

The "Elixer of Life" - From a Chela's Diary by G.M. (Godolphin Mitford?)

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by G.M. (Godolphin Mitford?)

A Chela is the pupil an disciple of an initiated Guru or Master

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"And Enoch walked with the Elohim, and the Elohim took him." Genesis

Introduction

[The curious information - for whatsoever else the world may think of it, will doubtless be acknowledged to be that - contained in the article that follows, merits a few words of introduction. The details given in it on the subject of what has always been considered as one of the darkest and most strictly guarded of the mysteries of the initiation into occultism - from the days of the Rishis until those of the Theosophical Society - came to the knowledge of the author in a way that would seem to the ordinary run of Europeans strange and supernatural. He himself, however, we may assure the reader, is a most thorough disbeliever in the Supernatural, though he has learned too much to limit the capabilities of the natural as some do. Further, he has to make the following confession of his own belief. It will be apparent, from a careful perusal of the facts, that if the matter be really as stated therein, the author cannot himself be an adept of high grade, as the article in such a case would never have been written. Nor does he pretend to be one. He is, or rather was, for a few years an humble Chela. Hence, the converse must consequently be also true, that as regards the higher stages of the mystery he can have no personal experience, but speaks of it only as a close observer left to his own surmises - and no more. He may, therefore, boldly state that during, notwithstanding, his unfortunately rather too short stay with some adepts, he has by actual experiment and observation verified some of the less transcendental or incipient parts of the "Course." And, though it will be impossible for him to give positive testimony as to what lies beyond, he may yet mention that all his own course of study, training and experience, long, severe and dangerous as it has often been, leads him to the conviction that everything is really as stated, save some details purposely veiled. For causes which cannot be explained to the public, he himself may be unable or unwilling to use the secret he has gained access to. Still he is permitted by one to whom all his reverential affection and gratitude are due - his last Guru - to divulge for the benefit of Science and Man, and specially for the good of those who are courageous enough to personally make the experiment, the following astounding particulars of the occult methods for prolonging life to a period far beyond the common. - G.M.]

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Probably one of the first considerations which move the worldly-minded at present to solicit initiation into Theosophy is the belief, or hope, that, immediately on joining, some extraordinary advantage over the rest of mankind will be conferred upon the candidate. [This was written in the late 19th century, published 1885; the situation at present is very different from the situation back then, editor ESTG]. Some even think that the ultimate result of their initiation will perhaps be exemption from that dissolution which is called the common lot of mankind. The tradition of the "Elixir of Life," said to be in the possession of Kabalists and Alchemists, are still cherished by students of Mediaeval Occultism - in Europe. The allegory of the Ab-è Hyat or Water of Life, is still credited as a fact by the degraded remnants of the Asiatic esoteric sects ignorant of the real Great Secret. The "pungent and fiery Essence," by which Zanoni renewed his existence, still fires the imagination of modern visionaries as a possible scientific discovery of the future.

Theosophically, though the fact is distinctly declared to be true, the above-named conceptions of the mode of procedure leading to the realization of the fact, are known to be false. The reader may or may not believe it; but as a matter of fact, Theosophical Occultists claim to have communication with (living) Intelligences possessing an infinitely wider range of observation than is contemplated even by the loftiest aspirations of modern science, all the present "Adepts" of Europe and America - dabblers in the Kabala - notwithstanding. But far even as those superior Intelligences have investigated (or, if preferred, are alleged to have investigated), and remotely as they may have searched by the help of inference and analogy, even They have failed to discover in the Infinity anything permanent but - Space. All is subject to Change. Reflection, therefore, will easily suggest to the reader the further logical inference that in a Universe which is essentially impermanent in its conditions, nothing can confer permanency. Therefore, no possible substance, even if drawn from the depths of Infinity; no imaginable combination of drugs, whether of our earth or any other, though compounded by even the Highest Intelligence; no system of life or discipline though directed by the sternest determination and skill, could possibly produce Immutability. For in the universe of solar systems, wherever and however investigated, Immutability necessitates "Non-Being" in the physical sense given by the Theists - Non-Being which is nothing in the narrow conception of Western Religionists - a reducto ad absurdum. This is a gratuitous insult even when applied to the pseudo-Christian or ecclesiastical Jehovite idea of God.

Consequently, it will be seen that the common ideal conception of "Immortality" is not only essentially wrong, but a physical and metaphysical impossibility. The idea, whether cherished by Theosophists or non-Theosophists, by Christians or Spiritualists, by Materialists or Idealists, is a chimerical illusion. But the actual prolongation of human life is possible for a time so long as to appear miraculous and incredible to those who regard our span of existence as necessarily limited to at most a couple of hundred years. We may break, as it were, the shock of Death, and instead of dying, change a sudden plunge into darkness to a transition into a bright light. And this may be made so gradual that the passage from one state of existence to another shall have its friction minimized, so as to be practically imperceptible. This is a very different matter, and quite within the reach of Occult Science. In this, as in all other cases, means properly directed will gain their ends, and causes produce effects. Of course, the only question is, what are these causes, and how, in their turn, are they to be produced. To lift, as far as may be allowed, the veil from this aspect of Occultism, is the object of the present paper.

We must premise by reminding the reader of two Theosophic doctrines, constantly inculcated in "Isis" and in other mystic works - namely, (a) that ultimately the Kosmos is One - one under infinite variations and manifestations, and (b) that the so-called man is a "compound being" - composite not only in the

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exoteric scientific sense of being a congeries of living so-called material Units, but also in the esoteric sense of being a succession of seven forms or parts of itself, interblended with each other. To put it more clearly we might say that the more ethereal forms are but duplicates of the same aspect, - each finer one lying within the inter-atomic spaces of the next grosser. We would have the reader understand that these are no subtleties, no "spiritualities" at all in the Christo-Spiritualistic sense. In the actual man reflected in your mirror are really several men, or several parts of one composite man; each the exact counterpart of the other, but the "atomic conditions" (for want of a better word) of each of which are so arranged that its atoms interpenetrate those of the next "grosser" form. It does not, for our present purpose, matter how the Theosophists, Spiritualists, Buddhists, Kabalists, or Vedantists, count, separate, classify, arrange or name these, as that war of terms may be postponed to another occasion. Neither does it matter what relation each of these men has to various "elements" of the Kosmos of which he forms a part. This knowledge, though of vital importance in other respects, need not be explained or discussed now. Nor does it much more concern us that the Scientists deny the existence of such an arrangement, because their instruments are inadequate to make their senses perceive it. We will simply reply - "Get better instruments and keener senses, and eventually you will."

All we have to say is that if you are anxious to drink of the "Elixir of Life," and live a thousand years or so, you must take our word for the for the matter at present, and proceed on the assumption. For esoteric science does not give the faintest possible hope that the desired end will ever be attained by any other way; while modern, or so-called exact science - laughs at it.

So, then, we have arrived at the point where we have determined - literally, not metaphorically - to crack the outer shell known as the mortal coil or body, and hatch out of it, clothed in our next. This "next" is not spiritual, but only a more ethereal form. Having by a long training and preparation adapted it for a life in this atmosphere, during which time we have gradually made the outward shell to die off through a certain process (hints of which will be found further on) we have to prepare for this physiological transformation.

How are we to do it? In the first place we have the actual, visible, material body - Man, so called; though, in fact, but his outer shell - to deal with. Let us bear in mind that science teaches us that in about every seven years we change skin as effectually as any serpent; and this so gradually and imperceptibly that, had not science after years of unremitting study and observation assured us of it, no one would have had the slightest suspicion of the fact.

We see, moreover, that in process of time any cut or lesion upon the body, however deep, has a tendency to repair the loss and reunite; a piece of lost skin is very soon replaced by another. Hence, if a man, partially flayed alive, may sometimes survive and be covered with a new skin, so our astral, vital body - the fourth of the seven (having attracted and assimilated to itself the second) and which is so much more ethereal than the physical one - may be made to harden its particles to the atmospheric changes. The whole secret is to succeed in evolving it out, and separating it from the visible; and while its generally invisible atoms proceed to concrete themselves into a compact mass, to gradually get rid of the old particles of our visible frame so as to make them die and disappear before the new set has had time to evolve and replace them

We can say no more. The Magdalene is not the only one who could be accused of having "seven spirits" in her, though men who have a lesser number of spirits (what a misnomer that word!) in them, are not

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few or exceptional; they are the frequent failures of nature - the incomplete men and women. [This is not to be taken as meaning that such persons are thoroughly destitute of some one or several of the seven principles: a man born without an arm has still its ethereal counterpart; but that they are so latent that they cannot be developed, and consequently are to be considered as non-existing. - Ed. Theos.] Each of these has in turn to survive the preceding and more dense one, and then die. The exception is the sixth when absorbed into and blended with the seventh. The "Dhatu" [Dhatu - the seven principal substances of the human body - chyle, flesh, blood, fat, bones, marrow, semen] of the old Hindu physiologist had a dual meaning, the esoteric side of which corresponds with the Tibetan "Zung" (seven principles of the body).

We Asiatics, have a proverb, probably handed down to us, and by the Hindus repeated ignorantly as to its esoteric meaning. It has been known ever since the old Rishis mingled familiarly with the simple and noble people they taught and led on. The Devas had whispered into every man's ear - Thou only - if thou wilt - art "immortal." Combine with this the saying of a Western author that if any man could just realize for an instant, that he had to die some day, he would die that instant. The Illuminated will perceive that between these two sayings, rightly understood, stands revealed the whole secret of Longevity. We only die when our will ceases to be strong enough to make us live. In the majority of cases, death comes when the torture and vital exhaustion accompanying a rapid change in our physical condition becomes so intense as to weaken, for one single instant, our "clutch on life," or the tenacity of the will to exist. Till then, however severe may be the disease, however sharp the pang, we are only sick or wounded, as the case may be. This explains the cases of sudden deaths from joy, fright, pain, grief, or such other causes. The sense of a life-task consummated, of the worthlessness of one's existence, if strongly realized, produced death as surely as poison or a rifle-bullet. On the other hand, a stern determination to continue to live, has, in fact, carried many through the crises of the most severe diseases, in perfect safety.

Col. Olcott has epigrammatically explained the creative or rather the recreative power of the Will, in his "Buddhist Catechism." He there shows - of course, speaking on behalf of the Southern Buddhists - that this Will to live, if not extinguished in the present life, leaps over the chasm of bodily death, and recombines the Skandhas, or groups of qualities that made up the individual into a new personality. Man is, therefore, reborn as the result of his own unsatisfied yearning for objective existence. Col. Olcott puts it in this way:

Q. 123. What is that, in man, which gives him the impression of having a permanent individuality?

A. Tanha, or the unsatisfied desire for existence. The being having done that for which he must be rewarded or punished in future, and having Tanha, will have a rebirth through the influence of Karma.

Q. 124. What is it that is reborn?

A. A new aggregation of Skandhas, or individuality, caused by the last yearning of the dying person.

Q. 128. To what cause must we attribute the difference in the combination of the Five Skandhas which makes every individual differ from every other individual?

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A. To the Karma of the individual in the next preceding birth.

Q. 129. What is the force or energy that is at work, under the guidance of Karma, to produce the new being?

A. Tanha - the "Will to Live."

First, then, must be the determination - the Will - the conviction of certainty, to survive and continue. [See comments above by Olcott]. Without that, all else is useless. And to be efficient for the purpose, it must be, not only a passing resolution of the moment, a single fierce desire of short duration, but a settled and continued strain, as nearly as can be continued and concentrated without one single moment's relaxation. In a word, the would-be "Immortal" must be on his watch night and day, guarding self against - himself. To live - to live - to live - must be his unswerving resolve. He must as little as possible allow himself to be turned aside from it. It may be said that this is the most concentrated form of selfishness, - that it is utterly opposed to our Theosophic professions of benevolence, and disinterestedness, and regard for the good of humanity. Well, viewed in a short-sighted way, it is so. But to do good, as in everything else, a man must have time and materials to work with, and this is a necessary means to the acquirement of powers by which infinitely more good can be done than without them. When these are once mastered, the opportunities to use them will arrive, for there comes a moment when further watch and exertion are no longer needed: - the moment when the turning-point is safely passed. For the present as we deal with aspirants and not with advanced Chelas, in the first stage a determined, dogged resolution, and an enlightened concentration of self on self, are all that is absolutely necessary. It must not, however, be considered that the candidate is required to be unhuman or brutal in his negligence of others. Such a recklessly selfish course would be as injurious to him as the contrary one of expending his vital energy on the gratification of his physical desires. All that is required from him is a purely negative attitude. Until the turning-point is reached, he must not "lay out" his energy in lavish or fiery devotion to any cause, however noble, however "good," however elevated. [On page 151 of Mr. Sinnett's "Occult World," the author's much abused, and still more doubted correspondent assures him that none yet of his "degree are like the stern hero of Bulwer's" Zanoni . . . "the heartless morally dried up mummies some would fancy us to be" . . . And adds that few of them "would care to play the part in life of a desiccated pansy between the leaves of a volume of solemn poetry." But our adept omits saying that one or two degrees higher, and he will have to submit for a period of years to such a mummifying process unless, indeed, he would voluntarily give up a lifelong labour and - Die - Ed.] Such, we can solemnly assure the reader, would bring its reward in many ways - perhaps in another life, perhaps in this world, but it would tend to shorten the existence it is desired to preserve, as surely as self-indulgence and profligacy. That is why very few of the truly great men of the world (of course, the unprincipled adventurers who have applied great powers to bad uses are out of the question) - the martyrs, the heroes, the founders of religions, the liberators of nations, the leaders of reforms - ever became members of the long-lived "Brotherhood of Adepts" who were by some and for long years accused of selfishness. (And that is also why the Yogis, and the Fakirs of modern India - most of whom are acting now but on the dead-letter tradition, are required if they would be considered living up to the principles of their profession - to appear entirely dead to every inward feeling or emotion.) Notwithstanding the purity of their hearts, the greatness of their aspirations, the disinterestedness of their self-sacrifice, they could not live for they had missed the hour. They may at times have exercised powers which the world called miraculous; they may have electrified man and subdued Nature by fiery and self-devoted Will; they may have been possessed of a so-called superhuman intelligence; they may have even had knowledge of, and communication with,

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members of our own occult Brotherhood; but, having deliberately resolved to devote their vital energy to the welfare of others, rather than to themselves, they have surrendered life; and, when perishing on the cross or the scaffold, or falling, sword in hand, upon the battlefield, or sinking exhausted after a successful consummation of the life-object, on deathbeds in their chambers, they have all alike had to cry out at last: "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!"

So far so good. But, given the will to live, however powerful, we have seen that, in the ordinary course of mundane life, the throes of dissolution cannot be checked. The desperate, and again and again renewed struggle of the Kosmic elements to proceed with a career of change despite the will that is checking them, like a pair of runaway horses struggling against the determined driver holding them in, are so cumulatively powerful, that the utmost efforts of the untrained human will acting within an unprepared body become ultimately useless. The highest intrepidity of the bravest soldier; the intensest desire of the yearning lover; the hungry greed of the unsatisfied miser; the most undoubting faith of the sternest fanatic; the practiced insensibility to pain of the hardest red Indian brave or half-trained Hindu Yogi; the most deliberate philosophy of the calmest thinker - all alike fail at last. Indeed, skeptics will allege in opposition to the verities of this article that, as a matter of experience, it is often observed that the mildest and most irresolute of minds and the weakest of physical frames are often seen to resist "Death" longer than the powerful will of the high-spirited and obstinately-egotistic man, and the iron frame of the labourer, the warrior and the athlete. In reality, however, the key to the secret of these apparently contradictory phenomena is the true conception of the very thing we have already said. If the physical development of the gross "outer shell" proceeds on parallel lines and at an equal rate with that of the will, it stands to reason that no advantage for the purpose of overcoming it, is attained by the latter. The acquisition of improved breechloaders by one modern army confers no absolute superiority if the enemy also becomes possessed of them. Consequently it will be at once apparent, to those who think on the subject, that much of the training by which what is known as "a powerful and determined nature," perfects itself for its own purpose on the stage of the visible world, necessitating and being useless without a parallel development of the "gross" and so-called animal frame, is, in short, neutralized, for the purpose at present treated of, by the fact that its own action has armed the enemy with weapons equal to its own. The force of the impulse to dissolution is rendered equal to the will to oppose it; and being cumulative, subdues the will-power and triumphs at last. On the other hand, it may happen that an apparently weak and vacillating will-power residing in a weak and undeveloped physical frame, may be so reinforced by some unsatisfied desire - the *Ichcha* (wish) - as it is called by the Indian Occultists (for instance, a mother's heart-yearning to remain and support her fatherless children) - as to keep down and vanquish, for a short time, the physical throes of a body to which it has become temporarily superior.

The whole rationale then, of the first condition of continued existence in this world, is (a) the development of a Will so powerful as to overcome the hereditary (in a Darwinian sense) tendencies of the atoms composing the "gross" and palpable animal frame, to hurry on at a particular period in a certain course of Kosmic change; and (b) to so weaken the concrete action of that animal frame as to make it more amenable to the power of the Will. To defeat an army, you must demoralize and throw it into disorder.

To do this then, is the real object of all the rites, ceremonies, fasts, "prayers," meditations, initiations and procedures of self-discipline enjoined by various esoteric Eastern sects, from that course of pure and elevated aspiration which leads to the higher phases of Adeptism Real, down to the fearful and disgusting ordeals which the adherent of the "Left-hand-Road" has to pass through, all the time maintaining his equilibrium. The procedures have their merits and demerits, their separate uses and

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abuses, their essential and nonessential parts, their various veils, mummeries, and labyrinths. But in all, the result aimed at is reached, if by different processes. The Will is strengthened, encouraged and directed, and the elements opposing its action are demoralized. Now, to any one who has thought out and connected the various evolution theories, as taken, not from any occult source, but from the ordinary scientific manual accessible to all - from the hypothesis of the latest variation in the habits of species - say, the acquisition of carnivorous habit by the New Zealand parrot, for instance - to the farthest glimpses backwards into Space and Eternity afforded by the "Fire Mist" doctrine, it will be apparent that they all rest on one basis. That basis is, that the impulse once given to a hypothetical Unit has a tendency to continue; and consequently, that anything "done" by something at a certain time and certain place tends to repeat itself at other times and places.

Such is the admitted rationale of heredity and atavism. That the same things apply to our ordinary conduct is apparent from the notorious ease with which "habits," - bad or good, as the case may be - are acquired, and it will not be questioned that this applies, as a rule, as much to the moral and intellectual, as to the physical world.

Furthermore, History and Science teach us plainly that certain physical habits conduce to certain moral and intellectual results. There never yet was a conquering nation of vegetarians. Even in the old Aryan times, we do not learn that the very Rishis, from whose lore and practice we gain the knowledge of Occultism, ever interdicted the Kshetriya (military) caste from hunting or a carnivorous diet. Filling, as they did, a certain place in the body politic in the actual condition of the world, the Rishis as little thought of interfering with them, as of restraining the tigers of the jungle from their habits. That did not affect what the Rishis did themselves.

The aspirant to longevity then must be on his guard against two dangers. He must beware especially of impure and animal thoughts.[In other words, the thought tends to provoke the deed. - G.M.]For Science shows that thought is dynamic, and the thought-force evolved by nervous action expanding outwardly, must affect the molecular relations of the physical man. The inner men, [We use the word in the plural, reminding the reader that, according to our doctrine, man is septenary. - G. M.] however sublimated their organism may be, are still composed of actual, not hypothetical, particles, and are still subject to the law that an "action" has a tendency to repeat itself; a tendency to set up analogous action in the grosser "shell" they are in contact with, and concealed within.

And, on the other hand, certain actions have a tendency to produce actual physical conditions unfavourable to pure thoughts, hence to the state required for developing the supremacy of the inner man.

To return to the practical process. A normally healthy mind, in a normally healthy body, is a good starting-point. Though exceptionally powerful and self-devoted natures may sometimes recover the ground lost by mental degradation or physical misuse, by employing proper means, under the direction of unswerving resolution, yet often things may have gone so far that there is no longer stamina enough to sustain the conflict sufficiently long to perpetuate this life; though what in Eastern parlance is called the "merit" of the effort will help to ameliorate conditions and improve matters in another.

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However this may be, the prescribed course of self-discipline commences here. It may be stated briefly that its essence is a course of moral, mental, and physical development, carried on in parallel lines - one being useless without the other. The physical man must be rendered more ethereal and sensitive; the mental man more penetrating and profound; the moral man more self-denying and philosophical. And it may be mentioned that all sense of restraint - even if self-imposed - is useless. Not only is all "goodness" that results from the compulsion of physical force, threats, or bribes (whether of physical or so-called "spiritual" nature) absolutely useless to the person who exhibits it, its hypocrisy tending to poison moral atmosphere of the world, but the desire to be "good" or "pure," to be efficacious must be spontaneous. It must be a self-impulse from within, a real preference for something higher, not an abstention from vice because of fear of the law: not a chastity enforced by the dread of Public Opinion; not a benevolence exercised through love of praise or dread of consequences in a hypothetical Future Life. [Col. Olcott clearly and succinctly explains the Buddhistic doctrine of Merit or Karma, in his "Buddhist Catechism" (Question 83). - G.M.]

It will be seen now in connection with the doctrine of the tendency to the renewal of action, before discussed, that the course of self-discipline recommended as the only road to Longevity by Occultism is not a "visionary" theory dealing with vague "ideas," but actually a scientifically devised system of drill. It is a system by which each particle of the several men composing the septenary individual receives an impulse, and a habit of doing what is necessary for certain purposes of its own freewill and with "pleasure." Every one must be practiced and perfect in a thing to do it with pleasure. This rule especially applies to the case of the development of Man. "Virtue" may be very good in its way - it may lead to the grandest results. But to become efficacious it has to be practiced cheerfully not with reluctance or pain. As a consequence of the above consideration the candidate for Longevity at the commencement of his career must begin to eschew his physical desires, not from any sentimental theory of right or wrong, but for the following good reason. As, according to a well-known and now established scientific theory, his visible material frame is always renewing its particles; he will, while abstaining from the gratification of his desires, reach the end of a certain period during which those particles which composed the man of vice, and which were given a bad predisposition, will have departed. At the same time, the disuse of such functions will tend to obstruct the entry, in place of the old particles, of new particles having the tendency to repeat the said acts. And while this is the particular result as regards certain "vices," the general result of an abstention from "gross" acts will be (by a modification of the well-known Darwinian law of atrophy by non-usage) to diminish what we may call the "relative" density and coherence of the outer shell (as a result of its less-used molecules); while the diminution in the quantity of its actual constituents will be "made up" (if tried by scales and weights) by the increased admission of more ethereal particles.

What physical desires are to be abandoned and in what order? First and foremost, he must give up alcohol in all forms; for while it supplies no nourishment, nor any direct pleasure (beyond such sweetness or fragrance as may be gained in the taste of wine, &c., to which alcohol, in itself, is nonessential) to even the grossest elements of the "physical" frame, it induces a violence of action, a rush so to speak, of life, the stress of which can only be sustained by very dull, gross, and dense elements, and which, by the operation of the well-known law of Reaction (in commercial phrase, "supply and demand") tends to summon them from the surrounding universe, and therefore directly counteracts the object we have in view.

Next comes meat-eating, and for the very same reason, in a minor degree. It increases the rapidity of life, the energy of action, the violence of passions. It may be good for a hero who has to fight and die, but not

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for a would-be sage, who has to exist and

Next in order come the sexual desires; for these, in addition to the great diversion of energy (vital force) into other channels, in many different ways, beyond the primary one (as, for instance, the waste of energy in expectation, jealousy, &c.) are direct attractions to a certain gross quality of the original matter of the Universe, simply because the most pleasurable physical sensations are only possible at that stage of density. Alongside with and extending beyond all these and other gratifications of the senses (which include not only those things usually known as "vicious," but all those which, though ordinarily regarded as "innocent," have yet the disqualification of ministering to the pleasures of the body - the most harmless to others and the least "gross" being the criterion for those to be last abandoned in each case) - must be carried on the moral purification.

Nor must it be imagined that "austerities" as commonly understood can, in the majority of cases, avail much to hasten the "etherealizing" process. That is the rock on which many of the Eastern esoteric sects have foundered, and the reason why they have degenerated into degrading superstitions. The Western monks and the Eastern Yogeas, who think they will reach the apex of powers by concentrating their thought on their navel, or by standing on one leg, are practicing exercises which serve no other purpose than to strengthen the will-power, which is sometimes applied to the basest purposes. These are examples of this one-sided and dwarf development. It is no use to fast as long as you require food. The ceasing of desire for food without impairment of health is the sign which indicates that it should be taken in lesser and ever decreasing quantities until the extreme limit compatible with life is reached. A stage will be finally attained where only water will be required.

Nor is it of any use for this particular purpose of longevity to abstain from immorality so long as you are craving for it in your heart; and so on with all other unsatisfied inward cravings. To get rid of the inward desire is the essential thing, and to mimic the real thing without it is barefaced hypocrisy and useless slavery.

So it must be with the moral purification of the heart. The "basest" inclinations must go first - then the others. First avarice, then fear, then envy, worldly pride, uncharitableness, hatred; last of all ambition and curiosity must be abandoned successively. The strengthening of the more ethereal and so-called "spiritual" parts of man must go on at the same time. Reasoning from the known to the unknown, meditation must be practiced and encouraged. Meditation is the inexpressible yearning of the inner Man to "go out towards the infinite," which in the olden time was the real meaning of adoration, but which has now no synonym in the European languages, because the thing no longer exists in the West, and its name has been vulgarized to the make-believe shams known as prayer, glorification, and repentance. Through all stages of training the equilibrium of the consciousness - the assurance that all must be right in the Kosmos, and therefore with you a portion of it - must be retained. The process of life must not be hurried but retarded, if possible; to do otherwise may do good to others - perhaps even to yourself in other spheres, but it will hasten your dissolution in this.

Nor must the externals be neglected in this first stage. Remember that an adept, though "existing" so as to convey to ordinary minds the idea of his being immortal, is not also invulnerable to agencies from without. The training to prolong life does not, in itself, secure one from accidents. As far as any physical preparation goes, the sword may still cut, the disease enter, the poison disarrange. This case is very

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clearly and beautifully put in "Zanoni," and it is correctly put and must be so, unless all "Adeptism" is a baseless lie. The adept may be more secure from ordinary dangers than the common mortal, but he is so by virtue of the superior knowledge, calmness, coolness and penetration which his lengthened existence and its necessary concomitants have enabled him to acquire; not by virtue of any preservative power in the process itself. He is secure as a man armed with a rifle is more secure than a naked baboon; not secure in the sense in which the deva (god) was supposed to be securer than a man.

If this is so in the case of the high adept, how much more necessary is it that the neophyte should be not only protected but that he himself should use all possible means to ensure for himself the necessary duration of life to complete the process of mastering the phenomena we call death! It may be said, why do not the higher adepts protect him? Perhaps they do to some extent, but the child must learn to walk alone; to make him independent of his own efforts in respect to safety, would be destroying one element necessary to his development - the sense of responsibility. What courage or conduct would be called for in a man sent to fight when armed with irresistible weapons and clothed in impenetrable armour? Hence the neophyte should endeavour, as far as possible, to fulfill every true canon of sanitary law as laid down by modern scientists. Pure air, pure water, pure food, gentle exercise, regular hours, pleasant occupations and surroundings, are all, if not indispensable, at least serviceable to his progress. It is to secure these, at least as much as silence and solitude, that the Gods, Sages, Occultists of all ages have retired as much as possible to the quiet of the country, the cool cave, the depths of the forest, the expanse of the desert, or the heights of the mountains. Is it not suggestive that the Gods have always loved the "high places"; and that in the present day the highest section of the Occult Brotherhood on earth inhabits the highest mountain plateaux of the earth? [The stern prohibition to the Jews to serve "their gods upon the high mountains and upon the hills" is traced back to the unwillingness of their ancient elders to allow people in most cases unfit for Adeptship to choose a life of celibacy and asceticism, or in other words, to pursue Adeptship. This prohibition had an esoteric meaning before it became the prohibition, incomprehensible in its deadletter sense: for it is not India alone whose sons accorded divine honours to the Wise Ones, but all nations regarded their adepts and initiates as divine.]

Nor must the beginner disdain the assistance of medicine and good medical regimen. He is still an ordinary mortal, and he requires the aid of an ordinary mortal.

"Suppose, however, all the conditions required, or which will be understood to be required (for the details and varieties of treatment requisite, are too numerous to be detailed here), are fulfilled, what is the next step?" the reader will ask. Well if there have been no backslidings or remissness in the procedure indicated, the following physical results will follow:-

First the neophyte will take more pleasure in things spiritual and pure. Gradually gross and material occupations will become not only uncraved for or forbidden, but simply and literally repulsive to him. He will take more pleasure in the simple sensations of Nature - the sort of feeling one can remember having experienced as a child. He will feel more light-hearted, confident, happy. Let him take care the sensation of renewed youth does not mislead, or he will yet risk a fall into his old baser life and even lower depths. "Action and Reaction are equal."

Now the desire for food will begin to cease. Let it be left off gradually - no fasting is required. Take what you feel you require. The food craved for will be the most innocent and simple. Fruit and milk will usually

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be the best. Then as till now, you have been simplifying the quality of your food, gradually - very gradually - as you feel capable of it diminish the quantity. You will ask: "Can a man exist without food?" No, but before you mock, consider the process alluded to. It is a notorious fact that many of the lowest and simplest organisms have no excretions. The common guinea-worm is a very good instance. It has rather a complicated organism, but it has no ejaculatory duct. All it consumes - the poorest essences of the human body - is applied to its growth and propagation. Living as it does in human tissue, it passes no digested food away. The human neophyte, at a certain stage of his development, is in a somewhat analogous condition, with this difference or differences, that he does excrete, but it is through the pores of his skin, and by those too enter other etherealized particles of matter to contribute towards his support. [He is in a state similar to the physical state of a foetus before birth into the world. - G.M.]. Otherwise, all the food and drink is sufficient only to keep in equilibrium those "gross" parts of his physical body which still remain to repair their cuticle-waste through the medium of the blood. Later on, the process of cell-development in his frame will undergo a change; a change for the better, the opposite of that in disease for the worse - he will become all living and sensitive, and will derive nourishment from the Ether (Akas). But that epoch for our neophyte is yet far distant.

Probably, long before that period has arrived, other results, no less surprising than incredible to the uninitiated will have ensued to give our neophyte courage and consolation in his difficult task. It would be but a truism to repeat what has been again alleged (in ignorance of its real rationale) by hundreds and hundreds of writers as to the happiness and content conferred by a life of innocence and purity. But often at the very commencement of the process some real physical result, unexpected and unthought of by the neophyte, occurs. Some lingering disease, hitherto deemed hopeless, may take a favourable turn; or he may develop healing mesmeric powers himself; or some hitherto unknown sharpening of his senses may delight him. The rationale of these things is, as we have said, neither miraculous nor difficult of comprehension. In the first place, the sudden change in the direction of the vital energy (which, whatever view we take of it and its origin, is acknowledged by all schools of philosophy as most recondite, and as the motive power) must produce results of some kind. In the second, Theosophy shows, as we said before, that a man consists of several men pervading each other, and on this view (although it is very difficult to express the idea in language) it is but natural that the progressive etherealization of the densest and most gross of all should leave the others literally more at liberty. A troop of horses may be blocked by a mob and have much difficulty in fighting its way through; but if every one of the mob could be changed suddenly into a ghost, there would be little to retard it. And as each interior entity is more rare, active, and volatile than the outer and as each has relation with different elements, spaces, and other articles on Occultism, the mind of the reader may conceive - though the pen of the writer could not express it in a dozen volumes - the magnificent possibilities gradually unfolded to the neophyte.

Many of the opportunities thus suggested may be taken advantage of by the neophyte for his own safety, amusement, and the good of those around him; but the way in which he does this is one adapted to his fitness - a part of the ordeal he has to pass through, and misuse of these powers will certainly entail the loss of them as a natural result. The Itchcha (or desire) evoked anew by the vistas they open up will retard or throw back his progress.

But there is another portion of the Great Secret to which we must allude, and which is now, for the first, in a long series of ages, allowed to be given out to the world, as the hour for it is come.

The educated reader need not be reminded again that one of the great discoveries which has

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immortalized the name of Darwin is the law that an organism has always a tendency to repeat, at an analogous period in its life, the action of its progenitors, the more surely and completely in proportion to their proximity in the scale of life. One result of this is, that, in general, organized beings usually die at a period (on an average) the same as that of their progenitors. It is true that there is a great difference between the actual ages at which individuals of any species die. Disease, accidents and famine are the main agents in causing this. But there is, in each species, a well-known limit within which the Race-life lies, and none are known to survive beyond it. This applies to the human species as well as any other. Now, supposing that every possible sanitary condition had been complied with, and every accident and disease avoided by a man of ordinary frame, in some particular case there would still, as is known to medical men, come a time when the particles of the body would feel the hereditary tendency to do that which leads inevitably to dissolution, and would obey it. It must be obvious to any reflecting man that, if by any procedure this critical climacteric could be once thoroughly passed over, the subsequent danger of "Death" would be proportionally less as the years progressed. Now this, which no ordinary and unprepared mind and body can do, is possible sometimes for the will and the frame of one who has been specially prepared. There are fewer of the grosser particles present to feel the hereditary bias - there is the assistance of the reinforced "interior men" (whose normal duration is always greater even in natural death) to the visible outer shell, and there is the drilled and indomitable Will to direct and wield the whole. [In this connection we may as well show what modern science, and especially physiology, has to say as to the power of the human will. "The force of will is a potent element in determining longevity. This single point must be granted without argument, that of two men every way alike and similarly circumstanced, the one who has the greater courage and grit will be longer-lived. One does not need to practice medicine long to learn that men die who might just as well live if they resolved to live, and that myriads who are invalids could become strong if they had the native or acquired will to vow they would do so. Those who have no other quality favorable to life, whose bodily organs are nearly all diseased, to whom each day is a day of pain, who are beset by life-shortening influences, yet do live by will alone." - Dr. George M. Beard.]

From that time forward the course of the aspirant is clearer. He has conquered "the Dweller of the Threshold" - the hereditary enemy of his race, and, though still exposed to ever-new dangers in his progress towards Nirvana, he is flushed with victory, and with new confidence and new powers to second it, can press onwards to perfection.

For, it must be remembered, that nature everywhere acts by Law, and that the process of purification we have been describing in the visible material body, also takes place in those which are interior, and not visible to the scientist by modifications of the same process. All is on the change, and the metamorphoses of the more ethereal bodies imitate, though in successively multiplied duration, the career of the grosser, gaining an increasing wider range of relations with the surrounding kosmos, till in Nirvana the most rarefied Individuality is merged at last into the Infinite Totality.

From the above description of the process, it will be inferred why it is that "Adepts" are so seldom seen in ordinary life; for, *pari passu*, with the etherealization of their bodies and the development of their power, grows an increasing distaste, and a so-to-speak, "contempt" for the things of our ordinary mundane existence. Like the fugitive who successively casts away in his flight those articles which incommode his progress, beginning with the heaviest, so the aspirant eluding "Death" abandons all on which the latter can take hold. In the progress of Negation everything got rid of is a help. As we said before, the adept does not become "immortal" as the word is ordinarily understood. By or about the time when the Death-

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limit of his race is passed he is actually dead, in the ordinary sense, that is to say, he has relieved himself of all or nearly all such material particles as would have necessitated in disrupting the agony of dying. He has been dying gradually during the whole period of his Initiation. The catastrophe cannot happen twice over. He has only spread over a number of years the mild process of dissolution which others endure from a brief moment to a few hours. The highest Adept is, in fact, dead to, and absolutely unconscious of, the world; he is oblivious of its pleasures, careless of its miseries, in so far as sentimentalism goes, for the stern sense of Duty never leaves him blind to its very existence. For the new ethereal senses opening to wider spheres are to ours much in the relation to ours to the Infinitely Little. New desires and enjoyments, new dangers and new hindrances arise, with new sensations and new perceptions; and far away down in the mist - both literally and metaphorically - is our dirty little earth left below by those who have virtually "gone to join the gods."

And from this account too, it will be perceptible how foolish it is for people to ask the Theosophist to "procure for them communication with the highest Adepts." It is with the utmost difficulty that one or two can be induced, even by the throes of a world, to injure their own progress by meddling with mundane affairs. The ordinary reader will say: "This is not godlike. This is the acme of selfishness." But let him realize that a very high Adept, undertaking to reform the world, would necessarily have to once more submit to Incarnation. And is the result of all that have gone before in that line sufficiently encouraging to prompt a renewal of the attempt?

A deep consideration of all that we have written, will also give the Theosophists an idea of what they demand when they ask to be put in the way of gaining practically "higher powers." Well, there, as plainly as words can put it, is the Path Can they tread it?

Nor must it be disguised that what to the ordinary mortal are unexpected dangers, temptations and enemies also beset the way of the neophyte. And that for no fanciful cause, but the simple reason that he is, in fact, acquiring new senses, has yet no practice in their use, and has never before seen the things he sees. A man born blind suddenly endowed with vision would not at once master the meaning of perspective, but would, like a baby, imagine in one case, the moon to be within his reach, and, in the other, grasp a live coal with the most reckless confidence.

And what, it may be asked, is to recompense the abnegation of all the pleasures of life, this cold surrender of all mundane interests, this stretching forward to an unknown goal which seems ever more unattainable? For, unlike some of the anthropomorphic creeds, Occultism offers to its votaries no eternally permanent heaven of material pleasure, to be gained at once by one quick dash through the grave. As has, in fact, often been the case many would be prepared willingly to die now for the sake of paradise hereafter. But Occultism gives no such prospect of cheaply and immediately gained infinitude of pleasure, wisdom and existence. It only promises extensions of these, stretching in successive arches obscured by successive veils, in an unbroken series up the long vista which leads to Nirvana. And this too, qualified by the necessity that new powers entail new responsibilities, and that the capacity of increased pleasure entails the capacity of increased sensibility to pain. To this, the only answer that can be given is twofold: (1st) the consciousness of Power is itself the most exquisite of pleasures, and is unceasingly gratified in the progress onwards with new means for its exercise; and (secondly) as has been already said - This is the only road by which there is the faintest scientific likelihood that "Death" can be avoided, perpetual memory secured, infinite wisdom attained, and hence an immense helping of mankind made possible, once that the adept has safely crossed the turning-point. Physical as well as

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metaphysical logic requires and endorses the fact that only by gradual absorption into infinity can the Part become acquainted with the Whole, and that that which is now something can only feel, know, and enjoy Everything when lost in Absolute Totality in the vortex of that Unalterable Circle wherein our Knowledge becomes Ignorance, and the Everything itself is identified with the Nothing.