THE
OCCULT REVIEW
A MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE INVESTIGATION OF SUPER-NORMAL PHENOMENA AND THE STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

TRICKS *and* TRICKS.

"DO I sleep? Do I dream? or is visions around?" It would be impossible to put into the mouths of those who have witnessed the more marvellous of the so-called "tricks" performed by certain Indian yogis a more appropriate quotation than the above line. For, as Dr. Hensoldt takes the trouble to point out in the article which I am submitting to my readers for the Christmas number of the OCCULT REVIEW, these tricks are not performed by gas light on a previously prepared stage as are those we are accustomed to witness in London at Messrs. Maskelyne and Cooke's admirable entertainments. The yogi appears unexpectedly in some Indian town and performs his "trick" in a public square or open road in broad daylight, and his audience are a chance crowd that happen to be in the vicinity at the moment and collect together to see what is to be seen.

Hypnotism is the usual explanation given of the phenomena witnessed on these occasions, i.e. the hypnotising by the yogi or fakir of a miscellaneous collection of people such as might be met with under such conditions. If we call this hypnotism, it is only because we have no better name to give it, and because hypnotic effects represent the nearest approximation to anything of the kind with which we are familiar in this country. Illusion there must undoubtedly be, but illusion of so convincing a character that it seems well-nigh impossible

to credit its unreality. Here in England the difficulty of many people is to believe that what they witness of incredible is anything but an ingenious trick. With these performances of the Indian yogis the difficulty is to believe that the illusion is not a reality.

HYPNOTISM IN EXCELSIS.

A lady, with whom I recently had a conversation on the subject and who had witnessed these performances on three separate occasions, absolutely refused to give credence to any such explanation, because the fruits of a tree produced by yoga instrumentality under her own eyes were handed round and taken away by passengers on the boat on which the performance took place, and there are many others who share her view; but admitting the truth of the hypnotic solution, it is quite obvious that the sort of hypnotism which could fascinate in this way a miscellaneous collection of passers by, is something far and away beyond anything of the kind that any of our European practitioners in that art would dream of attempting.

SOME ILLUSIONS AND A MORAL.

The philosopher will tell us—and such teaching is familiar alike to the European and Hindu student—that the whole phenomenal universe has no abstract existence, and that neither sight nor touch are evidence of the reality of any material object. It is matter not spirit he will contend which is non-existent. Apart from consciousness—universal or particular—nothing could exist at all. The material world exists purely in the mind or imagination of those who are conscious of it, and according to the mind of the seër, so that the character of the object seen varies. This is a hard saying to those who live the ordinary life of the world, but experiences from dreamland will convince many of us that illusion can simulate the appearance of reality quite sufficiently to hoodwink our keenest faculties. A circumstance occurred in Philadelphia (U.S.A.) not so long ago in which a detective was called in to trace a fraud which had been perpetrated on many tradesmen in that city, by a man who merely handed in to the cashiers at the various establishments a piece of an ordinary newspaper in the place of a twenty dollar bill. The man's capacity for suggestion enabled him to pass this off as the equivalent of twenty dollars, and although arrested and charged with theft, it was not possible to convict him under the law of the state, as he could not be proved to have ever stated or claimed that his piece of newspaper was of any intrinsic value. This is merely one among numerous instances which will serve to show how easily our senses are

deceived. We are the dupes of our senses at every turn, and it is quite possible that it is only by ourselves adopting the Yogi philosophy that we shall find their marvellous powers susceptible of explanation.

The illusory tree that is yet tangible what is it but an experiment in creation on a minor scale? The yogi has taken a leaf out of the book of the great Artificer Himself. For was it not so also before the worlds were produced? God hypnotised Himself, and the universe was the result of His auto-suggestion. The greatest blunders of modern science have been due to the fact that Science has dissevered herself from Philosophy. Science, which should have been the handmaid of Philosophy, has arrogated to herself an independent status. Hence the Dr. Haeckels and other such ephemeral productions of the nineteenth century. Hence the ridiculous illusions about matter being the only reality, and mind its offspring. Hence the self-satisfied sceptic who accepts the apparent as the only reality and pooh-poohs the real as non-existent.

SCHOPENHAUER OR HAECKEL?

It is not to be supposed that a single phrase will give the clue to the mystery which underlies all phenomena, nor is the expression "hypnotism" to be taken as anything more than an approximation to a process, the real nature of which it is beyond human comprehension to grasp. Hypnotism is indeed itself a mystery. Neither the hypnotic practitioner here nor the Indian adept who performs miracles of illusion is capable of fathoming those laws of nature or super-nature of which he avails himself A phrase, however, may at least serve to direct thought into right channels, when otherwise much time would be wasted in an intellectual wandering in the wilderness, which by its inevitable failure could only serve to discourage further effort. Nineteenth century science has shown what disastrous blundering one radical false concept may give rise to, and how entirely the whole outlook of life is metamorphosed according as one thinks with Schopenhauer or thinks with Haeckel. If Science—as there are indications in certain quarters that she not impossibly may—decides to reconsider her attitude and sit at the feet of Schopenhauer, she will not merely have to change her views with regard to psychical phenomena, she will actually by adopting this new standpoint revolutionise in every detail her whole creed as to life and its meaning. What is important to her now will become unimportant, what is real will become illusory. Let her disguise it how she may, she will behold a new heaven and a new

earth, and as the essential basis of either she will be forced to adopt those truths which till now she has most strenuously denied.

And the stone which the builders refused will become the headstone of the corner.

PROFESSOR WALLACE'S AUTO-BIOGRAPHY.

It is a matter of regret to me that considerations of space have compelled me to hold over my review of the very interesting autobiography of Professor A. R. Wallace, which Messrs. Chapman & Hall have just published. This work, I may mention for the benefit of my readers, is published in two large volumes, demy 8vo, at 25*s*. net, running in all to some 900 pages, fully illustrated throughout. A not inconsiderable section of the second volume deals with the Professor's investigations into the genuineness of psychical phenomena, and his attempts—mostly failures—to secure the collaboration of his fellow-scientists in his researches. The whole story of his life and travels on the Amazon and in Malaysia is full of interest, and is told with a straightforwardness and simplicity which is somewhat rare in autobiographies generally. His candid statements also with regard to his social-economic opinions and his attitude towards such questions as land nationalisation, vaccination, etc., are well worthy of study in an age when these sort of views become almost invariably suspect through the relations held by their exponents towards modern politics, and their consequent bias arising from party prejudice or party interest.

The present number of the OCCULT REVIEW completes the second volume of the magazine, and the first year of publication. It has been found necessary, in order to give Dr. Hensoldt's article in full, to increase the December issue by an additional eight pages. The change in the appearance of the magazine does not, my readers will understand, indicate any permanent alteration, and future issues will in the main follow the lines of the ordinary monthly numbers which have appeared heretofore, both in the character of the paper they are printed on and the diversity of their contents.

AN OFFER TO SUBSCRIBERS.

I am anxious, as far as possible, that readers of the OCCULT REVIEW who have taken the magazine in at a comparatively recent date, or are only now doing so for the first time, should have special facilities offered them for obtaining back numbers. I have therefore decided to make the following offer. Direct subscribers to this office who send up their annual subscriptions for 1906 on or before

December 20, if in the British Isles, or on or before January 1, if abroad, will be entitled to the two bound volumes representing the twelve months' issue for 6*s*. instead of 9*s*., or the last volume alone for 3*s*. 6*d*. These volumes will be post free in the United Kingdom; postage, however, must be paid if it is required to despatch them abroad. The second volume will, I anticipate, be ready about the 8th or 10th of December.

THE TELESPHERE.

A notice of an instrument called the "telesphere" appears at the end of this issue. For the benefit of those who are interested in or know how to utilize such contrivances, I may mention that the instrument in question is about the size and shape of a very small card-table, and that on the table surface there is a large clock-shaped face with a pointer, and the letters of the alphabet, "yes," "no," "doubtful," etc., arranged in a circle round. Two people sit at opposite sides of the table, placing their hands lightly upon it; and the table is so constructed that a very slight movement or pressure sends the pointer in either direction round the disc. The advantage of the instrument, which is very cleverly constructed, lies in the readiness with which it responds to the slightest pressure. It is, of course, as easy to manipulate fraudulently as a planchette or ouija, and it is hardly to be expected that an instrument will ever be invented which will eliminate this possibility. I am not an adept myself in these matters; I do not write with planchette, and I do not propose to argue the case of spooks versus the sub-conscious self. I *have* written automatically, but quite unintentionally on my part, and my experience in the matter has not led to my forming any definite opinion, except that what was written was outside my normal self, of which I think, under the circumstances, I am justified in saying that I have proof positive. The instrument is a more elaborate one than any yet produced, and the price is one guinea.

COOMRA SÂMI, THE PHILOSOPHER OF SERINAGUR, ONE OF THE FOREMOST ADEPTS OF INDIA.

AMONG THE ADEPTS AND MYSTICS OF HINDOSTAN

By HEINRICH HENSOLDT, Ph.D.

IT is a significant fact that some of the foremost exponents of Western science have, in recent years, manifested a far greater readiness than formerly to investigate and, in a measure, credit the strange experiences related by reputed travellers or residents in the Far East. True, they still express themselves in very guarded language in reference to the alleged miracles performed by Hindu adepts and esoteric initiates; but we no longer notice that implacable hostility and determined scepticism which they once assumed when things were brought to their notice which suggested the existence of occult forces, or phenomena running counter to the general experience of mankind.

Indeed, those who can read between the lines may have observed that, far from discrediting wholesale the reported stories of Eastern magic, our most advanced scientific reasoners, in their more recent utterances, appear quite interested in the subject, having come to recognize that there may be such things as natural forces, or substances, on this planet of ours which have as yet eluded the grasp of Western science—forces which our chemists and physicists can neither gauge, weigh, nor measure, and that there is a possibility that among a subtle race like the Hindus, which is immeasurably older in civilisation and experience than our own, some of these forces may have been discovered, even thousands of years ago, and their control, or application, preserved as a precious secret among the wisest of its representatives who, in consequence of such knowledge, can perform feats which to *our* limited understanding are perfectly miraculous.

Apart from the material progress, or mere outward culture, which the Hindus had already attained in times which we are apt to call prehistoric (as evinced by the splendour of their buildings and the luxuries and refinements of their civilization in general), it would seem as if this greatest and most subtle of Aryan races had developed an *inner life*, even more strange and wonderful. Let those who are imbued with the prevalent modern conceit that we Occidentals have reached the highest pinnacle of intellectual culture, go to India. Let them go to

that land of mystery, which was ancient when the great Alexander crossed the Indus with his warriors, ancient when Abraham roamed the plains of Chaldea with his cattle, ancient when the first Pyramid was built ; and if, after a careful study of Hindu life, religion and philosophy, the inquirer is still of opinion that the palm of intellectual advancement belongs to the Western world, let him lose no time in having his own cranium examined by a competent physician.

It would seem as if the Hindus, owing to that intense love for solitary meditation which has been one of their most pronounced characteristics from time immemorial, had acquired mental faculties of which we, as a race, are totally devoid. This need not in any way surprise us, especially if we hold that, in conformity with the principles of evolution, even outward organs may be developed through persistent efforts or tendencies manifested in a particular direction. We have abundant evidence of the fact that a nation may acquire mental traits, dispositions or talents of which another is utterly deficient. There are latent powers in man which are susceptible of the highest culture, and it is more than probable that a faculty once aroused and persistently exercised for a number of generations may develop into a permanent characteristic.

The wonderful talent of the ancient Greeks for plastic art is a case in point. The aesthetic principle among them was not (as some might think) confined to a limited few, but was a national inheritance, of which the meanest Boeotian shepherd possessed his share. The early Egyptians developed a perfect mania for stupendous buildings ; among them the " constructive instinct " was abnormally stimulated, and became a fixed peculiarity. The Chinese are noted for their passionate fondness for book-learning—in no country in the world are more books printed and devoured than in the Celestial Empire ; and the modern Italians are born musicians.

But it would seem as if among the Hindus *speculative philosophy* had been the ruling fancy from a very remote antiquity, and, moreover, that kind of philosophy which does not depend upon an interchange of ideas for its advancement, but is based almost entirely upon *intuition*, viz., upon the cultivation of certain mysterious innate faculties, which are presumed to lie dormant even in the breast of the savage. While *our* forefathers, driven partly by the exigencies of an inhospitable climate, were chiefly engaged in establishing a material prosperity—thereby unconsciously stimulating the acquisitive or accumulative faculty,

and transmitting to us the desire for wealth as a rooted instinct—the Hindus have descended into the abysmal depths of their own consciousness, and have tried to solve the great world-riddle by mere force of meditation. Whether they have accomplished much in this way, I will not here attempt to discuss; in my opinion they have come much nearer to the truth than we, with our endless empiricism and experimental torturing of matter.

But if they have not succeeded in solving any great fundamental problem, they have discovered a number of strange facts of which *we* are practically ignorant. Like the alchemists of old, who, in their search for the philosopher's stone, the elixir of life, etc., stumbled upon porcelain, sulphuric acid and other substances of great practical utility, so the Hindus, in their effort to raise the veil which hides the mysteries of time and space, discovered forces which are apt to cause extreme surprise in the Western neophyte, and which are destined to play a great part in the future of our race.

One of their earliest triumphs in this direction was the discovery and application of that strange psychic force known to us as hypnotism. We have only just begun to realize that there *is* such a force, and are on the threshold, as it were, of a dominion which is as boundless as it is marvellous; but the discoveries which we are making to-day were made ages ago by the early Sanscritic Indians and Iranians, and while *our* knowledge of the subject is chiefly derived from, or based upon, the experiments of a few investigators during recent years, the Hindus have the experience of at least fifty centuries behind them.

Our most skilful experts in hypnotism have already accomplished results (especially in France and the United States) which are wonderful enough in their way. They can by mere "suggestion" start a train of thought in any given individual which is utterly foreign to that individual in his normal condition. They can make an ignorant person discourse learnedly on subjects of which he knows nothing, cause a person to eat quinine and imagine it to be sugar, or make him do things which are altogether contrary to his habits. They can even influence several individuals at the same time, so as to render them perfect slaves to their will. But all this is as mere child's play compared with the feats accomplished by Eastern adepts, and practised by them, in furtherance of certain objects, from a very remote antiquity.

For there can be little doubt that the performances of Hindu Fakeers, Yogis, Sadhus and Sanyasis, which are a surprise and a revelation to the traveller from the West, and which have

excited the wonder of all ages, have their source in an advanced knowledge and application of hypnotic phenomena. In stating this opinion I do not for a moment wish it to be understood that the term "hypnotic phenomena" contains in itself an explanation, or affords any kind of clue to the secret of these marvels. We have not, as yet, the slightest knowledge of what hypnotism really is: to all intents and purposes it is an occult force, and to say of an apparent miracle that it is worked through *hypnotic* influence does not detract from its marvellous character. If the brain, or will-power, of another can make me see, hear, feel, or taste things which, to normal reason, either do not exist at all, or are in reality quite different from what I imagine them to be, it only renders the phenomenon all the more mysterious. And it would seem as if Hindu adepts had brought hypnotism to such a degree of perfection that, while under its influence, our senses are no longer a criterion of the reality around us, but can be made to deceive us in a manner which is perfectly amazing.

As it has been my fate to travel in India, Tibet, Burma and Ceylon for a number of years, and as I have made a somewhat close study of Oriental life, history and philosophy, I may, perhaps, be qualified to advance an opinion on this subject. In the following pages I shall therefore endeavour to relate some of my experiences in the line of Eastern magic.

Hindu sorcerers may be divided into several orders, and there certainly is a division of caste between them. Their secrets are never communicated to outsiders, but among performers of the lower order are transmitted from father to son, and among the higher from adept to disciple. The members of one order always perform the *same tricks*, which have been handed down to them from antiquity, and which they never vary in the minutest detail. These tricks have been performed in precisely the same manner for thousands of years, and the fact of their still exciting the same surprise at the present day shows how well the respective secrets have been kept.

Our European conjurers perform their paltry tricks at night, in an artificially illumined hall, on a platform, surrounded by an arsenal of apparatus. They can do little or nothing without the aid of apparatus. They also usually perform in full dress, and are thus enabled to conceal a multitude of objects in pockets, etc., made for this purpose. Now, the Hindu Fakeers, Yogis, Sadhus, etc., exhibit their astounding feats in broad daylight—not in halls or on platforms, but in the streets, gardens and public squares of India's great cities. They usually work alone, per-

mitting the spectators to approach them very closely and to surround them completely. They appear half naked (sometimes, indeed, almost completely nude) and if they make use of "apparatus" at all, it consists merely of one or two commonplace objects, such as a couple of short sticks and half a cocoanut shell. But with these they will do things which are perfectly marvellous.

The lowest class of sorcerers are certain Fakeers whose performances one can witness daily in the streets of Bombay, Jeypore, Delhi, Benares and other Indian cities. They perform tricks which are insignificant if compared with some of those of the higher orders, yet are marvellous enough to cause extreme surprise even in those who have seen the cleverest jugglery in Europe or America. These tricks give one at once the impression that some totally different principle is at work behind them than the mere legerdemain of substitution-trickery of our Occidental specialists. For instance, a Fakeer will take a large earthen dish, pour into it about a gallon of water, and hold it steadily in his left hand, the other being raised to his forehead. Then the vessel will diminish in size while you look on, growing smaller and smaller, so that at last it would require a magnifying glass to recognize it. Then it disappears completely. This will occupy about a minute and a half. Suddenly you see again a tiny brown object on the palm of the still motionless extended hand not bigger than a sand-grain; this enlarges in the most inexplicable manner, till, at the end of another minute, the original dish, a foot in diameter, filled with water to the brim, and weighing at least fifteen pounds, is again before you. (I have seen this trick performed many times during my sojourn in India, and on one occasion was so near as to be almost in contact with the performer).

Or, again, a Fakeer will hold out a large cocoanut, still surrounded with its green shell, and then slowly withdraw his hand from it, leaving the nut without support in the air, as rigid as if it were part of a stone pillar. On one occasion I saw a Fakeer pour out of a cocoanut-shell which he held high with his naked arm, enough water to fill a dozen large buckets.

Another class of Hindu sorcerers are styled Yogis. A Yogi is one who practises *yoga* or "union," viz., the union of his individual soul with the World-soul or Universal Spirit, and there are, of course, thousands of Yogis in India who are not performers of magic feats. But the Yogis who *are* sorcerers are simply Fakeers of a superior order, because they also do their "conjuring" as a means of getting their livelihood, differing in

this respect from the high-grade adepts to be found within the ranks of Sadhus and Sanyasis, who are veritable magicians, and who never accept money, for reasons which will presently be explained.

The tricks of the Yogis do not essentially differ from those of the Fakeers, although some of their performances cannot be approached by the latter. The difference is more in the men themselves, for, while the Fakeers are generally dull, commonplace individuals, the Yogis are exceedingly well-informed, or, I might even say, highly educated (though not as judged from a European standpoint), bright, communicative, and altogether very interesting men. Many Yogis make a speciality of their ability to suspend the law of gravity, so to speak, as in the trick which I described above, where a cocoanut was placed in mid-air.

A Yogi will ask one of the spectators to place a stone, a piece of wood, a bucket of water, or any object he may select, on any given spot. He will then request him to lift it again, which he is unable to do, as the object seems to have suddenly acquired an enormous weight. While pulling at it with his might and main, the Yogi suddenly releases the spell, and up goes the object as if shot from a cannon. This has been a standing marvel to me while in India, and, in spite of the most careful observation, I have been unable to solve the mystery. On one occasion a Yogi requested me to hold a small empty wicker-basket, which certainly did not weigh more than a few ounces. Suddenly—and without my knowing what to expect—it became so heavy, that it not only fell, but dragged me down with it, and my hand seemed to grasp it as with an iron grip, for I could not let it go. Then, again, it became as light as a feather.

I now come to the highest order of Oriental magicians, viz. the brotherhood of adepts among the Sadhus and Sanyasis. The performances of these men are so *very* strange that the term " tricks " seems altogether incongruous, if applied to them. We might as well call the miracles recorded in the New Testament as worked by Christ " tricks," for, except that of raising the dead, not one of them is half so wonderful as the feats performed by the genuine adepts. Those who believe that the age of miracles is past should by all means go to India. We talk about the riddle of that Sphinx on the Nile: there is a Sphinx far more mysterious on the sacred Ganges, and it presents a hundred riddles.

The adepts are not professional conjurers. They do not

make their living by performing "tricks" before crowds or audiences of any kind, nor do we find them exhibiting their wonderful powers very frequently. The Fakeers and Yogis one may see almost any day, but an adept only once in a while; one may be six months in India without seeing any of the more celebrated feats of Hindu magic. During six years of travel in the peninsula of Hindostan I witnessed their performances only fourteen or fifteen times, and this is above the experience of most Oriental travellers or even Indian residents, except such as live in districts which are especially favoured, as it were, by these mysterious individuals.

Now, if these high-grade adepts are not professional conjurers, if they do not make their living by their performances, and if, moreover, they only exhibit their powers incidentally—what *are* they? It would be rather difficult to answer this question. In my opinion they are advanced philosophers in the first instance and teachers of a unique type in the second. They certainly are esoteric initiates, that is to say, members of a fraternity which seems to have in its charge the secrets of Hindu thought and meditation, or rather the fruits thereof, handed down perhaps from a time which *we* would fain call prehistoric.

I have never known a Sanyasi to accept money, either before or after a performance. I myself have repeatedly tried to tempt them with as much as five rupees at a time (which is more than a wealthy native would ever dream of offering, as a present on such occasions), but the money was always refused, kindly but firmly. How, then, do they manage to exist? They live principally on rice, which they obtain in precisely the same manner as the religious mendicants, viz. by begging. They are, in fact, travelling teachers, at least the greater part of them, while the rest are hermits, who live in the jungle or in the hill-country, in solitary huts and caverns, which they quit comparatively seldom, to carry some mysterious message to the outer world.

These quiet, unobtrusive men, with their fine, intelligent faces—foreheads which reflect the wisdom of a thousand years—actually obtain their food by begging. This may seem incredible, but it is true. The reader may be naturally inclined to ask: "Why don't some of them go to Europe or the United States, and by exhibiting their powers make fortunes?" He might as well ask why the Old Testament prophets, or the apostles of Christ, did not turn their peculiar gifts into a money-making business. These men are beyond the *desire* of making fortunes—

something which it may be difficult for Europeans or Americans to realize. They look upon the brief span of life which separates us from eternity with altogether different eyes, and their contempt of wealth is only equalled by their pity for those who are incessantly engaged in its pursuit. Thus they would not do for our peculiar civilization. Besides, imagine one of these philosophers exhibiting his marvels in one of our theatres, with handbills or posters printed advertising the same, and all the paraphernalia of our sensational booming. The idea is simply preposterous!

These men have a mission to perform in their own country, and, like the prophets of old, they work miracles in order to arrest the attention of the people. The miracles, in fact, are their credentials. Miracles were the credentials of the prophets of old, and it is to be doubted whether Christ Himself could have produced much of an impression upon the Jews of Palestine if He had not worked His miracles. This the gospel explicitly tells us, for we usually find the record of the performance of a miracle followed by the words, "and he (or they) believed in Him." It would thus appear that Christ's miracles were largely intended to demonstrate His divine character and to open the eyes of the multitude.

There is a class of people—and unfortunately a very large one—whom it is impossible to reach by argument, even if one's eloquence were of an altogether exceptional order, and if one *could* thus reach them the impression produced would be merely a temporary one. They would shake it off, as it were, the moment the teacher is out of sight. But if the latter can perform what to them is a miracle—if he can suspend the law of gravity, make a large tree grow in a few minutes where none stood before, make ponderous objects disappear in front of their eyes—then he produces a feeling of great wonder, of admiration and awe, a feeling which is likely to be permanent—for these things are contrary to the experience of the individual. Then ***anything*** which he may have to tell them is likely to be accepted, because he will be looked upon as more than human.

Among all the marvellous feats performed by Hindu initiates, or rather philosophers—adepts of a higher science—there are two which in the opinion of all European travellers or Indian residents who have witnessed them, take the lead. They are the celebrated "mango-trick" and the "rope-trick." They were already seen by that early Venetian traveller, Marco Polo, who gave a minute description of the rope-trick, which holds

good at the present day. These marvellous illusions have been the wonder of centuries. If I could produce anything like them and go up and down the country exhibiting them, it would cause a sensation such as Occidental humanity never experienced, and I could make a fortune such as no Carnegie ever dreamed of.

I shall never forget the day and the state of my feelings when I saw the mango feat for the first time. This was in a large public square at Agra, and in the presence of about four hundred people, forming a circle of perhaps sixty yards in diameter. In the centre stood the Sadhu. Some of the onlookers were, of course, much nearer to him than others, and he seemed to have no objection if people came within ten or fifteen yards of him, but the average distance kept by the spectators was, I dare say, thirty yards. Most of my readers will know what a mango is; for the benefit of the few who may not, I will say that it is an edible tropical fruit, about the size of a large pear, growing on a tree which reaches a height of from forty to a hundred feet.

The Sadhu dug a hole in the ground (by means of a short white stick) about six inches deep, placed the mango in it and covered it with earth. I now expected to see a modification of a well-known trick practised by some of our Western conjurers. The performer plants a bean or pea in a flower pot, containing quicklime at the bottom, covered with earth. The bean has been previously soaked in warm water for several days, and is on the point of germinating. Then, by pouring in enough water to reach the quicklime, the earth is warmed to such an extent that the germ is driven out in a few minutes, forcing its way upwards through the soil, and reaching a height of several inches in less than half an hour. This will astonish all those who are unacquainted with the wonders of plant life.

Well, I expected to see something of this sort exhibited by the adept. I expected the tiny shoot of a mango, creeping slowly out of the soil, unfolding its leaves and reaching a height of, perhaps, six or eight inches. Instead of this I was startled to see, in the air above the spot where the mango had been buried, the form of a large tree, at first rather indistinctly, presenting, as it were, mere hazy outlines; but becoming visibly more distinct, until at length there stood as natural a tree as ever I had seen in my life—a mango tree about fifty feet high, and in full foliage, with mangoes on it.

All this happened within five minutes of the burying of the fruit. It may have been three minutes till I saw the tree, but

as I had been at first looking intently at the spot where the mango was planted, the apparition may have been there even sooner. I was so intensely surprised at what I beheld that I could hardly realize the fact that I was not dreaming. There stood a tree, to all intents and purposes as natural as any tree could have appeared to human eyes—a huge tree, with a stem at least two feet in thickness as its base. And yet there was something strange about this tree, something unearthly, something gruesome. There was a weird rigidness about it, not one leaf moving in the breeze; it stood there as if carved out of some hard solid, like the obelisk on the Thames Embankment. Another curious feature I noticed: the leaves seemed to obscure the sun's rays, and yet I could not detect a particle of shade: it was a tree without a shadow.

But the most amazing thing of all was this: after having gazed at it for about two or three minutes, I slowly approached it, wishing to make a closer examination of the stem, and, if possible, to secure some of the leaves. Now, in proportion as I drew near, the tree seemed to lose its distinctness; its outlines became blurred and faded, so that I had to strain my eyes to retain the impression of its form, until, when about ten yards from the supposed stem, the apparition had completely vanished. Only the Sadhu stood there, and he smiled as he caught my eye, but his look was such as I shall not easily forget. And my surprise did not end here, for no sooner had I commenced retracing my steps, than the outlines of the tree appeared once more, growing more distinct with every step till, at last, when reaching the spot where I had originally stood, it resumed the same marvellous reality. Precisely the same thing happened when, instead of approaching the tree, I went farther away from it. It faded, and finally disappeared completely when I had about doubled the distance; then came back again and appeared as distinct as ever when I got to my original position. And it was evident that all the rest of the onlookers underwent the same experience, viz., each individual saw the tree only from the place where he stood. Two English officers, who happened to be very close to me, saw nothing at all, as I could notice from their remarks; they appeared to be highly amused, and were wondering what we were gazing at, but they had not witnessed the performance from the commencement.

The mango tree had now been in view fully twenty minutes, during which a large concourse of people had gathered. The adept who, until then, had not opened his lips, now placed a

small mat of cocoanut fibre on the ground, and squatted down on it, Eastern fashion, with his legs crossed, which was at once interpreted by the people as a sign that he wanted to address them. The Hindus squatted down likewise and most of them came around to the side where they could face him. It was a beautiful and impressive sight—this silent multitude of dark-eyed orientals, assembled as it were by accident, on the great square in Agra, listening to the voice of the teacher. There was a sincerity, repose and attention such as few, if any, speakers would find in a Western audience.

" Once," he began, " when Brahmadatta was king in Benares, the Bodhisatta was born as a white crane, far in the Neilgherry mountains, near a lake where the lotos never fades." And then he went on, giving the details of one of those strange and beautiful Jâtakas, or birth-tales of Buddha, of which an incredible number are circulating in India, showing how the great teacher, for the hundredth time, resolved to quit the blessed repose of Nirvâna, out of divine compassion, to be once more incarnated in an earthly form and undergo the suffering and sorrow which all terrestrial existence involves.

It was easy to perceive that the listeners were profoundly impressed with the Sadhu's preaching, and as for myself, I had become so absorbed in it that I seemed to forget time and space. I certainly did not notice what afterwards startled me more than anything, viz., the disappearance of the tree. When the Sadhu had finished his discourse the tree was gone ; it must have vanished suddenly, and yet the precise moment of its disappearance nobody could tell. The adept quietly arose, folded up his mat, then went to the spot where the tree had stood and kneeled down, taking from a small bundle which he held under his arm, a short stick. With this he stirred up the earth, and in a few moments brought out again the fruit which he had planted. I was very close to him at the time, and he allowed me to take it in my hand. It was an ordinary mango, an unripe one, apparently, for it felt rather hard. I expressed my surprise at his wonderful powers, and complimented him on his eloquence, but he merely smiled. I then offered him two rupees, and tried to engage him in a conversation, but he refused the present on the ground that a Sadhu who practised Yoga-Vidya was not in need of money, and he begged to be excused, as he had a great way to go. So he walked off rapidly, and I saw him disappear among the crowd, leaving me utterly bewildered and more than ever conscious of the truth of that saying which Shakespeare

puts into the mouth of Hamlet, that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy.

This was my first experience of the famous mango feat, which I witnessed five times in various parts of India. On one occasion I saw it performed in a little village, in the Vale of Kashmir, near Serinagur in the Himalayas, by a certain Ram Sûrash, an adept famous throughout the Punjab, and I am almost afraid to record this experience, as it may be deemed utterly incredible. Yet I am telling here no idle fairy tales. The mango tree which this adept produced did *not* vanish in proportion as I approached it, but retained its full realism, and I not only touched it, but actually climbed several feet up its stem.

ILLUSORY MANGO-TREE.
(Feat performed by Ram Sûrash.)

The only "explanation" I can give of this marvel is that (according to Hindu doctrine) the outer world is not real, but merely a product of our mind, and that in proportion as a person's *mind* is changed, his "world" must necessarily follow suit, and undergo corresponding alterations. Now, assuming that it is within the power of high-grade adepts to effect a change in the mind of each individual present at their performances (say, by a supreme mental effort, or some other agency unknown to us) it is at least feasible that they may conjure up a world entirely different from that which previously seemed to surround the audience, and which, for the time being, is as real as the other. We experience something analogous in our dreams, where changing conditions of mind are sufficient to produce the most extraordinary "worlds," which, for the time being, are as real as the so-called "normal world" in which we live during our waking state. Now, the sense of sight is only a modification of the sense of touch, and if will-power is potential enough to deceive the *eye*, it is verily no great step to mislead our sense of touch as well. Hence I fail to see the "impossibility" of climbing up an imaginary tree. Our so-called "normal world" is just

as unreal as our world of dreams, and if it appears more substantial, it is simply because we are, from our earliest infancy, more *familiar* with it, never stooping to question its reality, which we naïvely take for granted. Now, in regard to the illusory mango tree here referred to, I have even succeeded in *photographing* it (as I, doubtless, would have succeeded in photographing other illusory objects I beheld in the presence of Indian adepts, if I could have had a camera in readiness every time I was lucky enough to witness these astounding feats). Let those who dogmatically assert the impossibility of photographing an "imaginary" tree, explain, in the first instance, why *anything* can be seen, touched or photographed in this world of Maya, or illusion, in which we live, move, and have our being.

On the west coast of India about 230 miles north of Bombay, lies the city of Baroda. It is the capital of one of the semi-independent native states (Guzerat) and is ruled over by a Mahratta prince who bears the title of Gaekwar (which in plain English means "cow-herd"). It was in front of the Gaekwar's palace, in the open air and in broad daylight, that I first witnessed the illusion which, in the opinion of the Hindus themselves, is the climax of Sadhu achievement, viz., the celebrated "rope trick." I say "illusion" not because the performance gives one any such impression, or as if that word afforded some kind of explanation, but for want of a better term at the present moment. What I saw appeared to me just as real as the fact that I am now engaged in penning these lines.

A Sadhu, after having addressed a large assemblage of people and preached one of the most impressive sermons I ever listened to, took a rope about fifteen feet long, and perhaps an inch thick. One end of this rope he held in his left hand, while with the right he threw the other end up in the air. The rope, instead of coming down again, remained suspended, even after the adept had removed his other hand, and it seemed to have become as rigid as a pillar. Then the adept seized it with both hands, and to my utter amazement, *climbed* up this rope, suspended all the time, in defiance of gravity, with the lower end at least five feet from the ground. And, in proportion as he climbed up, it seemed as if the rope was lengthening out indefinitely above him and disappearing beneath him, for he kept on climbing till he was fairly out of sight, and the last I could distinguish was his white turban and a piece of this never-ending rope. Then my eyes could endure the glare of the sky no longer, and when I looked again he was gone.

I have seen this miraculous feat on four different occasions, performed in precisely the same manner, and the mystery seemed only to deepen with every repetition. It has been the standing wonder of India from a time ante-dating, perhaps, the building of the first pyramid. Marco Polo was profoundly impressed with it, and Tavernier, who visited India about the middle of the seventeenth century, speaks of it in terms which plainly denote his bewilderment. The early Jesuit fathers, startled at the sight, and at a loss to account for it, very promptly attributed it to the devil, and this ingenious explanation is still persisted in by the missionaries of the present, who assert that it is a sin even to witness these performances, and who anathematise the Sadhus as agents of Satan. Western philosophy has not yet furnished anything like an explanation of these strange phenomena, and as to Western science, it is only now on the point of waking from a long dream.

Such are a few of the wonders of Hindu sorcery. I might go on relating a hundred others of minor significance, but in some respects equally strange, which I have witnessed in that gorgeous land of the East, which, even in this twentieth century of our merciless Western materialism is more of a fairyland than Arabia ever was at the time of Haroun al Raschid. But space is limited and I must yet relate, in the following, how, when in Northern India, I tried to secure initiation into the mysteries of "Yoga-Vidya," and my experiences among the adepts of Serinagur.

Serinagur, or, as it is more frequently styled, Srinagar, is located in the beautiful Vale of Kashmir, and is the capital of that unique mountain-paradise of the north-western Himalaya. The Jhelam river here gathers its crystal waters from the pure snows of the uplands, viz., from the labyrinth of majestic peaks, ridges and furrowed slopes which encircle the incomparable "valley of roses" and which send down rivulets, streams and cascades in bewildering profusion. This Jhelam River is the famous Hydaspes of ancient lore, on whose banks Alexander subdued Porus, one of the most powerful princes of the Punjab, in the year 326 B.C.* The city of Serinagur itself is of remote antiquity, and, during the last nineteen centuries, has been venerated by the Northern Buddhists, because here, under the

* This battle took place at Chillianwallah, about 100 miles to the south-west of Serinagur. The Jhelam is one of the five rivers from which the Punjab derives its name (Panj-ab=five waters). They are all tributaries of the Indus.

auspices of the great king Kanishka, the fourth Buddhist council was held, in the year 9 of our era. At this council a new version of the sacred canon, known as the "Tripitaka" was prepared in Sanscrit, and translated into Tibetan, the translation filling one hundred volumes.

When travelling in Upper Bengal, and on the point of leaving Umballa for Jalandhar in the Punjab, my learned friend Chenda Dóab, a pundit to whom I am greatly indebted for information which, for a long time, I had vainly sought to obtain, advised me to visit Kashmir, and offered to furnish me with a letter of introduction to Coomra Sâmi, "one of the adepts of Serinagur." Up to that moment I had not thought of including Kashmir in my itinerary, my plan being to proceed only as far to the west as Lahore, and thence south to the Aravali Hills, a region which, in a geological sense, is still terra incognita, but I readily altered my programme. I would not have deemed it likely that favourable opportunities for studying the problem of Indian occultism would present themselves in that north-western corner of the peninsula.

My letter of introduction consisted of a rectangular strip of palmyra leaf, on which the pundit, in my presence, traced four lines of writing, with a sharp-pointed stylus. The writing at first was almost invisible, but when Chenda afterwards rubbed the leaf with a piece of burned linen, moistened with cocoanut oil, the characters came out black and distinct, and proved to be Nágari letters, seemingly devoid of meaning, and interspersed with curious hieroglyphics.

Of the incidents of my long journey to Kashmir I will say nothing on this occasion. The scenery through which it led me was perhaps the grandest I ever beheld in any of the four continents through which it has been my lot to travel. It seemed to grow in magnificence in proportion as I approached the goal of my wanderings, and I shall never forget the hours whiled away on the borders of idyllic mountain lakes, and in the groves and gardens of secluded valleys, nor my lonely camping days in the great cedar forests, where the stately deodar raises its crown to the purest of skies. These memories alone would have been ample reward for the journey to Kashmir.

I arrived at Serinagur about the middle of May, and at once inquired for the great Coomra Sâmi, intending to take up my quarters as near to his habitation as possible. I had never dreamed of any difficulty in finding the adept, whom I had imagined to be a person of social prominence in the city; but

to my astonishment and dismay I found that he was practically unknown. The few European residents had never heard of such an individual, and the local authorities directed me to a one-eyed Mohammedan shopkeeper, whose name (Râsami) slightly resembled that of the person I was in quest of. All inquiries which I instituted in the bazaars proved in vain, and I already began to suspect the integrity of my friend Chenda, and to think that he had played a huge practical joke on me, when my apprehensions were ended by a Beloochi shepherd, who informed me that Coomra Sâmi lived three miles to the north-west of Serinagur, and was known among the local sheep raisers as Sâmadhi Múnshi ("the man who speaks seldom") I at once engaged him as a guide, and within two hours afterwards I stood in the presence of the adept.

The abode of Coomra Sâmi was a singular one. It was formed partly of the walls of an old pagoda, of the earlier Buddhist type (semi-elliptical), of which several fine specimens still exist in Eastern Nepal and Tibet. This pagoda had been turned into a monastery, after having been ruined at least once by the Afghans, and after having doubtless served numerous other purposes during the course of the centuries. In 1738 the monks were driven out by Nadir Shah,* and the building was again partly destroyed, and for more than a hundred years after this Kashmiri shepherds might have been seen driving their flocks into the deserted rooms, to take shelter from storms. All around the neighbourhood the valley is studded with ruins, and for nearly a mile higher up I could trace the foundations of houses, sometimes covering half an acre of ground, and almost concealed from view by a tangled vegetation of ferns and creepers, in which the lizards were holding high carnival.

These were the ruins of Kanishkapúra, the old city of the great Kanishka, the valiant champion of Buddhism and hero of a hundred legends, who may be termed the Indian "King Arthur," and this also was another vestige of the fatal work of Tamerlane. *Sic transit gloria mundi.* The old building to which my guide had brought me was the only habitable corner in this strange wilderness, which nature had once more rendered beautiful by covering the dreary memorials of man's ferocity with her mantle of verdure.

* The invasion of India by this fierce Persian despot, who brought the Mogul empire to destruction, was perhaps the greatest calamity India ever suffered since the days of Tamerlane. Among the spoils carried away by this miscreant was the famous peacock throne of Delhi, valued at six million pounds.

Coomra Sâmi was not the only inhabitant of this vale of ruins; he had with him four companions—men of perhaps as many different Indian nationalities—and this singular household was completed by two dusky menials, of which one acted as cook, while the other served in the joint capacities of gardener and keeper of a small herd of goats. As I approached the "hermitage," which externally presented a most uninviting appearance, a tall individual, who apparently had been on the look-out for somebody, rose from behind a row of huge earthen jars, placed in front of the entrance, and, slowly descending the broken steps, held out his hand in token of welcome. This was no less a person than Coomra Sâmi, alias Sâmadhi Múnshi, the object of my pilgrimage, the man on whose account I had traversed nearly four hundred miles of mountainous country, and under whose tutelage I expected to augment considerably my knowledge of Indian occultism.

ANCIENT RAMPART OF KANISHKA'S PALACE
(RUINS OF KANISHKAPURA.)

His figure was rather slender, and his face perhaps the most remarkable I ever beheld: large dark eyes of singular lustre peered from underneath bushy eyebrows and seemed to penetrate one's very core; the forehead, which was high and broad, denoted an intellect of no ordinary calibre and exhibited that strange bulging of the frontal sinuses with which we are familiar in the antique statues of the Olympian Zeus. The general expression of the adept's features was, however, by no means forbidding, and might even be called pleasant, were it not for a certain indefinable trait, chiefly noticeable about the lips, which denoted sternness and an uncompromising individuality. The dress of Coomra Sâmi was (on this occasion, at least) not selected on aesthetic principles; he wore a dark brown caftân, which covered the

greater part of his body, sheepskin slippers at least four inches too long for him, and a yellow skull-cap (replaced at other times by a large turban) of superlative ugliness. Altogether his appearance struck me as singularly odd, even in that strange corner of the strangest of all countries, where the unusual and unexpected meet one at every turn, and where the traveller from the Far West often finds it difficult to realize that he is not dreaming.

"You are the white Múnshi from Lanka" (Ceylon), he addressed me, in Tamil, which at that time was the only Indian language that I could speak with some degree of fluency.

"The country of my birth lies farther west," I replied, "but I lived two years in Ceylon." Coomra Sâmi nodded twice, and after an embarrassing pause, during which we remained standing at the foot of the stairs, he said, "Yes, your home is in Frankistan, but the Devas guided you, and you came as a pilgrim to the sacred island."

"Not as a pilgrim," I protested, "my voyage to Ceylon had no religious background." I then took pains to explain to the recluse that, previous to my departure from Europe, I had not even been aware of the fact that Ceylon was "holy land" (so little had I known of the religious history of the Orient); that I was a student of philology and natural science, who had accompanied a Sanscrit scholar on a tour of exploration, and that my presence in India was, in great measure, due to accident.

"You talk like a true sutukáran" (man from the West) said Coomra Sâmi, when I had finished, as he led the way to a tree close by, at the foot of which a rude bench was located, on which we both sat down. "With you everything is accident; you come into the world by accident, and you are short-sighted enough to imagine that the union of your parents also was due to accident. Your whole life is a series of accidents, and, when finally the soul quits the carcass, your death is, in most cases, attributed to accident."

"You are mistaken as to the latter point," I answered, impressed by the solemnity and dignity of Coomra's manner. "We only speak of such deaths as due to accident as are entirely unforeseen—for instance, when a person is drowned, shot through misadventure, or killed by lightning; and these, after all, are rare exceptions."

"I have lived among your people," said the adept thoughtfully, "and I noticed that even in ordinary cases of death through disease they would say: 'Oh, if he had not caught cold on such and such an occasion,' 'if he had not drunk that ice-cold water

when he was perspiring,' or 'if he had not spent two days in that fever-stricken village'—as if a man held his destiny in his own hands and could act contrary to the decrees of fate."

"Here is a letter from Chenda Dóab of Umballa," I said, handing him the thin wooden case which contained the palmyra leaf, "but I see that he has already advised you of my coming."

"Chenda has sent me no message of any sort," replied Coomra Sâmi; "it is more than two years since I received a written or verbal communication from him," and he carefully inspected the curious document.

"Then how did you learn about my arrival, and who told you that I had been to Ceylon?" I replied, now indeed astonished, but still positive that some one had informed him.

"I knew you were coming," said the adept, "and nobody advised me of the fact. I saw you cross the Sutlej River, and will describe some of your experiences on the way through the hills; after that you shall judge for yourself as to whether my knowledge is derived from other parties." And to my amazement Coomra related, step by step, the journey I had made, the localities where I had camped,* and even *the character of my musings*, challenging me to ask him anything I pleased in this direction, and answering with an unhesitating accuracy and precision which fairly bewildered me.

"You have come here to study our wisdom," he resumed after a long pause: "there is great merit in such an undertaking, and we turn nobody from our door. Many years ago two white Múnshis came here, and stayed with us for a long while; one went to the summit of yonder mountain, where he perished, and the other lies buried behind that wall," and he pointed to a low ruin across the stream, where half a dozen black goats were busily engaged in botanical research. This was cheerful information, and something like a chill crept over me as I thought of the day when Coomra Sâmi would probably point out *my* lonely grave, with the same unconcern, to some future pilgrim to the shrine of Isis.

"You must not stay in Serinagur," said Coomra Sâmi, rising. "I have a room here ready for you, close to mine; you cannot learn much while you remain in contact with yonder cattle" (meaning the inhabitants of the city); "send for your belongings—

* I had not followed the route usually taken by travellers, but had proceeded according to my own whim, sometimes zigzag fashion, exploring hills and river-beds that led me miles out of the beaten track.

or, rather, leave them where they are, for the less you bring with you in this retreat the better. There is no greater folly than that of having a multitude of things around one that are useless and draw away one's attention."

My sensations, as I arose, may be described as a mixture of fear and curiosity, but the latter feeling predominated. I thought of the two dead Munshis, and the prospect of finding an early grave in that solitude repelled me, at a time when I still looked upon life as a boon; but, on the other hand, my desire to penetrate the veil which obscures the ordinary vision was so intense that I would have faced almost any risk to secure so great a privilege. The Rubicon of doubts was crossed, and I followed Coomra Sâmi into the building.

INNER COURT-YARD OF THE HERMITAGE.
(RUINS OF KANISHKAPURA)

The adept led the way up the ruined stair and through a dimly lighted, low-roofed passage, where more than once I stumbled over broken flagstones, to a spacious courtyard located in the centre of the hermitage. Here I involuntarily halted for awhile, to take in the scene, which struck me as singularly quaint and picturesque. Before me, like a polished mirror, lay a sheet of water on which the sunbeams danced, and on which several magnificent specimens of an exceedingly rare kind of pond-lilies at once attracted my attention. It was the dark-blue Padma of legendary fame, the mystical flower of Sankarachârya.

The square tank was surrounded by a low wall, and a little farther to the left I observed the crumbling foundations of an angular tower, which in olden times may have served as a "Dhub Ghur" (literally house of light) like the famous Kootub Minar of old Delhi, on whose summit the priests of yore greeted the first rays of Sûrya (the sun). A number of young fig-trees of the sacred species * next aroused my interest, and I was just on the point of examining them a little more closely when Coomra Sâmi, whose patience was apparently exhausted, pointed to a door on the opposite wing of the building.

"Young friend," he said, "there will be plenty of time for you

* *Ficus religiosa*, the famous Indian Peepul tree. These trees are claimed to be derived from shoots of the identical Banyan at Buddha-Gaya, in Berar, under which Gautama attained divine wisdom.

to inspect our yard and gratify your naturalistic tastes by and by; or would you really prefer to sit down at once and count the petals of yonder blue flowers? You are like Múnshi Gregory, who could never pass a stone without chipping off a piece with his hammer and looking at it with a magnifying glass, and who tore out plants by the roots, in order to dry them between sheets of paper. Let me show you your quarters, and if you like to take a bath afterwards, our nookhar (servant) shall bring you as much water as you may require.

ENTRANCE TO THE ROOM INHABITED BY THE AUTHOR DURING THE TWENTY-THREE WEEKS OF HIS RESIDENCE IN THE HERMITAGE.

We crossed the yard and approached a kind of portico formed by pillars, between two of which a dark-green curtain was gracefully suspended. "We have no regular doors here," said the adept, while he pushed the folding aside and invited me to enter: "the Kashmiris have taken almost every scrap of wood out of the building which could be turned to any use. Blankets and curtains have to serve us as doors, and you will find them very convenient, they keep out the sun, and are impervious to rain. Three seconds later I stood in the apartment which, for a period of twenty-three weeks, was destined to serve me as bedroom, study and laboratory, and in which it was my privilege to witness some of the strangest phenomena which probably ever came under the observation of a follower of modern science.

My first impressions were not particularly agreeable ones. The room was too large and bare to awaken pleasant feelings even in one accustomed to the cheerless comforts of Indian dâk bungalows, and there was a peculiar cellar-like aspect about it, which was heightened by the circumstance that it was devoid of windows, and that the ceiling was slightly vaulted. It was tolerably well lighted, however, by a square hole in the opposite wall, about six feet from the ground, which, moreover, afforded a fine view of the ruins along the upper slope of the valley. The stone floor was partly overlaid with coir matting, and the only articles of furniture discernible were an old chest of cypress wood, richly carved and stained almost black, which stood in the left corner, facing the entrance, and in the right a bed or sleeping couch. The latter consisted of a camel-skin, stretched between two wooden bars, so as to form a deep trough in the middle, and a coarse brown

blanket, rolled up and deposited on the floor underneath. Pillow there was none, and Coomra Sâmi almost startled me with the severity of his censure when I pointed out the deficiency.

"A man who must have a pillow to sleep on has but a very poor chance of rising beyond the level of the Bhayla," * he said; "you must try to do without one, my friend. It is of importance that, during sleep, your head be on a level with the rest of your body and that you lie on your back. Only in that position can the brain be brought to develop that which it mostly lacks, viz., a perception of nature's unseen forces."

"Then you identify the brain with the intellect," I replied, "and admit that what we call mind, soul, spirit, consciousness, etc., is a product of matter? This is exactly *my* standpoint, and here we have a common starting ground."

RUINS ALONG THE UPPER SLOPE OF THE VALLEY.
(View from the square opening in the wall of the room inhabited by the Author.)

"Mind a product of matter?" said the adept with a contemptuous smile, as he fixed his keen gaze on me, "is that really the outcome of your studies? I am sorry for a science which can lead its disciples to such comforting conclusions."

"Then, in the name of reason, what better definition have *you* to offer?" I exclaimed, now thoroughly aroused and put on my mettle by the spirit of controversy. "Do you think we adopt a conclusion because it *pleases* us? We follow truth for its own

* Bhayla=cattle; this was Coomra's favourite term for the generality of mankind. Specifically it was intended for those who are engaged in a monotonous routine of work, indolence or frivolity, and particularly for so-called "men of business," who in their greed for transitory possessions never find time to ponder over life's great riddle, but act as if the accumulation of rubbish and the propagation of their miserable species were the foremost objects of existence.

sake; and although it would undoubtedly please us best to discover that which promises us most, yet we are prepared to accept even the most unpleasant revelations with resignation."

"It would be folly," said Coomra, "to attempt to answer such a question at the present moment. It is one of those questions which cannot be answered in a few words. Besides, you will first have to unlearn a great deal of that which now forms the bulk of your conceptions." Then, after a pause, during which the adept paced twice up and down the apartment, he added (speaking, as it were, to himself): "Mind a product of matter! What a strange inversion of the truth! Why, it is your so-called 'matter' which is a product of *mind*. Without mind there *is* no such thing as matter!"

I thought of Berkeley and Schopenhauer, but ventured nothing in reply. Coomra Sâmi then advised me to take a rest, promising to call me later in the evening. Thus was I formally installed as a member of the strange household, amidst the ruins of Kanishkapura.

It is not here my intention to give a detailed account of my experiences during this remarkable episode of my life, or to furnish a chronological record of occurrences in a sort of diary fashion. A hundred pages would not suffice to exhaust the wealth of material at my command, were I to proceed in the manner hitherto followed. There are some things, also, which I am under a promise not to reveal. In the following, therefore, I shall endeavour to present and discuss such of my observations as I deem of special interest to the Western student, and as most calculated to elucidate some of the darker features of Indian occultism.

It was on the evening of the second day of my sojourn at the hermitage that I witnessed the first manifestation of Coomra Sâmi's occult power, or rather the first ocular demonstration thereof; for that he was gifted with singular and altogether unaccountable potencies of mental vision was clear to me after our first memorable conversation. He had described to me—with an accuracy that was absolute—incidents of my journey to Kashmir that were known only to myself, and had, moreover, exhibited a cognisance of ideas and speculations (not always of a philosophical character) in which I had indulged at certain times and localities, which he could not have acquired by any methods known to ordinary mortals. Still these might be termed mere manifestations of psychic power, referable to the dark field of clairvoyance, of which we have abundant evidence nearer home,

and so far I had not witnessed anything out of the common in a physical sense among the adepts of Serinagur.

It was about half an hour before sunset, when I returned from a protracted ramble amidst the ruins of the southern curve of the valley, where, among other things, a well-preserved portion of the ancient aqueduct, which was composed of square blocks of greenish basalt, joined in a peculiar manner, had excited my interest and admiration. I found Coomra in the yard, reposing on a mat, with his back slightly reclining against the low wall which surrounded the tank.

"Sâmadhi," I began, "I am glad you are here; I wanted to speak to you this morning, but the nookhar who brought me my rice told me you had gone to the mountains. Surely, I would have been happy to accompany you. As it is, I have spent the day in exploring the ruins and collecting some rock-specimens."

RUINS OF ANCIENT AQUEDUCT.
(South end of Valley of Serinagur.)

"And, pray, what would you wish to speak to me about?" said the adept, without rising, or in the least changing his attitude.

"Why, about my course of studies here. What would you advise me to do first? You know of my anxiety to learn the truth; indeed, I am thirsting for knowledge. Four hundred miles have I journeyed, in the hope of obtaining a spark of that which I have hitherto sought for in vain, and willingly would I travel six times around the globe, if by so doing I could secure but a momentary glimpse behind the curtain."

"Behind what curtain?"

"Behind the curtain which hides the solution of all the mysteries by which we are surrounded. So far, I have derived little satisfaction from the teachings of what we, in the West, term science, and I cannot see how its revelations—no matter how far extended—can ever affect the fundamental riddles of the universe.

"So there *is* a curtain?" replied Coomra solemnly; "I am glad your science has at least led you to this conclusion. Yes, there is a curtain, which all your learned Múnshis in Frankistan will never raise, unless" (he added after a pause, during which he glanced at the chips of stone which I had placed on the wall), "they leave off hammering rocks, and look into their own selves. And you are mistaken if you think that *many* mysteries are hidden

by that curtain. It conceals *one* only, but that is an awful one, and I am afraid it would not flatter you much to behold it." This last sentence was delivered with increasing solemnity, and a sinister light shone in the adept's eyes, while his face assumed an almost threatening expression.

"Doubtless," I rejoined, "you have here a rare collection of Kitâba (books), in which the thoughts and inspirations of wise men are recorded. Surely a great Arhat would not wish to die without leaving a trace of his accumulated experience, for the benefit of later inquirers. I know that such books exist—there are hundreds of manuscripts in the great library of Bijapur alone—and I would like you to select something for me to begin with. I can read Sanscrit and Pâli, and want to start working in real earnest."

"We have a few books," answered Sâmi, "but they would help you very little. They are at your service. I know the Pâli library at Bijapur, and can assure you that it does not contain one manuscript of real importance. If you were to learn them all by heart, you would not be much the wiser for your trouble. They are much like the books of your own libraries in Frankistan."

"Then what am I to do, Sâmadhi? Do you really mean to say that no records exist of the most valuable discoveries of the past? Of what advantage is the treasuring of works of poetry, history and moral precepts, if the greatest cosmic revelations are allowed to be buried in oblivion?"

"You know not whereof you speak," said Coomra. "The wisdom *you* are in search of is not to be found in books. Young friend, there are things which it is altogether impossible to express in words. Could the Lhorwa (a species of mud-fish) understand the language of the eagle? It crawls about at the bottom of its turbid pond, and knows of nothing but water, mud and worms. If any one were to inform it of the existence of another, and totally different world above this pond—a world of air and sunshine, of trees and flowers, a world inhabited by winged creatures with gorgeous plumage—would or could it form a conception of such? You can only explain an object in terms which refer to similar objects, and" (he added with peculiar emphasis) "the world behind the 'curtain' is so utterly unlike the world revealed by our senses that the masters could not describe it if they would."

"But there must be ways and means of getting at such information," I observed, "or else how could any one ever hope to pierce the gloom? How did the *masters* come by their knowledge?"

"The method is a very simple one: *look into your own self*, and if you do this rightly you will *see* everything, and will be under no obligation to ask further questions."

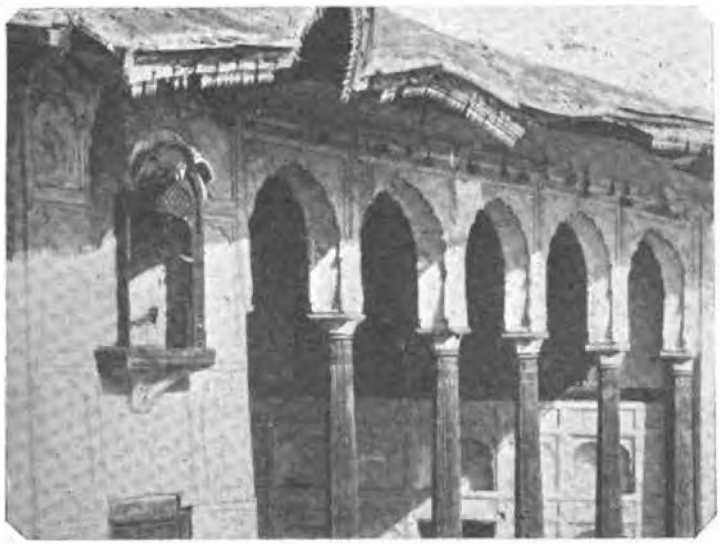
These last words, although quietly spoken, seemed to denote that peculiar weariness or impatience which overcame the adept whenever a series of questions was propounded to him, or when his attention had been directed beyond a certain time to any subject —as confirmed by later observations. It soon became apparent that he disliked being interrupted in his meditations, and as I saw comparatively little of him during the course of a week, I found it indeed difficult to approach him. He had a prejudice against being interrogated, or even taken notice of, whenever design or accident brought him in my way; but he would sometimes seek me of his own free will, and talk, with evident pleasure, for an hour or longer. On such occasions he would squat down on the ground, inviting me to do the same; and many a strange truth, that has sunk deep into my heart, have I learned from his lips. As a rule I abstained from interrupting him with questions (which he never relished), and soon I found it practically unnecessary, for such was his marvellous intuitive knowledge of what was passing in my mind during his discourses, that he answered objections before they were uttered, and went to the length of explaining difficult points in such a manner that the objects stood "in relief," as it were, assuming all the beautiful reality of a stereoscopic view.

But to return to our conversation in the yard of the hermitage, which had just reached a point where I deemed it expedient to hold my peace and effect a well-timed retreat. Moreover, it had grown very dark in the meantime, and a few raindrops began to fall. I was therefore about to seek the shelter of my room, when Coomra Sâmi rose, and, seizing my hand, offered to conduct me to a part of the building where a number of books would be found.

"Come," he said, "and I will show you our library, such as it is. I know you will not be happy until you can feast your eyes on a lot of musty volumes. Most of your learned munshis are great believers in books, and will even carry them about on their travels. We have such poor-witted freaks also among our own people here in India; they are ever seeking that information outside which they should look for in the depth of their own being. Everybody wants somebody else to do his thinking for him, but there are some things which can only be understood by *seeing*." After this not altogether flattering observation, Coomra led the way to a curtained door in the wall on the west side, located about

twelve yards from where we stood. It was now pitch dark and the rain was falling fast, so that I was glad to get under cover. We walked through several empty rooms and then ascended a stair, the adept holding my hand all the time and piloting me through the darkness.

"Now," he said, as we had reached the end of the steps and had advanced a few paces, "here are some forty books—many of them three hundred years old—written in Pâli and Sanscrit, and you can come here as often as you like and study to your heart's content; or you are at liberty to take the whole lot to your own room." He released my hand and left me standing in the dark, while I heard him walk some distance and open what afterwards



PORTICO OF FLUTED COLUMNS, FORMING PART OF WEST WING OF COOMRA SÂMI'S ABODE.

proved to be a large chest. "Here," he said, approaching me again, "look at this fine carving and at these pictures; this is usually the kind of thing which interests the duffers most."

"I beg your pardon, Sâmadhi," I replied, "how can I see anything in this inky darkness? What a pity we did not bring a lantern with us."

"Oh, I forgot," said the adept, and suddenly, as if at the fiat of some unseen power, a flood of light surrounded me, and I found myself in a high-roofed apartment devoid of furniture, except an old chest and two sheepskins in the middle of the floor. The light was certainly not produced by any artificial means; it was as bright as day, and of that unearthly refulgence which, on

more than one previous occasion, had startled me in certain of the feats of Yogis in Central India. The objects in this light cast no shadows, which clearly proves that its source cannot be an incandescent body like the sun, or any other stationary, radiating point. The nearest definition—although a poor one—which I can give of this light is that of a luminous fluid, which is suddenly precipitated over a limited space, and in which the objects seem to be immersed. On this occasion the light did not extend beyond the threshold of the apartment, where it did not merge by gradual transition into the darkness of the corridor, but seemed cut off by a sharp demarcation-line. The same was the case with the windows, which were square holes in the wall : there was inky darkness and the drizzling rain without.

Coomra Sâmi stood in front of me, holding in his hand a book, composed of a large number of strips of palmyra leaf, about two feet long and five inches broad ; these were held together by the usual strings and by two boards of teak wood, elaborately carved and decorated with multi-coloured arabesques. The adept appeared not to notice my surprise, and I deemed it wise not to ply him with questions at that moment. My agitation, however, was such that I was in no fit state to examine the literary treasures of the hermitage that night.

This was my first opportunity of witnessing Coomra Sâmi's occult power, as manifested on the "physical plane." In the foregoing I have already stated that the singular individual whose hospitality it was my privilege to enjoy for a period of nearly six months, was not the only denizen of the secluded hermitage among the ruins of Kanishkapura. There were domiciled under the same roof four other recluses to whom the name of adepts was more or less applicable, and two servants, so that the household for the time being consisted of eight persons. These four men were seldom visible, and seemed to spend most of their time in the seclusion of their rooms (each occupying a separate apartment in the dreary south wing of the building), and in errands to the neighbouring hills, which for many weeks puzzled me exceedingly. Two of them, named Angûthi and Chôta, were old men of venerable appearance, but with a soured look and not over-polite bearing. They wore enormous turbans and long brown caftâns, and were usually in each other's company, although I do not remember ever having known them to exchange a single word or greeting. They acted like deaf mutes minus the sign language, and during the first two weeks I took them for such.

Angûthi, in particular, was difficult of access, and of an iras-

cible temper; it almost seemed as if the presence of a stranger irritated or worried him, and for a long time he did not deign to take the slightest notice of me, even ignoring my friendly greetings when we happened to meet in the yard. Towards the end of the second month he condescended to speak to me, informing me, among other things, that he was a native of Rajputana and (inferentially) a person of high degree; but—whether owing to his unsympathetic nature or his ill-disguised contempt for white humanity—there was little mutual satisfaction in our short conversations. The other grey-beard, Chôta, although somewhat less unsociable, was even more taciturn, and successfully managed to foil every attempt I made to draw him out or establish a friendly footing between us.

2 1 3

ARUPÁNSHA AND SINNE TAMBI, IN CONSULTATION WITH SHEPHERDS. (RUINS OF KANISHKAPURA.)

1. Arupánsha. 2. Sinné Tambi. 3. Khebar Mahmat, an Afghan refugee.

Of a totally different type were Arupánsha and Sinné Tambi, the two youngest of the recluses. They were kind and amiable men, whose memory will ever be among the brightest reminiscences of my Indian career. Arupánsha was an athletic Dravidian from the Malabar coast, about thirty-five years old, of very dark complexion and quite handsome features. He had been to the coffee plantations of Ceylon as Kangány (overseer of a gang of Tamil coolies) and could speak Singhalese, Tamil, Hindee and English with equal fluency. Although not quite so communicative as I might have wished, he was invariably friendly, polite, and almost deferential; his entire behaviour contrasted favourably with the persistent moroseness of his older colleagues. Intellectually, however, he was greatly inferior to Coomra Sâmi, who towered high above the level of his surroundings, and who, although nominally their equal, was tacitly recognized as the chief of the little republic. Sinné Tambi, the youngest and

humblest of the anchorites, was a bright-faced Tibetan with a strong Mongolian cast, and soft, dreamy eyes. He seemed to have but recently joined the fraternity, and to have become greatly attached to Arupánsha, who, apparently, had taken him under his wing.

There was an atmosphere of unsociableness and isolation at the hermitage which painfully affected me during the earlier part of my sojourn, and to which I could never become quite reconciled. The habits, nay, the entire mode of life, of the men who had discarded the frivolities and illusions of their kind, and had chosen this voluntary exile amidst the ruins of a forgotten past, were such as to foster a spirit of exclusiveness and asceticism. The meals, which consisted of boiled rice and fish-curry, were not served at regular intervals in a general dining-room,

COOMRA SÁMI'S AUDIENCE ON THE 15TH OF JUNE.
(RUINS OF KANISHKAPURA.)

but had to be individually applied for in the kitchen, and were consumed by the adepts in the privacy of their own apartments.

There is a strange fascination in solitude. Man—that singular admixture of the bestial and divine—who in the society of his own species delights in being paltry and trivial, and in developing the more ignoble and clownish side of his nature, becomes a different being when, by necessity or choice, he is left to his own meditations. The silence of the forest, the stillness of the desert, the vast expanse of the ocean, or the unbroken quiet of some secluded nook, awaken in him thoughts and feelings which the bustle of every-day life can never engender. Then man is apt to propound to himself the great old riddle, and to descend into the abysmal depth of his own consciousness.

Several times, during my protracted stay, the hermitage was

visited by travelling mystics, who, from the manner of their reception, were well known to Coomra Sâmi and the elder of the adepts. These individuals seldom remained longer than a few hours, during which they were usually in conclave with Coomra. The latter—as if advised of the precise moment of their coming—would invariably receive them in person at the entrance, and conduct them to a small, empty room, close to Angûthi's quarters. These strange visitors arrived sometimes late at night, and departed again, shortly afterwards, irrespective of the darkness and the state of the weather. Among them was the subtle Ram Sûrash, an adept famous throughout Northern India. This great Hindu seemed to have reached the highest pinnacle of occult wisdom attainable by mortal man, and his very look was awe-inspiring and indicative of tremendous will-power. He could perform the most astounding feats by the mere fiat of his volition, as it seemed, and the "mango-trick" referred to, in which the illusion was carried so far as to completely deceive even the sense of touch, was not the least of his marvels.

THREE SORCERERS FROM ROHILCUND.

These three Yogis loitered for several days among the ruins of Kanishkapura, and once I succeeded in photographing them without their knowledge. To my surprise the plate revealed the astral form of a *fourth*, as shown in the above reproduction.

One day I had taken a stroll over the low range of hills to the north of the valley, and was on the point of crossing a barren expanse of gravel, after spending an hour or so in the shade of a delightful cypress thicket, where an interesting limestone formation had been exposed by the erosive action of a little brook, when my attention was attracted by a rock of singular aspect. It was dome-shaped, and had the appearance of a huge boulder, brought down by glacial agency, in Miocene times, from the upper Himalaya. In the pure atmosphere of that elevated region it seemed only a few hundred yards distant, but it took me nearly

an hour to reach it. It proved to be an erratic block of the dimensions of a small mountain, measuring perhaps sixty feet in height by forty in width near the base and ninety in length. Its composition was that of a porphyritic conglomerate, with quartz and flesh-coloured feldspar as chief ingredients, like many so-called "pudding-stones."

But the extraordinary feature of the rock was a cave-like opening on one side, resembling a huge mouth, the roof of which was formed by an overhanging part, a few feet from the ground, so that, if seen in profile, the boulder appeared not unlike the head of some monstrous animal, with its mouth agape, the impression being heightened by a projecting portion of the base, which resembled a lower jaw. I entered the cleft and advanced some eight or nine paces, feeling my way along the cold, moist wall, when I came to what seemed the end of the short cavern. Here the sides and roof converged, and the space became so narrow that only by dint of extreme caution and much stooping could unpleasant collisions be avoided. This, added to the prevailing darkness and a strong odour of bats, soon determined me to quit the dismal hollow, and return to the bright sunshine of the outer world.

THE PÂTHAL KÂSAM (OR "ENCHANTED ROCK").

There was an unaccountable "something" about this rock which excited my curiosity in a more than ordinary degree, and caused me to linger in its vicinity. Five times, at least, did I walk completely around it, observing its dimensions, and chipping off small pieces here and there with my geologist's hammer. There was no vegetation in the immediate neighbourhood, except a few bushes of thorny chenâr along the south base, and I finally took my seat on the projecting ridge in front of the cleft, placing the detached stone-fragments at my side and examining them, leisurely, one by one. Ten minutes probably elapsed while I was thus occupied, when a slight noise in the direction of the chenâr bushes caused me to start as if in sudden fright, and, turning my head quickly, I beheld Coomra Sâmi, who stood there like a statue carved out of ebony, quietly gazing at me. I had left him resting on a mat in the yard of the hermitage, and as he could not well have passed me without my noticing it, his presence

at this time and place was enigmatical ; still I repressed my agitation and rose to meet him.

" What brought you to this place ? " said the adept, in a voice which seemed to denote a certain irritation. " Did Arupânsha conduct you hither ? "

" Nobody showed me the way, Sâmadhi ; I noticed this hill from yonder copse, and it is about the queerest boulder I ever saw."

" Indeed ! " answered Coomra, " the ' queerest boulder ! ' Are you not aware that this is the Pâthal Kâsam (enchanted rock) ? "

" No, I never knew you had an ' enchanted ' rock here. Is there some legend or tradition connected with this boulder ? "

" Did you not enter the cavern ? "

" Yes, I went as far as it reaches ; it ends some fifteen feet from this spot."

" Let us explore that cavern once more ; it may possibly extend a little farther, after all," rejoined the adept.

" But it is pitch dark in there ; we shall knock our heads against the quartz ledges."

" There are ways and means of procuring light, as you may remember," said Coomra, " although in this instance it will hardly be necessary." He then took my hammer and stepped into the entrance of the cavern, requesting me to follow him. " You shall be your own torch-bearer," he said, placing the hammer again in my hand. " Take hold of the steel end and let the handle be pointed upwards, as you would carry a candlestick," As I seized the hammer in the manner desired, Coomra Sâmi lowered his head, till his lips were within a couple of inches of the wood. Then he blew steadily against the extremity of the latter, when, after a lapse of about five seconds, a bright flame, preceded by a crackling noise, suddenly burst from the end of the handle.

I have seen this feat—which at the time greatly astonished me—repeated on numerous subsequent occasions, by northern esoterics, and even common Punjabee fakeers, and shall revert to it on a future occasion, as it is one of the few occult phenomena of which I am able to furnish a positive explanation.

The hammer-handle made an excellent torch, in spite of its being composed of an exceedingly hard wood, and soon I had reached the extremity of the cave, when Coomra, who had preceded me by a few paces, suddenly disappeared as if by magic. His voice, however, at once assured me of his close proximity, and I soon discovered that he had merely entered a narrow side

cleft, which during my first visit had escaped my notice. This cleft was so narrow that it could only be entered sideways, but the height seemed considerable. Moving along as best I could, it seemed to lead down a rather steep incline, and then again upwards, and soon I could see daylight once more, a short distance overhead. Here the tunnel widened, but the roof became lower, so that we had to resort to stooping, and Coomra Sâmi was the first to reach the opening, through which I speedily followed, emerging in the midst of a cluster of chenâr bushes, and glad to breathe once more the free air. The hammer-handle appeared more than half consumed, although the space traversed could not have exceeded about thirty yards.

"Well," said Coomra, as I shook the dust from my sleeves, "are you satisfied now?"

"Satisfied? what is there wonderful in this burrow? Such caves exist by the hundred, and I have seen far more interesting ones. Show me a limestone cavern that will at least contain some stalactites."

"Yes, but where is the *rock*?" said the adept, "where is the *Pâthal Kâsam*?"

Slowly I turned round and a weird sensation of dread came over me as I realized that the huge boulder was no longer there. It had vanished like "the airy fabric of a vision," and nothing but an unbroken expanse of gravel extended between us and the cypress-covered bluffs beyond.

Of all the occult phenomena which I was privileged to witness in the East, this was perhaps the strangest; certainly of all the moments of surprise I ever experienced, this one has left the keenest impression. The boulder was gone, and no amount of searching would discover it; I scanned the horizon in every direction, but to no purpose. A mere trick on the part of Coomra Sâmi was out of the question; the territory was perfectly level for a radius of two miles, so that even a moderate-sized ant-hill could not have escaped notice, whereas the Pâthal Kâsam was a boulder of gigantic proportions, which if viewed from a distance of three miles still formed a striking object in its isolated position.

I made a careful examination of the spot where the rock ought to have been, while Coomra looked on with a provoking smile; but my labour was in vain, so far as the discovery of any trace was concerned. A slanting hollow in the ground, surrounded by a clump of chenâr bushes, was all that was left to commemorate the reality of the late adventure. From this hollow we had, but fifteen minutes ago, emerged, and it struck me as a good plan

to creep in again and retrace my steps. The adept refused to accompany me on this second trip, although his manner was encouraging rather than otherwise. So in I went accordingly —this time without a torch, so confident did I feel of being able to grope my way—and in less than a minute and a half I reached the original entrance of the cavern, the "lion's mouth," thus, to my infinite amazement, finding myself once more in front of the huge rock.

This manœuvre I repeated over twenty times during the course of the next three months—always with the same result—and I regret that space does not permit my entering here more fully upon the details of my experiments with the mysterious Pâthal Kâsam.

Coomra Sâmi, whom I found quietly sitting on the ledge, as I emerged from the cave, accompanied me to the hermitage, after patiently waiting till I had again minutely examined the rock, and had indulged in some rather fanciful speculations as to the nature of the phenomenon. He was rather taciturn on the road and seemed more than usually disinclined to answer questions; his thoughts evidently dwelling in other regions. With silent steps, and as one in a dream, the unfathomable recluse walked at my side, and strange fancies came over me as, from time to time, I cast a sidelong glance at this sage of Kashmir, who had raised the veil of Maya, and whom an almost immeasurable gulf seemed to separate from the rest of mankind.

When we reached the bluff the sun was near the horizon, and I halted for a moment to take a parting look at the enchanted rock, which—though more than two miles distant—loomed from the darkening plain like some yawning monster of the deep.

Far to the north and north-west rose the majestic peaks of the Hindu Koosh, now glowing in the golden tints of a true Himalaya sunset. Dark cypress forests bounded the view on the east, while in the direction of the south-west the eye swept over the vast plain of the Punjab, till in the hazy distance it rested on the Suleiman Range, nature's grim demarcation line between the domain of India's gentle races and the rugged mountain world of the fierce and treacherous Afghan.

In India there are to be found, at this day, hundreds, if not thousands of individuals, of the type of Coomra Sâmi, although *very* few have risen or will ever rise to a degree of occult power and wisdom equal to that which he possesses. Like the hermits of the Middle Ages, these men live in austere seclusion; either in the solitude of India's great forests or in the hill country,

usually selecting some locality as remote as possible from the contingency of disturbance. The impenetrable jungle region along the Malabar coast of the Peninsula is full of these recluses, and they are numerous also in the hills of Mysore, in the Neilgherris, the Vindhyas, along the Nerbudda and Jumna, and even in the Rajputana Desert. Their place of abode—generally a primitive bamboo hut—is often cunningly constructed in imitation of nature, to ensure concealment or attract as little attention as possible, so that even the expert hunter will often pass by these silent retreats without in the least suspecting their presence. I have already pointed out that these mystics may be divided into various classes and that the high-grade Sadhus and Sanyasis are practically teachers or prophets who have a mission to perform in their own country, besides accomplishing their own individual salvation by means of Yoga-Vidya or union with the world-soul. They have sprung from a race of people who, for fifty centuries, have striven to subordinate matter to mind, who have succeeded in reducing their physical wants to a minimum, who are all brain (while we are all stomach), whose knowledge of the mysteries of the mind and life is far in advance of that in our possession, who have spent years in introspective brooding over this great world-illusion, who have acquired a mastery of telepathy or mind-reading such as we can neither understand nor appreciate, and whose knowledge of the possibilities of what we call hypnotism is far ahead of anything we can now even conceive.

These men, from time to time, will leave their hidden retreats in the jungle, or their mountain caverns, and suddenly appear in the cities, where at once they are surrounded by an interested crowd of spectators. A miracle of some kind is performed in broad daylight—is seen perhaps by several thousand people—then a sermon of a most impressive character is delivered. These master-minds scornfully refuse money, or any sort of remuneration; their marvels have been the wonder of ages and cannot be explained except by the theory advanced in an earlier part of this essay. In the middle of a street they will stand, wave their hand, and in two minutes a huge tree will appear before the eyes of all; or they will perform the most amazing feats of levitation, such as the famous rope trick; will rise perpendicularly to a height of several hundred feet and then deliberately walk through the air and disappear from sight.

By far the greatest of India's recluses, however, are the adepts proper, viz. philosophers who have risen above all creeds, and who seldom, if ever, make use of the occult powers which they

have acquired for the furtherance of any tangible object. These men are engaged in a process of reaching a higher level of spirituality. They live in the strictest seclusion and never go about performing feats of any sort. They have been pronounced selfish by shallow reasoners, who are apt to inquire why the adepts, instead of seeking refuge in solitude, do not go about enlightening the world and proclaiming their occult attainments from the house-tops. It may be urged in reply that this latter occupation does not form part of the adept's plan : in other words, he is not preparing to become a teacher of the people ; if he were to do this he could not be what he is, nor reach the lofty heights to which he aspires. There are thousands of humbler intellects, who are engaged in teaching, and who have set themselves the task of warning and admonishing the masses, arousing them from their intellectual and moral torpor and bringing them to a higher level. The Sadhus and Sanyasis are among the foremost of these, as well as a host of Pundits, and it cannot for a moment be asserted that there has existed at any time a lack of the teaching and prophetic element in India.

The great principle which underlies the almost endless modification of Hindu occultism may be embodied in the term "*abstraction*," viz. the attainment of as complete a state of introspective vision as possible, by the withdrawal of the senses of sight, hearing, touch, etc., from the external world. Perhaps it will be of advantage to the reader if I here describe a little more fully what is meant by introspection. Suppose a mathematician, in order to master some intricate problem, were to seek refuge within the solitude of his four walls, and endeavour to concentrate his mind completely upon the task before him. Now, if his success depended on his power to reach complete abstraction, he would speedily discover that he was far from reaching the desired goal, for although he might secure solitude, he would not be able to exclude sound, as various noises will inevitably reach his ear and attract part of his attention, in spite of the most rigid application of his will. He might seek the solitude of some forest, or retire within the most secluded cavern, yet not be able to get rid of the disturbing element of sound. Assuming, however, that (as in the case of a deaf person) all sound *were* excluded, there are impressions of sight, which are an equal, if not a greater, obstacle in the path of him who would seek to attain the introspective state. A single blade of grass, if it catches the eye, will start a train of thought which may embrace a thousand subjects ; a caterpillar, a grain of sand, a rain-drop, will lead the mind into a

labyrinth of reflections that are more or less involuntary. He might resort to the simple method of shutting his eyes, hoping thereby to exclude the eternal world and reach the introspective state; futile effort! there still would remain the consciousness of the fact that objects of various kinds were *surrounding* him, which is a disturbing influence. Now, granting that the perceptions of sound, sight and even touch, could, for a time at least, be completely extinguished, there still would remain the memory of this or that sorrow, of frustrated hopes, of business troubles, of all the petty vexations and annoyances of life. Unless these *also* be completely annihilated, there can be no such thing as abstraction in the sense of the esoteric philosophy of India.

The various methods followed by the student of occultism in India, from the fakeer to the greatest adept, have only this one sole aim, viz. the attainment of a state of complete introspection. When that condition is reached, so the masters say, "The mind is a scroll upon which nature will write." In other words, the gnostic in that state identifies himself with the *Brahm* (or universal consciousness) and partakes, in a measure, of the divine attributes of omniscience as well as omnipotence. Among certain schools of Fakeers, Yogis etc. the practice of crystal-gazing is largely followed as a means of enforcing the introspective condition. A piece of crystal usually polished (Japanese balls of rock-crystal, about three inches in diameter, are in common use all over India) is placed before the observer, who will seek some solitary spot and steadily gaze on the shining surface.

The reader may imitate this practice, and the result will be a surprise and a revelation to him. The eye should be placed on a level with the crystal and about ten inches away from the latter; a light (preferably the small flame of a candle) must be adjusted sideways, so that its image is not in the line of vision, and a piece of black cloth should be suspended behind the crystal. Within less than two minutes the fakeer has attained a degree of introspection, and will then behold in the mirrored surface whatever he wishes to ascertain, for instance, what a certain person is doing at a certain moment—even the past and future will become, in a measure, revealed. A little practice, two or three times a day, will enable almost any one to reach this degree of occultism, and the clearness of the images thus obtained, coupled with the correctness of the information, will be an everlasting surprise to the neophyte.

Of course what he apparently sees in the crystal is in reality transpiring in his own mind; he has reached a degree of introspec-

tive vision, but is obliged to make use of some external tangible object, which, for the time being, becomes his medium. A plane or concave mirror, set in a wooden frame and floated upon water, will answer the same purpose, and many fakeers enforce the abstract condition by merely gazing into the water which they have poured into a small earthen bowl. The breathing-exercises resorted to by the so-called Râja-Yoga school of occultism have no other purpose than to identify the consciousness of the individual with that of the Brahm, and fifty pages might be filled with a description of the endless variety of methods which this school enjoins.

The true adept, however, who has attained to the highest pinnacles of esoteric wisdom, scorns to make use of these external, and, to him childish, modes of introspection; he has come to recognize that the truth lies within the depth of his own consciousness, and he can place himself in the clairvoyant state within a few seconds by mere will-power; whereas the common fakeer identifies the occult phenomenon with the crystal, the mirror or the magic cup, which he correspondingly reverences and regards with superstitious awe. Coomra Sâmi was one of those high-grade adepts who had come as near to perfection in the domain of occult wisdom as probably any Hindu initiate from the time of the great Sakyamûni. His power of mind-reading was perfectly marvellous; he could read my thoughts with as much ease as if he had a large-type manuscript before him, so that, after a little while, I found it perfectly unnecessary to utter a single word, as he would reply to my ideas with a readiness and precision which were a constant source of wonder to me.

During the first few weeks of my stay among the adepts of Serinagur I regarded these men as very unsociable, morose and even uncivil, because they seldom uttered a word or even exchanged a greeting; it was not long, however, before I realized that while apparently mute, these men carried on an active conversation with each other—they had simply risen above the necessity for speech.

The development of telepathy or thought-transference in India, as a national characteristic, is amazing; it manifests itself in the every-day life of her people, and reaches its climax in the attainments of the masters of occult wisdom. The wonderful manner in which intelligence is communicated, or rather the speed with which news of an important character travels in the East, is a case in point. During the last Afghan war it invariably happened that the news of any success or disaster to the British was known

all over India long before the authorities in Calcutta were officially informed, ; thus, for instance, the details of the battle of Maiwand were discussed in the bazaars in Calcutta three days before the news was received at headquarters, to the utter amazement of the vice-regal government. This in spite of the fact that the British had the advantage of sending dispatches by couriers down the valley of the Kabul river and through the Khyber Pass to Peshawur, and telegraphic cipher-messages from there to Calcutta.

It is absurd to try to account for this on the supposition that the news will travel from mouth to mouth, as it were, and from village to village: there are intervening mountain ranges and great deserts, villages and hamlets many miles apart, and extensive regions where scarcely any human habitation is to be met with. Besides, the Hindus are not given much to travel. Why, the news of the great disaster which befell Napoleon's army at Moscow took over six weeks to reach Paris, and this at a time when postal communication was already well organized all over Europe; in India it would have been known all over the land in less than two hours, and not merely in the sense of a vague presentiment that something *had* happened, but in the shape of a distinct vision, which, although not seen by everybody, is beheld by the most impressionable (psychically) who are not slow to communicate it to their fellow-men.

During the six months of my stay among the adepts of Serinagur I made a determined, not to say a desperate effort to obtain a clue to some of their secrets. But I was speedily given to understand that there is no such thing as a course of studies prescribed or laid down by the esoterics, which will enable the neophyte in the course of time to cast a glimpse behind the mysterious "curtain." No amount of hard work and perseverance, in the line of studious reading, etc., would materially assist the searcher for truth; the long years of probation and the various modifications of self-denial which are usually imposed upon the neophyte by those who hold the key to some of Nature's greatest marvels have no other purpose than to test the powers of endurance and the personal character of the Chela.

Among an intensely philosophical race like the Hindus there are always tens of thousands possessed of such an intense longing to raise the curtain which hides the mysteries of life that the great gnostics, even in places difficult of access, such as the Tibetan plateau, are never in want of Chelas or disciples. Now it may be taken for granted that fully nine-tenths, if not more, of these are actuated by no other motive than mere curiosity on the one

hand, and on the other, the desire for occult powers which will enable them more readily to attain the goal of their more or less sordid ambitions. In other words, they merely wish, for the furtherance of their own selfish schemes, to obtain control over occult forces—forces which in the hands of the unscrupulous would be a fatal power for evil. These spurious disciples are speedily recognized by the masters, who will impose upon them such hardships that the great majority give up the pursuit in less than three weeks, and but few will stay a year or longer. Among these, again, a very small minority ultimately reach the object of their desires, and are gradually initiated into the various degress of esoteric mastership.

DR. HEINRICH HENSOLDT.

I have not the slightest doubt that if I had persisted in the course of austerities that were imposed upon one by Coomra Sâmi, during my stay in the Vale of Kashmir, a more or less complete initiation into the secrets of the mystic brotherhood would have been attained. I have grounds for believing that the great adept had contracted a sort of friendship for me, and that he would have liked to see me become a follower of the "path," if not a member of the inner circle of the fraternity. Often he seemed to be on the point of communicating to me some important truth, which would be likely to startle me and open my eyes to a new and glorious revelation. But then again a species of doubt would arise in him as to the wisdom of such a course. I was young in Yoga experience, and as yet little tried in the "crucible," and although I am convinced that Coomra approved of my perseverance and, in his own mind, was satisfied that I was a seeker after truth for its own sake, yet I might not, after all, prove a worthy custodian of secrets which had been so jealously guarded for centuries. Indeed, I may say that nothing has more forcibly impressed me than the conscientiousness of these singular indi-

viduals with regard to the responsibility of their position as esoteric initiates, or adepts of a higher science, and their extreme hesitancy to admit outsiders, as expressed in the almost incredible precautions which they take in order to guard against a possible abuse of their precious trust.

After a residence of nearly six months at the hemitage I determined to quit, not because my desire to raise the "curtain" had become less intense (for I had, indeed, obtained a glimpse behind it), but because I hoped to arrive at the desired goal by a sort of short-cut—that is, I conceived the idea of going into Tibet and studying occultism at the reputed fountain-head of esoteric lore. Although this desire had been ripening in me many weeks before my actual departure, I never uttered a word, or acted as if I thought of ever quitting the incomparable "valley of roses"; yet the subtle Coomra soon detected what was going on in my mind, and one day took me to task about it.

He asked me to accompany him on a walk to the hills that extended in an unbroken and endless series of cypress-clad ridges, domes and snow-crowned peaks to the north of the valley. For two hours we walked side by side, without either of us uttering a syllable, although I knew and felt that the adept was constantly reading my thoughts. We toiled up a rugged mountain path strewn with enormous boulders, and were approaching an altitude of considerably over ten thousand feet. The region of the deodars was below us, and all vegetation had become stunted, when Coomra halted and pointed to the glorious landscape at our feet.

"You want to go into Tibet," he said, "because you are tired of our régime here; the idea is a laudable one, although I can tell you beforehand that you will not find there what you seek. The path lies everywhere and nowhere, and the eternal truth you must seek for within the depths of your own consciousness; there is no royal road to success, and you must climb the Himalayan heights with painful effort. *I* was once as you are now, and I well remember the impatience and the madness of despair which more than once overwhelmed me, as I realized the stupendousness of the task before me; how my heart almost failed me, and how more than once I was on the point of giving up the battle. Wealth, ease, luxury, and the thousand and one delusive pleasures which hold the Bhaila (cattle) in bondage I had abandoned, and had almost completely subdued and mastered the evil propensities—the curse of a thousand ages of animality—with which our race is afflicted. Yet, such is the demon of perversity, all-powerful through the inherited blindness of a benighted and

besotted past, that it required all the fierce determination of which I was capable to persist in the upward path. 'Through night to light'—let this be your motto in the course of ascent. The greater the obstacles the greater the triumph; and although seclusion is to be recommended under all circumstances, yet if you are of the right calibre, you will succeed wherever you are. Go to Tibet and see the brethren, and perhaps the time will come when we may welcome you once more in the Vale of Kashmir."

I was on the point of replying something when Coomra exclaimed: "What you have to get rid of, in the first instance, is this fundamental delusion of *matter*. There *is* no such thing as matter! What you call the external world is no more real than the shadow of yonder rock. The things which you seem to behold around you are simply the products of your own mind. This truth, of course, is apt to startle you, as it has startled all the learned incapables in Frankistan who have taken great pains to prove, in bulky volumes, that the external world is real, because they can *see* objects with what they call their own eyes, touch them with their own hands and perceive sound by means of their own long ears. They forget that it is not the eye that sees, the hand that touches and the ear that hears, but the mind—or let us say the brain, because you like this term better; like all Franks you are a great believer in words that convey no meaning. The fact that you can see, hear or feel an object, does not prove its existence, but simply proves that something is going on in your mind.

"If these things were real, then it would naturally follow that we must all see them in precisely the same light, and then difference of opinion on any subject would be absolutely impossible. Yet, where will you find two human beings who hold the same views even in regard to the most trivial of subjects? *Your* world is not *my* world, and mine again differs from that of everybody else; why? No two *minds* are alike and therefore no two worlds. Moreover, your world of to-day, my friend, is not your world of yesterday, because even since yesterday you have had new mental experiences, and there have been corresponding changes—however slight—in your world. Five years ago your world differed materially from the world in which you *now* live, because your mind differed; so much so, that you wonder how you could ever have entertained views which now seem to you utterly absurd. And let us go back, in imagination, to the time when you were only five years old; what a small,

curious world it was which you beheld *then!* That there is a great general resemblance between the various worlds in which we live, move and have our being—who would deny it? Do we not all belong to the same 'species,' or rather exist on the same mental plane, and are we not (more or less) fashioned after the same pattern? Are we not all closely related, brought forth under similar conditions, and brought up under similar influences? Are we not all taught in early youth to call a certain mental conception a 'stone,' another a 'tree,' and another a 'horse.' But, observe, that whenever several individuals come to describe the same 'object' in detail (be it stone, horse or tree) you get as many *different* stones, horses, trees, etc., as there are individuals who imagine they behold them."

After a short pause, during which I gazed upon him as one in a dream, the adept continued: "What has brought us to these conclusions? We Hindus are a race immeasurably older in mental culture than the one from which you have sprung; your so-called civilization is but of yesterday, and you are merely engaged in an eternal process of multiplying your wants. You have abnormally developed and stimulated the accumulative instinct, so that you have actually come to look upon life as a mere opportunity of piling up rubbish, in the shape of so-called material possessions. What, otherwise, can be the meaning of your saying that 'Time is money,' which would be apt to amuse us if it were not for the saddening thought which underlies it. I say again that what you call your glorious civilization is, and has been, nothing but a process of multiplying your wants—the luxuries of to-day are the necessities of to-morrow—and the more the horizon of these wants extends, the more you will have to toil in order to gratify them; you are forced to devote an ever-increasing part of your life to the procuring of the means wherewith to gratify artificial wants; you are, indeed, the slaves of your wants, for each new want implies a new sorrow, viz. the sorrow experienced in the deprivation of the means to gratify it. A thousand wants means a thousand sorrows, a thousand disappointments, a thousand pains.

"Has the standard of happiness been raised even to the extent of one inch by your much-vaunted civilization? I say *no*; on the contrary, you suffer more than your forefathers did at any given period, because they lived in a simpler and more frugal manner, and their wants were fewer. They had more time to rest and think. The multiplicity of your wants has brought about a feverish activity, and in your so-called 'struggle

for existence ' you have actually come to look upon your fellow-man in the light of an enemy. You try to overcome him by stealth and by every modification of craft ; you try to oust him from business and drive him to the wall. This is what you complacently call ' the survival of the fittest,' a kind of password which you have invented in order to appease your not over-delicate conscience.

" Eight hundred years ago there was club-law in Frankistan : your rival or competitor would simply dash your brains out and take possession of your property, and there was an end of you and your sorrows. You do not fight with clubs any longer, but you wage a more merciless warfare with your brains ; to-day it is brain against brain that is pitted in relentless and implacable combat, and your suffering is more of a mental than physical character. Physical suffering is limited in duration, but mental suffering is the worst kind of agony. You see the carnage around you, the furious struggle for possession at the expense of your fellow-man, and you actually seem to enjoy your miserable triumph ; you chuckle at the thought of having overreached your neighbour in cunning, of having ruined him in business, of having brought him to his knees. You little think of his grief and sorrow, and of the fate of those who are depending on him, of the heart-break involved in his agony on realizing that another hope has been frustrated, another illusion dispelled, another dream of happiness shattered for ever, and another load added to this world's burden of sorrow. Survival of the fittest, forsooth ! who *is* it that survives in your precious struggle for existence ? Is it the most humane, the most sensitive, the most generous, the most altruistic ? No, it is the most merciless, the most selfish, the most unscrupulous—the very type whose complete extinction would be eminently desirable in the interest of the race.

" We Hindus, on the other hand, after having risen to a certain height of material culture, have paused and reflected, and have begun to reduce our wants to a minimum. We live on rice, and most of us are satisfied with one meal a day. A teacup full of boiled rice, with a little salt, is all that we need in the line of food ; one piece of cloth, which will last us for years, is all the raiment we need, and as for shelter, why a few bamboo sticks, thatched with palm-leaves, will more than suffice. All our immediate wants, if translated into time, would mean less than twenty minutes' work per day ; we can devote all the remainder of our time to mental culture, to thinking—not to book-study but to the solution of the world-mystery. And we *have* done a good deal of

thinking, as you are prepared to admit; we have developed, during the last fifty centuries, mind-faculties which are a source of constant surprise to you; in fact, while you have been working for the stomach, we have been working for the brain. You westerners, in fact, are all stomach and we are all brain."

Here Coomra Sâmi advanced a few paces, then suddenly turning around, and facing me, he continued: "Now one of the singular discoveries we have made during this long period of our mental activity is that no two persons see the world in precisely the same light. This discovery was already made by the Rishis at the time when the Upanishads were compiled, but the knowledge now may be said to be the common inheritance of our people. You see we are an older race; older in experience, older in memories, and you are enough of a naturalist, or rather evolutionist, to be aware of the fact that there is a memory of *race*, even in the lower animal world, which far surpasses in intensity that short memory which is acquired by the individual in his transitory existence in any given incarnation. What makes a blind kitten 'spit' and put up its back when you bring a dog near it? It never saw *anything*, yet the accumulated experiences of countless generations of previous cats, which have been transmitted to it, are here represented, and give warning of danger. You have given the name of 'instinct' to this inherited memory in the animal world; but we also are the heritors of the stored-up memory of previous existences, and we know that the so-called external world is not real.

"There have been enlightened minds even in your Western culture, who have come to recognize what, to you, may seem a new truth, but which is as old as the eternal stars. Your greatest philosophers, from the time of Plato to that very Schopenhauer whom you quote so often, have come to the conclusion that mind, and not matter, is the one reality. What you call matter exists only in your mind and it cannot be too often repeated that the fact of our being able to see or touch a thing does not prove its existence. In your dreams the world to you is as real as in the so-called waking condition; you can see, hear and feel things which are equally devoid of existence. There are as many worlds as there are minds, although the general resemblance is such that we may speak of a normal type; yet among so many millions of minds there must be at least a few who are so *very* differently constituted that they may be said to be living in quite another world. Those whom you call insane are simply cases which differ *largely* from the normal type; you put them into asylums

because they happen to be in the minority although *their* world is as real as *yours*. You may reply that their so-called ' insanity ' is due to some alteration, disease or peculiarity of the brain ; this, however, *strengthens* my position, because it clearly proves that what we call the ' world ' depends entirely upon the temporary condition of the mind (or brain) of the individual.

" But, Sâmadhi," I replied, " this is indeed a revelation which staggers me ; do you really mean to say that these eternal hills and the fertile plains beyond, have no existence except in my own mind ? "

" These eternal hills," replied the adept, as he gave me a singular look and waved his hand, " where are they *now* ? " And as I turned my gaze from the adept's eyes in the direction of the snow-clad Himalayas I was amazed to find myself gazing upon vacancy—the eternal hills and fertile plains had vanished into thin air, and nothing was before me but a vast expanse of space ; even the solid rock beneath our feet seemed to have disappeared, although I felt as if treading some invisible ground. The sensation was weird in the extreme, and the illusion lasted fully eight or ten minutes, when suddenly the outlines of the hills came faintly to view again, and before many seconds the landscape had risen to its former reality.

" This is nothing but a wonderful case of hypnotic influence," I thought, when Coomra Sâmi exclaimed : " Hypnotic influence ? Yes and no. The phenomena of what you call hypnotism have their explanation in the fact that if some one, with a knowledge of this occult power, can alter your *mind* in any given direction, the ' world,' as a matter of course, will alter *with it*, and here we come back to the eternal truth, viz. that your so-called universe, after all, is Maya or illusion, which I hope you have grasped now and for ever."

This was my last conversation with Coomra Sâmi, one of the greatest adepts of Northern India. Three months later I found myself on the frowning heights of Darjeeling, in front of Mounts Everest and Kitchinchanga, amidst the grandest Himalayan scenery, prepared for my journey into the land of the Lamas.

REVIEWS

PERIODICAL LITERATURE

THE issue of *Light* for November 11 reproduces the first part of an excellent lecture delivered before the London Spiritualist Alliance on November 2 by Mr. Herbert Burrows. In this lecture Mr. Burrows deals with physical science and its aperçu of problems of life and mind. He says :—

> I sometimes feel that in face of the great and overwhelming all-round problems of human existence—its hopes, its fears, its sorrows, its joys, its suffering and its pain, its misery and its disease, especially its social disease—these other things are, after all, but as mint, anise—and cummin ; and that if the human life around us, our own and that of others, were better understood in its various aspects, understood in relation to the infinite universe in which we live and move and have our being, many other things would, almost unconsciously, be added unto us.

On the inadequacy of science in regard to the larger life-problems, he says :—

> Science in itself has nothing human about it ; it is neither hot nor cold, neither moral nor immoral, but passionless and colourless ; and the human heart wants something more than that—some other kinship than that of physical atoms, true and correct as that may be. So, inevitably, the dogmatism of Science has been challenged, as it before challenged the dogmatism of theology. Men are everywhere craving for a wider conception of unity than the physical, a more inspiring conception than the atomic.

And, finally, as to the effect of this challenge of modern science upon the attitude of its professed heads towards the higher problems, Mr. Burrows voices this observation :—

> The fact is that all the newest and best science is leading us away from physical death to physical life—to the idea that behind every form, every manifestation, organic or so-called inorganic, lies the pulsing, beating, ceaseless, universal life, whatever name we choose to give it.

Mr. Burrows is complete master of his subject, while his language is crisp and sometimes eloquent, his material well arranged, and his arguments convincing. The further instalment of this lecture will be awaited with impatient interest.

Broad Views for November contains an article by Mr. A. P. Sinnett on "Occultism in Fiction," in which that well-known student of Occult Science bewails the tendency of modern fictional writers to indulge in psychological plots and occult incidents in violation of the principles of both psychology and occultism. Even the prosaic telephone "has been impressed into the service of the current romancist, and constrained to bring messages from another world." This at all events has the mark of originality when contrasted with the rappings and tiltings of the orthodox method of other-world communings. But of course Mr. Sinnett's contention is clear and well-founded. Rider Haggard started the new method among modern romancists—though to be sure there were Scott and Bulwer Lytton some years ahead of him, not to mention Wilkie Collins and many others all more or less affected by the same regard for the market value of the uncanny—and Marie Corelli soon followed with "The Romance of Two Worlds" and other books bearing the same impress. But Mr. Sinnett's plaint is that

> They fasten on some single idea suggested by that teaching (Occultism) and then let their own untrained imagination surround it with an environment of circumstance that is an outrage on the real natural possibilities of the central conception.

What these "real natural possibilities" are, and what authority there may be for regarding them as real, Mr. Sinnett does not pause to show, and when in the same sense he speaks of "the real Occultist" as the last person in the world to desire "to retain a monopoly of the subjects with which he deals" we are lost for want of a clearer definition of the exact quality of person referred to. Mr. Benson and Mr. Rider Haggard are both taken to task for this offence against the "true principles," the latter novelist more particularly in connection with the novel "She," which is evidently built on the doctrine of reincarnation and, as Mr. Sinnett thinks, "strained to give a theoretical vraisemblance to the reappearance of "She." Mr. Arnold's "Phra the Phœnician" is another work cited in the category of Occult absurdities, and the whole contention of Mr. Sinnett in regard to the use of the occult idea in fiction appears to be embodied in the sentence :

> If he had taken the pains to study the conditions under which such influences may really operate, he would have found them quite as well adapted to the purposes of modern fiction as the absurd imaginings with which he has thought fit to work.

For, although this sentence is levelled directly at the work of Benson, yet it applies equally well to all others which come under the stricture applied by Mr. Sinnett to dabblers in the occult. It is obvious, however, that the novelists might take any of Mr. Sinnett's more serious works on Occultism pure and simple, and retort that he is the most sinful romancist among them all, and for anything that he would feel justified in showing by way of proof to the contrary, they would be well within their rights. [Possibly the criticism of Mr. Sinnett may be just, but Mr. Sinnett's criticism is undoubtedly so.—ED.]

The Open Court (Editor, Dr. Paul Carus) contains an excellent article on the Philosophy of Pain, by Ernest Crutcher, M.D. The first two paragraphs open up the ground considered and deserve quotation :

> There is no caprice in Nature. All is the result of law. Ignorance speaks of chance. There are often chance-like occurrences, but the laws of nature are the immutable laws of the universe. Nothing can occur by chance except through infraction of unbreakable laws. Effects are from causes, however inexplicable they appear to our ignorance. The universe is a cosmos not a chaos.
>
> One of the greatest laws of life is that of activity. Nothing within our comprehension is at rest. There is no such thing as dead matter. Death of anything is not annihilation, but a change ; chiefly molecular rearrangement.

" Infraction of inviolable laws " is a good phrase, if somewhat ambiguous and paradoxical at first sight. " No such thing as dead matter " ought to commend itself to Mr. Burke and other experimentalists in what is called spontaneous generation. Dr. Crutcher then proceeds to indicate what part in the economy of life pain may be rightly said to occupy, and he shows it to be conservative of organic life, stimulative of organic and mental functions, and a potent factor, if not indeed the chief of factors, in the evolution of character and soul-attributes. Pain is the great artificer in the universe of Mind. The article runs through seventeen sections in which the beneficence of Pain in relation to man as a candidate for responsibility and progress is very efficiently and yet delicately pourtrayed. It is an article well worth the reading.

The same number contains another article, " Formula for the Risen Body of Christ," which is of considerable merit and should be read by students of psychic science.

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.]

MR. ANDREW LANG'S REPLY TO PROFESSOR HYSLOP.

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—Dr. Hyslop's essay, "An Important Question in Psychic Research," contains, I think, no idea that is new to me, and no argument that affects my attitude. I wish it were otherwise; I wish that Dr. Hyslop could enable me to understand more clearly things subconscious and subliminal.

His idea is that "the discarnate have to be in a sort of dream-like trance in order to communicate *through a medium* with the living." Drop the words "*through a medium*," and I can easily believe that, if the dead ever get into touch with the consciousness of the living, the dead, while doing so, are, *as a rule*, "in a sort of dreamlike trance." In the large majority of cases of "hauntings" in which the percipients *see* a human figure, the figure is not recognized by them, and cannot be identified with any person who once lived on earth. Explanatory myths are evolved by housekeepers, aunts, and others, myths explaining who the figure was in this earthly life. But myths are not evidence. Who was Green Jean that haunts W—— Castle? Nobody knows; even myth is silent.

In such cases, however good the evidence of the appearance of Green Jean or any other phantasm may be, we cannot logically advance the theory that the appearances are caused by the agency of a once incarnate Jean, because we do not know that there was ever any such person.

But where there is good and sufficient evidence that the phantasm seen is recognized correctly (which is very rare indeed), then we have a choice of two hypotheses. A recognized person, (1) now discarnate, is affecting with a sense of his or her presence the consciousness of the percipients. Or (2) it happens in some other way, a way which we cannot explain. The place where the appearances occur, as I say, is "a local centre of permanent possibilities of hallucination." Dr. Hyslop talks of my "proposing such a theory." It is not a *theory* at all. It is a plain statement of simple facts, without any theory, if we believe that, in a given place, say a bedroom at C— Castle, and not elsewhere, various persons of credibility have experience of hallucinations. I am thinking of hallucinations representing human beings about

whom nothing is known. My position is perfectly logical. Again, if the appearances undoubtedly represent real and recognized human beings, now dead, we cannot say that the appearances are due to any agency exercised by the discarnate spirits. The percipience of them may be simply hallucinatory, a vivid revival of memory. I have myself seen several hallucinatory appearances of persons then incarnate; I have no right to explain them as caused by any agency on the part of these persons, one of whom was dying at the moment. The others are living yet. In the same way, if I perceive any number of recognized phantasms of discarnate persons, I am not to assume that their discarnate spirits cause my percipience. That would be a wanton hypothesis.

Secondly, if I see, let us say, the phantasm of Mary, Queen of Scots, in a room which, though I did not know it, she was wont to occupy, I have no logical right to say that my experience was caused by some agency on the part of her discarnate spirit. My experience may be an act of "retrocognition," exactly as if I saw in the room a picture or a piece of tapestry which really did once hang on the wall of the room but hangs there no longer. I have heard of such instances, which we cannot explain, if they really occur, for we know nothing about retrocognition. Thus, if I were inclined to regard the recognized phantasm of a person now dead, as truly caused by the effect of that person's discarnate consciousness on my incarnate consciousness, then, judging from the usual conduct of such "ghosts," I should say that they do represent a "dream-like" or "trance-like" stratum or current of the dead party's consciousness. The "ghosts" almost always behave like sleep-walkers. All this was part of Mr. Myers's theory. If caused by discarnate spirits at all, the majority of "ghosts" are caused by a dreamlike current of the discarnate consciousness. They are vague, wandering, purposeless. But if ever, as in some reported cases, they are purposeful, and plainly utter messages of a nature which the percipient could not know or invent, then, and then only, we have evidence for deliberate communications of the dead to the living, not through a third person, a "medium." But in such cases, if they do exist, the discarnate spirit is *not* "in a sort of dreamlike trance," but is perfectly wide awake.

Why, then, should we suppose the discarnate to be "in a sort of dreamlike trance," when, if ever, they clearly communicate to the medium these facts, which the medium could not invent or know, even by dint of retrocognition? But I must

say plainly that I am not acquainted with any such case, with any such communication to the living medium by a discarnate spirit. Here, of course, it is probable that Dr. Hyslop and I disagree as to the point of fact. The evidence, for example, in the case of Mrs. Piper leaves me absolutely sceptical; and Heaven knows that I have read enough of it!

If Mrs. Piper's utterances correctly represent what the "spirits" say to men, then they are perfectly lucid and copious as long as they are talking twaddling generalities. Nothing can be more distinct and wakeful than their small talk. But, on being pressed by direct questions which could prove their personal identity, they fall into "a sort of dreamlike trance," or they "lie like a dentist." The discarnate are *not* "in a sort of dreamlike trance," "when they communicate" any superabundance of trivial small talk "through a medium with the living." They become "dreamlike," full of "error" (to put it mildly) and "confusion," when they are brought to book for the purpose of establishing their identity.

Dr. Hyslop will say that I take this line because "respectability compels me." Alas, I am not respectable, I have no respectability to lose! I believe in far too many things that are to the Philistines foolishness. But I emphatically do not believe, on the evidence, that the dead communicate with the living, through Mrs. Piper. The lady stated some years ago, I think, that she did not believe it herself, not that her opinion is of value, except when she speaks as a critic of the printed evidence taken down from her unconscious lips in trance.

There is, I hope, nothing "flippant" in these remarks. The conclusion of the whole matter is that Dr. Hyslop is satisfied by evidence, and relies on arguments, which on me produce no favourable impression. On the other hand, I am convinced by evidence which would produce no favourable impression on Professor Ray Lankester. Yours faithfully,

A. LANG.

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

SIR,—In my experiences in hypnotism I use the magnetic gaze, supplemented, if necessary, by passes. I was always uncertain as regards the action of the latter. One day I was describing to one of my hypnotics the methods of a well-known public hypnotist. "He just goes so," said I, waving my hand carelessly in front of my subject's face, when, to my surprise, he tottered

and nearly fell, saying, "Oh! don't do that." Subsequently I inquired the value and reason of passes and was told, "They convey magnetism (a somewhat all-embracing term at present) from the brain of the operator to that of the subject"—a perfectly reasonable explanation of Mr. Lambert's instructive experiment recorded upon page 178. A careful operator should be able to look at any of his subjects without unpleasantness to them. See my letter to *Light*, July 29 of this year. The stages of Hypnotism that I recognize are a clearly defined Three :— Light, Deep, Deepest. In the first and last the subject does not answer hypnotically. Suggestions may be given in the first stage which may sometimes be acted on and sometimes not. In the second stage suggestions are generally carried out and are always of *some* use. The third stage appears to me to be of little value to any one. I have not tried much with it, as I prefer my subjects to converse with and instruct me. I can liken the Distinct and Indistinct Stages (of certain French schools) to the Three Primary colours as contrasted with the Seven of the Rainbow, of which one cannot tell where one begins and another leaves off, so are they blended. And I am always for as much simplicity of system and terminology as possible. Extra-terrestrial clairvoyance I have found interestingly imaginative but not very reliable, though I had one case of a striking nature and an absolute "test."

Yours faithfully,

H. W. THATCHER.

11, CAMPDEN HILL SQUARE,
Oct. 25, 1905.

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

SIR,—Beyond the fact that my life here is a blank, and that all I care for is on the other side, I am not in the least mediumistic, and cannot even stimulate my imagination, to see, hear, or feel anything abnormal; still the following experiences, telepathic or otherwise, actually took place. My daughter, who hates the whole business, and I, who am interested in occult phenomena, sometimes sat with our hands on a three-legged table, sometimes on a small board, sometimes on a glass on the alphabet.

No. 1. The board fidgetting uneasily.

Q. What is the matter with you to-night?

A. Snakes. All over the place, and one has stung me.

The next day or two brought us a letter from a friend who had purposed coming to see us, but was delayed owing to having to change camp on account of an influx of snakes.

No. 2. The table speaking by raps—Mary is a beast.

Q. What Mary? Several Marys mentioned, and one agreed to as the one alluded to.

Q. Why is she a beast?

A. I proposed to her by letter and she took no notice.

Q. Why do you come to us, and who are you?

A. You don't know me, and I come to you as your husband bought a horse of mine.

This gave the clue to his name, and later I inquired of "Mary" about the letter. She had never received it, and in default consoled her breaking heart by marrying another man.

No. 3. A glass and the alphabet as mediums—both operators blindfolded—a third taking down communications which were read out as each sentence ended.

I am S. T. (deceased).

Q. If you are S. T., what did you die of?

A. Inflammation of the brain.

Q. Nonsense.

A. I tell you I did.

A month or two later a lady who had been with S. T. near the end was calling, and I put the question:—

What did S. T. die of?

Answer. Inflammation of the brain.

No. 4. Glass and alphabet again. Mrs. S. is coming to England alone, she has been staying on the Continent.

Q. Where, then, is her husband?

A. Dead.

Q. How can that be, they are only just married, and we heard of them only the other day?

A. You will find it is true.

A few days after we saw the notice in the Obituary.

The two who were operating in this instance were total strangers, and did not know the S.'s.

Yours faithfully, S. E. G.

CONCERNING "DEATH AS A PSYCHIC EXPERIENCE."

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—Recently, being engaged professionally in investigating some criminal business, I had occasion to spend some little time at the police-offices of a certain town. While there engaged there came under my eye a number of photographs, taken by the police for the purposes of identification, of corpses which it had fallen to their jurisdiction to deal with. These corpses were those

of suicides, tramps who had been found dead by the wayside, perhaps the subject of a murder or two, and other specimens of human wreckage, whose unknown personality might possibly become traced if a portrait of the body was taken and preserved. The bodies had been placed apparently quite close to the camera, so that excellent reproductions might be obtained of the minutest facial characteristics, wrinkles, etc. The collection of photos was naturally somewhat gruesome to contemplate, but, nevertheless, a considerable, and even fascinating, interest attached to many of the pictures and caused me to give them particular and studied attention; especially those of drowned persons, mostly women fished out of rivers, and tramps who had been picked up dead upon the highway. I doubt whether even the sight of the actual contents of the Paris *Morgue* itself would reveal as much as a series of photographs such as that of which I speak; for while photography is often incapable of giving expression to the living face, those very mechanical methods, by which alone it works, have distinct advantages when applied to, shall I say, "still life"? Photos of the living, especially if those photos are a little faded by time and exposure, often appear like portraits of corpses; but the actual portraits of corpses I speak of seemed to express not death but life, or, at any rate, the last emotions of life which the physical form could respond to. And so the almost universal characteristic of these photos was the registration upon the flesh-mask of the emotion caused, I cannot but think, by the first glimpse into "the beyond," ere the *psyche* of the subject had accomplished its liberation from the mortal vehicle. Beneath the closed lids of the wrinkled, many-wintered tramp the eyeballs could be seen looking up, as it were, at some fair vision. The drowned woman, hair and bonnet still all a-drip, was plainly looking as though she were responding gratefully to some one's friendly help and welcome. Excitement, profound but restrained, pleased surprise, showed from many a half-opened mouth, from many pairs of lifeless but still straining eyes, even under the veiling lids, and were blended with the expression of utter restfulness. Occasionally the dead face was a quite unemotional mask; but never once did I see exhibited anger, terror or any form of fear or abhorrence. The one predominant note registered upon the features of these human derelicts and *pauvres diables* at the moment of their last agony was that of mingled peace and joy as, out of the corruptible body, their souls greeted and passed into the presence of "the Great Surprise."

Yours faithfully,

November 11, 1905. W. L. WILMSHURST.