

tions, the quantity has no real importance. Thus, for instance, when alcohol has to be inhaled, it makes no difference in the result obtained whether its surface covers an area of one square inch or that of a large plate.

In the next number it is proposed to show the enormous light that Yæger's discoveries of this new application of the chronoscope throws upon homeopathy in general, and the doubted efficacy of the infinitesimal doses in countless dilutions—especially.

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### FRAGMENTS OF OCCULT TRUTH.

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BY A LAY CHELA.

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No. VIII.

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#### THE PROGRESS OF HUMANITY.

THE course of Nature provides, as the reader will now have seen, for the indefinite progress towards higher phases of existence of all human entities. But no less will it have been seen that by endowing these entities as they advance with ever-increasing faculties, and by constantly enlarging the scope of their activity nature also furnishes each human entity with more and more decisive opportunities of choosing between good and evil. In the earlier rounds of humanity this privilege of selection is not well developed, and responsibility of action is correspondingly incomplete. The earlier rounds of humanity in fact do not invest the Ego with spiritual responsibility at all in the large sense of the term which we are now approaching. The devachanic periods which follow each objective existence in turn dispose fully of its merits, demerits, and the most deplorable personality which the Ego during the first half of its evolution can possibly develop is merely dropped out of the account as regards the larger undertaking, while the erring personality itself pays its relatively brief penalty, and troubles nature no more. But the second half of the great evolutionary period is carried on on different principles. The phases of existence which are now coming into view, cannot be entered upon by the Ego without positive merits of its own appropriate to the new development in prospect; it is not enough that the now fully responsible and highly gifted being which man becomes, at the great turning point of his career should float idly on the stream of progress; he must begin to swim, if he wishes to push his way forward.

Debarred by the complexity of the subject from dealing with all its features simultaneously, our survey of nature has so far contemplated the seven rounds of human development, which constitute the whole planetary undertaking with which we are concerned as a continuous series throughout which it is the natural destiny of humanity in general to pass. But it will be remembered that humanity in the sixth round has been spoken of as so highly developed that the sublime faculties and attributes of the highest adeptships are the common apanage of all; while in the seventh round the race has almost emerged from humanity into divinity. Now every human being in this stage of development will still be identified by an uninterrupted connexion, with all the personalities which have been strung upon that thread of life from the beginning of the great evolutionary process. Is it conceivable that the character of such personalities, is of no consequence in the long run, and that two god-like beings might stand side by side in the seventh round, developed, the one from a long series of blameless and serviceable existences, the other from an equally long series of evil and grovelling lines! That surely could not come to pass, and we have to ask now how do we find the congruities of nature preserved compatibly with the appointed evolution of humanity to the higher forms of existence which crown the edifice.

Just as childhood is irresponsible for its acts, the earlier races of humanity are irresponsible for theirs; but there comes the period of full growth, when the complete development of the faculties which enable the individual man to choose between good and evil, in the single life with which he is for the moment concerned, enable the continuous Ego also to make its final selection. That period, that enormous period for nature, is in no hurry to catch its creature in a trap in such a matter as this,—is barely yet beginning, and a complete round period around the seven worlds will have to be gone through before it is over until the middle of the fifth period is passed on this Earth, the great question—to be or not to be for the future—is not irrevocably settled. We are coming now into the possession of the faculties which render man a fully responsible being, but we have yet to employ those faculties during the maturity of our Ego-hood in the manner which shall determine the vast consequences hereafter.

It is during the first half of the fifth round that the struggle principally takes place. Till then the ordinary course of life may be a good or a bad preparation for the struggle, but cannot fairly be described as the struggle itself. And now we have to examine the nature of the struggle so far merely spoken of as the selection between good and evil. That is in no way an inaccurate, but it is an incomplete, definition.

The ever-recurring and ever-threatened conflict between intellect and spirituality is the phenomenon to be now examined, the common place conceptions which these two words denote must of course be expanded to some extent before the occult conception is realised, for European habits of thinking are rather apt to set up in the mind an ignoble image of spirituality as an attribute of the character rather than of the mind itself,—a pale goody-goodness hour of an attachment to religious ceremonial and of devout aspirations, no matter to what whimsical notions of Heaven and Divinity in which the "spiritually-minded" person may have been brought up. Spirituality in the occult sense has little or nothing to do with feeling devout; it has to do with the capacity of the mind for assimilating knowledge at the fountain head of knowledge itself,—of absolute knowledge,—instead of by the circuitous and laborious process of ratiocination.

The development of pure intellect, the ratiocinative faculty, has been the business of European nations for so long, and in this department of human progress they have achieved such magnificent triumphs that nothing in occult philosophy will be less acceptable to European thinkers at first, and while the ideas at stake are imperfectly grasped, than the first aspect of the occult theory concerning intellect and spirituality,—but this does not arise so much from the under-tendency of occult science to depreciate intellect as from the under-tendency of modern western speculation to depreciate spirituality. Broadly speaking, so far western philosophy has had no opportunity of appreciating spirituality; it has not been made acquainted with the range of the inner faculties of man; it has merely groped blindly in the direction of a belief that such inner faculties existed, and Kant himself, the greatest modern exponent of that idea, does little more than contend that there is such a faculty as intuition,—if we only find how to work with it.

The process of working with it is occult science in its highest aspect,—the cultivation of spirituality. The cultivation of mere power over the forces of nature, the investigation of some of her subtler secrets as regards the inner principles controlling physical results, is occult science in its lowest aspects, and into that lower region of its activity mere physical science may, or even must, gradually run up. But the acquisition by mere intellect—physical science *in excelsis*—of privileges which are the proper apanages of spirituality, is one of the dangers of that struggle which decides the ultimate destiny of the human Ego. For there is one thing which intellectual processes do not help mankind to realise, and

that is the nature and supreme excellence of spiritual existence. On the contrary intellect arises out of physical causes,—the perfection of the physical brain,—and tends only to physical results,—the perfection of material welfare. Although as a concession to “weak brethren” and “religion,” on which it looks with good-humoured contempt, modern intellect does not condemn spirituality, it certainly treats the physical human life as the only serious business with which grave men, or even earnest philanthropists, can concern themselves. But obviously if spiritual existence, vivid subjective consciousness, really does go on for periods greater than the periods of intellectual physical existence in the ratio as we have seen in discerning the Devachanic condition, in the ratio of 82 to 1, at least then surely man’s subjective existence is more important than his physical existence, and intellect in error when all its efforts are bent on the amelioration of the physical existence.

These considerations show how the choice between good and evil,—which has to be made by the human Ego in the course of the great struggle between intellect and spirituality—is not a mere choice between ideas as plainly contrasted as wickedness and virtue. It is not so rough a question as that, whether a man be wicked or virtuous, which must really at the final critical turning point decide whether he shall continue to live and develop into higher phases of existence or cease to live altogether. The truth of the matter (if it is not imprudent at this state of our progress to brush the surface of a new mystery) that the question, to be or not to be, is not settled by reference to the question whether a man be wicked or virtuous *at all*. It will plainly be seen eventually that there must be evil spirituality as well as good spirituality. So that the great question of continued existence turns altogether and of necessity on the question of spirituality as compared with physicality. The point is not so much “*shall a man live, is he good enough to be permitted to live any longer as,*” “*can the men live any longer in the higher levels of existence into which humanity must at last evolve.*” Has he qualified himself to live by the cultivation of the durable portion of his nature? If not he has got to the end of his tether. The destiny which must befall him is annihilation, not necessarily suffering in a conscious existence but that dissolution that must befall the soul which has wholly assimilated itself to matter—into the eighth sphere of pure matter that Ego must descend, which is unfitted to go on any further in the upward spiral path around the planetary chain.

This is the great meaning of the occult doctrine that, “to be immortal in good, one must identify oneself with God: to be immortal in evil with Satan. These are the two poles of the world of souls; between these two poles vegetate and die without remembrance the useless portion of mankind.” The enigma, like all occult formulas, has a lesser application (fitting the microcosm as well as the macrocosm), and in its lesser significance refers to Devachan and Avitchi, and the blank destiny of colourless personalities; but in its more important bearing it relates to the final sorting out of humanity at the middle of the great fifth round, the annihilation of the utterly unspiritual Egos and the passage onward of the others to be immortal in good or immortal in evil. Precisely the same meaning attaches to “Revelations” (iii. 15-16) “I would thou wert cold or hot; so then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” Spirituality then is not devout aspiration; it is the highest kind of intellection, that which takes cognisance of the working of nature by direct assimilation of the mind with her highest principles. The objection which physical intelligence will bring against this view is that the mind can cognise nothing except by observation of phenomena and reasoning thereon. That is the mistake: it can, and the existence of occult science is the highest proof

thereof. But there are hints pointing in the direction of such proof all around us if we have but the patience to examine their true bearings. It is idle to say, in fact merely for one thing, of the phenomena of clairvoyance,—crude and imperfect as those have been which have pushed themselves on the attention of the world—that there are no other avenues to consciousness but those of the five senses. Certainly in the ordinary world the clairvoyant faculty is an exceedingly rare one, but indicates the existence in man of a potential faculty the nature of which, as inferred from its slightest manifestation, must obviously be capable in its highest development of leading to a direct assimilation of knowledge independently of observation. One of the most embarrassing difficulties that besets the present attempt to translate the Esoteric Doctrine into plain language, is due really to the fact that spiritual perceptiveness, apart from all ordinary processes by which knowledge is acquired, is a great and grand possibility of human nature. It is by that method in the regular course of occult training that adepts impart instruction to their pupils. They awaken the dormant sense in the pupil, and through this they imbue his mind with a knowledge that such and such a doctrine is the real truth. The whole scheme of evolution which the foregoing chapters have portrayed, infiltrates into the regular Chela’s mind by reason of the fact that he is made to *see* the processes taking place by clairvoyant vision. There are no words used in his instruction at all. And adepts themselves, to whom the facts and processes of nature are familiar as our five fingers to us, find it difficult to explain in a treatise which they cannot illustrate for us, by producing mental pictures in our dormant sixth sense, the complex anatomy of the planetary system.

Certainly, it is not to be expected that mankind as yet should be generally conscious of possessing the sixth sense, for the day of its activity has not yet come. This consideration may serve to introduce a highly important fact connected with evolution which has been passed over in silence till now. Each round in turn is devoted to his perfection in man of the corresponding principle in its numerical order to its preparation for assimilation with the next. The earlier rounds have been described as concerned with man in a shadowy loosely organised, unintelligent form. The fourth round in which we are now engaged, is the round in which the fourth principle, Will, Desire, is fully developed, and in which it is engaged in assimilating itself with the fifth principle. Reason, Intelligence in the fifth round, the completely developed Reason, Intellect or soul, in which the Ego then resides, must assimilate itself to the sixth principle, spirituality, or give up the business of existence altogether.

All readers of Buddhist literature are familiar with the constant references made there to the Arhat’s union of his soul, with “God.” This, in other words, is the premature development of his sixth principle. He forces himself right up through all the obstacles which impede such an operation in the case of a fourth-round man, into that stage of evolution which awaits the rest of humanity,—or rather as much of humanity as may reach it in the ordinary course of nature,—in the latter part of the fifth round. And in doing this it will be observed he tides himself right over the great period of danger—the middle of the fifth round. That is the stupendous achievement of the adept as regards his own personal interests. He has reached the further shore of the sea in which so many of mankind will perish. He waits there in a contentment which people cannot even realise without some glimmerings of spirituality—of the sixth sense themselves for the arrival there of his future companions. He does not wait in his physical body,—let me hasten to add to avoid misconstruction—but when at last *privileged to resign this*, in a spiritual condition which we have not yet endeavoured to describe.