

THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

Divine Wisdom

Brotherhood

Occult Science

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THE MYSTICAL POETRY OF ARTHUR STRINGER

In a recent article entitled "Reincarnation and the Poets" reference was made to "Memories," a poem by Arthur Stringer. This is but one of many poems by Mr. Stringer dealing with reincarnation and other subjects relating to the Eternal Mystery.

Two metaphysical poems, "An Alaskan Night" and "The Questioner," have for their theme questions with which men and women have struggled since the beginning of time, yet in their beauty of expression exemplify a principle concerning poetry enunciated by A. E. Housman. In *The Name and Nature of Poetry* the distinguished English poet wrote: "Poetry is not the thing said but a way of saying it." In the former poem, with its vivid description of night in the far North, the lonely soul cries out: "Is there or is there not a God?"

So, iron hills that can not care,
And tundras, tempest-trod,
Facing your night, I ask: "Is there
Or is there not a God?"

Many a heart has cried: "There must be a God," but Arthur Stringer says it in a way that makes poetry.

Yet all these ancient hills that brood
Beneath dead Baldur's sun,
These aching leagues of solitude
Cry out: "There must be One!"

There must be One who dwells above
Defeat and Death and Time,
Beyond the storm some final Love,
Some Spring beyond the rime.

* * * * *

For whence He came, or whither goes,
I know not being blind;
My soul walks naked in His snows,
And trail nor fire can find,

Till huddled hope and fear cry out:
"O foolish child and weak
Too near He dwells for ye to doubt,
Too far for ye to seek!"

The theme of "The Questioner" is *Why are we here?*, a question which all have heard innumerable times. Rarely indeed have the human body and brain been described with such consummate beauty of expression as in the opening lines of this poem:

This brief warm-rivered body that I
own,
This brain that nests behind its
shielding bone,

This nerved and pulsing frame that
 seeks to wrest
 Such frail endurance from a pumping
 breast,
 Is it a tent that holds no pilgrim soul,
 Is it a house by feeble hands kept
 whole,
 Where when the floors decay, the
 rafters fall,
 No tenantry survives the crumbled
 wall?

In tracing "that keen reiterant call"
 as it appeared to mankind down
 through the ages the poet has created a
 series of pictures in the evolutionary de-
 velopment of man. Primitive man is
 described in such lines as:

But through the twilight jungles
 crept a shape
 That seemed the brooding brother of
 the ape.
 Time saw the slanted brow being
 lifted up
 For thought to house within its
 sutured cup,
 Saw in the clod some central hidden
 fire,
 A smouldering hunger after some-
 thing higher.

The present with its glory of achieve-
 ment—and shameless use of that same
 great power!—is indicated in the fol-
 lowing striking passage:

He brings the atom captive to his
 knees,
 He gropes through nebulous far gal-
 axes,
 Till, dazed by distance, he must won-
 der why
 He loses what once seemed a friendly
 sky,
 His startled mind too circumscribed
 to pace
 Those labyrinthine lanes of star-
 buoyed space,
 Too crowned with old inconstancies to
 climb

The peaks that prove the timelessness
 of Time.

Sir Charles G. D. Roberts once
 write:* "For me, God is the inescapable
 fact of all existence. And I believe that
 some apprehension, however dim, of
 that eternal fact has lurked in the spirit
 of man from its beginning. All else
 that I believe, with whatever degree of
 conviction, rests on that basis." Mr.
 Stringer advances the same belief:

It is the time-worn question, from the
 birth
 Of him who first walked upright on
 the earth.

The poem concludes with a proclama-
 tion of faith. The question which has
 troubled the hearts of men through the
 ages is in itself the *proof*:

With that small flower of faith the
 mortal dust
 No more is mocked, but sanctified, by
 trust,
 Touching with kingliness the quest-
 ing clod
 That still can seek a still eluding God.

Several shorter poems have the same
 general theme. There are many others,
 however, which express the poet's belief
 in reincarnation, including several phil-
 osophical poems which have for their
 underlying principle the theory of re-
 incarnation. Of this latter group "In
 Glastonbury Abbey" is one of the most
 appealing. The poem, based upon the
 description of the tombs of Arthur and
 Guinevere as recorded in Marson's
Glastonbury, describes, not only the
 tombs of the legendary king and queen,
 but the beautiful countryside pregnant
 with memories of the days when "those
 dreamers 'neath its ramparts . . . the
 arch of England built!"

* An article, "My Religion," in *The Star Weekly*, Toronto, May, 1926.

Yet past the whispering twilight,
That altars touched with gloom,
The valour that was Arthur's still
Outlives the Abbey tomb!

And 'neath the soft green grasses
That in the breezes wave,
The glory that was Guinevere's
Still whispers from the grave!

*And as the green leaves mantle
The crumbling arch of time,
So men and all their tangled creeds
Toward God and beauty climb.*

Of this philosophic group "The Woman Sang" is one of the most significant. In this poem Mr. Stringer expresses the unusual belief that the outstanding achievement of one person may be the result, not only of his own past lives, but of the lives of others who have influenced him "And we who most knew Life remember most!" Lines describing the song of the "Singing Woman who was naught to us" are succeeded by the following passage:

For not as waters sing, nor wakened
birds,
You sang to us who should have joyous
heard,
Had we not seen too far beyond the
bourne
Of Past and Future and been
strangely moved
By undertones of half-remembered
things.
For not in your rapt breast and body
warm
This Song was born, nor of your
spirit grew.

* * * * *

A thousand ghostly bosoms tenderly
Once nourished dark this root of regal
song,
And women that you know not of,
through you
As through a pipe, forever cry and
plead;

The poet's belief in reincarnation is stressed in the personal note which marks the concluding stanza:

And this immortal makes mortality,
This is the most that we may ask of
life,

This echo of ourselves abiding still
In others, creeping up the slopes of
Time

Where God and Aspiration stand as
one!

And since all temporal things toward
Beauty trend

To live, however slow they move and
deep,

Let us be glad of Music, and more
glad,

My troubled Soul, remembering 'twas
man

Distilled through all the years this
ageing wine

Of song, through Earth's dark fer-
ment of first speech!

Mr. Stringer has written several poems relating to student days at Oxford, "the timeless city on the Isis." "One April Dusk," belonging to that period, expresses with a convincing simplicity the poet's belief in reincarnation. It opens with a description of the silence and the warm rain of *an April dusk* in England when "all the loneliness of all the world seemed eating" at the heart of the homesick Canadian youth. Suddenly there fell upon the air "a burst of song."

I knew it was the nightingale,
Waking the valley, voicing all the
ache

Of all the loneliness that earth had
known.

I knew it was the nightingale that
made

The mist-emerging moon seem beauti-
ful

And crowned with sudden rapture all
the gloom

And touched with calm the heart of
troubled youth.

I knew what bird it was; yet ne'er
before

Had I once hearkened to that tremulous

Full-throated music born of night and
love.

They told me this, yet long ago and
oft

My straining ears had heard this
selfsame note,

My breast had known this selfsame
balm of song,

Had known the mournful music and
the moon

That left memorial their hills of dusk
And made me wonder in what far-off
times

I had known other lives and was at
home

With all my dark and half-remembered
ghosts!

As a poet Mr. Stringer is most widely known for his Irish poems whose haunting melodies and whimsical characterizations reflect the poet's Irish ancestry. "The Celt Speaks," the prologue to *The Old Woman Remembers*, while not a characteristically Irish poem, is marked by a mystical quality suggesting the influence of the ancestral Irish strain. Its sub-title, "*Jeceris stabit quocunque*," indicates the philosophy which makes it, in the opinion of some readers, the poet's most significant poem on the subject of reincarnation:

*Throw me, and yet I stand:
Chained close, I still walk free,
Since no thrall's link yet spanned
The elusive soul of me.*

*Throw me, but to the end
Some touch of mordant mirth
Shall with disaster blend
To lift me from the earth.*

*When Saxon, Briton, Dane,
Bent me with sword and gyve
I sang, above my slain:
"Break me, but I survive."*

*Break me, but from the dust
Some laughter of the soul
Shall sweeten life's last crust
And keep my spirit whole.*

(All poems quoted by permission of the poet and of McClelland and Stewart, publishers.)

Elsie Pomeroy.

Toronto.

EXCHANGE MAGAZINES

We acknowledge with many thanks the receipt during the past three months of the following exchange magazines:

The American Theosophist, June,
July, August.

Theosophy (United Lodge), June,
July.

The Theosophical Forum (Covina),
June, July, August.

Theosophia (Independent), May-
June, July-August.

The Theosophist (Adyar), May.

Theosophy in Action (Organ T.S. in
Europe), June.

The Theosophical Movement U.L.
Bombay, May, June.

The Bombay Theosophical Bulletin,
April.

The Young Citizen (Adyar), May,
June.

The Aryan Path (Bombay), May,
June.

Lucifer (Covina), June.

The Golden Lotus, June, July.

The Path (Australia), Jan.-March.

Theosophy in New Zealand, July-
Sept.

The Link (Suuth Africa), April-May,
June-July.

Bulletin, United Lodge, London, May.

The Kalpaka, Jan.-March.

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RACIAL PREJUDICES AND SOME MODERN BOOKS

ALBERTA JEAN ROWELL

(Continued from Page 96)

The Jews began their dispersal over many lands following the destruction of their holy city by the Roman legions. Since that time they have sat by the rivers of many foreign Babylons and wept. For centuries the Jew has breathed the stultifying airs of the ghetto, languished in the torture chamber, known the pillory, the stake and the concentration camp—all for loyalty to an ancient tradition. For this he has been an object of derision and the butt of many a jest. For this he has been made the scapegoat of every tyrant who wished to detract unfavourable attention from himself by focussing national odium on a defenceless group.

Must prejudice against the Jew continue and only cease by his complete assimilation? Intolerance for the Jew is largely an affair of religion, for the term "Jew" has a religious connotation and not a racial one. Then there is antipathy for distinctive "Jewish" traits, the result of certain conditioning and not inherent in Jewish glands and physiology as some people erroneously believe. Yet men and women, both among Jews and Gentiles, have demonstrated by their friendly intercourse, the power of enlightened opinion to bridge all differences. As Goethe wisely observed, national hatred is strongest and most violent among those sections of society where culture is lowest.

Racial prejudice is not something innate like the instinct for self-preservation. Individuals who support Jim Crow regulations, berate the Jew, look with favour on restriction of Asian immigration, or raise a hue and cry about the danger of the "yellow peril" do so

because the cultural environment into which they were born fosters racial intolerance.

What are the winds of influence that fan the fires of race hatred? Those who have burrowed deeply beneath social phenomena have unearthed certain fundamental causes of racial tension. It is thought to be basically an outlet for fear, anxiety and inveterate hostility. And economic competition intensifies these divisive emotions.

Fear of the Negro's political ascendancy has largely begotten anti-Negroism in the deep South. The Negro is forced to ride in the rear of cars. He is barred from places of amusement patronized by whites. By these means he is instructed in the belief that he is congenitally inferior. Thus he has been discouraged from agitating for civil and political rights illegally denied him.

Supporters of white supremacy cling to the scientifically discredited myth that the Negro's biological inferiority places him by the ordinances of nature, for all time, in the class of hewers of wood and drawers of water. A good example of the muddled thinking that characterizes anti-Negro propaganda is afforded by this excerpt from *Kingsblood Royal*—" . . . a mulatto invariably lacks both the honour and creativeness of the whites, and the patience and merriment of the blacks. So, the reason why so many mulattoes display talent and high mortality is because they have so much white blood, and the reason why so many extremely dark Negroes show as much talent and morality is because it simply ain't so".

The Negro who clamours for his just rights is a nuisance and a menace. But the Negro who conforms to the stereo-

typed pattern of "Uncle Tom", whose piety consists largely in being satisfied with his station in life and making appropriate obeisance to his superiors, stands approved by "white" standards. When the Negro essays to play the role of the naive comic, with a genius for malapropisms, thus lending support to the current fictions regarding his child-like quality of mind and clown-like propensities, the white man's vanity is placated. The master-servant relationship is thus perpetuated. And that is all that the white man wants.

Tall yarns are circulated regarding the Negro's cousinship with the ape. This is done by those without a smattering of anthropology else they would know that it is we Caucasians who bear the greatest resemblance to the ape in the matter of thin lips and a hairy body. If the white man experiences twinges of conscience when he sees educated Negroes employed as waiters and janitors, and segregated in overcrowded coloured ghettos, myths like this, together with tales of Congo savagery, quickly banish the accusing phantoms that trouble his "white" mentality.

Although fear may be the basic cause of anti-Negroism in the deep South⁵ racial prejudice has also been explained in terms of frustration—an unconscious antagonism that stems from sources other than racial. According to Freud our hostility for an outer condition is the dramatization of some inner tension. For instance, the psychologist will tell you that Hitler's repressed dislike for his father in early years might have been responsible for later persecution of "inferior" aliens. This is the position taken by Dorothy Baruch in

her book *Glass House of Prejudice*. She therefore advocates psycho-analysis as a cure for race hatred. But how many racial bigots would submit to being psycho-analyzed?

Another cause of racial friction put forward by students of the racial question, and little publicized, is the association of a dark skin with the principle of evil⁶. In the West Black is a symbol of mourning as well as sinister forces. The mediævalist who probed deeply into Nature's arcana was anathematized as a *black* magician. Witches, of the traditional fairy tale, who ride the air on broomsticks to start Love's tears and hasten Beauty's decay, are invariably attired in *black*. If the Biblical description of post-mortem states are to be accepted literally, it is in a region of Stygian gloom that the spiritually lost dramatize inner convulsions by weeping and gnashing of teeth. In traditional folklore all Mephistophelian characters that stalk the nether pit and borderlands of the dead, are depicted as wearing the sombre hue of hell's own fumes.

The sight of an ebony or tawny skin frequently conjures up frightening images in the mind of the child entertained by stores of satanic monsters. The child grown to manhood may experience an automatic revulsion to a dark skin because of early fears that attended his reaction to such tales. These notions, implanted at a tender age when the brain is "wax to impress and marble to retain", may blossom later into the noxious weeds of fanaticism and hate.

When all these reasons for racial prejudice are given wide currency, and

⁵ It is a fact that in the South lynching is not as common as it used to be, simply because the group of liberals who are voicing their protests are rapidly growing.

⁶ In the opinion of Eric John Dingwall in *Racial Pride and Prejudice* this is a more basic cause of race hatred than is generally supposed.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Johannesburg Lodge in South Africa we send congratulations coupled with cordial greetings and best wishes to the members from the Canadian Section. Fifty years of steadfast service to the Cause is most commendable and is something to be proud of besides being an important milestone in the history of the lodge. In congratulating the members for having kept the Light of Theosophy burning that number of years we trust that this, the beginning of another fifty years will be conducive to even greater efforts on behalf of our ideals.

* * * *

Our congratulations to Mr. Hugo Valvanne on being elected General Secretary of the Finnish Section. Mr. Valvanne is well-known in the section for his many-sided activities, and is at present a minister in the Finnish Government. At the same time we also congratulate Mr. Curt Berg on being elected General Secretary of Sweden. Until recently Mr. Berg was editor of the Swedish Bulletin and has done much good work in connection with Theosophy in that country.

* * * *

It was with the greatest interest I read a pamphlet entitled "An Animals' Bill of Rights" compiled by Mr. Geoffrey Hodson, and published in New Zealand by the Council of Combined Animal Welfare Organizations. In that country there is a nation-wide campaign to educate the public, adult and juvenile, in animal welfare, and the aforesaid Council is actively engaged in legislation for regulations conducive to mitigation of suffering of dumb creatures. The same procedure might with advantage be emulated here in Canada. I have taken up cudgels several times on behalf

of animals on reading in the daily press cases of extreme cruelty; and the multifarious reportings show very clearly that there is much work to be done in our midst, and I would urge all Theosophists to rally to the support of the S.P.C.A. in the wonderful work they are doing in this respect; thereby taking an active part in doing their share and helping to arouse public opinion against such a slur on our prestige as a civilized nation. It is not sufficient to shudder when one reads of these sufferings and, let it go at that. We have a duty to perform and we must do something about it. Mr. Hodson is to be highly commended for the good work he is engaged in, and it is sincerely to be hoped that repercussions of what he is doing will be felt not only here in Canada but throughout the world.

* * * *

The beginning of July marked the new financial year and members' dues should be sent in as soon as possible to their respective lodges, by doing so, much clerical work will be avoided. We are happy to welcome the following new members into our Section: Miss Martha Marsden, Orpheus Lodge; Mrs. Kathleen Brazier, West End Lodge; and these of the Toronto Lodge: Mrs. Margaret Wilcox; Mrs. Jocelyn Thompson; Mrs. Lillian McLaughlin; Mr. John A. Higgins and Mrs. Ann Thomas.

E. L. T.

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OFFICE NOTES

Isolated students and those unable to have access to Theosophical literature should avail themselves of the Travelling Library conducted by the Toronto Theosophical Society. There are no charges except for postage on the volumes loaned. For particulars write to the Travelling Librarian, 52 Isabella Street, Toronto, Ont.



Mr. Jinarajadasa has pointed out that the words attributed to H.P.B. in the report of his talk to the Toronto Lodge were actually those of the Master K.H. and appear on page 323 of the Mahatma Letters, "learn to be loyal to the Idea, rather than to my poor self."

It was of interest to note in *Deltion*, official organ of the Theosophical Society in Greece, a re-print in the April issue of an article 'Illumination' from the pages of *The Canadian Theosophist*. *Deltion* is a well-printed magazine of sixteen pages published in Athens.



We hear quite a bit these days of a 'School of Wisdom' which will be established at Adyar. Apparently the idea is to have workers from the National Societies attend this School and undergo a period of training. The name seems unfortunate; let us hope that it is not the intention to bestow degrees of "Doctor of Wisdom"! "Wisdom", said Whitman, "cannot be pass'd from one having it to another not having it; Wisdom is of the Soul, it is not susceptible of proof, is its own proof . . ."



The July issue of *The Theosophical Forum*, official magazine of the Theosophical Society, Covina, is a particularly interesting issue. Among the several well written articles we noted particularly "Chemistry and Theosophy" by Clesson Hopkins Harvey, which contains 'A Theosophical Periodic Table of the Chemical Elements' divided into the four realms of Fire, Air, Water and Earth and which indicates 'a Law that covers all the chemical properties of the elements in one symmetrical relationship'. There is also an interesting report by Mr. James A. Long who as a representative of the Theosophical University Press attended the annual Convention of the American Booksellers Association at Washington, D.C., in May of this year, the first time that the Press was represented at the Booksellers' Conventions. The general excellence of publications of the Theosophical University Press always arouses our admiration—the recent edition of *Light*

on the Path and Through the Gates of Gold combined in one volume is a fine example—and Mr. Long in reply to a question as to the comparative quality of the books displayed by publishers at the Convention, said: “. . . there were none that equalled ours . . . all publishers and booksellers commented voluntarily on the quality of our craftsmanship.”

✻ ✻ ✻

Some Unrecognized Factors in Medicine has been republished by The Theosophical Publishing House Ltd., London, price 10/6 net. This has been considerably revised from the 1939 edition and, we would judge, to advantage. We hope to have a comparative review in a subsequent issue.

✻ ✻ ✻

The Link, official organ of the Theosophical Society in Southern Africa, devoted its June-July issue to the National Convention, the 41st in the Section's history and to the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Johannesburg Lodge. The National President, Mrs. J. Eleanor Stakesby-Lewis, in the course of her annual report mentioned that as a result of the policy of disassociation from the Society of affiliated movements, various bodies such as the Institute of Race Relations, the Penal Reform Movement, the Health Foundation, etc., etc., had been transferred to the Theosophical Service Group. This was in accordance with the general opinion expressed earlier at a special meeting held at the Adyar Convention to the effect that the Society should not be identified with such movements. Members are encouraged to work in all movements for Brotherhood and Peace, but the Society itself should be kept separate from them. The Convention Number of the magazine gave an interesting picture of the work being carried on in South Africa where the membership is now 568.

RACIAL PREJUDICES AND SOME MODERN BOOKS

(Continued from Page 102)

their irrationality and confused origins clearly perceived, the passion of race hatred will lose something of its virulence.

The psychologist has sought to dissipate the unhealthy miasma of racial tension by digging into the limbo of subconscious urges and conflicts for the true reasons, and parading them in the light of day. Thus has a considerable purification of the human psyche been achieved. But the novelist, by the dramatic power of his art, is awakening the *consciencess*⁷ of men by enabling them to see, and by “seeing” abhor, the foul and ignoble nature of their racial misdeeds. It is not enough that men and women should be informed of the evils of race prejudice. They must be convinced. As Professor Hall⁸, of the university of Denver, so pointedly observes—“ . . . those who are prejudiced are not going to drop their prejudice unless they can see why it is they are the way they are and what it is doing not only to others but to themselves.”

⁷ On September the 15th, 1947, the press published a story about a young Unitarian minister (Rev. Kenneth L. Patton, by name) who had determined to fight racial discrimination by becoming “a coloured man”. One wonders to what extent he was influenced, if indeed he was, by Lewis's novel *Kingsblood Royal*.

⁸ *American Journal of Sociology* (p. 42, July 1947).

“Our voice is raised for spiritual freedom, and our plea made for enfranchisement from all tyranny, whether of Science or Theology.”—*Isis Unveiled* 1, li.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY— ITS PURPOSE

COMPILED BY GEOFFREY HODSON

In the year 1880, Messrs. A. P. Sinnett and A. O. Hume, then living in India, were permitted to correspond with the two Adept Founders, known by Their initials M. and K. H. Many of the letters from these Masters were much later published as *The Mahatma Letters*. Extracts here given, reveal certain of the Master's views and purposes when founding the Society and may serve both as guide in planning and executing the work of the Movement in these days and as touchstones wherewith to test the relative value of Theosophical objectives and methods of attaining them.

The mysteries never were, never can be, put within the reach of the general public, not, at least, until that longed for day when our religious philosophy becomes universal. —K. H. Letter II, page 6.

The chief object of the T.S. is not so much to gratify individual aspirations as serve our fellow men. —K. H. Letter II, pages 7 and 8.

The new society [Anglo-Indian Branch], if formed at all, must (though bearing a distinctive title of its own) be, in fact, a Branch of the Parent Body as is the British Theosophical Society at London and contribute to its vitality and usefulness by promoting its leading idea of a Universal Brotherhood, and in other practicable ways. —K. H. Letter II, page 9.

The term, "Universal Brotherhood" is no idle phrase. Humanity in the mass has a paramount claim upon us, as I tried to explain in my letter to Mr. Hume, which you had better ask the loan of. It is the only secure founda-

tion for universal morality. If it be a dream, it is at least a noble one for mankind: and it is the aspiration of the *true adept*. K. H. Letter IV, page 17.

The *Chiefs* want a "Brotherhood of Humanity", a real Universal Fraternity started: an institution which would make itself known throughout the world and arrest the attention of the highest minds. —K. H. Letter VI, page 24.

Until final emancipation reabsorbs the *Ego* it *must* be conscious of the purest sympathies called out by the esthetic effects of high art, its tenderest cords to respond to the call of the holier and nobler *human* attachments. Of course, the greater the progress towards deliverance, the less this will be the case, until, to crown all, human and purely individual personal feelings—bloodties and friendship, patriotism and race predilection—all give way, to become blended into one universal feeling, the only true and holy, the only unselfish and eternal one—Love, an immense Love for humanity—as a *Whole!* For it is "humanity" which is the great Orphan, the only disinherited one upon this earth, my friend. And it is the duty of every man who is capable of an unselfish impulse to do something, however little, for its welfare. Poor, poor humanity! it reminds me of the old fable of the war between the Body and its Members: here too, each limb of this huge "Orphan"—fatherless and motherless—selfishly cares but for itself. *The* body uncared for, suffers internally, the limbs are at war or at rest. Its suffering and agony never ceases . . . And who can blame it—as your materialistic philosophers do—if, in this everlasting isolation and neglect it has evolved gods,

unto whom "it ever cries for help but is not heard!" . . . Thus—

"Since there is no hope for man *only in man* I would not let one cry whom I could save!" —K. H. Letter VIII, pages 32-33.

It has been constantly our wish to spread on the Western Continent among the foremost educated classes "Branches" of the T. S. as the harbingers of a *Universal Brotherhood*. —K. H. Letter XXVIII, page 209.

We want true and unselfish hearts; fearless and confiding souls. —K. H. Letter XXVIII, page 214.

We have the weakness to believe in ever recurrent cycles and hope to *quicken* the resurrection of what is past and gone. We *could not* impede it even if we would. The "new civilisation" will be but the child of the old one, and we have but to leave the eternal law to take its own course to have our dead ones come out of their graves; yet, we are certainly anxious to hasten the welcome event. Fear not; although we do "cling superstitiously to the relics of the Past" our knowledge will not pass away from the sight of man. It is the "gift of the Gods" and the most precious relic of all. The keepers of the sacred Light did not safely cross so many ages but to find themselves wrecked on the rocks of modern scepticism. Our pilots are too experienced sailors to allow us to fear any such disaster. We will always find volunteers to replace the tired sentries, and the world, bad as it is in its present state of transitory period, can yet furnish us with a few men now and then. —K. H. Letter XXVIII, pages 214-215.

And I wish I could impress upon your minds the deep conviction that we do not wish Mr. Hume or you to prove conclusively to the public that we really exist. Please realise the fact that so long as men doubt there will be curiosity and enquiry; and that enquiry stimu-

lates reflection which begets efforts; but let our secret be once thoroughly vulgarized and not only will sceptical society derive no great good, but our privacy would be constantly endangered and have to be continually guarded at an unreasonable cost of power.

—K. H. Letter XXIX, page 227.

We cannot consent to over-flood the world at the risk of drowning them, with a doctrine that has to be cautiously given out, and bit by bit like a too powerful tonic which can kill as well as cure. —K. H. Letter XXXIV, page 245.

The Society will never perish as an institution, although branches and individuals in it may. —K. H. Letter XXXIV, page 245.

It is not *physical* phenomena that will ever bring conviction to the hearts of the unbelievers in the "Brotherhood" but rather phenomena of *intellectuality*, *philosophy* and logic. —K. H. Letter XXXV, page 246.

. . . he who joins the Society with the sole object of coming in contact with us and if not of acquiring, at least of assuring himself of the reality of such powers and of our objective existence—was pursuing a mirage? I say again then. It is he alone who has the love of humanity at heart, who is capable of grasping thoroughly the idea of a regenerating practical Brotherhood, who is entitled to the possession of our secrets. He alone, such a man—will never misuse his powers, as there will be no fear that he should turn them to selfish ends. A man who places not the good of mankind above his own good is not worthy of becoming our *chela*—he is not worthy of becoming higher in knowledge than his neighbour. If he craves for phenomena let him be satisfied with the pranks of spiritualism. Such is the real state of things. There was a time when, from sea to sea, from the mountains and deserts of the north to the grand woods and downs of

Ceylon, there was but one faith, one rallying cry—to save humanity from the miseries of ignorance in the name of Him who taught first the solidarity of all men. How is it now? Where is the grandeur of our people and of the one Truth? These, you may say, are beautiful visions which were once realities on earth, but had flitted away like the light of a summer's evening. Yes; and now we are in the midst of a conflicting people, of an obstinate, ignorant people seeking to know the truth yet not able to find it, for each seeks it only for his own private benefit and gratification, without giving one thought to others. Will you, or rather they, never see the true meaning and explanation of that great wreck of desolation which has come to our land and threatens all lands—yours first of all? It is *selfishness* and *exclusiveness* that killed ours, and it is selfishness and exclusiveness that will kill yours—which has in addition some other defects which I will not name. The world has clouded the light of true knowledge, and selfishness will not allow its resurrection, for it excludes and will not recognise the whole fellowship of all those who were born under the same immutable natural law.—M. Letter XXXVIII, page 252.

The sun of Theosophy must shine for all, not for a part. There is more of this movement than you have yet had an inkling of, and the work of the T. S. is linked in with similar work that is secretly going on in all parts of the world. M. Letter XLVII, page 271.

Those who have watched mankind through the centuries of this cycle have constantly seen the details of this death-struggle between Truth and Error repeating themselves. Some of you Theosophists are now only wounded in your "honour" or your purses, but those who held the lamp in preceding generations paid the penalty of their lives for their knowledge.

Courage, then, you all who would be warriors of the one divine Verity; keep on boldly and confidently; husband your moral strength, not wasting it upon trifles but keeping it against great occasion. —K. H. Letter LV, page 322.

The Theosophist's duty is like that of the husbandman's; to turn his furrows and sow his grains as best he can; the issue is with nature, and she, the slave of law. —K. H. Letter LIX, page 339.

The only object to be striven for is the amelioration of the condition of *man* by the spread of truth suited to the various stages of his development and that of the country he inhabits and belongs to. *Truth* has no ear-mark and does not suffer from the name under which it is promulgated—if the said object is attained. —K. H. Letter LXXXV, page 399.

From Theosophy in New Zealand.

REVIEWS

Lead Kindly Light by Vincent Sheean, published by Random House, 364 pages.

More and more, thinking people are becoming aware of the sinister trends of our mechanized society. We are rapidly moving away from the limits of man's control over nature into the region of the uncontrollable.

On the flyleaf of Sheean's book is a reproduction of the mathematical formulæ from which the specific phenomenon of an explosion of atomic energy is derived. There is also a quotation from William James' "Variety of Religious Experience"—"What we need to discover in the social realm is the moral equivalent to war, something heroic that will speak to the minds of men, as universally as war does, and yet will be as compatible with their spiritual selves as war has proved itself incompatible."

Sheean records his increasing disillusionment during the United Nations

Conference and in the two years following. "The ghost that stalked the corridors was, through all that time, atomic energy and not of the humane instincts which forever try to mitigate the devastation wrought by strife." Some years of philosophical reading had indicated to him that in the culture of India might be found an antidote to the moral disintegration of the West. What specific hope he had in this regard, he tells us, centred round the figure of Mahatma Gandhi, in whose long life of discipline and logic he felt the manifestation of an older force than electromagnetics. It was this hope of finding some clue to a different concept of reality than the materialistic one that he took with him to India in the fateful winter of 1947-1948.

Those chapters in the book dealing with the history of India, its religious culture and caste system, will be familiar reading for most Theosophists. What is interesting is the impact of India and particularly of Gandhi on Vincent Sheean. Darshan, for instance, interested him profoundly—he himself experienced it. It is not, he feels, a purely religious phenomenon, but is "a form of happiness induced among Hindus by being in the presence of some great manifestation of their collective consciousness. It may be a person, place or thing, represent present, past or future, so long as it sets up the definite recognizable glow of supra-personal happiness." Nehru is not, in the sense that Gandhi is, a spiritual leader, yet at one time Sheean was present at a mass meeting of some 400,000 people when the loud-speaker apparatus failed. Not a word of Nehru's speech could be heard but the crowd sat blissfully through it all, hearing nothing but experiencing darshan. Gandhi, while understanding it, was sometimes very impatient with what he called the "craze" for darshan. It im-

peded his work as a teacher and reformer. Sheean's own experience of it came about during his talks with Gandhi. Communication, he says, was from soul to soul and not in words alone. He was present at the time of Gandhi's murder, previous to which he had had recurring dreams in which he interposed between the Mahatma and his attacker. Immediately after the shots were fired, he tells us, the Mahatma's consciousness left him and blisters appeared on his hands for which there was no way of accounting. Afterwards certain inner experiences gave him absolute certainty of the transcendent, immanent spirit that men call God. He says, "Even though my 'spiritual' experience (if that is the correct name for it) was of the most rudimentary character—not to be compared to those tremendous revelations which are to be found in religious literature—nevertheless, it was so real, so overwhelmingly real, that it compelled me to reject an entire set of pseudo-sciences and partial sciences as aids to the comprehension of life."

At the time of their first talk Gandhi seems to have accepted Sheean as a sort of Chela, even inviting him to stay at Birla House. The talks seem rather halting as written, probably because his own reactions were so new to the author. Principally they seem to have discussed the Gita—particularly the Gandhi-Gita and the Mahatma's interpretation of Kurukshetra. Gandhi remarked that many people believed him to have been influenced by the Sermon on the Mount. This he denied, asserting that his interpretation is well within the framework of the Upanishads and based on his own perception of self-evident truth. "Kurukshetra is in the heart of man," he said. In this belief he differed from many Indian scholars, among them Shri Aurobindo Ghose. Sheean claims that this transposing of

the Kurufield into the individual life of man is a creative interpretation—that “Shri Aurobindo Ghose’s Kurukshetra is a truth of being (not Being): Gandhi’s Kurukshetra is a truth of becoming. The liberation of India, if this is so, may be a prelude to the peace of the world.”

There is a brief outline in the book of Gandhi’s early life and a more detailed account of the South African period, during which he evolved and first put into practice his philosophy of voluntary sacrifice (Satyagraha). In summing up the meaning of Gandhi’s life and teaching, Sheean says—“Apart from Satyagraha, Gandhi’s teaching is not new. The most significant fact of the lesson of his life, enacted as it was in full view of the world, under modern conditions of limitless publicity was that it “happened” to come at a time when alternatives to the lesson seem to lead to disaster. He taught his lesson in the exact time area which also produced the limitless destructive power of modern physical experiment. Gandhi, in other words, addresses one side of man’s nature at the moment when Einstein addresses another and both say the same thing—make peace or perish.”

It is Sheean’s belief that Satyagraha can help the Western World—that is, the world of individual freedom—through individuals, not masses. In India is a common awareness of soul and over-soul—the people are what he calls co-conscious. In the West individuals can influence other individuals in an endless chain. Sheean concedes that much of Gandhi’s teaching was too ascetic for general acceptance, either in India or elsewhere, nevertheless he says—“In Gandhi’s own life, I perceive, or think I perceive, an embodiment and enactment of the Gita’s teaching. His interpretation of it therefore, in terms of non-violence acquires the value of life rather than the value of literature: he

lived the Gita in non-violent terms. That was his interpretation and he proved it by his hero’s death. Just as life transcends letters, so the Gandhi-Gita triumphs over the unanimous dissent of the scholars by the dramatic perfection of the life given to it.”

E. C.

MYTH OF THE MAGUS

In MYTH OF THE MAGUS, by E. M. Butler and published by the Cambridge University Press, the author shows that the lives of those persons gifted with the more subtle powers of Nature seem to follow a similar pattern. The singular lives of such persons as the two Bacons, Joan of Arc, Faust, Apollonius of Tyana, Pythagoras, Moses, Solomon, Christ, Zoroaster, and others, including Madame Blavatsky, (all of whom are considered in this volume) indicate that in many particulars this resemblance is evident. The identifying characteristics of the Magi, according to the author, are:

1. Supernatural or mysterious origin of the hero,
2. Portents at birth,
3. Perils menacing infancy.
4. Some kind of initiation,
5. Far-distant wanderings,
6. A magical contest,
7. A trial, or persecution,
8. A last scene,
9. A violent or mysterious death,
10. A resurrection and/or ascension.

Often the records are based on mythical or imaginative data or on commonly accepted rumour, rather than historical fact, so that the conclusions are not necessarily final nor authoritative, but using the data at hand, Miss Butler has analyzed the selected lives and checked them against the list which she believes to be representative at least in part, of all magi, and what follows is often highly interesting reading.

Theosophists will be especially interested in the chapter MADAME AND THE MASTERS wherein once again, the much maligned H.P.B. is ushered into public view, this time to be measured for a possible fitting of the magus cape.

Miss Butler's criticisms are not always complimentary (as for instance when she calls Faust ". . . that scrubby little medieval sorcerer . . .") but she does not vilify nor is she inclined to be vindictive. I don't think Miss Butler believes in Masters, but she has the good grace to say, "As far as such Masters are concerned, the burden of disproof is on the sceptics. There is a great deal of evidence in their favour, and since it is next to impossible to investigate it, one should keep an open mind."

Perhaps the chief merit of the treatise (which runs to about 270 pages) lies in the attention focussed on the Society and its founder and the possible interest stimulated in further investigating the books of H.P.B. It is always stimulating, I think, to members of the Society to read the reactions of outsiders to the Society and its work, whether they be an indictment of its methods or a somewhat wilted bouquet for its accomplishments. The book contains a wealth of bibliographical material which will be of value to the student.

Mrs. Olive Oltcher.

187 Belonda St.,
Pittsburgh 11, Pa.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor,
Canadian Theosophist.

Dear Sir,

The Maha Chohan's letter of 1881 has been republished by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, India, and copies may be obtained for 15c from the Toronto Lodge. A lengthy com-

ment is added by Mr. C. Jinarajadasa. The letter offers to us some evidence of the things close to the heart of one who in the words of Mr. Jinarajadasa:—

" . . . from the summit of that mountain sees all mankind spread out before Him, and there is no secret corner which is unrevealed. As no philosopher has ever dreamt of suggesting, with the single exception of Gautama Buddha, the Maha Chohan shows where is the diseased spot in civilization today, whence an infection has spread everywhere causing untold suffering to mankind. This is the struggle for existence, which has steadily become sharper."

This letter, now 68 years old, will register itself more deeply on those amongst us who have laboured in humanitarian causes. It would seem that the path of the introvert, viz.—one who seeks personal liberation alone—does not please Him too much. One could almost feel that Communism with its negative ear to things spiritual, but with a power to deliver a fatal blow at theological authority, might enlist His interest. Perhaps to reflect wistfully on what might now be the role of the Theosophical Society in the world if mankind had but caught its teachings and had learned to manifest them in the way of creative living here on earth.

For Communism and Theosophy are the two ends of something. Both are capable of becoming powerful in the world if taught with passionate enthusiasm.

The former has enlisted sacrificial workers. They endure rebuff and public antagonism, finding refuge in what they believe. The latter is doubtless still seeking its place in the outer world. But the Chohan felt that man caught in the matrix of things physical, in a struggle for existence, could not fit into his everyday thinking the wisdom of the eternal life. Instead, caught in the

struggle for existence—and this in a world of plenty—the heart of man is moved towards a primitive urge, the conquest of bread.

The Chohan reflects upon this. He muses about it, as though like Rodin's Thinker.

Who can truthfully say they can study the Secret Doctrine with full attention, on an empty stomach?

In our place in the outer world, the mundane plane, here is what the Maha Chohan offers us as a guide to conduct:

“For our doctrine to practically react on the so-called moral code, or the ideas of truthfulness, purity, self-denial, charity, etc., we have to preach and popularise a knowledge of Theosophy. It is not the individual and determined purpose of attaining oneself Nirvana (the culmination of all knowledge and absolute wisdom) which is after all only an exalted and glorious selfishness, but the self-sacrificing pursuit of the best means to lead on the right path our neighbour, to cause as many of our fellow-creatures as we possibly can to benefit by it, which constitutes the true Theosophist.”

The Chohan also comments on the errors in religious teachings. These He states, with the exception of Buddhism, all teach man to fear death.

He comments on the danger of the T.S. becoming a mere occult society. He would rather see it perish than have its time wasted with psychic researchings which gratify whims of a few persons, and leave the suffering millions neglected. He commands us to bring the teachings to the world gradually, to co-operate with all true scientists and religionists, regardless of what the outer form may be. He says: “The doctrine we promulgate being the only true one, must, supported by such evidence as we are preparing to give, become ultimately triumphant as every other

truth. Yet it is absolutely necessary to inculcate it gradually enforcing its theories, unimpeachable facts for those who know, with direct inferences deduced from and corroborated by the evidence furnished by modern science.”

We are told that the Chohan sees us from a lofty plane, but in his heart he finds a place for us. He is one with us. He has joined His ends to ours. In our progress he finds delight and happiness. To Him the purpose of the Society, in 1949, is as clear as it was in 1881. To teach mankind to banish fear of death, to find in each of the planes and today in the physical, the place to work for our brothers.

Frederick E. Tyler, F.T.S.

EXCHANGE MAGAZINES

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 O Teosofista (Brazil), May, June.
 Revista Teosofica Cubana, May, June.
 Bulletin T.S. Mexico, May-June.

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