

The Irish Theosophist.

“THE BHAGAVAD GITA” IN PRACTICAL LIFE.

(Continued from p. 144.)

THE third chapter of *The Bhagavad Gita* deals with the right performance of action, this right performance being looked upon as true devotion. Arjuna, being at the point where a man desires to do his duty, asks whether knowledge is indeed “superior to the practice of deeds,” as he has understood Krishna to say. No mistake more natural than this. The idea of knowledge at first absorbs the mind of the student of spiritual things, and most come but slowly to a realization of the fact that true knowledge is being, that we can never truly be said to know a truth until we have thoroughly lived it. The truth must be manifest in us, realized in our own persons. Krishna then replies that there are indeed two modes of devotion, the one being the “exercise of reason in contemplation,” and the other Yoga, or “devotion in the performance of action.” Here the key-note is struck; devotion is shown to be practical action.

It is noteworthy that in the very beginning of his statement to Arjuna, the blessed Lord strikes the most human of all chords—he refers to man’s need of happiness. For at once we are shown that man cannot find happiness in inaction. The reason is given. Nature is against it. The “qualities which spring from Nature” impel to action. Only when man has penetrated behind the veil of Nature does he rise above the influence of the qualities: he then sees these qualities, these three great orders or divisions of force, moving in the ocean of being above which his supreme consciousness has soared.

We can, to some extent, picture the qualities to ourselves as three great orders of vibration and consciousness, of which one, Tamas, is inertia; the second, Rajas, the driving force; and the third, Sattva, equilibrium or balance, the other pole of inertia. Between these two poles plays Rajas, the driving energy, in one sense a path from one to

the other. Inertia may be converted to equilibrium by means of the action of energy. Balance would become stagnation were it not for that same energetic action. The three, interacting, compel to action the universe composed of Nature's substance. But the Self being "distinct from them" (the qualities) and above Nature, man may find eternal peace in the harbourage of the Self.

Another reason, an ethical one, is given in favour of devotion through the right performance of action. "The journey of thy mortal frame cannot be accomplished by inaction." To those who regard the body as dust to be cast aside, this teaching must sound strange. But the man who knows that the physical and astral bodies are built up of elemental lives—or life atoms, if the term be preferred—recognizes a duty towards those lives upon which his thoughts leave an impress, a stamp almost indelible, lives which mirror his acts. They are the monads of Leibnitz, "every monad a mirror of the universe," and in the case of man that universe is the sphere to which they belong. They are the skandhas, the bearers of Karma. Under the play of human energy they give up the pictures of the past, the forces locked within them, and are, in short, agents of Karma, bearers of the destiny man has provided for himself. To evolve every atom of his chosen habitation, to transmute these locked-up forces into higher energies, is a part of the duty of man. Inaction would inhibit the interaction of these life atoms, and the choice of good or evil continually offered by that interaction would be lost to "the lives" and to man.

We next find the comprehensive statement that "actions performed other than as sacrifice unto God make the actor bound by action." Why is this?

We have just seen that action, in regard to the three qualities, proceeds in a never-ending circle. At first sight man would appear to be bound in that, as Ixion was bound upon the wheel. But this is not so. He is bound while he acts from the basis of Nature. Let him act from the consciousness of the Self, the Lord above Nature, and he is no longer bound. For the Self is free, and only the Self. Nature is a secondary product and is not free from the action of her qualities. But the man who acts with the whole of Nature, that is, with Nature guided by law, already approaches freedom: he has cast aside the shackles of the personal self. Not until he has become one with Maha-Atma—the supreme Spirit—can his freedom be called perfect; but still, the lower self once sufficiently cast aside to allow him to act with Nature, he may be said to draw near to the Self. In thus acting with Nature he sacrifices, as Nature herself does, to divine law. It should not be forgotten

that Nature “exists for the purposes of soul,” hence her action is sacrifice. The same is true of man; when he exists only to fulfil the law and resists not the effects of those causes which he himself set in motion, then he also fulfils the purpose of soul (which purpose is evolution), and has resigned “the whole world” to gain that purified soul which is his true Self.

Krishna then makes the statement which has puzzled so many readers of the sacred book, and in which we seem to discern a storehouse of hidden occult truths. “Beings are nourished by food, food is produced by rain, rain comes from sacrifice and sacrifice is performed by action. Know that action comes from the Supreme Spirit who is one; wherefore the all-pervading Spirit is at all times present in the sacrifice.”

In *The Voice of the Silence* occurs a verse which throws some light upon the lines just quoted. “Desire nothing. Chafe not at Karma nor at Nature’s changeless laws. But struggle only with the personal, the transitory, the evanescent and the perishable. Help Nature and work on with her”

And then how will Nature regard the man who follows this behest?

“Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance.”

Not as a helper, but as “*one of her creators.*” It seems strange, does it not, until we remember that “action comes from the Supreme Spirit who is one”? How if the Great Breath breathes through all action, action being a necessity for the evolution of Nature and Soul: and how if man, in abandoning all personal desire in action, in acting only as “sacrifice” to the Supreme, has really left action to that Supreme Spirit? The Karma at which he shall not chafe is the whole round of action and reaction; he accepts it all, doing only his duty in every act and resigning all possible results to Krishna, who is “present in the sacrifice” as the Mover, the Breath. That Breath is creative. When man has thus sacrificed his personal desires to the necessary round of action, he works with that creative Breath, and being so regarded by Nature she “shows the means and the way” to him.

But the man who delights in gratifying his passions “does not cause this wheel thus already set in motion to continue revolving.”

In a well-worn copy of the *Gita*, used for many years by our late beloved chief, Mr. Judge, I found this note, quoted from memory:

“This wheel is the Cycle of All, and it is the place and nature of man, in Cosmos, to assist in the revolution of the Cycle of All.” I have heard this spoken of as “the human cycle,” and have supposed

this to mean that the whole of the great sub-division of time here indicated as "the Cycle of All" is the "period of choice" for the present human race. Be this as it may, we see that discord is introduced into the action of the great harmonious vibration by the sinful desires of man, whose personal energy and will introduce, as it were, a cross series of waves which mar the even sweep of the currents of the Breath.

The simile of rain and sacrifice reminds us that the emanations of the earth are cast up into the atmosphere and descend in the form of rain. In air is to be found every component of the earth, water, fire; the gases, known and unknown, the mysterious sun-force of the alchemist, all are there. We have been told that the thought of man affects these emanations, as it affects every convulsion of Nature, and all at once we see a new meaning in the simile of the rain and the sacrifice. Mr. Judge has hinted in one of his books that the Ego may be bound by certain kinds of food. Certainly the life-essence enters the human body by means of food. May we not find reason to believe that it descends in rain? Many a hint in alchemical works points in this direction. "Rain comes from sacrifice," which "sacrifice is performed by action." What kind of action? The action of thought? The action of the One Life, "at all times present in the sacrifice"? Here is matter for much meditation. Even on a cursory reading we see the interaction between Nature and man, and the fact that there is such interaction proves to us the importance of every thought and action, when each must be for or against evolution.

Reasons are then given for action as opposed to inaction. Krishna, full of tenderness for mortals, shows the boundless scope of universal love when he declares that all these creatures would perish were he to cease to act, to breathe forth. The wise man is he who knows that "the qualities act only in the qualities," that is, that the qualities or three forces are the actors in Nature; he attributes all this action to the qualities, and by conceiving the Self as distinct from them, as a consciousness above and apart from them, even though in a mystical sense "present in the sacrifice," he comes in time to unite himself with that Self. Meanwhile he seeks "for that which is homogeneous with his own nature." That is to say, he recognizes that all his present surroundings are the karmic outcome of his own nature; his own desires and acts brought him where he stands, and his conditions are, in fact, what he most desired, for they are the immediate results of his desire and choice. Hence he accepts them all and tries to work them out by doing his duty in each as it rises, neither liking nor disliking them.

Even if he should perish in the performance of his duty, he has fulfilled the law. His return to the scene of action will find him further on the path.

Arjuna then asks what instigates man to offend, and he is told that “lust instigates him.” We must not narrow the meaning of the word “lust,” for it is “passion, sprung from the quality of Rajas.” That is to say, desire, the product of the driving energy of Nature. There is help to be found in the direction of a constant recollection of this truth. If man could only cease to identify himself with his desires, much sin would be at an end. *The Voice of the Silence* warns us :

“If thou wouldst cross the first hall safely, let not thy mind mistake the fires of lust that burn therein for the sunlight of life.”

In other words, this desire, this driving force, is not the true life-force, the universal essence. Although the fire of desire burns in the mind, that mind which is the lord (“rajah”) of the senses, “the Thought-Producer,” the “great Slayer of the Real,” yet man shall know that this desire is the Hall of Ignorance. Its empire is wide. It rules, when it rages, “the senses and organs, the thinking principle”; even to Buddhi, here called “the discriminating principle,” does its fatal power extend. “The Lord of the body,” or the Lord *in* the body, the Ego, is deluded when desire “surrounds” the discriminating principle; when the “holy seat” of Buddhi, the white light of wisdom, is surrounded by the raging desire-flames and the smoke of passion and sin. That light cannot manifest at the sacred place so long as the grosser flames rage there.

It is a well-known fact in human nature that desire ends with possession, and the mind of man passes on to new conquests, new desires. This fact should be the means of liberation, for it proves that man does not *himself* desire anything; the Rajas fire burns, that is all. Once convinced of this, once satisfied that that desire is never appeased when its apparent object is attained, but continues unabated, man would surely cease to be the dupe of desire. He would grasp the fact so cunningly concealed by Nature, that he in truth does not desire, but that desire—the driving energy—operates in the substance of his sphere. Once he can begin to put an end to the mental identification of himself with this desire, this quality of Nature, he is in the position of one who, link by link, strikes off his chains. It is this identification of himself with Nature’s quality which has forged and ever rivets his chain. Once let him realize that he has an antagonist; once let his mind glimpse the truth that liberation is possible, that his own real interest is not with this desire, but is on the other side, and already he

has taken the first step towards freedom. Then he wonders why he did not earlier discern this truth ; for instance, when he saw that the gratification of his various desires neither assuaged desire itself, nor yet contented him ; that he was not happy ; why did he not then find a hint of the truth ? Desire never gratified any one of us ; we are never permanently happy ; why ? We conceive the desired object strongly and singly ; we give no thought to the consequences it entails. But it never comes singly ; it brings in its train a throng of unimagined conditions and consequences, most of them reactions of that initial action, desire. We have thought perhaps of the pleasing consequences, and not of their polar opposites, their shadows. We forgot what Krishna later tells Arjuna, " the pleasures which spring from the emotions are the wombs of future pain." The very nature of action implies reaction and that to its polar opposite. Why then have we been so blinded ? Is it not because the personality, seeking to assure itself of its power, its life, borrowing even the hope of immortality whispered by the spirit to the soul, drives us onward to gratify its own thirst for sensation, to employ its own driving force, to accrete strength and consciousness around itself ; it conceals from us, as in a blinding glare of life, that other side, that calm light which would reveal truth to the mind. It would appear, from this point of view, that the personality is an entity working for itself and opposed to the progress of the inner man. What if that be so ? What if the personality be a congeries of elemental lives, all driven onward by desire, until some higher unifying force appears from above or from within to guide and train them towards a wider plan ? Then the personality, under the influence of Tamas, ignorance or inertia, uses this driving force which it finds within its component parts, as a " will to live," a will for itself. Every part evolves this will, and each is " for itself." Can we wonder that man is torn asunder ? But he can unify himself by the strength of the higher will, once he catches a glimpse of Sattva. In that calm radiance he contemplates the real nature of desire, and knows that he is not that ; that even Sattva is but a light to be used by him, a temporary aid, and that he himself is one with that Ego which is " He, greater than Buddhi," for the divine Thinker is greater than his thought. Krishna states this truth very clearly and frequently, that the real man is the Ego, for if we look to that Light as something separate from ourselves we can never merge ourselves into it. Hence Arjuna is ever the bowman because he must never loose his hold of the bow, that saving weapon, that tense instrument which is his constant thought, " I am That." This is the never-ending thought of the manifested universe ;

it is the Aum, the eternal vibration chanted forth by cosmos evermore. It is the "great bird" between whose wings he shall rest when he has given up the personal life, divided and separative as that life ever is, torn, tempest-tossed and complex as it looks to his weary mind when he comes to loose his clutch upon its lures to live the life. May thy bow, Arjuna, hit that shining mark!

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(*To be continued.*)

THE MAELSTROM.

Behold the hosts of souls.

I WATCHED the mighty mass of souls sweep onward without ceasing. A roaring filled my ears as of endless torrents, rent by sharp shrieks and curses.

A sulphurous smoke arose; an awful stench. Across the darkness, black and terrible, shot now and then a lurid glare that made the moving horror plainly visible.

My brain reeled. Sick and faint I cried: "Lo, Master, what is this thou showest me?"

He of the radiant face and anguished eyes replied: "This is the stream of human life; study it well."

I caught the faces swiftly passing. Pain and sorrow on each one I read; an awful tragedy. But heart-breaking as these suffering ones appeared, I found a deeper sorrow in the ones that spoke of joy.

"This is the maelstrom of man's life," the Master said, "in which he lives, from which he fears to die, to which he hungers to return. Here lies our task: to show a way out of this hell, to make men wish to walk in it when shown."

"Appalling is the work!" I cried aghast.

"Yea, verily," the clear voice answered me, "but verily it must be done."

I looked above to the deep vault of heaven, gemmed with its myriad stars. A cool air blew, as from some snow-clad mountain's summit, laden with fragrance and with peace. But knowing what must be, and nerved by the Master's smile of tenderest compassion, I plunged into the maelstrom far below.

CAVE.

THE AGE OF THE SPIRIT.

*I am a part of all that I have met :
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
 Gleams that untravelled world . . .
 Come, my friends.
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.—ULYSSES.*

WE are no longer children as we were in the beginning. The spirit which, prompted by some divine intent, flung itself long ago into a vague, nebulous, drifting nature, though it has endured through many periods of youth, maturity, and age, has yet had its own transformations. Its gay, wonderful childhood gave way, as cycle after cycle coiled itself into slumber, to more definite purposes, and now it is old and burdened with experiences. It is not an age that quenches its fire, but it will not renew again the activities which gave it wisdom. And so it comes that men pause with a feeling which they translate into weariness of life before the accustomed joys and purposes of their race. They wonder at the spell which induced their fathers to plot and execute deeds which seem to them to have no more meaning than a whirl of dust. But their fathers had this weariness also and concealed it from each other in fear, for it meant the laying aside of the sceptre, the toppling over of empires, the chilling of the household warmth, and all for a voice whose inner significance revealed itself but to one or two among myriads.

The spirit has hardly emerged from the childhood with which nature clothes it afresh at every new birth, when the disparity between the garment and the wearer becomes manifest: the little tissue of joys and dreams woven about it is found inadequate for shelter: it trembles exposed to the winds blowing out of the unknown. We linger at twilight with some companion, still glad, contented, and in tune with the nature which fills the orchards with blossom and sprays the hedges with dewy blooms. The laughing lips give utterance to wishes—ours until that moment. Then the spirit, without warning, suddenly falls into immeasurable age: a sphynx-like regard is upon us: our lips answer, but far from the region of elemental being we inhabit, they syllable in shadowy sound, out of old usage, the response, speaking of a love and a hope which we know have vanished from us for evermore. So hour by hour the scourge of the infinite drives us out of every nook and corner of life we find pleasant. And this always takes place when all is fashioned to our liking: then into our dream strides the wielder

of the lightning: we get glimpses of the great beyond thronged with mighty, exultant, radiant beings: our own deeds become infinitesimal to us: the colours of our imagination, once so shining, grow pale as the living lights of God glow upon them. We find a little honey in the heart which we make sweeter for some one, and then another lover, whose forms are legion, sighs to us out of its multitudinous being: we know that the old love is gone. There is a sweetness in song or in the cunning reïmaging of the beauty we see: but the Magician of the Beautiful whispers to us of his art, how we were with him when he laid the foundations of the world, and the song is unfinished, the fingers grow listless. As we receive these intimations of age our very sins become negative: we are still pleased if a voice praises us, but we grow lethargic in enterprises where the spur to activity is fame or the acclamation of men. At some point in the past we struggled mightily for the sweet incense which men offer to a towering personality: but the infinite is for ever within man: we sighed for other worlds and found that to be saluted as victor by men did not mean acceptance by the gods.

But the placing of an invisible finger upon our lips when we would speak, the heart-throb of warning where we would love, that we grow contemptuous of the prizes of life, does not mean that the spirit has ceased from its labours, that the high-built beauty of the spheres is to topple mistily into chaos, as a mighty temple in the desert sinks into the sand, watched only by a few barbarians too feeble to renew its ancient pomp and the ritual of its once shining congregations. Before we, who were the bright children of the dawn, may return as the twilight race into the silence, our purpose must be achieved, we have to assume mastery over that nature which now overwhelms us, driving into the Fire-fold the flocks of stars and wandering fires. Does it seem very vast and far away? Do you sigh at the long, long time? Or does it appear hopeless to you who perhaps return with trembling feet evening after evening from a little labour? But it is back of all these things that the renewal takes place, when love and grief are dead; when they loosen their hold on the spirit and it sinks back into itself, looking out on the pitiful plight of those who, like it, are the weary inheritors of so great destinies: then a tenderness which is the most profound quality of its being springs up like the outraying of the dawn, and if in that mood it would plan or execute it knows no weariness, for it is nourished from the First Fountain. As for these feeble children of the once glorious spirits of the dawn, only a vast hope can arouse them from so vast a despair, for the fire will not invigorate them for the repe-

tition of petty deeds but only for the eternal enterprise, the purpose of the immemorial battle waged through all the ages, the wars in heaven, the conflict between Titan and Divinity, which were part of the never-ending struggle of the human spirit to assert its supremacy over nature. Brotherhood, the declaration of ideals and philosophies, are but calls to the hosts, who lie crushed by this mountain nature piled above them, to arise again, to unite, to storm the heavens and sit on the seats of the mighty.

As the Titan in man ponders on this old, old purpose wherefor all its experience was garnered, the lightnings will once more begin to play through him and animate his will. So like the archangel ruined let us arise from despair and weariness with inflexible resolution, pealing once more the old heroic shout to our fallen comrades, until those great powers who enfold us feel the stirring and the renewal, and the murmur runs along the spheres, "The buried Titan moves once again to tear the throne from Him."

Æ.

AN INTERESTING LETTER.

[This letter was written by Mr. Judge to the London household at the close of 1893. It is most comprehensive, and much in it seems to be as applicable at this present time as when it was first written.—ED.]

ONCE more in the absence of — I send you a word of brotherly greeting. I would ask you to read it impersonally in every part, as I have no reserved thoughts and no ulterior aim in it, and have not had any letters or news from anyone to lead me to write. We are so far away from each other that now and then such a greeting is well and should be taken in the spirit it is sent. It is not possible to send to any other household, as none other exists in the Society, you being unique in this, that you are the only one. Here we have no such thing, all nearly living at other places and this being a mere centre for work.

Many times have coöperative households been tried and failed. One was tried here and is famous. It was called the Brock Farm, but it had no such high aim and philosophy behind it as you have, and thus the personal frictions developed at any place of close intimacy broke it up. That should be a guide to you to enable you to watch and avoid. Yours may alter in number and in *personnel*, but can never be really broken up if the aim is high and the self-judgment strict and not self-righteous. I am not accusing you of this, but only stating a common human danger, from which the Theosophist is not at any time exempt. Indeed he is in danger in your centre from the fact that strong force

revolves around it. Hence all must be ever careful, for the personal element is one that ever has a tendency to delude us as it hides behind various walls and clothes itself in the faults, real or imaginary, of *others*.

Your centre being the only one as yet of such size, it is useful for you to think how you may best all act as to make it truly international. Each one has a right to his or her particular "crank," of course, but no one ought to think that anyone else is to be judged from not being of the same stripe of "crank." One eats meat, another does not. Neither is universally right, for the kingdom of heaven does not come from meat or from its absence. Another smokes and the other does not; these are neither universally right nor wrong, as smoke for one is good and for another bad; the true cosmopolitan allows each to do in such matters as he likes. Essentials are the only things on which true occultism and Theosophy require an agreement, and such temporary matters as food and other habitual daily things are not essentials. One may make a mistake, too, of parading too much his or her particular line of life or act. When this is done the whole world is bored, and nothing effective or lasting is gained except a cranky impression.

In a place like yours, where so many of all sorts of nature are together, there is a unique opportunity for gain and good in the chance it gives one for self-discipline. There friction of personality is inevitable, and if each one learns the great "give and take," and looks not for the faults of the others but for the faults he sees in himself, because of the friction, then great progress can be made. The Masters have said that the great step is to learn how to get out of the rut each one has by nature and by training, and to fill up the old grooves. This has been misconstrued by some who have applied it only to mere outer habits of life, and forgotten that its real application is to the mental grooves and the astral ones also. Each mind has a groove, and is not naturally willing to run in the natural groove of another mind. Hence comes often friction and wrangle. Illustrate it by the flanged wheel of the steam-engine running on a track. It cannot run off nor on a track of broader or narrower gauge, and so is confined to one. Take off the flange and make the face of the wheel broader, and then it can run on any road that is at all possible. General human nature is like the engine, it is flanged and run for a certain size of track, but the occultist or the would-be one should take off the flange and have a broad-faced wheel that will accommodate itself to the other mind and nature. Thus in one life even we might have the benefit of many, for the lives of other men are lived beside us unnoticed and unused because we are too broad and flanged in wheel or too narrow and flanged also. This is not

easy, it is true, to change, but there is no better opportunity than is hourly presented to you in the whole world, to make the alteration. I would gladly have such a chance, which Karma has denied me, and I see the loss I incur each day by not having it there or here. You have it, and from there should go out to all the earth soon or late men and women who are broad and free and strong for the work of helping the world. My reminding you of all this is not a criticism, but is due to my own want of such an opportunity, and being at a distance I can get a clearer view of the case and what you have for your own benefit and also for all others.

It is natural for one to ask: "What of the future, and what of the defined object, if any, for our work?" That can be answered in many ways.

There is, first, our own work in and on ourselves, each one. That has for its object the enlightenment of oneself for the good of others. If that is pursued selfishly some enlightenment comes but not the amount needed for the whole work. We have to watch ourselves so as to make of each a centre from which, in our measure, may flow out the potentialities for good that from the adept come in large and affluent streams. The future, then, for each will come from each present moment. As we use the moment so we shift the future up or down for good or ill; for the future being only a word for the present—not yet come—we have to see to the present more than all. If the present is full of doubt or vacillation, so will be the future; if full of confidence, calmness, hope, courage and intelligence, thus also will be the future.

(To be concluded.)

THE UNCONQUERABLE.

A FRIEND who had written some three or four articles once complained to me that he had ventilated all the original thoughts at his command. He could write no more. Later on he came to the conclusion that he had never had any original thoughts, and immediately commenced to write again. To say a new thing is not possible and he had realized it. We must remain content to repeat the oft-told stories of the past, feeling them true and having carried them in our hearts.

So without apology I join the ranks of those who for ages have been counselling a greater love for all that lives. Such a simple thing; such an antiquated cry. But day by day there is a wider need for just this simplicity. The wisest words I ever heard were these: "*Be compassionate, and sit still in the midst of all that may be said, inclining only*

to your duty." If we are not compassionate the rest is of no account. Men seek wisdom, but the mind and soul and spirit of wisdom is love, and that they have not got and do not seek. They think it will come in time; and meanwhile they try to flatten what skimpy love they have, and spreading it over the universe call it "impersonal." The misery of it!

They work, yes; they may grow learned in many different ways; they may write and speak and give sage counsel to others. But where is that fire of love whose light shines and whose beams bring faith and hope into the world's darkest places? Such people are wise in their own way. They find many blemishes in others—for they look for them. They see hidden motives—for they know something of their own. And they are always anxious that others should share their wisdom—for it is their own. We know them. Someone sees in another some glimpse of his own divinity and pays homage to the divine. Whereupon those who have not love must adjust this matter; they well know the blemishes in this temple of God's light and proceed to hint or boldly point to their existence. A crack in a window-pane through which God's light shines! Perhaps they go still further and deny that the light is there at all—they are better at seeing darkness than at seeing light. And if it be not there, what of it? It has been seen there, and the seer in paying homage did reverence to deity. Is it that he should bow to some other idol, of which they have possession? Or is it that he bows to any and should climb to their loveless heights where benevolent esteem is spread so thin over boundlessness? It matters not. They were better occupied in seeing that they themselves still live; they may yet die.

Is there so little evil in the world that we must needs be for ever hunting it in our friends? If found, is it not better to turn away our eyes in sorrow, than act as devil's showmen at our friends' expense.

If we have insight into character we can surely use it, not by a silly cynicism which rejoices in its own cleverness, nor by assuming the odious duty of exposing the weaknesses of others, but by seeing and evoking the best in those around us, helping them to a wider usefulness and more perfect expression of themselves. For that is love and that is service.

Poor people who have not love! They work and work, maybe for years, but as they work they forget their end in the means adopted for its attainment. Let them turn round on themselves before it is too late and find out *why* they work. Rules of conduct will not save them, nor rules of thought. They may tie themselves up in a maze of rules and precepts and feel themselves safe—but they are not. Jealousy, ambi-

tion, envy, vanity, meanness, ingratitude, with back-biting and all unbrotherliness as their offspring, will do their slow, sure work, now in secret, now in open lawlessness. And they will be powerless against them if they have not love. With it they would have the might of the universe with them and could pass through hell untouched.

Therefore *love*, or thy heart will turn to stone and kill thee; *love*, or thy life will turn to a death more bitter than thy life already is.

Be compassionate, and thy light, which is the One Light, will shine wherever is darkness, and thy service will be of the kingly service which lives and endures for ever. In thee will spring up wisdom, and as thy love becomes more perfect thou shalt know thyself as among the Brethren of the Flaming Heart, the Brotherhood of Compassion.

T.

BE BRAVE! GO ON!

WHAT is said by you to the Branch in case any trouble arises should be only that which you know. Anything else is superfluous and may lead to trouble. Caution them to hold fast, go slow, and remain cool. They will all be tested in various ways, each in his own way, and the rest can be left to Karma and the law. Don't endeavour to keep up a faith that cannot sustain itself. Watch and guide and what is in your power to help will be your work when you are called to do it. Never attempt to do more than the occasion requires, and you will not be obliged to retrace your steps and rectify errors of omission and commission. You need not fear anything while you try to do your duty, and you will be able to do much when the time to do it comes. The trouble will come and pass, and when the skies are again clear the efforts you have made in your own sphere will be of advantage to your further progress. The days are getting short for any work that can affect this cycle, and the new era will bring enormous accessions to the body of the Society and from entirely unexpected sources. Every one will be given the opportunity to work in the new day, and when the present night closes the dawn will find entirely new forces where now there is only disease and death.

Not in many ages has there been such a change as now impends, and when the evil forces are at last exhausted those faithful ones remaining will be ready for a new earth and a new destiny.

I might say much in detail of the present, but can only add that —, and the faithful ones, are all aware that this is the last struggle for them and the Society ere it is established in absolute security for all time, in the new field that the fight will clear of all hostile elements. Be brave! Go on!

IKO.

NATURE AND MAN.

ALL of Nature and her wonders,
 Pomp of earth and air and sea,
 And the glorious wealth she squanders,
 Came of old from me.

I—the mountains and the rivers,
 And the sun's surpassing glow,
 All the woodlands' leafy quivers—
 Made them long ago.

I, eternal, I, undying,
 Bade the stars and planets shine—
 World on world through space outflying—
 With a song divine ;

And the day and night divided,
 Set and ruled the seasons four,
 And the teeming waters guided
 Round the fertile shore.

Made the waters of the ocean,
 And the clouds that sail aloft ;
 Gave the winds their mighty motion
 And their murmur soft.

All the earth with creatures peopled,
 Peopled all the sky and main,
 From the heavens highest steeped
 To the lowest plain.

We, my brothers, built the heaven—
 You and I, the One and All—
 Forged the deadly lightning-levin,
 And the thunder-call.

Earth and sea can but restore us
 What we gave them ages gone ;
 Earth and sea and sky adore us—
 We the All, the One.

PAUL GREGAN.

ROBERT BROWNING.

III.—HIS FAITHS.

It would be an interesting, and might be made a profitable study, to examine the ethnic affinities which mark Browning's work; to see where realism and staid restraint prove him to be Teuton, where his gift of form and his perception for fine shades of thought relate him to the Greek spirit, and where his passionate ardour, dominated by gracious and heroic sentiment, proclaim him a Celt. But this would be beside our present purpose, and the study of so great a mind as his suggests so irresistibly the fruitage of many lives "spent training for his task," that perhaps we would not advance our knowledge or appreciation of that task's fulfilment very much by turning into the by-ways of ethnology for clues to Browning's development. It is, however, of interest to Celts to notice that he, more than any modern writer, has seized on two of the characteristics which we usually associate in Europe with Celtism—the passion which pursues ideals dauntlessly to defeat, and the mystic trust in the unseen which accepts such defeat heroically and takes refuge in an inner world of sentiment and hope. What Oxford was to England for centuries the abodes of the Celt are to Europe to-day, "the home of lost causes and forsaken beliefs and impossible loyalties." If the Celtic spirit, with its outward ineffectualness, its inward vitality, has any singer in our modern world, it is Browning with his idealization of failure, his magical trust in the inward, the glamorous, the dreamful. Browning's doctrine of failure might well claim for him a place among the immortals if he had taught us nothing else. It lies at the basis of his hopes for man, and is the key to his most distinctive thought. It is the recognition that eternal defeat is the form in which there is arrayed for us true spiritual victory; that it is through battling and being baffled and rising up again to fight, and yet once more being conquered, and once more essaying the strife, that we learn the vastness of our resources, the infinite range of our hopes, the indestructible nature of the spark within us which is the real warrior, and whose unremitting energy and sustained valour in the war for ideals is the sure portent of our final triumph. Seen so, life presents no defeat and no disgrace so long as will is tense and motive pure. The thrilling heroism of a man deserted and derided by his fellows, who cannot understand the purity of his deeds and aims, has

been painted for us with a pathos and power in Browning's "Patriot" that could not easily be matched.

"I go in the rain, and more than needs
A cord cuts both my wrists behind,
And I think by the feel that my forehead bleeds
For they fling, whoever has a mind,
Stones at me for my years' misdeeds.

Thus I entered and thus I go.
In triumph a man may drop down dead :
'Paid by the world, what dost thou owe
Me?' God might have whispered, but now instead,
It is God shall requite, I am safe so."

It is in this absolute trust in the abiding sovereignty of the heroic, not merely and not even mainly in life as we know it, but deeper and more fully in that transcendental life beyond death which is the mystic's goal and refuge, that we find heart and hope for the toils and defeats of our little day, and room for the expansion of these hopes into a fruition vague indeed, but intense in its appeal to the immortal being which stands behind the life of each of us. This greater life has been told us from of old in many tongues and through many temperaments, but for our modern world it is not said more finely anywhere than in the restrained passion of this simple utterance :

"A man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for?"

How many volumes of vapoury verse and multitudes of lifeless sermons might we not spare for words like these, so pregnant with the thoughts of immortal being and with all the hope of power to realize ; to be and to become which this vista of life growing fuller, and richer, and mightier, opens up for men—whose very limitations are seen to bear the promise and potency of infinite growth. This deep trust in man and in the overworld out of which his real nature springs, is very different in character from the shallow philosophy which denies the existence of powers or beings higher or greater than the stunted humanity of our present earth. It is in his trust in God—that universal Presence behind and within us, the *not ourselves* of religion, the divine intuition taking for us the concrete shape of our supreme ideals—that his faith in the destiny of man is most deeply rooted. He seems to express somewhat of his own relation to this vividly-felt power in the words he attributes to David in his "Saul" :

"I have gone the whole round of creation : I saw and I spoke ;
 I, a work of God's hand for that purpose, received in my brain
 And pronounced on the rest of His hand-work—returned Him again
 His creation's approval or censure : I spoke as I saw,
 Reported, as man may of God's work—all's love yet all's law.
 Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me. Each faculty tasked
 To perceive him has gained an abyss, where a dewdrop was asked.
 Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels at Wisdom laid bare.
 Have I forethought? how purblind, how blank to the Infinite care!
 Do I task any faculty highest, to image success?
 I but open my eyes—and perfection, no more and no less,
 In the kind I imagined, confronts me, and God is seen God
 In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and the clod.
 And thus looking within and around me, I ever renew
 (With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it too)
 The submission of man's nothing-perfect to God's all-complete.
 As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to his feet."

From this faith in the interior revelation of power and love made
 within in the heart of man springs the vision of his growth and ultimate
 divinity, and the inlook upon universal spirit purges the sight to
 read into human life the transcendental meanings of, "Power all ways,
 perfection every turn." not yet made manifest in life only because
 "man is not man as yet," but "partly *is* and wholly *hopes to be*."

It is very noticeable that in Browning's beliefs concerning the
 relation of deity to man the conception of dualism, which plays so
 large a part in the metaphysical machinery of theology, is altogether
 absent. That "the evil is null, is void, is silence implying sound," is
 more than a philosophical opinion. It is a song of triumph from the
 lips of a spiritual artist who has been indrawn through his music to the
 heart of life, and comes back to tell us what he has found there. There
 is no room in a mind so full as Browning's is of spiritual vision, and of
 the sense of that penetrating and pervading beauty which is as the
 breath of God and the glory of man, for infernal hierarchies and dia-
 bolic agencies. Frankly accepting the imperfection of our present
 life, he sees it transfigured in the light of our future, in the triumphs of
 undying love, in the prowess of unending conquest, in the unlimited
 greatness of the immortal spirit which essentially man is. It is oftener
 with love than with reverence that he looks out upon life and searches
 the illimitable abysses of the divine : and bringing love to his task he
 finds more love in his quest, illuminating all that his glance falls upon
 until it reflects back the lustre of his own imparting and gives up to

him all its own faculty of gleam and glamour also. It is this which invests him with that inward magic which falls upon the spirit like dew upon the grass by moonlight, and makes us feel past the sound and the sense of his singing a native music rising up within the heart. For to him the last word of the vast Being in whose immensity we lie is love, and the clue to all life, all thought, is the prevalence within and around us of love, working through good and ill, through pleasure and agony, through desire and disaffection, towards one end—the spiritual coronation of man.

OMAR.

(*To be continued.*)

THE OUTLOOK.

“AH, my Ireland!” These words of W. Q. J.’s came to me with new significance as I greeted once more the shores of Erin after a short absence in the United States and Canada. The soft beautiful verdure of spring never before seemed so bewitching, I thought. What impressed me most, however, was the quietness and peace—the stillness in which the secret voice of Nature can be heard, revealing an inner world behind that which is so opaque to the civilized man of to-day. The force which manifests itself in such restless activity in the U. S. is felt also in Ireland; in the former country awakened and nearing its meridian, in the latter it is yet early morning and the time of the singing of birds, with an occasional outburst of fiery energy indicating possibilities that the fulness of time will unfold. Everything is run at high pressure in the U. S.; there seems so much to do and yet so little time to accomplish anything! Quality is too often sacrificed for quantity, and new schemes develop with mushroom-like rapidity to be as quickly engulfed in the rushing stream continually hurrying by, bearing on its bosom the wreckage of many a promising enterprise. To build for eternity is to build according to the Architect’s plans, and with a knowledge of the destructive forces at work, against which wise provision must be made. In Ireland there is time for leisure and rest, with perhaps the danger of now and then becoming impatient under the impression that the wheels of the chariot move too slowly. Every condition, in every land, has undoubtedly its advantages and disadvantages. America and Ireland will be closely united in the work of the future, for events point that way.

The keynote of the Convention T. S. A., as has been already frequently stated, was “consolidation.” The strain of the past year was undoubtedly great, and disturbing influences, without and within, develop and flourish more readily under such a condition. It was

necessary, therefore, to hold, draw together strength, and rally anew round our leader, to whose wise foresight and judgment the astonishing success of the year's work was almost entirely due. More reference might have been made at the Convention to the Crusade, and the scheme of International Representatives might have been profitably considered; but time will reveal more of the significance of the Crusade, and the necessity for emphasizing the international character of the Theosophical Movement will become more and more apparent every day.

According to *The Theosophical News* of May 10th, an organization has already been formed for work on a broad general basis, including Lotus Circle work (Lotus Circle work having been officially cut off from T. S. at the Convention), and characterized as a young sister of the T. S. This seems a very important step.

The absence of two familiar faces again brought clearly to light the fact that the work goes on, no matter how personalities come and go. We impose conditions on ourselves and are responsible for the result. Overlooking this we foolishly blame others, and think we can run away from obligations voluntarily undertaken. It is a hasty conclusion and unwise, of course, as we recognize in our more luminous moments. Relying on the soul, wisdom illumines the path of action; viewing life from such a spiritual basis we are able to distinguish between illusion and reality, between the personal and the impersonal.

The Convention of the T. S. E. (England) has, I understand, been postponed till August, but is still to be held at Liverpool. Mrs. Tingley will likely be over then, and in many respects it will be a better time. The European Convention will follow shortly after. Sweden has claims, and will probably be considered by the Executive Committee as a most suitable place. D. N. D.

THE T. S. IN EUROPE (IRELAND).

13, EUSTACE STREET, DUBLIN.

THE public meetings at the Central Hall were brought to a close for the session with a lecture on *Irish Faeries*, by Mr. P. Gregan, which proved to be one of the most interesting of the series. A large audience assembled to hear this fascinating subject discussed, which shows that, despite the materialistic tendency of the day, there lingers still in the hearts of many a strong regard for the "good people," and a belief that though the legends and stories current as to their doings may appear fantastic, there is yet a substratum of truth in them.

ROBT. E. COATES. *Hon. Sec.*