

# Some Philosophical Fragments

## Supplement to Students Monthly Letter

### HEALING

BY MANLY HALL

THE quest for health has again become an aspect of religion. Numerous cults have sprung up which derive a great part of their income from the metaphysical treatment of disease. Grateful patients enrich these institutions for the real or imaginary help which they have received until today several such organizations flourish like the green bay tree. It seems no more than fair to the public in general and students of metaphysics in particular that the claims and pretensions of the various healing cults should be examined with an eye to the proper segregation of facts and fancies.

In ancient times all physicians were priests of the instituted Mysteries and like the Aesculypiads were attached to some shrine of the god of healing. When the material sciences divorced the occult arts, the physicians departed from the temples. They no longer sought divine assistance for the sick but put their faith in poultices and physics. For nearly two thousand years the medical profession purged and bled a suffering humanity and only within

this present century has the healing art begun to sense its dependency upon spiritual and psychological factors.

Every physician of the ancient world was a priest and a philosopher. It was his duty to minister to the spiritual and mental needs as well as the physical necessities of his patient. Though a body be wracked with pain the origin of that pain is not always in the body. The physician who is not a philosopher will lose many patients that a wise man might have saved. There are also diseases which only a spiritual counsellor can cure. The art of healing is more than *materia medica*. The art of healing has as its first and only consideration—the effecting of a cure. But unfortunately *materia medica* places ahead of the patient's health a numerous array of medical prejudices and limits the practitioner to a few accredited but often ineffectual methods of treatment.

In the last few years the public has staged a successful revolution against pills. Natural methods of combating disease have been sponsored by a long-suffering human kind and the result has been a drastic change in the theory of therapeutics. Doctors, finding their medications unpopular, are more sparing of their prescriptions and drugs stores

#### A ZOROASTRIAN PRAYER

"I praise the well-thought thoughts, well-spoken words, well-performed deeds. I lay hold on all good thoughts, good words, good deeds. I abandon all evil thoughts, evil words, evil deeds. I offer to you, O Ameshaspentas! praise and adoration, with good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, with heavenly mind, the vital strength of my own body."

—FROM AN ANCIENT WORK.

which not long ago catered exclusively to doctors' opinions are dealing in books, hardware, cosmetics and chicken dinners. Even surgery has been affected by the general reformation. Whereas not long ago operations were both numerous and lucrative, drugless healers and dieticians are now even successfully treating appendicitis, the old surgical standby, and saving no end of tonsils.

Under the influence of this rapid transformation in medical theory and practice, the doctors and surgeons are forming into two distinct classes. The first group is composed of the "stand-patters" and their solution to the problem is to exterminate all non-"Medics" and in this way preserve the good old practice in the good old way—at the expense of the patient if necessary. The second group consisting of the forward looking and progressive men are exploring the field of psychology and psychiatry, seeking the hidden causes of manifested things. These men, although somewhat school-bound, are taking an interest in the metaphysical aspects of healing and are more or less honestly desirous of refounding the therapeutic theory upon something more substantial than a pillbox.

As far back as history records there has been a supernatural element at work in the healing arts. When physicians ceased to be priests, priests continued to be physicians. Nearly all old religious orders instructed their initiates in what we may call spiritual healing. The Pythagoreans healed by formulas, the Therapeuti, Nazarenes and Essenes by prayer, and several of the early Christian fathers by the "laying on of hands." As the church persecuted heretics for the sin of non-agreement, so the medical profession, since its inception has persecuted spiritual healers for the crime of non-conformity. In spite of this persecution however, or possibly because of it, there has not been a single century since the Christian era in which well authenticated cases of spiritual healing have not been recorded.

The nineteenth century brought with it a renaissance of ancient culture and belief. The spiritistic cults of the pagan world were reestablished under new names and the non-medical healing arts firmly refounded themselves in society. Before the century closed materia medica was not only aware

of this competition but had felt keenly the inroads of such competition. In the twentieth century the healing art may be said to consist of three important schools:

1st: the conservative and orthodox medical school.

2nd: the unorthodox and less conservative school the osteopaths, chiropractors, naturapaths, dieticians, psychiatrists, etc.

3rd: healers, "practitioners," organizations and individuals—usually without any scientific knowledge or background—practising mental, spiritual or faith healing, magnetism, prayer, auto-suggestion and similar methods of inducing health.

Our present writing is devoted largely to the third group for it is this group which for the most part combines healing with religion. Entrenched behind the religious rights of the individual, various non-medical methods of treating disease are able to function which otherwise would fall easy prey to the legislations of the American medical board.

Metaphysical healing derives its authority directly from divine revelation. The founders of nearly all great religious movements, with the possible exception of Mohammed, are all accredited with possessing a supernatural power. In most cases miracles are attributed to them. What pious Christian would deny the power of faith over disease when their own Saviour had raised the dead, opened the eyes of the blind, and had given to His disciples power to heal the sick in His name? The problem of miracles leaves materia medica and theology in a deadlock. Although the Protestant clergy did not assert its privilege of treating disease by virtue of the admonition of its Founder, it was certainly sympathetic to the idea that God could bestow at His pleasure a curative virtue upon individuals untrained in medical science. Many of our medical specialists disagree, but must state their opinions in a modulated voice lest they lose patients.

We are now in an era of mystical movements. Dissatisfied with the literal interpretations of our spiritual canons, we are seeking to discover within

the hard rind of dogma some richer meat. The desperate need for a more adequate spiritual code forces us into the mystical outlook and with mysticism inevitably comes healing. Mysticism is a mental Utopia. It is the Promised Land of theology. Mysticism is an escape from sordid literalism, and millions of people, disillusioned and disappointed, turn from the oppression of the outer world and seek release and solace in the building up of an inner mystical existence. It is natural that this trend should result in a critical attitude towards these materialistic institutions which are left behind. If it is a fact that the average material scientist has no patience with mystics, it is equally true that mystics have no patience with material scientists. If it be true that the materialistic scientist is bigoted in his opinions, it is in equal measure true that the average student of metaphysics is bigotted in his mysticism. The doctor will say, "My hospital is full of individuals who ruin their lives through metaphysics." And the metaphysical healer will say, "My sanatorium is filled with wreckage of medical ignorance." There is some truth on both sides and this makes the problem even more difficult to solve.

(To be continued)

## PALINGENESIS OF PLANTS

PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRODUCTION OF ASTRAL PLANT LIFE ON FROSTED WINDOW PANES

A REPRINT FROM "STAR OF THE MAGI" DEC. 1900.

A curious little pamphlet, bearing the explanatory title of "Frost Flowers on the Windows, the Result of Vital Energy of Plants," was issued some little time ago by a Chicago writer purposely to be circulated among the great scientific institutions and scientific journals of Europe and the United States. The author, Albert Alberg, who is well known in England and also somewhat in America as a writer for children, quite by chance came upon a new light in psychic philosophy during the severe winter of 1899 in Chicago. He observed that the leaves

of plants in particular photographed their structure on the frozen panes of windows. The first startling discovery was made at a restaurant, where he found that a number of puny celery stalks, left over from a dinner in their respective tumblers, had photographed themselves as ENTIRE celery plants, in their full growth and pulpy form in one long continuous row on four windows and also that some ferns had done likewise on a larger front window. This occurred on January 29, 1899.

Mr. Alberg perceived, at a glance, that the frost flowers were no mere freaks of "Jack Frost," as commonly accepted, but constituted a perfect system or process of Nature, where the psychic or soul life, so to speak, of the plant testified its existence in the delicate and often glorious display on the frosted window panes, a veritable palingenesis or resurrection of the plant in ice—an ice photography of the vital force of the plant, permeating the whole vegetable kingdom. He followed up this incipient indication and for several weeks made a number of startling discoveries and charming observations, enabling him, in a manner, to classify or systematize the whole floral frost display.

What Mr. Alberg noted may be briefly and concisely stated thus: If there be living plants in the rooms and there is a severe frost the plants will display their contours and even the ramifications of their fibres or network on the frosted window panes. If there are no living plants within, but such have recently been consumed therein, either by cooking or eating or smoking, you will invariably find just such leaves in the frost flowers. A cooked cabbage will produce a large cabbage leaf, cereals will give stunted grains with floss, frozen tobacco fumes will realize maimed tobacco leaves, and florists have their winter stock of greenery reproduced on their windows when the air inside is not too warm to admit of their icy reproduction. Yet still more startling discoveries were made—for instance, that woolen goods produce tall grass and foliage, such as the sheep have grazed upon, and that meat store windows and leather bindings displays will exhibit similar pasture herbage. But perhaps the most astonishing of all is that druggists' windows, and particularly saloon windows, where tropical ingredients in bottles occasionally uncorked will

surcharge the atmosphere to such an astounding degree that a rich tropical vegetable display is shown on the windows.

All these phenomena are on a somewhat magnified scale, with the exception of that of burning fir tree cordwood, when the redolent particles still lingering in the air in the room reproduce entire miniature fir trees in long rows, just as did the celery plants on the windows on an enlarged scale, with pulpy thickness. Among these observations noted are the following:

"The saloon, southeast corner of Sixtieth and State streets, was repapered on February 7. It being a very cold day the consequence was that at night the entire two large front windows were covered with an uncommonly thick layer of ice tracings of cereals, the effect of the paste used during the day. I drew the attention of the proprietor to it, who at once perceived the phenomenon of the powerful emanations of the cereals of which the paste was made. As I was curious I called again the following afternoon, when we both observed that nearly everywhere the tracings of cereals lay in uniform layers, just as the paper hanger's brush had affixed the paste on the long paper strips, by strokes right and left, which, however, had been effected in the adjoining back room, but having once been transfixed on the back of the paper, now in the big bar-room, to judge by appearance, had evidently transmitted, by vibration, its influence on the large window glass panes, perhaps accelerated by the paper hanger's brush when smoothing down the paper on wall and ceiling. In the smokerooms ice tracings of tobacco leaves were plainly visible during several cold days." Another citation from Mr. Alberg's work presents a strong bit of evidence: "Mrs. Charles Howard, a Theosophist of Chicago, after having heard a portion of this paper read, looked in her own house to see if she might discover any sign of ice palingenesis. She soon found an exemplar on a window pane in front of which had chanced to be left a small jar of preserved grapes, in consequence of which a couple of large bunches of grapes had developed on the frosted window."

All these observations led Mr. Alberg to various philosophical speculations and deductions upon the psychic conditions of plants, and their relative con-

nection with man. He says:

"From our observation of ice tracings, the frost seems in a manner to supply the means of astral resurrection of plants, which Paracelsus and Dr. Hartmann refer to as being one of the secrets of the alchemists of bygone ages, for the plants plainly demonstrated by their ice palingenesis that they possess an innate power of extending their influence even into frost. With frost we generally associate death, just as with genial heat we associate life. But ice is not death, as witness the whole arctic regions, replete with cold-blooded animal life. Thus, then, we may infer that the frost flowers have been for the nonce imbued with life from their parent efflorescent plants, for else how would they have been called into existence? And exist they most certainly do. Do we not here stand face to face with another wonder of creation—ice palingenesis, or evolution of a plant into a frost flower counterpart, an ice shadow of its material ego, which could not have been called into existence had the parent plant no self-consciousness, no vital energy, no ego, no soul?"

"Thomas Edison holds that plants possess consciousness; some call it automatic consciousness. I am perfectly convinced of it. For instance, if you deprive a creeper of its support it will soon send out an eager tendril to find another hold. Have the plants any object in thus repeating themselves in fancy ice tracings, or is it a mere freak of the plant, as we hitherto thought it was a freak of 'Jack Frost?' Depend upon it, there is no such thing as freak or chance in Nature, although the transient existence of the frost flowers may appear to us as purposeless as it is inexplicable to most of us. Yet they will occur again and again as often as opportunity affords, a bit of Nature, tiny and transient, I grant, but yet a phase of Nature, although hitherto ignored or laughed at. But from the attention drawn to the frost flowers I hope you will henceforth find them as interesting as heretofore you have found them, and always will find them exquisitely beautiful, and that you may try and find out their cause and their mission."

Like the important discovery of the sexuality of plants by Linnaeus, Mr. Alberg's discovery has first been recognized in Sweden and Holland.