

corpse was carried to the Woking crematory, near London ; hence the possibility of her sudden death was even then kept in mind.

The year 1882 went out with me working at my desk alone.

H. S. OLCOTT.

MODERN IDEALISM, WORSE THAN MATERIALISM.

[*Ed. Note.*—The following vigorous article, from the pen of H. P. Blavatsky, has quite recently come into my hands and, like all her writings, will repay perusal.]

THAT which is herein presented will be, as a matter of course, Dead-Sea fruit to blind materialism ; withal it may prove still more distasteful to advocates of *Hylo-Idealism*—as that modern cross-breed between misunderstood Protagoras and Büchner is now named.

Theosophy has no bitterer enemy than *Hylo-Idealism*, the great ally of materialism, to-day. This is because, though repudiating the systems of both, we accept most of the *physical* facts of science, rejecting their conclusions only ; while we recognize a good deal of the Vedântic doctrines in European Idealism, but none of its highly philosophical and consistent logic. The conclusions of Materialism and Idealism, in fact, are so far stretched, that in their final synthesis they almost meet in their atheism and pessimism. The last word of both—the Alpha and the Omega of Modern Thought, whether traced to the potencies of brute matter, or to the nihilism of idealistic speculation—is a dreary negation of any possible future existence in spirit. Apparently—there is an abyss between the two in sober reality—a platform on which both shake hands. The materialism of to-day is only a shade more scientific than the crass fallacies of Büchner and Moleschott. It is the same Death's-Head, with its stereotyped rictus grinning hideously, but now crowned with a wreath of rhetorical flowers woven by Mr. Tyndall's unparalleled oratory. As to Idealism—of whatever school—it has become “ a double caricature ” on Kant and Schopenhauer. The “ rigour and vigour ” type of generalization is prevalent ; witness the attitude of Materialists (or Realists) and Idealists toward what J. S. Mill terms the “ battle-ground of metaphysics ”—the question of an external world.

The Materialist asserts that matter—or the external Universe—exists independently of a perceiving mind ; that the object in short has evolved the subject, which latter in its turn mirrors its author in its consciousness.

The (pure) Idealist, on the contrary will say—“ Not so ; so far from Mind being the resultant of an evolutionary process from Matter, the latter exists only in consciousness. All we know, or can know, are states of our own consciousness ; objects are such only by and through a perceiving Ego—*its sensations*, and as such, are necessarily phenomenal ; with the destruction of Mind, the whole fabric of seeming objectivity collapses.”

In what respect is such an *idealist* more "ideal" than the Materialist? One denies point blank, anything existing outside of matter; the other, that anything *is*—no more matter than Spirit,—that these two positions do not exhaust the alternatives. While it is clear that the Realist is unable to postulate the independent existence of the *External World*, except by *projecting into space the visions of his own subjectivity*, the (*pure!*) Idealist is brought face to face with the assertion of science, that the objective universe existed æons before the first dawn of human consciousness.

It is from this predicament that we might be rescued by the compromise between the two opposing systems, known variously as *Transfigured Realism*, *Transcendental Realism* or, better, objective (as opposed to pure) Idealism—if only that transfigured Realism were to conceive of Object and Subject in the way Vedântic occultists do. According to this system, the external world of this our present consciousness, is the joint product of Object and Subject. While non-existent *per se*—it is said, the creation of the individual mind—matter is equally the *sensible manifestation of the objectivity of an unknown Substance* (unknown to—the profane only). Mind *translates* the impressions received from without—impressions radiating from the world of *Noumena* into panorama of purely subjective ideation. The object as it is given in consciousness is phenomenal, but the primary stimulus comes from *without*. Subject and Object—as *Noumena*—are equally real, but the SENSE-OBJECT is a subjective creation. Take, for example, the case of the Sun. To the Realist the glorious orb exists outside of, and independently of Mind, *just as it appears in consciousness*. To the Idealist it is the creation of Mind and perishes with it. To the *objective* Idealist, with Mind perishes the phenomenal Sun, but an *unknown Substance—removed beyond the possibility of human conception as to its nature—remains*.

This—except the "Unknown Substance"—the Occultist will deny. For him, the subject as much as the object, *Ego*, Sun, Mind and the Universe itself is—a *Mâyâ*, a huge illusion. But, as both the Perceiver and the Object perceived belong to the same plane of illusion, they are mutual and reciprocal Realities *for such time as the Manvantaric illusion lasts*. In Reality, and outside and beyond Space and Time, it is all the effect and result of Ignorance. Nevertheless, reverting to the conclusion of one of the greatest thinkers of the day—Mr. Herbert Spencer, where he argues that "If the object perceived is self, what is the subject that perceives?"—and concludes that such a process is only conceivable on "the annihilation of both" (*First Principles*, p. 66)—we say that according to the views of the Occultist he is entirely wrong. Mr. Herbert Spencer knows, it appears, of but one grade of subjectivity, and has no idea of the occult (*Yogic*) teaching, of the existence of other and higher planes of consciousness, vision or perception, than those of Mind; of the existence, in short, of the "Transcendental Ego" or true *self* (Buddhi)—a spark from the radiant essence of the Universal Spirit. Consequently, to the

query of Mr. Spencer,—“ If it is the true Self that thinks, what other Self can it be that is thought of ?” (*ibid*) we reply. The true Self is *per se*, impersonal ; the *personal* or brain-consciousness being but an illusory reflection in incarnated existence. Western Psychology errs in regarding this *personal* ego as the only factor to be considered in its researches. The argument, therefore, as to the inconceivability of the Subject perceiving itself—which, *if we limit subject to Mind* (Manas) is absolutely valid—collapses the moment we assert with Kant and his modern exponents, the existence of a Higher Self or “ Transcendental subject.” For, in the act of self-analysis, the *Mind* becomes in its turn an object to the spiritual consciousness. It is the overshadowing of the Mind by *Buddhí* which results in the ultimate *realization of existence*—i.e., self-consciousness in its purest form. But it must at the same time be borne in mind that the *full* realization of the spiritual Self is impossible for an incarnated 4th Rounder. The Spiritual ego reflects no varying states of consciousness ; is independent of all sensation (experience) ; it does not *think*—it *KNOWS*, by an intuitive process only faintly conceivable by the average man. “ The subject that perceives” Mind, as an attribute of itself, is this Transcendental or spiritual Ego (Buddhi). He who would know more, let him study *Vedánta* and Patanjali’s *Yoga Philosophy*—*esoterically*. Let him understand the real meaning of these sentences : “ The knower of SELF passes beyond sorrow” (*Chhândogya Upanishad*, 7, 1, 3) ; and again “ he who knows Brahma becomes Brahma” (*Mundaka Upanishad*, 3, 2, 9).

It is the “ collective aggregate of Ignorance” as the *Vedántasúra* puts it, that led to *scientific* definitions by opponents ; as one for instance that we find among the many pearls scattered by Dr. Lewins’ “ *What is Religion*.*” For the beauty and clearness of language, we recommend it ; and though its critic (An examination and popular exposition of the Hylo-Idealistic-Philosophy, Mr. W. Bell M’Taggart) recommends likewise the reader to remember that “ Dr. Lewins’ philosophy does not lie on the surface” (Preface), yet one may be excused, for insisting on a close scrutiny of a system which aims at supplanting every philosophy, archaic, ancient or non-existent, by *Hylo-Idealism*, which, it is claimed, is the *scientific* union of Materialism and Idealism—or that of oil and water ; as says the reviewer—“ matter, matter, everywhere,” and justly adds of the pure Materialistic and Idealistic hypotheses that “ both positions lead to gross—nay *unthinkable*—absurdities of thought” (p. 3). But what does Dr. Lewins say ?

“ By Hylo-Idealism I mean nothing else than a less ambiguous and self-explanatory form of the term Psychology (which term)...is the accredited creed of all rational human knowledge *in contradistinction to the occult and morbid mysticism of ontology or metaphysics*...Psychology is thus relative and phenomenal, the doctrine of life...and human knowledge, beginning and ending as anthropomorphosis, and automorphosis,

* Pamphlet by G. N., with Appendices by Dr. Lewins.

which is quite one with *Hylo-Idealism*, the rational or cerebral theory of mind and matter...Without further preamble let me state that the Hylozoic theorem of life and the world may be formulated as the utter and self-evident impossibility, in the nature of things, to transcend or escape in any way from the limits of our own anatomy, our own conscious ego.....(which is thus made one with *anatomy*!); the non-ego, or—falsely so called—“External universe,” being but the objective or projective image of our own *Egoity*, not the *vera effigies* or absolute substance of any ‘thing’ external to Self...Entities, or non-entities—abstract or concrete—from Divinity downwards, are merely ideal or phenomenal imagery.....the essential physical basis, proplasm, or *officina* of which is THE VESICULO-NEURINE or grey tissue of the hemispherical ganglia...—the function, namely, of a somatic organism, itself fons et origo of all cognition.....It seems perfectly clear that, as now mirrored in modern thought, the objective can have no other than a relative existence...in other words this is only...formulating the *solidarité* of the ego and non-ego, as *psychosis is now diagnosed by medico-psychological symptomatology, as VESICULO-NEUROSIS IN ACTIVITY!*”

This is the *clear* and forcible rendering of the last conclusions arrived at by *modern thought*.

H. P. BLAVATSKY.

THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF LIFE AND THOUGHT.

THE last number of *Borderland* cannot have failed to call special attention to the work that is being done by Dr. H. Baraduc of Paris, in the domain of supersensible photography. Within the last few months he has published an elaborate and copiously illustrated volume of 300 pages giving some of his results in this field. Unfortunately for the student, Dr. Baraduc has so inextricably interwoven his facts with the theories he has formed to explain them, and has chosen to employ so elaborate a terminology based on these theories, that it is almost impossible to arrive at any clear judgment or even accurate understanding of his work. The book itself somehow gives one the impression of being a really valuable addition to our knowledge, but the experiments are so imperfectly described, and so many of the essential details as to the conditions, &c., are altogether omitted, that practically, the reader finds himself forced into an antagonistic frame of mind, which is highly prejudicial to a just appreciation of Dr. Baraduc's labours, both experimental and theoretical.

Under these circumstances it would be manifestly unfair to attempt to review such a work on ordinary lines. Fortunately, however, Col. Olcott is personally acquainted with the Doctor and requested him to write an account of his work for the pages of the *Theosophist*. In response to this request Dr. Baraduc most kindly sent the brief MS. note which is translated below, to which are appended some extracts