion there is no motion possible. With others the same degree of exaltation cannot be reached except with the aid of psychical stimuli, found in different rituals and in the specially constructed environment and atmosphere. Besides, there is a natural inborn difference between mind and mind as regards the power of exaltation. No effort with or without artificial stimuli will enable a sparrow to reach the altitudes where an eagle soars naturally and without effort.

Once more: Emotion of the heart, but pure spiritual emotion, and exaltation of the mind are the essentials. Without these no prayer is efficient, be it offered even in perfect accordance with the most reasonable and accurately designed ritual. Many students of Occultism make mistakes at this point. The kingdom is within, as the Master teaches; and He also said that it is the leaven. It is also the magical force. With one who has already entered it, a deep sigh, a heartfelt desire, an inner song without words are efficient, no ritual is needed. Because, as the excellent psychologist who wrote the letters of Paul rightly pointed out (Rom. viii. 26–27), in such cases the Spirit—that is, the higher subconscious or, when already developed, the Ego—makes intercession; and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit. But in the case of conscious action, the law that the reaction is always equal to the action remains in full force, and the amount of light received is in exact proportion to the exaltation reached.

Lastly, there is another and very important point to be kept in mind. The rays of the sun are the ultimate source of life for everything living on earth, but the earth has to co-operate, to assimilate the force received in the rays. Likewise we have to live up to our prayers, to co-operate with all our might, expressed in deeds before and after, to assimilate the blessings offered. Pray and work, for the prayers of the slothful man are always inefficient.

Lectoribus salutem!

THE BRAHMAN'S WISDOM

Translated from the German of F. Rückert

By EVA M. MARTIN

I.

AS I was watering my flowers one eventide,
I said, "Why hath this bud not oped her petals wide?
Her rosy lips have felt the sun's soft kiss all day;
Her bosom, see, hath swelled; why should she still delay?"
The plant bowed to the breeze in beauty delicate,
And answered, "It was I counselled my child to wait.
She would have been to-day but an imperfect flower—
So many buds have bloomed that failing is my power:
But I shall gather in fresh strength all through the night,
That she like scented flame may greet the morning light."
Softly I stole away, and cherished all night long
Within my joyous heart a half-unfolded song.

II.

Each morning from the window you scan your garden-beds,
But seem to notice only the withered flower-heads,
Not those in perfect bloom, nor those with budding faces
That gladly wait to fill the dead ones' empty places.
O, discontented heart, thus counting o'er your treasure,
Not what you have, but what you lack alone to measure!

III.

In the spring my heart is one with the great heart of the world,
All Nature to mine eyes shows a scroll of God unfurl'd;
But in the winter days my heart demands and sends
Greetings and words and looks, to keep in touch with friends.
Then, every flow'r brought news of loved ones far away:
Now, only pen-and-ink tells what they have to say.

IV.

The father with his son has wandered far afield,
And night comes down and leaves the home-road unreveal'd.
The son takes notes of rocks and trees, in hope that they
May act as guides to show the hidden homeward way;

But up toward the stars the father looks, as though
From heaven he would learn the earthly road to go.
The rocks and trees are dumb; but through the lonely night
The stars point out the way with many a golden light—
They point the way to home. Who trusts the stars does well,
For only heaven to man the ways of earth can tell.

V.

A sudden joy fades suddenly away—
Then is a gradual joy more like to stay?
No, not a flower can here eternal be,
Only our hopes bloom on unfadingly.
Let wither every flower, but cherish thou
Hope, that puts forth new buds on every bough.

VI.

Nature hath built a mighty temple for her Lord,
Wherein He thousandfold beheld is, and adored.
The seasons, who in turn pass through the wide-flung doors
As temple-servers, lay bright carpets on the floors,
And suns and stars give praise in chorus sweet and clear,
While ocean and abyss reply from far and near.
For ever in the midst the eternal fires rise,
And Life is offered as the eternal sacrifice.
The soul, as priest, at myriad altars kneels to pray,
And seeks in pictures fair their meanings to portray.
For perfect Truth 'neath many a veil doth hide from ken,
Though every fold is filled with nought but Truth: and when
The soul at last from selfhood's clinging veil is free,
It shall behold, undimmed, creation's Mystery;
Shall feel the Breath of God float down the solemn aisle,
And see, at dawn, the joy of His light-bringing smile.
God takes the brightest flame from every altar-fire,
The purest drop from every fountain of desire;
He takes from every prayer the thought that soars toward heaven,
Receiving thus again what His own Hand hath given.
He folds within Himself the souls of all, that they
More worthily may keep His endless Holy Day,
That the earth-bound may rise in bliss, made strong and free—
For 'tis the Lord's joy His creation's joy to see.

THE PRECOLITSCH

By PHILIP MACLEOD

" Bist Du, Geselle,
Ein Fluchtling der Hoelle ? "

DOWN in the wild south-eastern corner of Europe, where Serb, Bulgar, Wallach and Turk have so long been striving for the mastery—a contest that now at last seems to be in a fair way of settlement—many curious superstitions flourish that are little known outside the boundaries of those war-wasted lands.

One of the strangest, and at the same time most terrible, of these superstitions, is the belief in what is called the Precolitsch (or Prikulics). This name is given, in the Wallachian Mountains, to a being somewhat resembling the Bunyip of Australia, though the stories related of him are of a more terrifying character. The Precolitsch is described as a species of wandering Terror, gifted, as the Bunyip apparently is, with the power of assuming various forms, and possessing unheard-of strength.

One story concerning this mysterious being has been placed upon record as matter of fact.* It has been well said that it is characterized by a " horrible sort of originality." The authority for this strange narrative is an officer in the Austro-Hungarian army, whom I will call Captain Mueller, that not being his real name. He was, as will be seen, nearly concerned in the incident related. At the period in question, he was a " Faehnrich," or ensign. I keep, as closely as possible, to the terms of his narration.

Captain, or rather Ensign, Mueller was at one time stationed at the Pass of Temesn in Transylvania, with about forty men under his command. The pass consists of a long, narrow ravine, walled in on each side by rocky precipices, inaccessible to human foot. It is about fifty yards wide. A wall, with a strong gate, has been built across it. Inside the wall are, or were, the buildings occupied by the officer in command of the guard, his men, and the officials of the " Contumaz," or quarantine. It was usual to post two sentries outside the wall, one close to the gate, and the other a short distance farther out.

* It was communicated to a German psychological publication, some sixty years ago, by a Hungarian physician who had it of Captain " Mueller."

Christmas-time had come, welcomed no doubt by such festivities as could be made in such a place. The weather was cold, and the Pass, with the mountains around it, was covered with snow.

One morning a soldier of the guard, a Hungarian gipsy, came before his officer, and begged leave to make a request. It seems that, in the ordinary routine of duty, it would be his turn to mount guard that night, from ten o'clock till twelve, at the outer of the two posts above mentioned, beyond the gateway; and he begged most earnestly to be allowed to exchange turns with some other soldier, so as not to be on guard there at that time. He would willingly take two other turns if he might be allowed to avoid that one; and he entreated that, for the love of God, his officer would grant his request.

Ensign Mueller was very much surprised at all this, and asked the man what reason he had for making a petition so unusual in the service. The soldier replied, that he had been born on what he called "New Sunday," and therefore possessed a power of knowing things hidden from ordinary people—a kind of second-sight. He had thus, he said, become aware that, if he mounted guard at that particular time, a great misfortune would inevitably befall him. After midnight, however, he would have nothing more to fear; and he renewed his request with the most earnest manner of supplication.

Ensign Mueller afterwards confessed that he at first felt a great impression from the evident sincerity and conviction with which the private spoke, all the more so as the man was in other respects quite faultless as a soldier. But (as he afterwards had great reason to regret) common sense soon resumed its sway, and removed the strong impression produced by the gipsy's manner. Besides, to grant a request so unusual would have led to all sorts of irregularities, and would have been subversive of the interests of the service. So instead of acceding to the man's petition, Ensign Mueller, with excellent intentions, gave him a good lecture upon the silliness of superstition, and told him that he would have to keep his number, and mount the outer guard from ten till midnight.

The gipsy seems accordingly to have made up his mind to do battle with his terrors and fulfil his duty, "since no better it mote be." He was moreover encouraged by being reminded that his comrade at the inner post would have him constantly in his sight, and would instantly come to his assistance if he required it; while the whole guard would be prepared to turn

out at a moment's notice if anything suspicious should take place.

That evening, Ensign Mueller went over to the Quarantine Superintendent's quarters, to play chess with him, and they were soon engaged in their game. It was about half-past nine o'clock. Suddenly, they both saw a man's face, strange and wild, outside the window, close to the glass—the room was situated on the ground floor—and staring in upon them with, as it seemed, an expression of mockery or derision. They could see the body, which appeared to be wrapped in a white cloak such as is worn by the peasantry in those parts. Next moment, the figure turned from the window and slowly went away.

At so lonely a post as the Pass of Temesn, the sight of a strange face is quite an event, especially at such an unusual hour. Ensign Mueller ran out, accompanied by his friend. It was a clear moonlight night (a full moon shone until after midnight), the snow was lying deep upon the ground. They saw the figure pass along the wall, as far as a small niche or recess, into which it turned; they followed, and found the niche empty! There was apparently no possible way out except by passing through the solid wall. Ensign Mueller and his friend could make nothing of it. They shook their heads, looked at each other, and returned to their game.

Ten o'clock passed over; the gipsy must have begun his watch. The game of chess went on, till suddenly it was interrupted by the sound of a shot from without, closely followed by another, then by a confused noise, and shouting. The guard turned out, Ensign Mueller rushing up to join them, and went out through the gateway at the double.

The inner sentry was standing in the snow, convulsively grasping his smoking gun, and staring towards the place where the other sentinel should have been, but was not—the gipsy had disappeared.

Ensign Mueller rushed on to the spot where the man had been standing. Not a sign of him was to be seen, but his gun was lying in the snow, *with the barrel bent into a semicircle*, like a sickle-blade. (The musket had not burst; the barrel was a strong one, with neither crack nor flaw in it.) In the snow were the tracks of the soldier's shoes; there were other footmarks there too, shapeless ones.

Further search was made, and the soldier was found lying some thirty paces away, below the crest of a slope. He was unconscious, and moaning piteously. They carried him into

the hospital. It was found that his whole body was as it were burned, especially the face and breast, which were quite blackened. He never recovered consciousness for even a moment, but lay crying and moaning terribly all night and the next day till the afternoon, when he died.

The other sentry reported that, being aware of his comrade's fears, he had never once taken his eyes off him from the moment of going on guard. It was, as before observed, a bright moonlight night, and he could see every motion of the gipsy, as he paced quietly up and down. Suddenly (continued the inner sentry), a black shape was standing on the snow, at a short distance beyond the other man; how it had come there, all at once as it were, he could not tell. It was an ugly black shape, and seemed to him rather animal than human. It was not very big. The moment he saw it, it began to approach the outer sentry, who challenged it, but it continued to come on. The gipsy then fired at it, and the Black One made a huge spring towards him. The inner sentry fired in his turn, whether with or without effect he could not tell; but he saw the thing seize the gipsy by the breast. Next instant, they were both gone from his sight, he knew not how.

This is all that is ever likely to be known of the matter. The unfortunate soldier died, as above related, without word or sign; and "where, or in what realm of creatures the Other is to be sought for, is a matter best left to each man's unprejudiced judgment." It is possible that the bent musket may still be preserved in some arsenal in Transylvania.

A learned Roumanian gentleman of Budapest informs me that a swineherd on his estate once ascribed an unusual mortality among the pigs to the malignant operations of the "Prikulics." He (the swineherd) performed some secret magical rites as a precaution. "Ha!" said he, defiantly, snapping his fingers, "The Prikulics won't be able to hurt our pigs any more now!"

Hungarian authorities (I am writing in Budapest) seem to identify the Precolitsch with the Hungarian "Farkaskoldus" or Wolf-beggar (cp. the old English "Bull-beggar"). The Farkaskoldus* is a kind of vampire. It is said that shepherds, especially when they have been unjustly treated during life, are apt to become Farkaskolduses after death, and ravage the flocks of those who have injured them; they also kill human beings. When their revenge is accomplished they return to the grave.

* Compare the modern Greek "Broucolaca" or "broucolaca."

THE IDEALISTIC POINT OF VIEW

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

ALL experience is subjective. But in spite of the self-evident nature of this fact, its significance does not seem always to be fully recognized; otherwise, materialistic theories of the Cosmos would be propounded with a less degree of assurance than is actually the case.

I shall here attempt a brief analytical examination of experience in general. Firstly, I may distinguish between what are termed respectively "sense-impressions," and "mental images" or "images of the imagination." The feelings or emotions arising on account of these sense-impressions and mental images may be grouped together as a third element of experience;—with such, however, I am not concerned on the present occasion. In popular opinion and according to the terms of materialistic philosophy, sense-impressions and mental images differ from each other inasmuch as sense-impressions arise on account of a material world external to us, with which they are immediately connected; whilst mental images do not so arise, and have no immediate connection with this material world. A moment's consideration, however, shows us that this is not a statement of the differences between sense-impressions and mental images as experienced,—the differences, that is to say, in virtue of which we are entitled to divide our experiences into two categories, and in virtue of which we can determine to which category each of our experiences belongs,—but a hypothesis to explain such differences assumed to be existent. It may be a valid hypothesis; on the other hand, it may not. I shall, however, attempt a statement of these differences without involving myself in any hypothesis whatever.

An examination of one's own experiences reveals two differences between those forms of experiences termed respectively "sense-impressions" and "mental-images." In the first place, sense-impressions are generally very vivid as compared with mental images. This difference, however, is a purely relative one. Sense-impressions which are not attended to and barely penetrate the fringe of consciousness can hardly be called vivid; whilst in dreams, on the other hand, whatever may be the cause, the dramatic images of our imaginations take on an apparent vividness comparable only with the sense-impressions of waking life.

The second and more fundamental distinction between sense-impressions and images of the imagination is to be found in the

degree of control we have over them. If I desire to do so, merely by an effort of will I can conjure up in my mind a complete mental image of an orange, that is to say, not merely a visual image of an orange, but a representation of all the sense-impressions connoted by the term. But in order to experience the corresponding sense-impressions, I must first of all experience other sense-impressions—such complex series of sense-impressions I call "going to the fruiterer's and buying an orange" or "instructing a servant to procure me an orange," etc.,—and it is quite possible in certain circumstances that I may not be able to obtain the desired sense-impression, however much I may strive so to do.

Sense-impressions always occur in certain groups and follow a definite and fixed order. Thus, the characteristic gustatory and odoriferous sensations connoted by the term "orange" are always accompanied by such sensations as those of roundness, smoothness, yellowness, etc. Or to take another example: the complex series of sense-impressions called "putting one's hand in the fire" is invariably followed by an intense sensation of pain. This order in the grouping and sequence of sense-impressions constitute what are called the "laws of nature," and our control of our sense-impressions is strictly limited thereby. It is quite easy to call up in the mind representations of all the sense-impressions connoted by the term "orange," substituting, however, an idea of pinkness in place of yellowness, or squareness in place of roundness; but similar groupings of sense-impressions themselves have never been experienced. Or to take another example: it is quite easy to picture in one's mind the process of putting one's hand in the fire without at all proceeding to conjure up a representation of the very painful sensations which inevitably follow the corresponding sequence of sense-impressions.

Now, it is of the very utmost importance to notice that these two differences are the only differences between sense-impressions and mental images of which we have any consciousness, and it is wholly in virtue of these that we divide our experiences into the two groups we call respectively "sense-impressions" and "mental images," and decide to which group any particular state of consciousness is to be assigned. In everyday life we have, as a rule, no difficulty in deciding this question; for, usually, our sense-impressions are very vivid, the images of our imaginations very vague, compared one with the other. And in any case of doubt, the method adopted to decide the question always depends, in the last analysis, on the difference in our power of control over these two forms of experience.

As I have already indicated, the usual explanation of the differences between those forms of experience called respectively "sense-impressions" and "mental images" is that the former arise on account of an objective world of matter external to us, whereas mental images bear no direct relation to this world. I must here distinguish between two different uses of the word "matter," however. By the idealist, the term, if used at all, is employed merely to denote the fact that certain sense-impressions are invariably grouped together. This is the strictly scientific use of the term, since science being concerned only with facts of experience as such, for science "matter" can imply nothing more than certain facts of experience, or the relations they bear one to another. In this sense of the term, there can be no question as to the existence and reality of "matter"; the only point that may be raised is whether it is advisable to use the term in this manner, since it is so frequently employed as implying much more than merely this.*

This brings me to the second use of the word. By the materialistic philosophers and in popular phraseology, the term "matter" is employed not merely to denote the fact that sense-impressions always occur in definite groups, but as supplying an explanation of this fact. Matter is supposed to be a thing-in-itself, something existing outside of all conscious beings, independent, in a sense, of all phenomena and all experience. The thorough-going materialist asserts more even than this. He denies the existence, in any real sense, of aught else save matter. This hypothetical matter is supposed to be possessed of certain properties or attributes, each of which is responsible for a definite sense-impression. Thus, we find certain sense-impressions, such as roundness, yellowness, smoothness, juiciness and a characteristic taste and smell, grouped together, and this we call an orange. According to the materialistic theory, each one of these sense-impressions is dependent upon a certain property of matter; we find them always grouped together in this way, because the properties of matter on which they depend are always grouped together in the same

* Compare Prof. Ostwald's remarks in his *Fundamental Principles of Chemistry* (trans. by H. W. Morse, 1909), § 7: "... the idea that there is something more in the concept of matter than the expression of a set of experiences and their reduction to a law of nature has persisted from earlier times. Matter is looked upon as something originally existing, which is at the bottom of all phenomena and in a sense independent of them all. The concept of matter can be shown, however, to be made up of the simpler concepts, weight, mass, and volume, and it is certainly less fundamental than these."

portion of matter—the real, material orange. We can experience a mental image of a pink orange or a cubical orange; but we cannot experience the corresponding sense-impressions, because a real pink material orange or a real cubical material orange does not exist.

But even according to the materialistic theory itself, it is evident that we can know nothing of matter beyond its properties, nothing of matter in itself. Divest an orange of all its properties and what remains? If the above theory were true, we should have pure matter, matter in itself; but, in point of fact, so far as we are concerned, we have absolutely nothing. It seems, therefore, rather absurd to limit the application of the term "real" to the hypothetical material orange—using the term "material" as the materialists employ it, as denoting not merely a phenomenon, but a self-existent "thing-in-itself."

To such an extent has our language become impregnated by materialistic ideas that the term "imaginary" has come to mean something the reverse of real: the assumption underlying this use of the word, of course, is that all reality is connoted by the term "matter." It is abundantly evident, however, that a mental image—an "imaginary" thing—has a perfectly real existence in the individual mind. The comparative unimportance of mental images as compared with sense-impressions arises, not because mental images are unreal, but because they are almost entirely under our control. If I experience those sense-impressions I call "putting my hand in the fire," then, inevitably, I shall also experience a very vivid sensation of pain, and not only this, but it may very probably happen that the possibility of my experiencing certain other sensations may become for ever inhibited—in ordinary phraseology, my hand may be permanently destroyed. It is highly important, therefore, that I do not experience those sense-impressions I call "putting my hand in the fire." But the corresponding play of images in the imagination implies no such unpleasant consequences. I can mentally reproduce or imagine the series of sense-impressions of "putting my hand in the fire" and then banish the ideas from my mind. When this power of control over mental images is lost or inhibited, as in dreams, hysteria, and madness generally, they are no longer distinguished from sense-impressions. We see, therefore, that we call sensations "real," and mental images "unreal," not because they are thus distinguished, for clearly both forms of experience are real as such, but because the latter are in every sense our own, originating and existing only in our individual

minds; whereas our sense-impressions are determined according to an order imposed on us from without and in virtue of which our control of them is strictly limited.

Of course, in a manner, our individual sense-impressions are real for each one of us alone. As sensations they exist in the minds of each one of us and for each one of us alone. But in another manner our sense-impressions are, to a large extent, universally valid. It is not, however, altogether easy to make plain exactly in what way this statement is true without involving the hypothesis of an external world; and from this fact may be concluded the validity of such a hypothesis, divested, however, of the untenable assumption that matter is anything more than the sum of its properties, anything more than itself a phenomenon. We must, on the other hand, beware of overstating the facts. We are not justified in saying that the world as it exists in one individual mind is the same as it exists in the mind of some other. Indeed, we cannot even say that for any two individuals, sensations are identical which are denoted by the same term, for we have no means of directly comparing sensations existing in different individual minds. All we can state is the principle of relativity; though, indeed, this is of immense importance. Our individual sense-impressions, said to be one in origin, may or may not be different; but the relations between them, we know, are identical. The distance I call one inch may appear longer to me than to you, but for both of us the distance called two inches is twice that called one inch. In other words, our individual sense-impressions are all subject to the same laws of order and sequence, laws of experience, or "laws of nature," as they are called. It is not merely true for me that the series of sense-impressions I call "putting my hand in the fire" is followed by an intense sensation of pain, this and all other determinations in the order and sequence of sense-impressions which lie beyond man's control are true for every individual. A teacher is lecturing at the blackboard to an attentive class: if one of the students experiences at some moment a mental image of the blackboard falling over, it certainly by no means follows that any other or others of the students present will experience a like mental image. On the other hand, however, if one of the students experiences the corresponding sense-impressions, each one of the students present will, in general, experience corresponding sense-impressions. This latter fact is expressed by saying that the hypothetical material blackboard giving rise to the sense-impressions of a blackboard in the mind of each student has actually fallen over;

though we really know nothing beyond the fact that all the individuals present experienced corresponding sense-impressions.

Moreover, defining the " laws of nature " as certain observed orders and sequences in sense-impressions, we find that it is not always necessary for the fulfilment of the law, for the necessary sequence of sense-impressions to be restricted to one mind. Indeed, we often experience the results of laws which have, so to speak, worked apart from the individual mind altogether, and we are compelled to postulate a Divine or Universal Mind.

We cannot, in truth, restrict the universe to the concept of it in the individual mind. The possibilities of sense-impressions far transcend the experience of any individual, or even the experiences of all individuals. Processes take place which no man has ever experienced and which, therefore, do not exist in the individual mind, processes which we know must take place because the results of them do come within the experience of the individual. We cannot believe, for example, that the flowers and the trees, the stones and rivers of some hitherto unexplored and uninhabited country, spring into existence the moment they begin to exist in the mind of the explorer. We must at least admit the perennial possibility of their existence as sense-impressions in any and every individual mind. In other words, we must admit the existence of a world outside of us, existing for us as a permanent possibility of sensation. This world may be referred to as an objective, material world ; using the term " material " in a sense intermediate between the purely idealistic and the purely materialistic meanings, as connoting this permanent possibility of sensation, but in no way affording an *ultimate* explanation of the fact, and in no way implying any transcendency of the world of phenomena. The laws of nature, we see, are universally true ; whence the fallacy of any system of thought, such as Christian Science in its philosophical aspect, which holds that the world of sensuous experience is an illusion of the mortal mind. The same laws of nature, *i.e.*, the same orderly sequences in our sense-impressions, hold good for every one of us whether we know of them or not : the result is always that given by such laws whether expected or not. Thus, to take an illustration I have used elsewhere, the student obtains a red colouration by the addition of a solution of litmus to an acid, though he may know nothing of chemistry, or may even expect a green colour. Surely, here is no delusion. True Idealism does not teach that there is. True Idealism asserts the reality of sense-impressions when rightly understood.

We see that, whilst the reality of the images of our imaginations

is purely individual or subjective—" imaginary " money, for example, is quite as good as so-called " real " money so far as he who imagines is concerned; but it will not satisfy his creditors —sense-impressions are, in a manner, universally true; they do, to some extent, inform us of objective truth. Hence, we may postulate the existence of an objective or material world, in the sense defined above. But, since all experience and knowledge is necessarily subjective, absolute objectivity is unthinkable. With the postulation of the Divine Mind, however, this difficulty is overcome; and we realize that what we, in our ignorance, call " objective " is really subjective—subjective to the Divine Mind. Hence it is real in a manner that the images of our imaginations are not real; and we may re-define " the objective " as that which is universally true or real, in contradistinction to " the subjective," —that which is true or real for the individual mind alone.

Here also is to be found the answer to the objection that to make reality subjective is to make reality relative. As I have elsewhere remarked, " we may quite correctly speak of the physical universe as an idea in the mind of God; but this does not mean that it is in any sense unreal—to be an idea in the Divine Mind is the essence of reality; nothing else is truly real save that which is such. And it is because spirit is what it is, because of our likeness (faint though it may be) to God, that this real physical universe is possible to some extent to us as an ideal construction corresponding to the Divine ideal construction. The ' external ' world we know is the world as it exists in each of our minds; the real world is the world as it exists in the Divine Mind; in so far, then, as our ideal constructions are like to the Divine do we know Reality " *—reality, that is, which is not merely individual, but universal. All science, every endeavour so to interpret and co-ordinate sense-impressions as to eliminate the errors of the individual, and arrive at truths universally valid, is an attempt rightly to read the thoughts of God, rightly to understand His Will.

* *Matter, Spirit and the Cosmos* (Rider, 1910), § 87 (2*s*. 6*d*. net).

STRANGE PHENOMENA

By REGINALD SPAN

STRANGE phenomena of which the world knows little or nothing happen frequently in this prosaic matter-of-fact world of ours—phenomena which are outside the pale of the natural and normal, and which we accordingly term supernatural and abnormal. The man in the street dismisses them with indifference or ridicule—they are all hallucinations to him—the wise man and thinker pauses and considers them gravely, for he knows that all things are possible, and that what is evident to our senses is but a very small fraction of what really exists and happens—as there are worlds within worlds which we cannot see or come in touch with owing to our lack of the finer vibrations of seeing, hearing and feeling. There are very few human beings who are conscious of the Fourth Dimension sphere, and yet we all live in the midst of it, and it is from that sphere that most of the strange phenomena which so greatly puzzle us emanate. There are strange and grotesque worlds, as well as beautiful ones, in this Fourth Dimension ; a curious mixture of good and evil, beauty and ugliness, sanity and the wildest fantasy. The extraordinary adventure of two English ladies at Versailles (which has been referred to in the OCCULT REVIEW) was evidently an excursion into the Fourth Dimension—there is no other possible explanation of it. Maeterlink's fantastic play, the *Blue Bird*, deals entirely with that sphere.

Many of the natural phenomena and great convulsions of Nature have their origin there, and are put into operation by psychic and spiritual forces. Before the destruction of Jerusalem strange phenomena occurred and were witnessed nightly by the terrified inhabitants. Before the great earthquake at Messina extraordinary phenomena indicated very plainly that the catastrophe was foreseen by invisible intelligences. At night a fiery cross appeared over the cathedral and strange lights were seen in the sky. Two weeks before the earthquake an old man appeared in different parts of the town and vicinity, ringing a handbell and proclaiming that a great disaster was at hand. He warned the people to repent of their sins, and that a visitation from the spiritual world would destroy the town. No one believed him ; they thought he was a religious fanatic gone mad,

and he was only jeered at. A few days before Messina was destroyed, the old man disappeared and was never seen again.*

The destruction of Martinique was also attended by strange occurrences, and it was predicted months before that the place would be destroyed on account of the great wickedness which prevailed there.

It is a well-known fact that the elements can be controlled by spiritual forces. A violent tempest can be produced by spirit power or the waves and winds hushed into a dead calm in an instant, as for example, when Christ controlled the storm on the Sea of Galilee. Magicians (both white and black) have been able to produce rain and wind in a very short time by putting into operation the necessary forces.

An extraordinary case of a sudden calm in the midst of a terrible storm was recorded recently in the *Westminster Gazette*. "On February 8, at 8.5 a.m., when in 163° W., 50° N., with a terrific hurricane blowing from the south-east and a mountainous sea which sent huge 'combers' sweeping over the vessel, the wind died suddenly away and the sea fell with abrupt suddenness to a glassy calm, the barometer at the same time rising six-tenths of an inch, from 29·12 to 29·70." The strange phenomenon was noted in the log as the most extraordinary experience ever encountered at sea. The steamer's speed was cut down to about three knots, steaming against the wind, *and the next minute* she was making full speed through a calm sea with glass-like surface. The steamer that had this miraculous experience was the *Inverie*, bound from Yokohama to Victoria, British Columbia.

A few years ago an incident occurred at a little mountain village, near Grasse (Alpes Maritimes) which is well-nigh incredible, but as it was witnessed by over twenty persons, we must assume there is some truth in it. At noon on a brilliantly fine day, the sky suddenly darkened and there was a hailstorm, the stones being of extraordinary size and most of them more square than round. Some of these stones were picked up by curious villagers, who noticed a distinct imprint or picture of the Virgin Mary (as usually portrayed in the churches) on the flat side of the stones. The curé, a magistrate and other intelligent persons saw and examined these stones before they melted. The late Mr. Stead referred to the incident in his *Review of Reviews*. This phenomenon illustrates the power of spirit forces over matter in a quite unique way.

* From an account of the Messina earthquake by Robert Hichens.

The following incident is similar in one respect to the foregoing, as it also deals with magical imprints :—

An engine driver on the Bombay, Baroda and Central India railway died suddenly one morning at a place called Bulsar, about 124 miles from the terminus, and 118 miles from Parel, where he resided. The man's brother, who was working in the running shed at Parel, received a telegram informing him of the death, and as it was recess hour he went off to the house where both brothers lodged, intending to leave by the mail train that night to attend the inquest. Seeing his brother's bedding rolled up (as was customary with engine drivers who had to sleep at different places) he decided to take it with him, as he would have to spend a night at Bulsar, so he asked his landlady to unroll it and place some necessary articles of his in it, whilst he went to obtain leave from the foreman. When the landlady unrolled the bedding, in which were two pillows, one on top of the other, she discovered, to her dismay and amazement, upon the pillow slip of the underneath one *a distinct likeness or impression of the dead man's face*, not in profile, but in full face. The dhobi had that morning brought the clean clothes from the wash and the pillow slips had been put on quite clean, pending the return of the dead man, who, of course, did not return in the flesh, but may have come in the spirit. The landlady in a great state of fright rushed out and told others, and everybody near came in to see the uncanny phenomenon. It lasted until the brother returned, then slowly faded away, after the likeness had been fully recognized by him. The bedding was never used again !

A curious phenomenon of quite a different kind was witnessed by Mr. J. C. Winslow (of St. Augustine's College, Canterbury), and his sister, Miss M. Winslow. Last April they were making a tour in Italy, and on the 10th of the month at about 6 p.m. they paid a visit to the well-known Protestant cemetery in Rome (close to the Pyramid of Cestius). Near the entrance they noticed a grave thickly covered with violet leaves and bearing the name of one Elizabeth Wyckhoff. As they stood over it, both noticed a delicious smell of violets, and looking down saw the flowers peeping out here and there from deep down among the leaves. Very soon they noticed that there were no violets actually tangible, for as soon as they tried to fix their gaze on one it vanished. Nevertheless these phantom violets, quite clear and distinguishable, kept appearing in all parts of the grave, wherever they turned their eyes, for the space of three or four minutes and long after they had grown quite critical about

them ; and the scent persisted for about the same period. Then gradually both the appearances and the perfume faded away, and there was no trace of either. They revisited the spot later, but the flowers did not reappear.

The violets had the exact appearance of the ordinary English violet. They appeared only one at a time, but at first in rapid succession, then later more sparsely. This case of an apparition of flowers is, I believe, the first on record.

The phenomenon of the divining-rod is pretty well known to students of the occult. There is no doubt that the power is a genuine psychical gift which very few people possess.

Some large and rich mineral veins and deposits have been found in South Africa and Australia by means of the divining rod in the hands of "sensitives." The famous diviner, J. Lee, found one of the richest veins on the Rand by means of his "gift." The rod, as a rule, is made of the hazel tree. It is in the shape of a capital Y. The diviner holds the ends of the two branches in either hand, and when over mineral the rod jerks violently downwards. Recently a Hungarian lady, Frau Tuckoerry, has come to the fore as a remarkable wielder of the divining rod. Her first success was the discovery of coal on M. Jan Kubelik's estate in Bohemia. Since then her gift has been the means of making many people rich. Professor Pfahl engaged her to try and find a new vein of silver near a worked-out mine with complete success. In Hanover she discovered abundant petroleum springs.

She describes her sensations as being unpleasant and very fatiguing. When over a vein of silver she felt violent twitchings in her right arm, which was a sign to her to turn to the right. Shooting pains in both arms and severe breathlessness afflicted her when immediately over the vein of silver. When discovering petroleum she had a feeling as if her head were being bound tightly with a cloth. The presence of coal made a burning sensation run from one hand right through her body and head to the other hand.

Water diviners (or dowsers) complain of extreme fatigue and often a night's sleeplessness after their efforts, especially when successful, which shows that the use of this power (like most mediumistic powers) is exhausting.

The following account of Lord Lytton's double, told by the author of the *Autobiography of a Magician*, is worth repeating here. When the writer first met the author of *Zanoni* and other famous novels, he did some crystal-gazing, after which he agreed to

study magic under Lord Lytton's guidance. On making the compact, Lord Lytton said to him: "Three nights from this date I will call upon you."

On the third evening he never left his rooms after dinner, but lit up his pipe and remained anxiously awaiting Lytton's arrival. An hour passed, but still no visitor, so he settled down to read. Happening to look up from his book he was astonished to see a somewhat shadowy form occupying the armchair on the other side of the fireplace, which gradually became denser till it took the form of Lord Lytton. He at once arose to shake hands with him, but as he got within touching distance the figure vanished.

It was his first experience of this phenomenon, and as he stood there in doubt what to do, a voice whispered close to his ear (so close that he felt the warm breath), "Come!"

He turned round sharply, but no one was there. He then decided to go to Lytton's hotel, and put on his hat and great coat and proceeded down the street, but when he got to the corner round which he should turn for the hotel, the voice said again close to him, "Go straight on."

He obeyed the direction. A few minutes later the voice told him to "Cross over," and, so guided, he came eventually to where Lord Lytton actually was—the last place he would have expected to find him. When he entered the novelist was standing in the middle of the sacred pentagon which he had drawn on the floor with red chalk, and holding in his right hand a bagnette which he extended towards him. Standing thus Lytton inquired if he had duly considered the matter and fully decided to enter upon the course. The reply being in the affirmative, the oaths of a neophyte of the Hermetic lodge of Alexandria were administered—the oaths of obedience and secrecy.

I noticed a curious incident at Monte Carlo a few years ago, which I think is quite unique, and can only be explained by the operation of some occult or psychical agency, as what occurred was beyond the possibility of chance or coincidence, and the idea of trickery was out of the question.

I was in the "Rooms" one afternoon when a tall, distinguished looking man walked up to one of the tables and, changing some thousand franc notes, placed the maximum on number 29, and piles of gold coin all round the number, and on every chance which the turning up of that number would involve he placed bundles of thousand franc notes. He was perfectly calm and methodical, as if he was bound to win. As the ball sped round

the revolving wheel, he stood at the end of the table with his eyes fixed steadfastly on it with intense concentration in his expression. The ball fell into 29, and he won fifty thousand francs. He next chose number 32 and repeated the operation, and that number also turned up. For about a dozen times in succession the very number he chose and covered with maximums turned up. He then began to show signs of great exhaustion and distress, as if he had been through some immense mental strain. His face was quite haggard. The " bank was broken," and the officials had to send for more money to replenish the table. In his last stake he lost, and seeing that his power was failing him, he wisely took his winnings and departed. An official who had taken notes of his play told me that he had carried off half a million francs.

Some years ago, in the north of France (Pas de Calais), a man seeking a hidden treasure of great value employed the services of a young woman clairvoyant.

This girl was put into a trance by hypnotic suggestion, and whilst in a state of somnambulistic lucidity her spirit was commanded to find the exact spot where the treasure lay. Many attempts were made before the secret place was disclosed, and then the girl was unable to decipher some letters engraved on a stone slab which covered the cavity or vault. As the locality was a disused burial ground with numerous vaults and stone slabs, it was important that the letters should be plainly seen. The man in his anxiety to make the girl read the name on the vault in her clairvoyant state overtaxed her strength and brought on brain fever, which terminated in death. However, a few weeks later this man, who had been poor, suddenly became rich in a mysterious manner.

He bought a grand old château, luxuriously equipped, and lived in great style, but it was noticed that he was never happy and seemed to be haunted by some awful horror. Darkness was intolerable to him, and his bedroom every night was brilliantly lighted from sunset to dawn. Whatever was the cause of his intense fear is unknown, but it certainly brought about his death, just a year after he had settled down as a rich man with the idea of enjoying himself. Some Unseen Power, awesome and malignant, was with him at his death—the same which had haunted him during the year. What he had done to deserve such a fate is a matter of conjecture, but it is conjectured that he must have meddled with malignant forces which found him at their mercy, being unprotected by higher spiritual powers.

CORRESPONDENCE

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

PHENOMENA OF HYPNOSIS.

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—I recently entered into a controversy with several friends upon "the power of mind over matter," and gave as an example the following phenomenon of hypnosis:—An operator presses a piece of metal upon the arm of a hypnotized patient, and suggests for a certain period that the said metal is red hot. A few hours afterwards a burn or blister will be found upon the patient's arm. This statement was scornfully rejected by my friends, and I had to admit that although I had placed several people under hypnosis, I had never tried the experiment, as I considered it entailed considerable mental strain, which might lead to serious results. I asked my friends to confirm the experiment by writing to one of the leading scientific journals, which was done. The answer came back that although they had *heard* of such hypnotic phenomena there were no authentic records to prove it. This reply has privately injured my reputation, and as I am rather inclined to disbelieve the "scientific journal's" reply, I should be obliged if you or any of your readers can throw light on the matter. With apologies for so troubling you,

I remain, yours, etc.,

GEO. A. JOY.

1, WINDERMERE VILLAS,
TOTTENHAM LANE, HORNSEY, N.

REINCARNATION.

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—I have carefully perused the letters by your correspondents "A" and "Floyd B. Wilson" on "Reincarnation," but fail to find any reply to my objections.

"A" writes: "Omnia Vincit Amor is content with small Love, if he fails to see the necessity for repeated lives." I presume your correspondent means repeated earth lives. Am I to understand that "A" denies the possibility of the evolution of Love on any plane other than the material? If so, why? If not, where is the necessity for "repeated lives"?

"A" also says: "It really matters very little comparatively whether we recognize some particular personality in after lives or not." To those who have never experienced love it may be immaterial, but to those who have it matters very greatly. Heaven would not be heaven without our loved ones.

" Floyd B. Wilson " writes : " I know no other philosophy capable of inspiring ambition to its noblest ends." May not this be due to his present limitations ?

Your correspondent " W. H. Edwards " gives the true solution of the problem of the still-born child, which the Theosophists are apparently unable to do.—Yours faithfully,

OMNIA VINCIT AMOR.

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—The text so frequently quoted, " whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," and erroneously attributed to Jesus, occurs in St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, chap. vi. Those who are anxious to support the doctrine of " Karma " by quoting a saying of Jesus, can find an equivalent in Luke vi. : " For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."—Yours faithfully,

A PLEADER FOR ACCURACY.

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

SIR,—I did not intend, after my letter of the other day, to add to the already large correspondence on the subject of Reincarnation now appearing in the OCCULT REVIEW, but it is difficult to resist the temptation of answering the distinctly misleading statements on Theosophy which came out in the August number above the signature " W. H. Edwards."

To begin with, to say that " every one who reads the OCCULT REVIEW firmly believes there is a sect calling themselves Theosophists, whose principal dogma is reincarnation," is surely a libel on a most broad-minded, many-sided periodical? Certainly the complete ignorance of Theosophy evinced by " W. H. Edwards " is somewhat unfairly attributed to the Editor and contributors of the OCCULT REVIEW !

Theosophy has one " dogma " (if it can be so called) and one alone, and that is, belief in " the universal brotherhood of humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour." To form a nucleus of this universal brotherhood is the first and foremost object of the Theosophical Society, and its only condition of membership.

This ideal of brotherhood, based on what Theosophists believe to be the spiritual unity of mankind, and the absolute oneness of all forms of life, is extended by them to the domain of religions ; for in this light all are seen as partial expressions of that Divine Wisdom—*Theosophia*—which is at the root of all the world's faiths. To call Theosophy " a sect " is therefore palpably absurd, since whatever it may or may not be, sectarian it most certainly *is not*. One cannot be " a sect " when one seeks the unifying basis of all sects and all religions.

The further statement of " W. H. Edwards " with regard to Theosophy, that it has obscured the light of Spiritualism, is amusing in view-

of the fact that hundreds of Theosophists have entered the Theosophical Society by way of Spiritualism, finding that only in the light of Theosophy could the phenomena of the séance room be intelligently and scientifically explained.

In answer to "Omnia Vincit Amor" most certainly I think the still-born child has life. Theosophy teaches that all is living, in a universe where all is God.—Yours faithfully,

THE LYCEUM CLUB, JEAN DELAIRE.
LONDON.

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—From the first issue till now, I have taken your Review for the sake of your monthly "Notes." They have done more for me than all the schools, and they express, in this last month's issue, my own exact hope and expectation. If there is hell—I have lived it here—in this life. Even since I began to reason, my childhood was a continual torture, because I persistently refused to believe in myself or my surroundings. My mother, a kindly, generous, hot-tempered woman, was outraged because I would not call her "Mother," and insisted I did not belong to her or to the country in which I was born. I resented my belongings and detested men from the time I began to speak, which I did very early. I laboured under a sense of injustice and wrong, I was always trying to express—though I never could remember what the wrong was:—only that all my environment was incongruous and hateful to me, and none of the people familiar or beloved. No one ever taught me to read or write, to sing, recite or pray, yet I did all these astonishingly well at the age of four—no one ever read or knew my songs or stories—yet I was sure I had not made them up—I *remembered* them—and they were generally remembered not in English, but in some other tongue like Italian which I remembered, translating simultaneously as I did so. My childhood was lonely and miserable chiefly because of all this, and the burning hate I cherished for everything in my life, a life that was sordid and dreary in all its details, save for the "dreams" that came to me now and again with an almost appalling vividness, after any unusual sorrow or affliction.

In these "dreams" I was always somebody else, and the breath of my life was sheer happiness.

I married, and after my marriage I met a learned Greek, who told me he had in his possession a Tanagra figure he would like to show me: the figure was an exact portrait of myself, feature for feature, line for line. It had been coloured, and the colouring was mine exactly. I was at that time nineteen, the figure had been dug out of the grave of a Greek girl who died at that age. My friend laughingly observed that if he believed in reincarnation he would say I was the reincarnation of the Greek girl. I wonder if we have to pay in one incarnation for the sins of another previous one. Certain it is that

"Misery hath been my bedfellow." I had a wretched married life, and widowhood burdened me with such responsibilities as would have discouraged the bravest man among you, yet I have faced the music, I have not flinched, no matter how hard the battle, my whole life has come and gone, bringing me none of its joys or pleasures, leaving me only the love of three children, for whom I am still fighting a lone battle, three parts blind and unable to do anything without assistance: a problem if you like—and the only explanation lies in your Notes this month. I thank you for them, my suffering and sorrow fail to reconcile me to the just God of the Christians. I cannot see love or pity in what has been meted out to me. But I understand that I may be under discipline for what I have myself done. I trust to emerge the stronger and better from my dead self. But I need sunshine —and I have never had it.

I wonder if X. Y. Z.'s "Dream of a Past Life" is as vivid as my recurring dream. I have just returned from South America, and I must have missed reading it somehow. Will you please tell me in what number it appeared?

Forgive me for inflicting all this on you. I am sure—if you are what I think—you will like to know these brilliant scholarly articles of yours have been as a Pharos to me in a world of darkness, and perhaps you will have something in next month's Notes that will further enlighten and uphold me in the only belief that makes it possible to continue. —Believe me in that anticipation, gratefully yours.

F. C. Mc.D.

[The above letter has reached me without either name or address, but on hearing from my correspondent I shall be pleased to send the issue in which "A Dream of a Past Life" appears. I need hardly say I appreciate her expressions of gratitude.—ED.]

SCIENCE AND THE INFINITE.

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—My attention has been drawn to a letter in the July Number of your REVIEW signed "Omnia Vincit Amor," which fails entirely to grasp the aim of the above little volume. This is especially remarkable when written above the writer's pseudonym and in the face of the fact that many critics have accentuated the point that the book was written in phraseology which even the man in the street could understand.

To read the letter referred to, one would come to the conclusion that I had propounded a method of diagnosing the Deity by dividing and multiplying infinite quantities, or by the summing up of an infinite number of points; whereas the examples I gave of what your correspondent calls "intellectual excursions," but which in my book I call "intellectual gymnastics," were purposely given to show how impossible it was for the finite to even approach the infinite by "In-

tellectualism." I specially emphasized the fact that our conceptional knowledge is based on perceptional knowledge, that our sense perceptions are based entirely upon the appreciation of change or motion and must therefore be limited by time and space, and the trueness of our conceptions of the Reality is dependent upon the knowledge which can be brought to bear upon those perceptions; we are thus forced to postulate two aspects of the Universe; one of these is what is called the visible, finite, or physical, which carries the appearance of reality to our finite senses, though it has no existence for us apart from those senses, and the other is that which transcends our utmost conception, which we call the invisible, infinite or spiritual. Under our present conditions we can only think of one finite subject at a time, and at that moment all other subjects are cancelled; we can therefore only think of points in time and space as situated beyond or in front of other fixed points, which again must be followed by other points; we cannot fix a point in either so as to exclude the thought of a point beyond; we can, in fact, only examine them in a form of finite sequences. The idea of Infinity is therefore a necessary result of the limitations of our thoughts; we cannot conceive beyond the finite as long as we are conscious of living under present conditions. With every act of perception by our senses, we have therefore not only intuition of the visible or finite as far as our intellect can carry us, but we become at the same moment aware of an Invisible Infinite beyond. So by the use of *introspection* as soon as we have intuition of our Physical Ego with a clear comprehension of its limited modes of thought, we at once become aware of the Invisible spiritual part of us beyond, and this I have called the Real Personality or Transcendental Ego of which the Physical Ego is only the manifestation or shadow on our plane of consciousness; the two Egos are both one, but we only have cognizance of the "shadow" in this life.

Your correspondent concludes, under the same erroneous conception, by giving his opinion that such "gymnastics" can never bring us to the source of all Truth and that it is Love alone which can bring us into conscious relationship with God; may I point out that the whole of the little volume called *Science and the Infinite* was written for the very purpose of showing that the Riddle of the Universe was not to be solved by the intellect but by attaining to a "Loving and Knowing Communion with the Absolute." The only conclusion I can come to is that he has not read the book.—Yours faithfully,

HATHERLOW, REIGATE. SYDNEY T. KLEIN.

SIRENS OF TO-DAY.

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—I think you would be glad to hear of a mysterious case which occurred in this Colony last week. I was on the scene during the rescue operations which took place and could, of course, tell you more than any others.

On the afternoon of the 15th inst. the police reported that a Chinaman was buried under some rocks on the hillside close to the Asiatic Petroleum Co.'s Oil Tanks, Bay View. It appears that the man, said to be a rickshaw coolie belonging to the Swatow district, went out of his mind on Monday afternoon, the 14th inst., and either fell or crawled through a small aperture between large granite boulders. This aperture leads to a small underground chamber, and from this he had crawled head first deep down into the bed of the nullah, squeezing his way between rocks in a manner which cannot be described. When discovered he was lying on his back, his head in a pocket formed by an overhanging boulder, and his body and limbs half-concealed by masses of rock. He could not have been placed in such a position by any one but himself. There can be no doubt, I think, that driven by madness and terror he reached this position in an attempt to escape from some imagined danger. The hole was dark, and there was water flowing round the man's head and shoulders. Had there been a sudden rainstorm he would probably have been drowned.

I am informed that some grass-cutters heard cries on the morning of the 15th inst., and informed the police. The members of the Fire Brigade endeavoured to release the prisoner, but found him too tightly jammed and inaccessible. They tried this way and that in order to release him, but without success. At one time they got hold of both of his legs and one arm, and moved his body several inches. With a sudden effort, however, he regained his former position and attempted to beat them away with his free hand. It should be remembered that he was unable to see who was pulling him, as his face was completely hidden by a projecting rock. He was certainly very frightened—he made a good deal of noise and evidently did not intend to try to get out. On the morning of the 16th inst., at about 4 a.m., after fifteen hours' hard work, the man was rescued alive. He had lain concealed in the rocks from the afternoon of the 14th inst., being confined for nearly forty hours.

From what he told his clansmen, it appears that he got into the aperture whilst bathing at the beach at Bay View on Monday afternoon, the 14th inst. Whilst so engaged he suddenly saw two or three beautiful young girls walking towards him, and in a moment they were in front of him. They laughed at him, and afterwards talked with him. They told him not to bathe on the beach as the water there was no good, and asked whether he would like to go to their house to bathe, as there was a stream inside their house, and the water there was very fine. He suddenly saw a very big road in front of him, and the girls pointed out to him a very fine and big building close by, which they said was theirs. They led him to the house, and when they entered he saw the walls were decorated with beautiful pictures, and the rooms were furnished with first-class Chinese furniture. He went in further and further, and suddenly he couldn't see the girls, and all the things he had seen disap-

peared. He then found himself in the dark and unable to move—it was the stone aperture.

I remember having heard, some years ago, that a man, who was walking at midnight along the Shaukiwan Road, which was about 500 feet in front of the aperture above mentioned, saw some young ladies following him, and when he turned his head round to see who they were, they asked where he was going. After a short conversation they invited him to their house to take a little rest, and while they were in the house the ladies gave him some dumpling to eat. After he had eaten a bowlful he felt very sleepy, and the girls brought him to one of their rooms, where they slept with him that night. Next morning, when he awoke, he found himself on the top of a big rock, which was on the hill-side close to the road. His clothes were stained with mud, and his mouth full of grass.

It appeared to me that there must have been something mysterious in the vicinity, and from what I have heard, there were some phantoms there.

I append a translation of what the Chinese newspaper said about the matter.

> . . . This mystery had been spoken of previously. It was reported that there were some she-devils in the aperture in question, who would tempt persons to fall into the hole. This appears to be somewhat superstitious, and whether true or not, is very difficult to say. . . .—*The World News.*

If you think this matter would interest your readers, I have no objection to your publishing my letter.—Yours faithfully,

HONGKONG. TIMOTHY L. WONG.

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

SIR,—I should be glad if any of your readers could contribute information as to the personality of the (?) lady who, some twenty odd years ago, exercised striking psychical gifts under the pseudonym of "Double Dummy."

Her method was nominally the telling of character from handwriting, but it amounted to far more than that. I have lately come across a "delineation" of my own "character" given at a time when my hand writing was quite unformed, and am greatly struck, after this lapse of time, by the extraordinary justice of her character sketch—given in about 300 words—and by the accurate fulfilment of the various prophecies which were implicitly made. I received scores of such delineations, from palmists, astrologers, clairvoyants, etc., at the time I was co-editor of *Borderland*, but none of them were at all comparable to that of the mysterious "Double Dummy." I believe that she was reported to be the daughter of a clergyman gathering half-crowns for restoring a church. I should be interested if other readers can compare experiences.—I am, faithfully yours,

A. GOODRICH-FREER ("Miss X").

PERIODICAL LITERATURE

AFTER the issue which commemorated the life-long work and the passing of its founder, the Reverend G. W. Allen, we have now another number of *The Seeker*, which rests in a more particular manner on the responsibility of its present editors, and assuming an adequate opportunity for the little quarterly to come into general publicity, we cannot help feeling that its success will be assured, as it should undoubtedly, on the evidence of its contents. It is difficult to speak of Mr. W. L. Wilmshurst's article entitled *The New Priesthood* without using forms of expression which might seem extravagant to those who have not seen it, perhaps also to some that have—in the absence of a certain preparation or disposition towards the mystic life. As a matter of fact, it is in our opinion the marking of an epoch in Mr. Wilmhurst's work, not only as a writer with a fresh outlook on the mystic theme, but as one who is capable of singularly good work as an artist in words. It is at once great in subject and felicitous in manner. The thesis is that " out of the ruins of the old self " the new man emerges and " the mystical consciousness which is his." It is this which confers the new priesthood, coming not by the imposition of hands, but in the spirit. This notwithstanding, " the inward conditions of ordination have not on that account been suspended " ; it is the outward conditions which have changed. There are no longer the cloister and cell in the matter of literal environment, for " our cloister is one of compulsory constriction, amid the furious activity of modern life " ; and our cell of self-knowledge must be " created of ourselves in the silent centre " of our daily activities. So also are austerities and self-discipline needed, as they were of old, but Mr. Wilmshurst quotes Francis Thompson, who said that our austerities are ready made, that life itself is an ascetic exercise and man is his own mortification. There is a sense in which the last argument is liable to prove too much, for whatever may constitute austerities and surrender of self, they have to be done with the conscious will before they can count towards redemption. Moreover, the preliminary difficulties are still, for the vast majority of less or more earnest people, the subjugation of the flesh rather than how to sustain it, as Mr. Wilmshurst advances; but this simply means that he is speaking to the few rather than to the many, even in religious circles. Other articles in *The Seeker* are excellent within

their own measures. Mr. C. J. Barker, who has earned our largest gratitude by his edition of Jacob Boehme, has begun a series of articles on the "Teutonic theosopher" by an account of the pre-requisites of his study, and there is an *apologia pro vita sua*, entitled *From Darkness to Light*, by a writer concealed under the initials J. W. M., which is a personal photograph of uttermost sincerity and therefore of palmary and living interest. Those who miss the current issue of *The Seeker* will lose more than these few words of imperfect appreciation can intimate with the best intention.

The Open Court has an admirable photograph of Rabindranath Tagore, taken in Chicago, and a very interesting biographical and critical account of "India's greatest living poet," by a contributor who is also an Indian, Mr. B. K. Roy. So many notices have appeared in the English periodical press that it is difficult to say what may be actually new on the points of fact; but it may be worth while, in any case, to note that Mr. Tagore comes from a family many of whose members have attained conspicuous distinction; that his father is termed one of the greatest intellectual giants and spiritual leaders of India; that he himself has long been famous for his poetry, and—if it must be said—for his beauty. He is termed also "a profound philosopher, a spiritual and patriotic leader, an historical investigator, a singer and composer, an able editor, a far-sighted educator, and a kind and considerate administrator," for he has a vast estate and is a man of great wealth. He seems to be therefore the Admirable Crichton *par excellence* of these our days. As the work of a fellow-countryman, it must be held excusable that the article is on the high side of panegyrics throughout. We shall probably recover from *Gitanjali*, Tagore's sheaf of Song-Offerings in English, as we have recovered from some greater things and many that are lesser. Perhaps already those among "the British literary men" who strove to touch his feet "by way of salutation" at the Trocadero banquet are not bitterly disappointed that they failed, or at least most of them. These trivialities are mentioned, not to reduce the claim of a sweet and catholic singer, but as a counter-blast to the occasional extravagance of current hero-worship. For the rest, Mr. Tagore's position as a national song-writer seems well expressed by his admirer when he says that "as long as men live in India he will be remembered as one of India's greatest poets. . . His songs have made such an indelible mark on the life of the nation that they will continue to shower their beneficent influence as long as the name of India shall endure."

We feel here that the nation itself, in the person of an occasional spokesman, is bearing witness as with one voice. There is another article in *The Open Court* which one is glad to have and to which one may recur gladly; it is Mr. Edgar J. Banks' account of his pilgrimage to the summit of Mount Ararat, enriched with many excellent photographs—taken of course on the spot. It may be mentioned that the first record of successful ascent belongs to the year 1829, while there are several instances of more recent dates; Mr. Banks accomplished his own adventure in 1912.

La Revue Theosophique, which has not offered anything of especial interest to our notice for an unusual time, has an article on the Second Coming of Christ—the recurring theme of all Theosophical organs—and it dwells upon spiritistic communications on this subject. They are said to be numerous and to cover the whole period of the movement, though they have been confined chiefly within particular circles of investigation. A point is made respecting the case of the peasant Louis Michel of Figanières in France and his revelation called *La Clef de la Vie*. In things cosmological it approximates to Theosophical views rather than those of modern spiritualism; the communications of which it consists claim to have been dictated in the manner with which spiritualists are familiar, nor shall we or they be surprised to learn that the title adopted by the unseen intelligence was that of the Spirit of Truth. It preaches three Advents of the Messiah: (1) as the Way, (2) as the Life, and (3) as the Truth, which changes the succession in the Gospel. Jesus, Who is Christ, came as the Way originally; He will manifest hereafter as the Light, to transform the living and raise the dead—the living being apparently those who are already reborn in Him, the dead those who have not received His influence and message. Finally, He will return as the Truth and will lead humanity to the condition of the Man-God.

Le Voile d'Isis is interesting as usual on several considerations: to those who care about astrology, for its particulars concerning Neptune and its influence; to Hermetists, for the conclusion of recent articles on the "Bible, Alchemy and Mythology," with some particular reference to alchemy of the mystical kind and the philosophical aspects of the Great Work. But we believe that there are many in England, once at least familiar with Huysman by means of *La Bas* and *En Route*, who will turn their attention to a few words on the distinguished novelist considered as an occultist and as a magician. A certain M. Bricaud, who is said to be profoundly informed on the subject of Devil-worship in France, claims to possess and to have produced evidence in a pamphlet

that after the appearance of *La Bas*, Huysman was driven to defend himself by magical means against magical attacks of occultists by whom he was pursued. There is a monograph on the Eucharistic Hosts used by the novelist to combat the sorceries of his enemies. If this kind of thing is true, which we take leave to doubt, M. Huysman failed to profit as he might by his celebrated retreat in a Trappist monastery.

We are sorry to see that A. E.'s contribution to *The Path*, under the title of "Transformation," has none of the singing qualities which we connect with this artist in measures, nor do we pretend to know exactly what is being talked about. . . . A commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gita* by an Indian writer is now appearing from month to month and should be of consequence to Eastern students. The series of articles by Mme de Steiger on "Superhumanity" is continued and we hear in the last issue concerning the Holy Family, meaning apparently the Secret Church of Eckartshausen, and concerning the Christ of Palestine in connection therewith. We observe that, in the writer's opinion, the Virgin Birth of Jesus is not to be taken in the literal and ordinary sense. . . . It appears from *The Vahan* that the new *Rosicrucian Order*, founded under the auspices of the Theosophical Society, has now not only a Supreme Temple in London but four other Grand Temples, for it adopts Masonic nomenclature in this respect. The stated objects are (*a*) restoration of the Mysteries and (*b*) inner development of members, while its aspiration is to gather about the cradle of a new teacher. . . . We do not remember to have seen our old friend *The World's Advance Thought* for a very considerable time. It has just inaugurated the 26th volume, being now a small monthly magazine instead of a large newspaper, as it was long ago. It claims to be the herald of a new spiritual dispensation, of which vegetarianism seems one of the corner-stones. The lady who is its editor is also chief contributor and is even its publisher in Portland, Oregon, U.S.A. The periodical has a good motto, namely, "The Lord is passing by," as we are sure that He is continually; but while wishing our contemporary another lease of life and an useful sphere we feel compelled to say that it has a look of belonging to the past and surviving rather as a vestige.

REVIEWS

CUBISM. By Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger (translated). 8½ in. × 6½ in. 133 pages. Many illustrations. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1, Adelphi Terrace, W.C. Price 5s. net.

UNDOUBTEDLY this is a remarkable book in more senses than one, especially with reference to the very high level of thought which the letterpress reaches from time to time. As for instance, when it refers to the Cubist painters, who "move freely in the highest planes," and goes on to say "among these—we need not name them—constraint is only the vestment of fervour, as in great Mystics."

Cubism is that by which "without employing any allegorical or symbolical literary artifice, merely by inflections of lines and colours, a painter can show, in the same picture, a Chinese city, a French town, together with mountains, oceans, fauna, and flora, and nations with their histories and their desires—all that separates them in external reality. Distance or time, concrete fact or pure conception, nothing refuses to be uttered in the language of the painter, as in that of the poet, the musician, or the scientist."

On turning to the illustrations to see how this ideal is carried out, we find ourselves hampered at once by the absence of colour, on which so much stress is laid in the book, and we have to depend upon various half-tones to get at what the artist, in the original painting, doubtless made clearer by colour. Of course the expense of reproducing in colour would have been greater, but, as it is, one gets from the book only a vague idea of Cubism, which insists upon no form being without colour and no colour being without form. One wants to be put into the way of reading the puzzle of so many of these reproductions. Some are quite definite and others are absolutely incomprehensible—if both are Cubism then many artists have been, like Monsieur Jourdain with his prose, making Cubist paintings without knowing it. Somehow an effect is attained, but certainly Cubism does not so far justify its intention to express all that poet, musician and scientist express.

One is reminded of the attempts to express music by flashing colours, and of Wagner's expression of definite actions by music. It is also like Arthur Rimbaud who invented the colour of vowels in his poem "Voyelles."

> "A noir, E blanc, I rouge, U vert, O bleu, voyelles,
> Je dirai quelquefois vos naissances latentes."

Catulle Mendes got a musical effect by the mere stringing together of names.

In their diatribe against Decorative Art the authors of this book forget that all art, even Cubism, is decorative in itself and most certainly does not mean merely that it is to be used as decoration for something else, a building or a book or a person. If a Cubist picture is not a decorative work it must not be bought to decorate any wall, for in doing this it would sin against this Cubist interpretation of decorative art, hence no Cubist picture would be bought, hence starvation and disappearance of

Cubist painters: Q.E.D. The statement, "Cubism is at present painting itself," does not affect the question of decoration in the least. As a matter of fact, Cubism is an attempt to depict in paint what clairvoyants attempt to depict in words. We are in the land of the fourth dimension where we are the thing seen and see it on all sides, within and without, all at the same time. We can even hail Cubism as an attempt at breaking up that very unreal thing the world looks upon as the only reality. It is a kinematograph film compressed into one picture by an intellectual effort and in this much it differs from Post-Impressionism, which is merely of sense impressions and not of intellect at all—according to Cubists.

In the Shades Zola must be congratulating his friend, Paul Cézanne, on his posthumous fame: Cézanne who figures as the artist-half of Lantier in *l'Assommoir*.

The essay finishes with: "There is only one truth, and that is our own, when we impose it on others. And it is the faith in Beauty which supplies the necessary strength."

There are many deep things in this book, but they do not apply only to Cubism. It is well that the preface states "we honestly believe that we have said nothing which is not calculated to confirm the true painter in his personal predilection," because it enables one to give the authors a hearty *auf wiedersehen*.

WILLIAM T. HORTON.

THE INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS. By Prof. Dr. Sigmund Freud, LL.D. Authorized Translation of third Edition, with Introduction by A. A. Brill, Ph.B., M.D. 8¼ in. × 5½ in., pp. xiii + 510. London: George Allen & Co., Ltd., 44 & 45, Rathbone Place. Price 15s. net.

PROF. FREUD'S views have gained a considerable vogue on the Continent. They are less well known in England; and the present work, which has already passed through three German editions, is now for the first time made accessible to English students. The sale, by the way, is restricted to members of the medical, scholastic, legal and clerical professions; and the book is almost sure to be widely criticized in this country (in fact, this has already occurred) as "unpleasant." Such criticism, however, is manifestly unscientific and unfair. If Prof. Freud's book is "unpleasant," this is because his endeavour to interpret the nature and meaning of dreams has led him to investigate those depths of human nature where "unpleasantness" resides. Prof. Freud has been accused of interpreting all dreams in terms of sexual desire. This accusation is not true. Prof. Freud's theory is that every dream is the realization of a wish—generally a suppressed wish, which is opposed by other elements of the mind (constituting what Prof. Freud calls the "dream-censor") and is thus realized only in a symbolical form. If the majority of Prof. Freud's interpretations turn upon sexual desire, this is only because such desires form a larger portion of the ordinary person's suppressed wishes. Some of the interpretations exhibit dreams as the result of quite different desires.

Prof. Freud shows very considerable ingenuity in bringing into line with his theory dreams which seem to be diametrically opposed thereto, such as anxiety-dreams and dreams which seem to realize a dread or fear rather than a wish. But although I have found Prof. Freud's book of the highest

interest, and although I feel quite sure that wish-realization is an important element in dream-formation, I am not able to accept Prof. Freud's theory *in toto*. I have two criticisms to offer :—(1) I doubt whether Prof. Freud's method of obtaining the supposed meaning of a dream (namely, by psycho-analysis) is altogether reliable. Surely, in the case of a person who accepted the wish-theory, auto-suggestion would produce an interpretation of the desired type ; and (2) Prof. Freud, like Herbart, seems to attribute an individual existence to " ideas " ; in fact, he speaks of them sometimes (and must do if his theory be wholly valid) as if they were individuals, with wills and emotions, eluding, warring against and combining with one another. Such individualization of ideas, however, can hardly be accepted as more than a symbolical representation of fact.

There is a useful bibliography of dream-literature at the end of the book. H. S. REDGROVE.

THE GATE OF HORN. By Beulah Marie Dix. Crown 8vo, 329 pp. London : Methuen & Co., Ltd. Price 6s.

THIS is an exceptional novel. There are three classes of readers who will read it with delight : there who have come under the spell of Cornwall and the Cornish coasts, and have caught some hint of the old far-off unhappy things that have happened in that ancient land ; those who can believe that they have lived other lives in past days on this same earth; and those who, with or without these qualifications, find their enjoyment in a sound, romantic story. It is an exceptionally good novel on lines that were once touched upon by Rudyard Kipling in *The Brushwood Boy*, and on those lines it is a better story than Kipling's. It would be difficult to find a more entirely satisfactory book for reading on a holiday.

P. S. W.

THE FURTHER EVOLUTION OF MAN : A Study from observed Phenomena. By W. Hall Calvert, M.D. 7½ ins. × 5 ins., pp. 324. London : A. C. Fifield, 13, Clifford's Inn, E.C. Price 5s. net.

THE medical profession is almost unique in that its members not only possess the advantage of a scientific education, but enjoy also exceptional opportunities for observing the less obvious aspects of human life. It is, therefore, with considerable interest and pleasurable feelings of anticipation that readers are likely to open a recently published confession of sociological faith by a Christian socialist who is also a Doctor of Medicine. Nor will they be disappointed. The book is certainly not free from defects : it loses force through repetition and a diffuseness of style ; sometimes Dr. Calvert's suggestions are not acceptable, and sometimes they are too indefinite and one wishes for further details. But there is much in the book that is of a high order of suggestiveness and interest, and there is much in the author's concept of " the ideal state " with which no one can disagree who frees his mind from prejudice and conventional opinions.

In the earlier chapters of this book, Dr. Calvert, following the arguments of George Paulin, criticizes the Darwinian theory of natural selection and the law of population formulated by Malthus. I am inclined to think that in so doing, Dr. Calvert unduly minimizes the effect of heredity ; but one

can fully agree with the final conclusion which he reaches, namely, that in the ideal state every child ought to be provided with the best environment possible, without following exactly the same road thereto.

Dr. Calvert's outlook is essentially optimistic; everywhere he sees signs of progress, slow, perhaps, but nevertheless sure, towards the realization of the ideal state. The altruistic spirit of Christianity as manifested in all its potency in the person of Jesus, has, Dr. Calvert believes, gotten hold of the hearts of men, even of those who are far from being professing members of any Christian Church, and is accomplishing the further evolution of man. Dr. Calvert is not a syndicalist. His ideal is the genuinely socialistic, and, as I think, only rational, one, namely, that to every one should be given equal opportunities, the good of the whole being always considered above purely individual ends. H. S. REDGROVE.

THE SECRET OF LIFE. By Henry Proctor, F.R.S., M.R.A.S., etc., Founder of the British Esoteric Society. Second Edition. London: L. N. Fowler & Co., Price 2*s*. 6*d*. net.

THIS book is properly a sequel to the author's previous work on *Evolution and Regeneration*; and as it deals more directly with the esoteric side of religious teaching, it will be even more helpful than its immediate predecessor in opening up "The Path" to the ordinary lay mind. The author is fully conversant with the latest movements of scientific thought, and in his preliminary note refers to the interesting controversy upon the Origin of Life, at the last Conference of the British Association. But his chief concern is with the Life that is Eternal; and to those who are just awakening to the numerous discrepancies which appear on the surface of theological teaching, the book will prove a useful guide to the Higher Life. The Gospel of Nature is shown by representing the natural world as a visible presentation and "working model" of the spiritual. The Book of Nature is full of spiritual teaching.

The Supreme God is unmanifest: the Logos is God in manifestation. All suffering is therefore the suffering of God. In the whole creation, He is constantly suffering death and continually rising from the dead. And all this suffering is working out Redemption—the Redemption of the whole creation from evil, which is the result of the process by which spirit becomes matter.

Creation producing evil, and evil producing suffering, suffering brings redemption in which the whole Creation participates. Evolution, involution, generation, regeneration, pain and pleasure, life and death, are only parts in the Glad Process of Redemption, which culminates in the great Consummation of Deity enriched by a glorified humanity—the return to its source of that which went forth, to go out no more but abide in the fullest consciousness of Transcendent Life. L. I. GILBERTSON.

PERSONAL POWER. By Keith J. Thomas. London: Cassell & Company, Ltd. Price 6s.

MR. THOMAS'S book is one which is full of encouraging thoughts and stimulating suggestions. If an author sets out to brighten the world with his message, and if that author even only accomplishes a little of his

original good intent, then, it may be safely said, he has won his way, and deserves his due meed of praise. And so Mr. Thomas. Here we have a mirror of mental gladness, and a perusal, however casual, of his *Personal Power* will be wise expenditure of time. X.

THE DIWAN OF ZEB-UN-NISSA. Translated from the Persian by Magan Lal and Jessie Duncan Westbrook. Wisdom of the East Series. London: John Murray. Price 2*s.* net.

ZEB-UN-NISSA, daughter of a Persian Princess and an Indian Emperor, was a contemporary of Charles II, and while that gay monarch was paying his court to light o' loves, the poetess was pouring out her soul in mystical love songs whose haunting refrains still linger in the hearts of her people.

Her poetry, which appears to have lost little or nothing at the hands of its able translators, has the beauty born of simplicity allied to depth. It is saturated with the ache of the mystic for the unattainable, tinged always with that strange joy that is pain and pain that is joy, and laden with the insatiable longing for the vision of the ever-elusive yet ever-pursuing Beloved.

> I have no peace, the quarry I, a Hunter chases me,
> It is Thy memory;
> I turn to flee, but fall; for over me he casts his snare,
> Thy perfumed hair.
> Who can escape Thy prison? no mortal heart is free
> From dreams of Thee.

But it seems invidious to quote where almost every poem is, as it were, a flame, bursting forth from a soul aglow with the "desire that dies not," and indeed perhaps one could not do better than state simply how very many one would like to quote, sure of their appreciation at the hands of those whose souls, like Zeb-un-Nissa's own, have been "by sorrow crucified," and so have gained the Mystic Portal. N. A.

THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF REINCARNATION. A Symposium arranged by S. George. The Power Book Co., London. Price 2*s.* 6*d.*

REINCARNATION; OR, THE EVOLUTION OF THE MONAD FROM THE ELEMENTAL TO THE HUMAN, from the Teaching of Thomas Lake Harris. C. W. Pearce & Co., Glasgow. Price 2*s.* 6*d.*

ONE does not often get at one and the same time two books attacking the theory of Reincarnation as presented to us by Brahmin and Buddhist teaching, but both the above-mentioned volumes are antagonistic to it. Mr. George in his symposium has drawn upon the writings of various authorities on the subject, and in a truly pedantic and narrow-minded manner has praised whenever their ideas ran in accord with his own, and denounced them when they did not. For Mr. George, despite the fact that he had a most fascinating topic to work upon and might have made a fine strong case of his disapproval of Reincarnation, has very successfully managed to bungle matters. First of all, he chooses the very weakest expositions of the theory as targets for his philippic bombardments. He quotes a chapter from Mr. Van Der Naillen's theosophical volume, *Balthazar the Magus*, in which fictitious imaginations

abound, and riddles this with ineffectual shot. The tiger story he quotes from Mr. Fielding Hall's Buddhist book. *The Inward Light*, is a piece of folk-lore, and altogether he does not attack Reincarnation in its highest ethical forms, but in its lower, commoner strata wherein it is slurred over by the fancies of a superstitious and half-savage people, as the best religions are apt to be under similar circumstances.

On page 57 the Karmic idea is reviled thus :

> Where is the justice of placing a dear, helpless babe, with a thousand sins chained to it, in an ignorant state, with people who are just as ignorant ? . . . I confess I should really hate a God who imposed such a condition on a dear, helpless baby.

But what of the Bible which preaches the punishment of the children for the sins of the father ? In another place Buddha's life is questioned, because of his renunciation of wealth and his entire subjection to asceticism and poverty. Does Mr. George disqualify St. Francis of Assisi on the same grounds ? The arguments of Mr. George arouse too much antagonistic criticism to be conclusive.

Thomas Lake Harris treats the subject with all the occult genius which has made his name rank so high in the annals of psychical literature. Like Mr. George, he also scouts the law of Karma, but replaces it by theories of his own which, though imbued with the ancient conceptions and beliefs of the East, are still vastly different and full of his own original inspirations. For instance, all his discourse on Devas is purely Asiatic,and when he fixes the interim between high forms of re-birth at from 1,500 to 2,000 years he coincides with Egyptian belief. According to Mr. Harris the spirit undergoes six stages of incarnation prior to its human birth, becoming " the life-fay " of metals, gems, flowers, etc., in succession, in order to absorb certain elements necessary for its final mortal manifestation ; while after each of these preparatory incarnations it returns into the God-world of bliss whence it came, a winged aërial soul-sprite, a spirit child born of the nuptials of angels, and enjoys a period of " Devachanic bliss " in the bosom of the World-Mother in spaces lit by God the Father's suns and moons. It is a strangely deep and mystical book. The theories of a rapt ecstatic pervade it and transmute even the somewhat badly-worded and often worse-rhymed quotations from the poems entitled " Star-flowers " with the innate mystery of their author's soul and the solemn music of his spirit.

REGINA MIRIAM BLOCH.

THE SPHINX IN THE LABYRINTH. By Maude Annesley. London: Mills & Boon, Ltd., 49, Rupert Street, W. Price 6*s*.

" THE heart of a woman is a Sphinx within a Labyrinth." Such is the quotation prefixed to this remarkable book, and the symbol bears an exceedingly apt relation to the story. It has always been asserted that a man cannot love two women at one and the same time, yet this is precisely what happens here, and what is still more remarkable is that the two women, far from being jealous, are devoted to each other, although one of them happens to be the wife of the man in question ! The scene of the story is on the Lac de Grand Krâl, which is situated in " the love-

liest corner of beautiful Provençe." Stephen Warren and his beautiful invalid wife, Camille, are exceptionally well-drawn characters, especially the latter, with her calm and gracious personality, her heroic fortitude and high-souled selflessness—Camille has a charm all her own. There is a little too much unnecessary and insignificant detail in *The Sphinx in the Labyrinth*, but, apart from this, it really is a delightful book, a book filled with the buoyancy and the joy of life, a laughing protest against the hypocrisy of the age.

MEREDITH STARR.

ORIGIN OF ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN, OR THE ARCHÆOLOGY OF ASTRONOMY. By Lee H. McCoy. Michigan: The Antiquarian Publishing Co., Benton Harbour.

MR. MCCOY, with much ability and insight, attempts to come to some conclusion as to ten important points; and we do not think we can describe the book in any better way, than to set these out, for they indicate, in a singularly clear manner, just what is the object of the author: 1. The Origin of Architectural Design; 2. The Relation of Astronomy (as conceived by the primitive races) to Religion; 3. The Actual Scientific Knowledge Possessed by the Earliest of Civilized Peoples, i.e., the Egyptians, Babylonians and Greeks; 4. The Influence of Astronomy upon Architecture; 5. The Value of Symbolism; 6. The Influence of Symbolism upon Architecture; 7. The Reflex Influence of Symbolism and Architecture upon Religion; 8. The Destiny of Man; 9. The Destiny of the Cosmos; 10. The Relation of Astronomy, Archæology, Mythology, and Religion to Human Advancement. The author has read widely, and has garnered a knowledge which he understands how to apply. We are interested, also, in the suggestive thought which evidences itself in various parts of the work.

X.

THE SIBYL OF VENICE. By Rachel Swebe MacNamara. William Blackwood & Sons, London, Edinburgh.

OF the six little love-stories which appear under this title "The Sparkling Necklace" is the most original; the ending is fresh and unexpected. The sibyl herself is the connecting link between all the tales. In each she appears with an affected air of mystery, but though she surrounds herself with all the accessories of a dealer in black arts she is, in point of fact, an amiable elderly woman with a friendly interest in her neighbours' love affairs, which she helps or hinders by the very whitest of magic.

Her various clients consider her as having supernatural gifts, but it is difficult to be sure what is the sibyl's own point of view as to her occult powers. At one moment she will be making love philtres of cochineal and powerful charms with leaves from cookery books—at another she is very genuinely lamenting that a spell, worked on her own behalf, with most decorative surroundings, should have proved so potent.

The book would have gained in interest if the psychology of this mental attitude had been worked out. We should like to have known to what extent Pia la Strega agreed with Mr. Sludge.

I don't know—can't be sure. But there was something in it—tricks and all!

J. S.