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MEDITATION, CONCENTRATION, WILL.

These three, meditation, concentration, will, have engaged the attention of Theosophists perhaps more than any other three subjects. A canvass of opinions would probably show that the majority of our reading and thinking members would rather hear these subjects discussed and read definite directions about them than any others in the entire field. They say they must meditate, they declare a wish for concentration, they would like a powerful will, and they sigh for strict directions, readable by the most foolish theosophist. It is a western cry for a curriculum, a course, a staked path, a line and rule by inches and links. Yet the path has long been outlined and described, so that any one could read the directions whose mind had not been half-ruined by modern false education, and memory rotted by the superficial methods of a superficial literature and a wholly vain modern life.

Let us divide Meditation into two sorts. First is the meditation practised at a set time, or an occasional one, whether by design or from physiological idiosyncrasy. Second is the meditation of an entire lifetime, that single thread of intention, intentness, and desire running through the years stretching between the cradle and the grave. For the first in Patanjali's Aphorisms will be found all needful rules and particularity. If these are studied and not forgotten, then practice must give results. How many of those who reiterate the call for instruction on this head have read that book, only to turn it down and never again consider it? Far too many.

The mysterious subtle thread of a life meditation is that which is practised every hour by philosopher, mystic, saint, criminal, artist, artisan, and merchant. It is pursued in respect to that on which the heart is set; it rarely languishes; at times the meditating one greedily running after money, fame, and power looks up briefly and sighs for a better life during a brief interval, but the passing flash of a dollar or a sovereign recalls him to his modern senses, and the old meditation begins again. Since all theosophists are here in the social whirl I refer to, they can every one take these words to themselves as they please. Very certainly, if their life meditation is fixed low down near the ground, the results flowing to them from it will be strong, very lasting, and related to the low level on which they work. Their semi-occasional meditations will give precisely semi-occasional results in the long string of recurring births.

"But, then," says another, "what of concentration? We must have it.

We wish it; we lack it." Is it a piece of goods that you can buy it, do you think, or something that will come to you just for the wishing? Hardly. In the way we divided meditation into two great sorts, so we can divide concentration. One is the use of an already acquired power on a fixed occasion, the other the deep and constant practise of a power that has been made a possession. Concentration is not memory, since the latter is known to act without our concentrating on anything, and we know that centuries ago the old thinkers very justly called memory a phantasy. But by reason of a peculiarity of the human mind the associative part of memory is waked up the very instant concentration is attempted. It is this that makes students weary and at last drives them away from the pursuit of concentration. A man sits down to concentrate on the highest idea he can formulate, and like a flash troops of recollections of all sorts of affairs, old thoughts and impressions come before his mind, driving away the great object he first selected, and concentration is at an end.

This trouble is only to be corrected by practise, by assiduity, by continuance. No strange and complicated directions are needed. All we have to do is to try and to keep on trying.

The subject of the Will has not been treated of much in theosophical works, old or new. Patanjali does not go into it at all. It seems to be inferred by him through his aphorisms. Will is universal, and belongs to not only man and animals, but also to every other natural kingdom. The good and bad man alike have will, the child and the aged, the wise and the lunatic. It is therefore a power devoid in itself of moral quality. That quality must be added by man.

So the truth must be that will acts according to desire, or, as the older thinkers used to put it, "behind will stands desire." This is why the child, the savage, the lunatic, and the wicked man so often exhibit a stronger will than others. The wicked man has intensified his desires, and with that his will. The lunatic has but few desires, and draws all his will force into these, the savage is free from convention, from the various ideas, laws, rules, and suppositions to which the civilized person is subject, and has nothing to distract his will. So to make our will strong we must have fewer desires. Let those be high, pure, and altruistic; they will give us strong will.

No mere practise will develop will *per se*, for it exists forever, fully developed in itself. But practise will develop in us the power to call on that will which it ours. Will and Desire lie at the doors of Meditation and Concentration. If we desire truth with the same intensity that we had formerly wished for success, money, or gratification, we will speedily acquire meditation and possess concentration. If we do all our acts, small and great, every moment, for the sake of the whole human race, as representing the Supreme Self, then every cell and fibre of the body and inner man will be turned in one direction, resulting in perfect concentration. This is expressed in the New Testament in the statement that if the eye is single the whole body will be full of light, and in the Bhagavad Gita it is still more clearly and comprehensively given through the different chapters. In one it is beautifully put as the lighting up in us of the Supreme One, who then becomes visible. Let us meditate on that which is in us as the Highest Self, concentrate upon it, and will to work for it as dwelling in every human heart.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE.

A PRIESTESS OF THE WOODS.

Here is a legend whispered to me, the land or time I cannot tell, it may have been in the old Atlantean days. There were vast woods and a young priestess ruled them; she presided at the festivals and sacrificed at the altar for the people, interceding with the spirits of fire, water air and earth, that the harvest might not be burned up, nor drenched with the floods, nor torn by storms and that the blight might not fall upon it, which things the elemental spirits sometimes brought about. This woodland sovereignty was her heritage from her father who was a mighty magician before her. Around her young days floated the faery presences; she knew them as other children know the flowers having neither fear nor wonder for them. She saw deeper things also; as a little child, wrapped up in her bearskin, she watched with awe her father engaged in mystic rites; when around him the airy legions gathered from the populous elements, the spirits he ruled and the spirits he bowed down before; fleeting nebulous things white as foam coming forth from the great deep who fled away at the waving of his hand; and rarer the great sons of fire, bright and transparent as glass, who though near seemed yet far away and were still and swift as the figures that glance in a crystal. So the child grew up full of mystery; her thoughts were not the thoughts of the people about her, nor their affections her affections. It seemed as if the elf-things or beings carved by the thought of the magician, pushed aside by his strong will and falling away from him, entering into the child became part of her, linking her to the elemental beings who live in the star-soul that glows within the earth. Her father told her such things as she asked, but he died while she was yet young and she knew not his aim, what man is, or what is his destiny; but she knew the ways of every order of spirit that goes about clad in a form, how some were to be dreaded and some to be loved; By reason of this knowledge she succeeded as priestess to the shrine, and held the sway of beauty and youth, of wisdom and mystery over the people dwelling in the woods.

It was the evening of the autumn festival, the open grassy space before the altar was crowded with figures, hunters with their feathered heads; shepherds, those who toil in the fields, the old and hoary were gathered around.

The young priestess stood up before them; she was pale from vigil, and the sunlight coming through the misty evening air fell upon her swaying arms and her dress with its curious embroidery of peacock's feathers; the dark hollows of her eyes were alight and as she spoke inspiration came to her; her voice rose and fell, commanding, warning, whispering, beseeching; its strange rich music flooded the woods and pierced through and through with awe the hearts of those who listened. She spoke of the mysteries of that unseen nature; how man is watched and ringed round with hosts who war upon him, who wither up his joys by their breath; she spoke of the gnomes who rise up in the woodland paths with damp arms grasping from their earthy bed.

"Dreadful" she said "are the elementals who live in the hidden waters: they rule the dreaming heart; their curse is forgetfulness; they lull man to fatal rest, with drowsy fingers feeling to put out his fire of life. But most of all, dread the powers that move in air; their nature is desire unquenchable; their destiny is—never to be fulfilled—never to be at peace: they roam hither and thither like the winds they guide; they usurp dominion over the passionate and tender soul, but they love not in our way; where they dwell the heart is a madness and the feet are filled with a hurrying fever, and night has no sleep and day holds no joy in its sunlit cup. Listen not to their

whisper ; they wither and burn up the body with their fire ; the beauty they offer is smitten through and through with unappeasable anguish." She paused for a moment ; her terrible breath had hardly ceased to thrill them, when another voice was heard singing ; its note was gay and triumphant, it broke the spell of fear upon the people,

"I never heed by waste or wood
The cry of fay or faery thing
Who tell of their own solitude ;
Above them all my soul is king.

The royal robe as king I wear
Trails all along the fields of light ;
Its silent blue and silver bear
For gems the starry dust of night.

The breath of joy unceasingly
Waves to and fro its folds star-lit,
And far beyond earth's misery
I live and breathe the joy of it."

The priestess advanced from the altar, her eyes sought for the singer ; when she came to the centre of the opening she paused and waited silently. Almost immediately a young man carrying a small lyre stepped out of the crowd and stood before her ; he did not seem older than the priestess ; he stood unconcerned though her dark eyes blazed at the intrusion ; he met her gaze fearlessly ; his eyes looked into hers—in this way all proud spirits do battle. Her eyes were black with almost a purple tinge, eyes that had looked into the dark ways of nature ; his were bronze, and a golden tinge, a mystic opulence of vitality seemed to dance in their depths ; they dazzled the young priestess with the secrecy of joy ; her eyes fell for a moment. He turned round and cried out, "Your priestess speaks but half truths, her eyes have seen but her heart does not know. Life is not terrible but is full of joy. Listen to me. I passed by while she spake, and I saw that a fear lay upon every man, and you shivered thinking of your homeward path, fearful as rabbits of the unseen things, and forgetful how you have laughed at death facing the monsters who crush down the forests. Do you not know that you are greater than all these spirits before whom you bow in dread : your life springs from a deeper source. Answer me, priestess, where go the fire-spirits when winter seizes the world ?"

"Into the Fire-King they go, they dream in his heart." She half chanted, the passion of her speech not yet fallen away from her. "And where go the fires of men when they depart" ? She was silent ; then he continued half in scorn, "Your priestess is the priestess of ghouls and fays rather than a priestess of men ; her wisdom is not for you ; the spirits that haunt the elements are hostile because they see you full of fear ; do not dread them and their hatred will vanish. The great heart of the earth is full of laughter ; do not put yourselves apart from its joy, for its soul is your soul and its joy is your true being."

He turned and passed through the crowd ; the priestess made a motion as if she would have stayed him, then she drew herself up proudly and refrained. They heard his voice again singing as he passed into the darkening woods,

"The spirits to the fire-king throng
 Each in the winter of his day:
 And all who listen to their song
 Follow them after in that way.

They seek the heart-hold of the king,
 They build within his halls of fire,
 Their dreams flash like the peacock's wing,
 They glow with sun-hues of desire.

I follow in no faery ways;
 I heed no voice of fay or elf;
 I in the winter of my days
 Rest in the high ancestral self."

The rites interrupted by the stranger did not continue much longer; the priestess concluded her words of warning; she did not try to remove the impression created by the poet's song, she only said, "His wisdom may be truer it is more beautiful than the knowledge we inherit."

The days passed on; autumn died into winter, spring came again and summer, and the seasons which brought change to the earth brought change to the young priestess. She sought no longer to hold sway over the elemental tribes, and her empire over them departed: the song of the poet rang for ever in her ears; its proud assertion of kingship and joy in the radiance of a deeper life haunted her like truth; but such a life seemed unattainable by her and a deep sadness rested in her heart. The wood-people often saw her sitting in the evening where the sunlight fell along the pool, waving slowly its azure and amethyst, sparkling and flashing in crystal and gold, melting as if a phantom Bird of Paradise were fading away: her dark head was bowed in melancholy and all that great beauty flamed and died away unheeded. After a time she rose up and moved about, she spoke more frequently to the people who had not dared to question her, she grew into a more human softness, they feared her less and loved her more; but she ceased not from her passionate vigils and her step faltered and her cheek paled, and her eager spirit took flight when the diamond glow of winter broke out over the world. The poet came again in the summer; they told him of the change they could not understand, but he fathomed the depths of this wild nature, and half in gladness, half in sorrow, he carved an epitaph over her tomb near the altar,

Where is the priestess of this shrine,
 And by what place does she adore?
 The woodland haunt below the pine
 Now hears her whisper nevermore.

Ah, wrapped in her own beauty now
 She dreams a dream that shall not cease;
 Priestess, to her own soul to bow
 Is hers in everlasting peace.

PROTEUS. (*Continued.*)

It was said at the beginning of this paper, that the wiser Ancients knew and taught that Man was Nature's Microcosm. They also knew the law of evolution, which Darwin has but re-stated. They knew, for instance, that the idea or psyche, or linear outline of man was latent in the horse, and was preparing to evolve still further. From this comes the myth of the Centaurs. It is a parable of evolution. So the Mermaid, the Syren, the Sphinx, and other supposed fables of the old Pagan Myths, are similarly parables.

In itself the Psyche is an unbounded force, seeking perpetual expansion, ready to break out into a chaos of passion. It needs restraints to shape it into orderly development, and to endow it, at last with self-control. The long series of moulds or bodies through which it ascends, furnish this curbing power, compressing the action of the soul into specific channels. Man's spiritual destiny is so sublime; his final blending with the divine so intimate and complete that he needs all this preliminary experience of mineral vegetable and mineral and animal existence, to give him the alphabet of self-consciousness, and to render him at last *solidaire* with the Gods.

Our humanity has been evolved out of the lower and coarser types of life, and faces still hang out the sign of this experience in the eagle or vulture beak, the bull-dog visage, the swinish or wolfish aspect. The brute peers forth through seeming manhood's face. "As the Carnivora disappear from the forests they re-appear in our race. The ape and fox are in the drawingrooms, the lynx and hyena haunt the courts of law, the wolf commands a regiment, the gorilla is the king." Animals are sentient structures in which the psychic germs, or human seed, are moving on the rounds of their long pilgrimage toward the human incarnation. We have trodden in all these rounds before. The present man has but stepped a little beyond the frontier of impersonal life. He is, as yet, but imperfectly and partially human, carrying much of the lime and slime of animalism on his shoulders. The present is rooted in the soil of the past, and worthier æons build from ages gone. But slowly does the body forget its heredity. We have worked the tiger out of our teeth and nails, but he lingers in our passions. The mind is still toothed and fanged, the human hand retains the wild beast's claw. The human heart the beast's heart with it blending.

Civilization does not so much remove and erase, as hide and cover. The former barbarian now goes clad in broadcloth, and looks very demure and decorous at church, but underneath his snowy linen you can still trace the primitive tattooing of the cannibal. Beneath this, again, are found the earmarks of animal heredity, the snake, the eagle or the swine, and especially the universal and irrepressible donkey. His tuneful voice is heard and his ears wave gracefully in our selectest circles.

He is the man of shells and chards. He is crusted over with bestial dross; erect in form, on all-fours by the thought. The animal is horsed on man. A four-footed beast is he, and if he looks at the universe at all, it is through a Jewish pin-hole.

The lower creation is planted permanently in man. He has distanced whatever is behind him, yet carries it all in him. He incorporates each fruit root and grain, and is "stuccoed all over with quadrupeds and birds." The snake slides through him and rests in his mouth. The predatory hawk peers out of his eyes. The mastodan retreats within his bones; nor are the wolf or hog wanting. Every birth brought him new riches, and other births will enrich him more.

True that we see all around us lamentable faces. The nobler faculties of man sleep in their shell. This face is a bear's muzzle; that one is a snout. This is written over by a foulness that needs no label; that is gnawed by worms. Faces of apes through Prelates may emerge. Here is a rat, and there an abject thing cringing for leave to be! But all are deific. All can show their "descent from the Lord." Beneath each haggard and mean disguise, the perfect Psyche patiently waits. It will wear better garments to-morrow. What matter spots on the window, if we know the master of the house stands within, sufficient and undisturbed. Man neither lags nor hastens, he takes his time and takes no hurt from it all. Through every change the Psyche remains serene and beautiful.

Through each product and influence of the globe we have circled and circled, till we have arrived at the form of man. From the time we were sacs merely, floating with open mouths in the creative sea, to the present, when we have begun to be man, we have exhausted millions of winters and summers. There are millions ahead of us, and millions still ahead of them. It is needful for the harmonious development of the soul that all phases of material existence should be first passed through. In each stage of the long process, the outward form represents so much of the unfoldment of the inherent and indwelling God, as its grade of life permits it to express. The science of to-day has but re-discovered a truth, which was known to ancient philosophy before the Indo-European had yet entered Europe.

"Go where we will through the obscure and almost obliterated paths of the old and still elder times; covered with fallen leaves, heaped over by the sand storms of the ages, we shall discover images partially animal, partially man; the fish-man, the reptile-man, the bird-man, the brute-man; the human form and feature struggling onward through the inferior disguise". The forms of life we see about us are the results of a long series of embodiments. Immense and unwieldy beasts, reptiles longer than the mountain pine, and birds tall as the giraffe, lived in the saurian ages. Obeying the innate tendency in nature to the higher round, the Psyche of the extinct Plesiosaurus, or Mammoth, is now the spirit of the eagle, the horse, or dog, and will be the spirit of the man. When it was a clumsy, wallowing titanic Saurian, huge in size and coarse in fibre, but a single remove from the vegetable, and moved only by the desire to eat and digest, it daily felt its twenty tons of flesh and bone as a clog; it aspired toward differentiation; it floundered after a higher structure; it sprawled and wallowed toward symmetry along the ages; and through the long series of advancing forms that it has since shaped and worn in the cycle of the Millenards, this ruling instinct was an active force slowly moulding the form.

We find this longing still expressive to-day in the universal aspiration of our humanity for a better and finer incarnation, for matter is the precipitate of mind, nature the sediment of soul. Said one "Who will deliver me from the body of this death?" - voicing a desire which, in the future as in the past, is surely the prophet of its own fulfilment. This is the ideal dream of humanity, presaging the sure destiny of the race. In this divine passion for something higher, man feels his infinity and eternity, and anticipates the hour of his full deliverance, when that which is in part shall be done away.

(to be concluded next number.)

THE ELEMENT LANGUAGE. (*Continued.*)

The correspondences here suggested do not I think at all exhaust the possible significance of any of the letters. Every sound ought to have a septenary relation to the planes of consciousness, and the differentiations of life, force and matter on each. Complete mastery of these would enable the knower to guide the various currents of force, and to control the elemental beings who live on the astral planes, for these respond, we are told, "when the exact scale of being to which they belong is vibrated, whether it be that of colour, form, sound or whatever else," (*Path.* May. 1886.) These higher interpretations I am unable to give; it requires the deeper being to know the deeper meaning. Those here appended may prove suggestive; I do not claim any finality or authority for them, but they may be interesting to students of the occult Upanishads where the mystic power of sound is continually dwelt upon.

The best method of arranging the letters is to begin with A and conclude with M or OO: between these lie all the other letters, and their successive order is determined by their spiritual or material quality. Following A we get letters with an ethereal or liquid sound, such as R, H, L or Y; they become gradually harsher as they pass from the A, following the order of nature in this. Half way we get letters like K, J, TCHAY, S, or ISH; then they become softer, and the labials, like F, B and M, have something of the musical quality of the earlier sounds. If we arrange them in this manner, it will be found to approximate very closely to the actual order in which the sounds arise in the process of formation. We begin then with

A This represents GOD, creative force, the SELF, the I, the begining or first cause. "Among letters I am the vowel A," says Krishna in the Bagavad. It is without colour, number or form.

R This is motion, air, breath or spirit; it is also abstract desire, and here we find the teaching of the Rig-Veda in harmony. "Desire first arose in It which was the primal germ of mind, and which sages, searching with their intellect, have discovered in their hearts to be the bond which connects Entity with non-Entity." The corresponding colour of this letter is Red.

H (*hay*) and L Motion awakens Heat and Light which correspond respectively to H and L. That primordial ocean of being, says the book of Dzyan, was "fire and heat and motion;" which are explained as the noumenal essences of these material manifestations. The colour of H is Orange, of L yellow. L also conveys the sense of radiation.

Y (*yea*) This letter signifies condensation, drawing together, the force of attraction, affinity. Matter at the stage of evolution to which this refers is gaseous, nebulous, or ethereal: the fire-mists in space gather together to become worlds. The colour of Y is green.

W (*way*) Water is the next element in manifestation: in cosmic evolution it is spoken of as chaos, the great Deep; its colour, I think, is indigo. After this stage the elements no longer manifest singly, but in pairs, or with a dual aspect.

G (*gay*) and K Reflection and Hardness; matter becomes crystalline or metallic: the corresponding colour is blue.

S and Z A further differentiation; matter is atomic: the abstract significance of number or seed is attached to these letters: their colour is violet.

J and Tchay Earth and gross Substance; this is the lowest point in evolution; the worlds have now condensed into solid matter. The colour of these letters is orange.

N and Ng Some new forces begin to work here; the corresponding sounds have, I think, the meaning of continuation and transformation or change: these new forces propel evolution in the upward or ascending arc: their colour is yellow.

D and T The colour of these letters is red. The involution of the higher forces into the lower forms alluded to before now begins. **D** represents this infusion of life into matter; it is descent and involution, death or forgetfulness, perhaps, for a time to the incarnating power. **T** is evolution, the upward movement generating life; the imprisoned energies surge outwards and vegetation begins.

Ih and Ish These correspond respectively to growth or expansion and vegetation; the earth, as Genesis puts it, "puts forth grass and herbs and trees yielding fruit." The colour of these letters is green.

B and P After the flora the fauna. **B** is Life or Being, animal and human. Humanity appears; **B** is masculine, **P** feminine. **P** has also a meaning of division, differentiation or production, which may refer to maternity. The colour here is blue.

F and V The colour is violet. Evolution moves still upwards, entering the ethereal planes once more. Lightness and vastness are the characteristics of this stage: we begin to permeate with part of our nature the higher spheres of being and reach the consummation in the last stage, represented by

M which has many meanings; it is thought, it is the end or death to the personality, it is the Receiver into which all flows, it is also the Symbol of maternity in a universal sense, it has this meaning when the life impulse (which is always represented by a vowel) follows it, as in "ma." It is the Pralaya of the worlds; the lips close as it is uttered. Its colour is indigo.

O The last vowel sound symbolizes abstract space, the spirit assumes once more the garment of primordial matter; it is the Nirvana of eastern philosophy.

I will now try to show how the abstract significance of these sounds reveals a deeper meaning in the roots of Aryan language than philologists generally allow. Prof. Max Müller says in the introduction to Biographies of Words. "Of ultimates in the sense of primary elements of language, we can never hope to know anything," and he also asserts that the roots are incapable of further analysis. I will endeavour now to show that this further analysis can be made.

(to be continued)

G. W. R.

THE THIRD ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE T. S.

The report of the General Secretary will shortly be in every member's hands, so that it is not necessary here to go into details of the business transacted at the Third Annual Convention of the European Section of the Theosophical Society. The members and delegates from the various lodges met together in the lecture room attached to the Head-Quarters at 19 Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London, on the 6th. and 7th. July. This hall has been covered with curious symbolical designs by Mr. R. Machell, so that the visitor who lacks concentration, whose attention wanders from the discussion, is brought back by these to the mystic traditions and the mythologies of ancient India, Assyria and Greece. It speaks volumes for the power of Theosophy in inducing self restraint, that a convention of people of such strongly marked individuality and power of vigorous self expression, passed without the slightest friction. The meetings were marked by the utmost kindness and humour; there was little or none of the red-tape formality, which generally suffocates any poor soul forced to endure the traditional routine of gatherings of this nature. The chairman, William Q. Judge, said: "The Theosophical Society needs no rules; rules are only made to be broken; the good man needs no rules, he becomes a law to himself," and bearing this in mind the convention delayed but little over these matters; the members spoke only of work; taking into consideration the rapid growth of the Society, they discussed new plans of propaganda and ways of utilizing the energy and enthusiasm which are inspired by the great ideas of Theosophy.

The convention deputed Annie Besant, Herbert Burrowes, Bertram Keightly and Miss Müller to represent the European branches of the Society at the Parliament of Religions to be held at the World's Fair, Chicago, and a sum of £79 was rapidly subscribed by those present towards covering the necessary expenses.

Mr. G. R. S. Mead announced that eleven other lodges had been founded since the last report, and that over two hundred and forty books and pamphlets had been published; these included works in almost every language. It was also proposed to republish all Madame Blavatsky's magazine articles in book form; this will be welcome intelligence to all students of occult philosophy. Annie Besant gave some valuable advice to intending public speakers, never to venture on a platform without having arranged their ideas beforehand in clear and logical sequence and yet they were not merely to intellectualize their ideals, the emotional nature must fire the speaker or else his speeches will have no effect.

A motion to introduce some form of Theosophical teaching into the club for working girls was unanimously opposed as unwise and as likely to break up the club, which was started to make these workers happy and not as an aid to propaganda.

The Convention terminated with a public meeting in Prince's Hall, Piccadilly. There was a large audience who were attentive and often enthusiastic. In this great city where materialism is rampant, where everything is so intensely modern, it was strange to hear the primeval wisdom learned by the Rishis in the golden age of the earth, uttered with calm conviction and defended by the science of to-day. The audience heard Bro. Judge proclaim that man is an immortal being; they heard Herbert Burrowes defend the right of Theosophists to hold these ideas; and finally they heard Mrs. Besant's triumphant oratory, full of prophecy for the future.

NOTES BY THE EDITOR

"Theosophy in plain Language" has been unavoidably held over 'till next number.

Somnancy is the name given to the phenomenon which has been attracting large audiences to the Rotunda during the past fortnight, and about which people generally, have been puzzling their brains. We have been asked to offer a few words in explanation. This could not be easily done, without encroaching too far on the space at our disposal. However, we may repeat one or two Theosophical ideas which we think point the way to a full explanation, for those who desire to give a little time to the study of the problem.

Now anyone who has an elementary acquaintance with Theosophy, will know the great stress laid upon the power and potency of thought. We say—not without good reason, that thoughts are things, which appear as real and actual to the clairvoyant, as material things do to the five-sense individual, and this is important, in view of the fact that the audiences in the Rotunda, were requested to let their minds dwell on the questions asked, and to think sympathetically towards the person in trance.

These thoughts, or mind pictures impress themselves on what we term the astral light—the great picture gallery of the universe, or what in other words may be called the men-

ory of nature. Here nothing is ever left unrecorded. Thus, the clairvoyant can see and read distinctly the question asked, and being in synchronous vibration with the questioner, derives impressions of pictures associated with the past, and connected with the question on which the mind is fixed for the time being.

The prophetic aspect of the question is less reliable, and for the present, we prefer not to touch upon it. In conclusion we wish to point to the light this phenomenon throws on the great importance of purifying our thoughts and motives, and once it is fully realized the bearing it will have on life generally. "As a man thinks, so is he."

The Key-note of the Convention, a report of which appears elsewhere, was work, more work, without looking for results. Another good sign was the active and sustained interest in the deliberations by the Provincial delegates, and many useful hints were given, and suggestions made, which we are sure will not be without good results, during the next twelve months.

We have to acknowledge with thanks, the following subscriptions toward the *I. T. FUND*, since our last issue:—W. Q. J. 3/6; Mrs. A. Keightley. 18/6; Eta. 10/-. Further contributions will be welcome.

DUBLIN LODGE.

There was a strong representation of this Lodge at the Convention of no less than six members, who will no doubt give us an interesting idea of the proceedings, at the conversazione which will be held here on Thursday evg. the 20th. inst. Herbert Coryn of Brixton Lodge will probably be with us on that occasion.

3 Upper Ely Place.

F. J. Dick, Secy.

REVIEWS.

BOOKS etc. of which notice is desired in these columns, ought to be forwarded to EDITOR, 71 Lower Drumcondra Road, Dublin.

Reflections and Refractions by Charles Weekes. (London, Fisher Unwin & Co.)

This is a remarkable book of verse from a young man; the wisdom, good or bad, which it contains is such as we are accustomed to find rather in men who have outlived their period of exuberant vitality, and the pleasure of mere living, who ponder carefully over every new experience, seeking for some subtler charm, some suggestion of the traditions of philosophy and religion which have arisen with these emotions as their germ. This subtle suggestiveness and charm we undoubtedly often get in these poems, but the effort is marred a little by a too great carefulness; our author seems as if he could never give himself away, never unchain the fancies of the populous soul; he intellectualizes everything. "Grow as the flower grows unconsciously, but eagerly anxious to open its soul to the air" says *Light on the Path*; Mr. Weekes should trust more to his unconscious nature from whence comes the breath of flame that vitalizes the filmy mental images. A vigilant and instantaneous perception, an insight into the philosophical aspect of emotion and a rare generosity of thought characterize the best of the lyrics. I think those who read this curious book with its young old thought will look with interest for further works by the same author, for a good deal of the attitude towards life suggests a sort of genius.

The Legend of the Golden Child, by Dhorna Vhegge. (London: Percy Lund & Co. One penny.)

This is an attempt to interpret intelligibly and to discover a similar-

ity in the stories about gods and heroes which are found in the records of the various religious systems, but particularly with the idea of identifying the Christos in each system. Perhaps the chief value of the paper lies in its suggestiveness; for, anything like a precise treatment of such a subject is scarcely to be thought of in fourteen octavo pages.

Literature may be said generally to have a poetic-scientific value: Dhorna Vhegge attempts, by discovering allegory in these legends, to give them a scientific value; a poetic value they of course already possess, and most people find them interesting reading. But a whole cycle of them is here treated, so that they are much crushed together, and the reader wishes that the author had performed the after all more difficult task of elucidating a single legend in detail, and in all its various aspects. Accepting him however as he is, it does not increase our confidence in his leading to find him suggesting that the Homeric Apollo was an allegorical figure as well as a messenger of "Jove." The messenger proper of the Homeric Zeus is not Apollo but Hermes: Apollo usually acts on his own account, and sometimes even against his father; and, as for allegory, we do not think that more can be found in him than the naïve and obvious god of the naïve and barbarous nations who revelled in battle within and without the walls of Troy. In some technical matters also, Dhorna Vhegge is not quite careful: the use of who for a neuter; the dropping of his notes of interrogation and the like.