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OBJECTS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA.

The principal object is to form a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood without any distinctions whatever; the subsidiary objects being:

(a) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies, and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and

(b) The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

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THE GREAT DEEP.

Vayu Purana, vi, 1-7.

FOR the Waters were in the beginning, when fire had perished from the face of the world; and all things, fixed and moving, and all that is between them, had melted together.

Nor could anything be perceived then, in that lonely ocean. Then the divine Evolver, thousand-eyed, with a thousand resting places;

The thousand-headed Spirit, in color golden, above all powers of sense; the Evolver, bearing the name of Lord of the waters, slept there on the deep.

Then, through the strong power of Being within him, awakening, he looked forth over the empty world, after a night that had lasted for a thousand ages.

And the Evolver, becoming the great Breath, moved there on the waters; hither and thither like a firefly, at night, in the season of the rains.

KING NALA'S RIVALS.

Mahabharata, iii, vi, 53, 5.

WHEN a fair time had come, and a lucky day and hour, King Bhima called the lords of the earth to the choosing. Hearing it, the lords of the world, all afflicted with love, swiftly assembled, longing for Damayanti. The Kings of men entered the arena, bright with golden pillars and majestic archway, as mighty lions go forth to the mountains. There the compellers of the earth were seated on their several seats, wearing well-scented garlands all, and circlets of polished gems. There were seen strong arms like bars of iron, and men, smooth-skinned, like serpents; clustering locks very beautiful, well-formed noses, eyes and brows. The faces of the Kings shone like the stars of heaven.

That august assemblage of Kings, full of tigers among men, as the underworld is full of serpents, or the mountain cave of tigers, radiant Damayanti approached, entering the arena. The eyes and hearts of the Kings were stricken by her sovereign beauty. The sight of those great-souled, falling on her limbs, was fixed there, nor moved, of them beholding.

Then, when the names of the Kings had been announced, the daughter of Bhima beheld five men of equal form and stature; and, gazing at them, as they stood, all alike in feature, the Vidarbhan princess doubted, not recognizing Nala the King. For whichever of them she looked at, she thought that he was King Nala; and the lady, thinking and wondering in her heart, "How shall I know which of them are gods? How shall I recognize Nala the King?" thinking thus in herself, the princess of Vidarbha, greatly troubled, called back to memory the signs of the gods, as she had heard them. "The signs of the gods, that I heard from the old men, I see not at all, in any of these who are standing here on the ground."

She, pondering much, and again deliberating, thought that the time had come to appeal to the gods. Paying them reverence with voice and heart, with hands joined suppliant, and trembling, she spoke: "Hearing the voice of the swans, the King of Nishadha was chosen by me for lord,—by my truth in this, may the gods reveal him to me! In heart and word I have been faithful to him,—by my truth in this, may the immortals reveal him to me! The King of Nishadha was chosen my master by the gods,—by my truth in this, may the gods reveal him to me! This vow was taken by me, winning King Nala,—by my truth in this, may the gods reveal him to me! May the Kings of the spheres, the mighty lords, take their own forms, that I may know Nala the King of men!"

Hearing Damayanti's troubled prayer, and seeing her firm and perfect faith and love for Nala, her pure heart and soul, and her devoted love for Nala, the gods did as she had said, assuming their powers and proper forms.

She beheld all the immortals, sweatless, steady-eyed, their garlands fresh, nor dust stained, standing, yet touching not the ground. But the King of Nishadha with a shadow, his garland faded, stained with dust and sweat, standing on the ground, revealed by his moving eyelids. And gazing at them, the gods and King Nala, the daughter of Bhima, faithful, chose the Nishadhas' King; and with dark eyes downcast touched the border of his robe, and set her splendid garland on his shoulders.

Thus she, fairest of women, chose him for her lord, and immediately a murmur of praise broke forth from the lords of men. And the gods and the sages, wondering, broke forth in words of honor, praising Nala the King of men. And the King of men, the son of Virasena, spoke comfortable words to Damayanti the slender-waisted, rejoicing inwardly in his heart: "As thou, lovely one, lovest a man, though gods are present, therefore know that I shall cherish thee, ever delighting in thy words. And as long as life shall keep me in this body, O thou of sweetest smile, so long shall I be thine; this truth I declare to thee."

Thus with joined hands rejoicing Damayanti with his words, they two, full of joy in each other, seeing the gods with Agni as their leader, heartily took refuge in the gods. And when Bhima's daughter had chosen the King of Nishadha, all the lords of the spheres, mighty in their brightness, heartily rejoicing, bestowed eight gifts upon Nala: To see him visibly in the sacrifice, and a bright and excellent path; these were the gifts of Indra, of Shachi's lord, in his gladness. And Agni gave his own presence, wherever the King of Nishadha should desire it, and that consumer of sacrifice made all the spheres luminous for him, with his own brightness. Yama gave him the essence of food, and firm steadfastness in the good law. And the Lord of the waters granted to him the waters, wherever he should desire them. Thus each gave him a twin gift, and garlands rich in excellent fragrance. And after giving him their gifts, the gods departed to the triple heavens.

And the lords of the earth, when they had thus taken part in the marriage of the King and Damayanti, full of wonder and exaltation, returned as they had come. And when the Kings were gone, great-hearted Bhima, full of joy, fulfilled the marriage-rite for Damayanti and Nala; and the King of Nishadha, dwelling there as long as was his pleasure, went forth to his own city, chiefest among men, with the good will of Bhima.

And, gaining thus the pearl of women, that prince famous in song, dwelt with her in happiness, as Indra with his consort Shachi. The King

was beyond measure exultant, radiant like the rayed sun. And the King showed great love to his people, guarding them well with equal sway. And he offered the sacrifice of universal sovereignty, that had been offered of old by Yayati the son of Nahusha. And many other oblations and gifts he offered also, in his wisdom. And many a time among the woods and groves, very beautiful, Nala wandered with Damayanti, like to one of the immortals.

THE LEGENDS OF THE BARDS.

I HAVE translated the story of King Nala's rivals, not for any esoteric or spiritual meaning it may possibly contain, nor in any way for the purposes of moralizing, but simply because it is an admirable piece of poetry, an image of life full of dignity and beauty. Yet we may use this story to point a moral in quite another way. It is an example, and an excellent one, of the element of bardic tradition which fills so large a place in the literature of ancient India. These songs of the bards were recited at the courts of the princes and kings, for their pleasure and delight, just as the poems of Homer were, when they were originally composed; and, in very many cases, the subjects of these recitations were chosen from the family traditions of the prince in whose presence they were chanted or sung; and this is the cause of the element of delicate and courtly flattery almost always present with them. For what could be more flattering to a prince than to say, that he was chosen by the loveliest of women, even when the four great gods were his rivals? What could be more flattering to the princess than to say that these great gods became suitors for her hand, and only relinquished their suit from admiration of her constancy and truth? Again, what could be more delicate than the suggestion that Nala's misfortunes were brought upon him, not by his own infatuation, but by the direct interference of a malignant demon,—as the story goes on to tell.

This story of Nala, at its first recitation, must have owed the largest part of its interest to the fact that it touched on traditions still fresh in the memories of its hearers, and was recited before the immediate descendants of the hero and heroine, if not, indeed, as is very possible, in the presence of Nala and Damayanti themselves, in the fair autumn of their life, after all their misfortunes were safely past. It must be extremely ancient, as far as its subject and original composition are con-

cerned, for the gods are those of the most ancient Vedic period, and there is no allusion at all to the later deities who afterwards eclipsed the old Vedic immortals, in the minds of the people. But, as in ancient Ireland, the songs of the bards were subject to continual revision, by the substitution of more easily understood words and phrases, when the old words, becoming obsolete and time-worn, were dropping out of use. At the same time, though, the bards adhered very strictly to the form, structure, and color of the old traditions, so that it may very easily be that we have the story of Nala's rivals to-day in the very same form, though not in the same words, that Nala himself first heard, in the evening of his life.

There are numbers of these old songs of the Rajput Kings, of their courtly dignity and valor; so much so that the praise and honor of the princes contained therein, and the generous estimation of the princely race, did not pass uncensured by the ambition of the Brahmans; with the result that almost every one of these songs has a Brahmanical postscript, to the effect that, though the Rajput hero was a very fine man, a friend of his, a pious Brahman, was a much finer; and that much of the fortune of the kingly hero was due to the fact that he made costly birthday-gifts and New-Year's gifts and sacrificial gifts to his friend the Brahman,—with the transparent moral: "go and do likewise."

The Mahabharata, as it has come down to us, has over and over again suffered from these didactic interpolations in honor of the Brahmans, and part of the burden of their song invariably is, that it is time to take up the collection. Thus, in the present tale, we find it added, as a proof of Nala's magnificence, that he offered many sacrifices, and gave many gifts; and the word used for the latter is invariably to be understood as "gifts to Brahmans." Again, we are informed that Damayanti was bestowed on her loving parents, because they hospitably entreated a certain peregrinating Brahman, and gave him great feasts. Thus the Brahmanical editors and revisers of the bardic songs sought to lead the princes along the good way.

But, it is needless to add, whatever is of real poetic worth in these songs we owe to the bards and not to the Brahmans or, even more, perhaps to the princes who set the example of knightly courtesy and valor, which is the theme of the bardic recitations. In just the same way, we find that whatever is of highest value in the philosophic systems of India owes its origin to the princely teachers whose wisdom is enshrined in the Upanishads, while the doctrinal and theological part, which has far less human interest, is the handiwork of Brahman elaborators.

In the Bhagavad-gita, for instance, the earliest chapters, as Krishna himself tells us, embody the mystic traditions of the kingly sages, while sections towards the end, such as the classification of the four castes, the

three kinds of gifts, and so on, are as clearly the work of the Brahman editors. The genius of these editors, it will be seen, was in no sense creative. The Brahmans did not create any of India's greatness, whether in poetry or philosophy. Their tendency was essentially for order, beginning with the hierarchic structure of their own caste, and the arrangement of class-relations, but also effecting an orderly grouping and preservation of the old Indian works. Their formal and dogmatic instinct, which we may see to have done great harm to India in many ways, yet brought with them this compensation, that it made them good librarians and tenacious preservers of texts.

HEART, WILL, LIFE.

Chhandogya Upanishad: iii, 12-16.

THE divine Song, verily, is all their being, whatsoever there is; and the Word is the divine Song. The Word, verily, enounces and guards all being.

And the divine Song, verily, is this world, for in it all this being firmly rests, and goes not out beyond it.

And what this world is, is this body here, in man; for in it all the life-breaths firmly rest, and go not out beyond it.

And what is this body here, in man, that is the heart, in the inner man; for in it all the life-breaths firmly rest, and go not out beyond it.

This is the divine Song, with its four degrees and its six parts, and it has been declared thus by the Vedic hymn:

So far is the greatness of it, and mightier than this is the spirit;
One degree of it is all beings, three degrees of it are immortal in
the heavens.

And what is called the Eternal, is the outward shining-ether, outside man; and what the outward shining-ether outside man is, that the shining-ether here in the inner man is.

And what the shining-ether here in the inner man is, that verily is the shining-ether in the inner heart.

Thus this is perfect, and passes not away; he who knows this gains perfect happiness, that passes not away.

Of it, verily, of the heart, there are five channels for the bright powers:

There is the eastern channel ; it is the forward-breath ; it is the power of seeing ; it is the sun. Therefore this should be reverently approached as radiance, as the world-food. Radiant, an eater of the world-food, he becomes, who knows thus.

And so there is the southern channel ; it is the distributing-breath ; it is hearing ; it is the moon. Therefore it should be reverently approached as happiness and fame. Happy and famous he becomes, who knows thus.

And so there is the western channel ; it is the downward-breath ; it is voice ; it is fire. Therefore it should be reverently approached as divine lustre and the world-food. Full of divine lustre, and an eater of the world-food he becomes, who knows thus.

And so there is the northern channel ; it is the uniting-breath ; it is mind ; it is the storm god. Therefore it should be reverently approached as glory and praise. Full of glory and praise he becomes, who knows thus.

And so there is the upward channel ; it is the upward-breath ; it is the great breath ; it is the shining-ether. Therefore it should be reverently approached as brightness and as the mighty one. Full of brightness and mighty he becomes, who knows thus.

These are the five spirits of the Eternal ; the keepers of the gates of the heaven-world. He who knows, verily, these five spirits of the Eternal, the keepers of the gates of the heaven-world, in his family is born a hero ; he reaches the heaven-world, who knows these five spirits of the Eternal, the keepers of the gates of heaven.

And the Light that shines there, beyond the heavens, at the back of the world, at the back of all, in the best and most excellent worlds, is the same as the light that shines in the inner man.

And the sight of it is this : where he knows by feeling the fiery power here, within the body. And the hearing of it is this : where, stopping both ears, he yet hears it like a murmuring, like the crackling of a burning fire. Therefore it should be reverently approached as seen and as heard. A seer and hearer he becomes, who knows thus,—who knows thus.

All this, verily, is the Eternal. It should be reverently approached, in silence, as breathing and living in him.

Verily man is formed of Will ; according as a man's will is, in this world, according to that is his being, on going forth hence. Let him perform his will.

Of the form of mind, with a body of vital-breath, of the nature of light, intending toward the real, of the being of the shining-ether, doing all things, desiring all things, smelling all things, tasting all things,

embracing all that is, silent, untroubled :—this is my Self in the inmost heart ; smaller than a grain of rice, or a grain of barley, or a grain of mustard-seed, or a grain of millet, or the kernel of a grain of millet ; this is my Self in the inmost heart ; older than the earth, older than the mid-world, greater than heaven, greater than all these worlds. Doing all things, desiring all things, smelling all things, tasting all things, embracing all that is, silent, untroubled. This is my Self in the inmost heart, this is the Eternal. Going forth hence, I shall enter into its being. He who has possessed this, doubts no more.

Thus, of old, spoke Shandilya, Shandilya.

There is an egg-like sphere encompassing the etherial world ; that root of the world grows not old. The spaces are its channels, heaven is its upper concave. This sphere is the treasury of the world, wherein all this world is stored.

The eastern space of it is called the sacrificial vessel ; the southern space is called the enduring ; the western space is called the queen ; of these the great Breath is the child. He who knows that Breath as the child of the spaces, mourns not with the mourning for children. I, verily, know that breath as the child of the spaces, and mourn not with the mourning for children.

I enter the most excellent sphere, by that, by that, by that. I enter life, by that, by that, by that. I enter the terrestrial world, by that, by that, by that. I enter the etherial world by that, by that, by that. I enter the celestial world by that, by that, by that.

So as I said : “ I enter life,” thus life, verily, is all being, whatsoever there is. As life, I have gained being.

And as I said : “ I enter the terrestrial world,” thus I enter the earth, I enter the air, I enter the sky ; thus I said.

And as I said : “ I enter the etherial world,” thus I enter fire, I enter the breath, I enter the sun ; thus I said.

And as I said : “ I enter the celestial world,” thus I enter the Rig Veda, I enter the Yajur Veda, I enter the Sama Veda. Thus I said ; thus I said.

Man, verily, is a sacrifice. His first four and twenty years are the early morning oblation. The metre of the divine Song has four and twenty syllables ; therefore this early morning oblation belongs to the divine Song. The powers of earth are correlated to it ; the vital breaths are the powers of earth, because they penetrate all this world.

Therefore if, in this period, he should be afflicted, let him say : may the vital breaths, the powers of earth, prolong this my early morning oblation until the midday oblation. May I not be cut off as a sacrifice

in the midst of the powers of earth, the vital breaths. It passes, and he becomes whole.

And the next forty-four years are the midday oblation. The metre of the hymns has forty-four syllables, therefore this midday oblation belongs to the metre of the hymns. The powers of the breaths are correlated with it, the vital breaths are the powers of the breaths, because they move all this world.

Therefore if in this period he should be afflicted, let him say : may the vital breaths, the powers of the breaths, prolong this my midday oblation until the third oblation. May I not be cut off as a sacrifice in the midst of the breaths, the powers of the breaths. It passes, and he becomes whole.

And the next forty-eight years are the third oblation. The second metre of the hymns has forty-eight syllables, therefore this third oblation belongs to it. The powers of light are correlated with it, the vital breaths are the powers of light, because they encompass all this world.

Therefore if in this period, he should be afflicted, let him say : may the vital breaths, the powers of light, prolong this my third oblation until the full end of my time ; may I not be cut off in the midst of the vital breaths as a sacrifice. It passes, and he becomes whole.

Knowing this of old, Mahidasa, grandson of Itara, and saying : " Why dost thou afflict me, since I will not therefore go forth from the body," lived, verily, sixteen hundred years. He lives, verily, sixteen hundred years, who thus knows.

THE TEACHINGS OF THE SEERS.

In Chhandogya Upanishad : iii, 12-16.

BY a curious coincidence, in which there was no element of intention whatever, the opening verses of the section of the Upanishads, here translated, carry with them a marked suggestion of the beginning of the Fourth Gospel ; while the verses from the Vayu Purana translated first, are equally reminiscent of the opening lines of Genesis.

Here we read " in the beginning, all things fixed and moving had melted together, and the spirit slept on the great deep," just as in the other teaching, where " the earth was without form, and void ; and the spirit brooded over the waters." Here also, the brooding spirit is pictured with a wonderfully vivid and poetic touch, " the great Breath moved on the waters, to and fro, like a firefly at night, in the season of the rains."

In the same way, we are reminded of those eminently gnostic verses : “In the beginning was the Word,” and what follows by the sentence “The divine Song, verily, is all this being ; and the Word is the divine Song.”

It will hardly be necessary to say that we are dealing, here, with a vivid and striking picture of the doctrine of the emanation of worlds from the unmanifest Eternal. The divine Song is the famous verse, of four short lines, which we translated some time ago :

OM ! earth ! mid-world ! heaven !
That Sun’s most excellent
Brightness divine, let us meditate on,
Which enlightens our souls.

And the four-lined verse is chosen because it very fitly represents the four steps, or grades of being, which are generally enumerated thus : waking, dreaming, dreamlessness, and the fourth, which is ineffable.

Therefore the “divine Song” represents the fourfold world, as is suggested by its own words : earth, mid-world, heaven, the divine Sun. And it further suggests that the manifesting of the worlds depends on rhythmical harmony of vibration, like the singing of a chant.

Then comes the teaching, so often repeated, that the little world of man, the microcosm, is built in perfect harmony with the great world of Nature, the macrocosm. So we are told that what the world is,—a fourfold being,—that also the body of a man is. We may understand this fourfold nature of man and his body in more ways than one ; first, corresponding to earth, mid-world, and heaven, there are the forces of passion, emotion, and soul ; with the spirit which includes them all, the Self, corresponding to the fourth world, the ineffable. Then again, there are the physical self, the psychic self, the spiritual self, and the divine Self, likewise corresponding with the fourfold world. Of this fourfold self it is said :

One degree of it is all manifested being ; three degrees are immortal in the heavens.

The three hidden degrees are the divine, the spiritual, and the psychic selves, though only the two former, or in the most rigid sense, the first, can strictly be said to be immortal.

Again, we are taught that the world outside man, the world of the inner man, and the world of the inmost man, who is called, very strikingly, the inmost heart, are not in reality different, but are all only modes of the Eternal, and therefore, in the last analysis, are all but the One. It will be seen that this teaching of the fourfold world of Nature, and the fourfold world of man that corresponds to it, really embraces the whole universe, though, of course, only in briefest outline. And it is

characteristic of what we are now translating, that almost every section is complete in itself, and is not closely connected with what goes before, or what follows; so that we evidently have here a series of brief and weighty teachings handed down in the schools of different masters, two of whom are mentioned by name, in the closing verses of two sections, particularly connected with them by tradition,—namely, Shandilya and Mahidasa.

The second section, translated above, develops more fully the teaching as to the inner man, who is still called the heart; as to his powers, and the vital energies within and without him which are correlated to these powers.

It will be easily understood that the sun and the sight referred to are primarily the spirit and the spiritual intuition; though, as all things are bound together in the universe, the natural sun and physical sight, correspond to the same powers on their own plane. The powers called “hearing” and “the moon” are, in the same way, the mind of the psychical self, and the psychical world, in their primary meaning; and, as before, they have also their natural correspondences. In like fashion, “fire” and “voice” are the habitual symbols of the fire of physical life, and the creative, or formative power which is the most extreme manifestation of physical life; the creative energy which, being, primarily, the reflection of the creative word of divinity, becomes, when abused, the darkest shadow of humanity.

Following the same symbolism, the “storm-god” and the “great Breath” again represent the psychic and spirit worlds, this time taken from below upwards, on the returning tide of involution, after the outward evolution or emanation has been completed.

At the same time, we have bound up together with this the correspondences of the vital breaths, the actual powers of the physical life of the body, and, with them, the physical powers of sense.

Then follows the striking image: these five powers, in whatever world they are manifested, are the five spirits of the Eternal, the five keepers of the gates of heaven. In no other books do we get this striking note of the highest spirituality, even in the midst of detailed lists of psychical or physical powers; in no other books are we perpetually reminded of the immediate presence of the eternal spirit in all things, in every manifestation, on whatever plane. For the light that shines there, beyond the heavens, at the back of the world, at the back of all things, is the same as the light that shines in the heart of man.

The “fiery power, within the body,” and “the sounds that are heard even where the ears are closed,” have to do with certain states and forces in the psychic life and its development, which must be experienced to be understood.

A new fragment of teaching is reached by the words: All this, verily, is the Eternal; it should be reverently approached in silence as breathing and living in the Eternal. This fragment, which tradition ascribes to the teacher Shandilya, anticipates in a remarkable way the thought that is the heart and soul of Schopenhauer's philosophy; the thought that the most real, indeed the only real, power in us, is the Will. Then the word-picture of the inner self, of the form of mind, of the nature of light, of the being of the shining ether, doing all things, desiring all things, knowing all things.

In the section of teaching that follows, we come to the world likened to an egg, as the symbol of life developing from within outwards. It seems that the three spaces, eastern, southern, and western, may best be represented by the three sides of a triangle, from which streams forth the radiance of the great Breath. Then again the doctrine of the thrice threefold world, suggested by the threefold repetitions: By that, by that, by that.

The last fragment translated suggests the idea of prolonging life by a knowledge of the powers of the vital breaths.

THE THREE KINDS OF WORKS.

Shankara's Vivekachudamani: The Crest Jewel of Wisdom, 441-470.

HE who through wisdom discerns that there is no division between the Eternal and the manifested world, bears the mark of one who is free even in life.

Whose mind is even, when honored by the good, or persecuted by the wicked, bears the mark of one who is free even in life.

In whom all sensuous objects, put forth by the supreme, melt together like the rivers and streams that enter the ocean's treasure house, making no change at all, since he and they are but the one Being, this sage self-conquered if set free.

For him who has understood the nature of the Eternal, there is no return to birth and death as of old; if such return there be, then the nature of the Eternal was not known.

If they say he returns to birth and death through the rush of old imaginings, this is not true; for, from the knowledge of oneness, imaginings lose all their power.

As the most lustful man ceases from desire before his mother; so, when the Eternal is known, the wise cease from desire, through fullness of bliss.

The scripture says that, even for him who profoundly meditates, there is a going after outward things of sense, on account of Works already entered on.

As long as there is the taste of pain and pleasure, so long are there Works already entered on ; the fruits come from the acts that went before ; without these acts where would the fruits be ?

From the knowledge that I am the Eternal, the accumulated Works, heaped up even through hundreds of myriads of ages, melt away like the work of dream, on awaking.

Whatever one does while dreaming, however good or bad it seems, what effect has it on him, on awaking to send him either to hell or heaven ? [45°]

On knowing the Self, unattached, enthroned like the dome of heaven, the man is no longer stained at all by Works to come.

As the ether enclosed in the jar is not stained by the smell of the wine, so the Self encompassed by its vestures, is not stained by any quality of theirs.

Works that have been entered on, before wisdom's sunrise, are not destroyed by wisdom, until they have reached their fruition ; like an arrow aimed and sent forth at the mark.

The arrow discharged by the thought that there was a tiger, does not stop when it is seen to be a cow, but pierces the mark through its exceeding swiftness.

Verily, Works entered on are the most formidable to the wise, they disappear only through being experienced. But Works accumulated and Works to come both melt away in the fire of perfect wisdom.

When they have beheld the oneness of the Self and the Eternal, and stand ever firm in the power of that knowledge, for them those three kinds of Works exist no longer ; for them there is only the Eternal, free from every change.

When the saint rests in the Self, through understanding that the Self is other than its vestures, that the Self is the pure Eternal ; then the myth of the reality of Works entered on no longer holds him, just as the myth of union with things of dream no longer holds him who has awakened.

For he who is awake no longer keeps the sense of " I and mine and that," for his looking-glass body and the world that belongs to it ; but comes to himself merely through waking.

Neither a desire for pursuing mythical objects, nor any grasping after even a world full of them, is seen in him who has awakened. But if the pursuit of mirages goes on, then it is seen for certain that the man has not wakened from sleep.

Thus dwelling in the supreme Eternal, through the real Self, he

stands and beholds naught else. Like the memory of an object looked on in dream, so is it, for the wise, with eating or the other acts of life.

The body is built up through Works ; the Works entered upon make for the building up of various forms ; but the Self is not built up through works. [460]

“ Unborn, eternal, immemorial,” says the Scripture, whose words are not in vain ; of him who rests in that Self, what building up of Works entered on can there be ?

Works entered upon flourish then, when the Self is identified with the body ; but the identifying of Self with body brings no joy, therefore let Works entered upon be renounced.

Even the building up of a body through Works entered on is a mirage ; whence can come the reality of a mere reflected image ? whence can come the birth of an unreality ?

Whence can come the death of what has not even been born ? Whence can come the entering on of what does not even exist ?—if there be a melting away of the effects of unwisdom, root and all, through the power of wisdom.

How does this body stand ? In the case of him who takes inert things to be real, Works entered on are supported by the sight of outward things,—thus says the scripture ; yet it does not teach the reality of the body and the like, to the wise.

One, verily, is the Eternal, without a second. There is no difference at all. Altogether perfect, without beginning or end, measureless and without change.

The home of Being, the home of Consciousness, the home of Bliss enduring, changeless ; one, verily, without a second, is the Eternal. There is no difference at all.

Full of the pure essence of the unmanifested, endless, at the crown of all ; one, verily, without a second, is the Eternal ; there is no difference at all.

That can neither be put away, nor sought after ; that can neither be taken nor approached,—one, verily, without a second, is the Eternal ; there is no difference at all.

Without qualities, without parts, subtle, without wavering, without stain ; one, verily, without a second, is the Eternal ; there is no difference at all. [470]

THE SONGS OF THE MASTER.

II.

ONE of the most natural questions, which it occurs to every one to ask, on making the acquaintance of the Bhagavad Gita, is, where it comes from. The answer which one generally finds, in the introductions to our translations, is, that it is "an episode of the Mahabharata," and sometimes we are further told that it is found in the Bhishma Parva. Now let us see what that answer means. Everybody knows that the Mahabharata is a huge epic poem, extending to something over two hundred thousand lines, and most people know that hardly more than a tenth of this vast bulk is concerned with the actual story of the Pandus and Kurus. The rest is made up of traditions, legends, sermons, and all kinds of picturesque details, dragged in without any particular reference to the actual course of the narrative, just as there are all kinds of diversions and episodes in the Arabian Nights. The story of Nala and Damayanti, for instance, is told to furnish a moral on the evils of gambling, and we have a brief narration of the wanderings of Rama and Lita, introduced on an equally slight pretext.

The whole great cycle of legends is divided into eighteen Parvas, or books; and the sixth of these, as being chiefly concerned with the death of Bhishma, is called the Bhishma Parva. This Bhishma was the uncle of the two brothers Dhritarashtra and Pandu; the former of whom was the father of the Kurus, the latter, the father of the Pandus. So that one may say that Bhishma was grand uncle to both sets of rival princes. There is an element of doubt about all these relationships, because princes were in the habit of coming somewhat irregularly into the world, and, when their ostensible parents were not to be revealed, they were discovered to be the children of various gods and goddesses. Princesses who happened to have sons born before their marriages, invariably accredited their parentage to the gods, or, sometimes, to celebrated saints. Finally, the mother of the Pandus was Krishna's aunt; and thus the great teacher became involved in the fortunes of the war.

The story of the intrigues that led up to the war is too long to tell; suffice it to say that Bhishma was to lead the Kurus, against Arjuna and the four other Pandus and their allies, including Krishna. The narrative of the battle, or rather, the series of battles that made up the great war, is told in rather an artificial way, though it was originally based on bardic traditions, of which we have already said something. Dhritarashtra, the father of the Kurus, was blind, and so took no part in the war,

but stayed at home in his palace. His servant Sanjaya had received the gift of unlimited vision, and was thus able to watch the development of the battle and to record the conversations of the combatants, down to the most minute details, without leaving the side of the blind master.

In this way, he relates at very great length the first few days' fighting, and the death of Bhishma. When Dhritarashtra hears that Bhishma has fallen, he exclaims, with tragic sorrow: "My heart must be of stone, for it breaks not on hearing of the death of Bhishma!" It is here that is recorded a wonderful astronomical occurrence which is relied on as fixing the date of the war: "The seven large planets, as they appeared in the firmament, all looked blazing like fire." This conjunction of the five planets, the sun and moon, took place, it is calculated, just five thousand years ago. It is worth noting that, before his death, or rather, before receiving his mortal wound, he exclaims: "To die of sickness at home is a sin for a Kopaltriya. The death he meets in battle is his duty forever." A sentiment like this is the motive of Krishna's sermon to Arjuna, which we know under the title of the Bhagavad Gita. It is led up to in this way: After hearing of Bhishma's death, Dhritarashtra asks his long-sighted servant Sanjaya which of the warriors first advanced to the battle? whose hearts were full of confidence? whose were overtaken by fear? Sanjaya replies, that both armies advanced full of courage, and begins to describe the movements of the charioteers, their banners and armor. Then Dhritarashtra asks the question which now forms the first two lines of the Bhagavad Gita, and Sanjaya replies.

Thus it will be seen that the beginning of the Bhagavad Gita, at any rate, flows quite naturally from the preceding events, and the first chapter, with its martial pictures, is exactly in the spirit of much that has gone before. In the same way, after the eighteen chapters which make up the Bhagavad Gita are ended, the story goes on unbroken, and we are told that, when Arjuna, reassured by Krishna, once more took up his bow, the Pandus and their allies broke out in cries of exaltation, and blew a note of defiance on their sea-born conches. "And drums were beaten, and horns were blown, and the uproar was great."

Thus the story of Krishna's discourse to Arjuna was evidently, in the beginning, an organic part of the whole legend; what portions of the whole teaching have evidently been added, we shall have to consider, later on.