

that the hyæna, by trampling on the shadow of a dog seated on an eminence, will hurl him down and devour him; and Aristotle says, that if a woman during her menstrua looks into a mirror, she will defile both, the mirror and the apparent image."

Yours faithfully,
DHUNJIBHOY JAMSETJEE.
Medhora.

AHMEDABAD, 12th April 1885.

Note.—From the quotations made in the foregoing letter it is evident that by Devas, Drugs and Drug-nasus the ancient Zoroastrian writers meant, *black-magicians, elementaries and elementals* respectively. The other names cited by our correspondent indicate some of the various Sub-divisions of elementaries and elemental spirits. These words do not merely mean the magnetic aura of a living or dead body. The question of auric emanations is of course important in considering the case of these agencies.

The injunction regarding the burial of hair and nails is intended to be a safeguard against the sorcery of black magicians who generally try to get possession of these things for purposes of black magic and for establishing a link between the intended victim and the mischievous agencies they evoke.

Mantras are supposed to implore the assistances of good spirits, friendly to man, to counteract the effects of black magic or demoniacal possession and drive away the evil elemental spirits; the recitation of these words must also be accompanied by appropriate ceremonies rendered effective by concentrated will; they are supposed, when the ritual is duly performed, to attract higher powers and induce them to grant the prayers of the person who use them.

It is generally supposed that a strong terrestrial magnetic current flows from the north-pole towards the Equator bringing with it swarms of elementals (Nasus) who live and have their being in it.

The seclusion of women during the period of menstruation is a time-honoured custom amongst several nations. Elementals, it is said, are easily attracted towards the female during this period; and so are the infernal incubi. If a woman is moving about freely, the contagion of bad magnetic aura is supposed to infect every person and thing in the house and render them amenable to the same influence; and hence seclusion and purification are strictly enjoined in this case by the codes of several nations. Our correspondent himself indicates the reason for the supposed pollution.

Magnetic emanations are constantly radiating from every human being. Their influence is present in the person's shadow, in his photo or picture as well as every thing else with which his aura comes into contact. It is interesting in this connection to refer to the "Chaya grahini" (Shadow Catcher), mentioned in Ramayana which was able to arrest the aerial progress of Hanuman by seizing on his shadow on the surface of the Sea. It is a well-known fact that the figure of a person or his picture is a great help to a black magician who intends to affect him by his infernal art.

The remaining questions contained in the letter of our correspondent can be easily answered by the light of the interpretation put upon Devas, Drugs and Nasus in these explanatory notes.—Ed.

Reviews.

THE IDYLL OF THE WHITE LOTUS.*

The preface of this book runs as follows:

"THE ensuing pages contain a story which has been told in all ages and among all people. It is the tragedy of the Soul. Attracted by Desire, the ruling element in the lower nature of man, it stoops to sin, brought to itself by suffering, it turns for help to the redeeming spirit within; and in the final sacrifice achieves its apotheosis and sheds a blessing on mankind." Thus, in a few words the scope of the book is indicated.

The work itself is a charming story of the life, development and death of an Egyptian seer. He is taken when a boy by his mother to the temple to be brought up in the priesthood. He has not been long there before it is discovered, by his vision of the Lady of the Lotus, that he is a natural born seer. The priests then take his development in hand. It appears however that the priests of the temple are followers of the left-hand path, and, deeply versed in all occult science, use it only for their own selfish purposes, enslaving the people for their own aggrandizement. The goddess whom they serve is not the bright goddess of wisdom, but the dark one of desire. They make of the boy a tool to serve their own selfish ends, compelling him to look upon the horrible face of the black goddess and to transmit her commands to her votaries. The recollection of the Lady of the Lotus never quite dies out of the boy's heart in spite of all the arts of the priests, and at last he learns the truth and proclaims it to the people, sealing his mission in consequence with his death. Such is a bare outline of the story which must, however, be carefully read

to be appreciated. For hidden beneath it lie deep esoteric truths and these can only be brought out by intuitional study. It may also be taken to have more than one meaning. For the benefit of those who would see down to its lowest depths, we may mention that, from one point of view, the "ten priests" whom it took to accomplish the seer's death (page 2) are the ten parts of the lower nature. The gardener, Seboua, who takes the boy into the garden and leads him to the lotus-tank where he has his first vision is "mind." The Lady of the Lotus, the black goddess and the little girl are all the same in reality and Chapters vi, vii and viii have reference to the final initiation. But even those who do not care to dive into these mysteries will be delighted with the beauty of the language employed and the vivid dramatic treatment of the various incidents related.

The following passage should be deeply engraven in the hearts of all Theosophists:

"There are three truths which are absolute, and which cannot be lost, but yet may remain silent for lack of speech.

"The soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour has no limit.

"The principle which gives life dwells in us, and without us, is undying and eternally beneficent, is not heard or seen, or smelt, but is perceived by the man who desires perception.

"Each man is his own absolute law-giver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself; the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment.

"These truths, which are as great as is life itself, are as simple as the simplest mind of man. Feed the hungry with them."

Different indeed would be the face of the world were these truths known and realised by humanity at large! Be it ours then to proclaim and teach them wherever opportunity is found, and by so doing we shall become in some degree co-workers with nature in its ever-upward spiral path of progress.

It would take more than one long paper to exhaust all that might be said about this little book, our present purpose is, however, but to introduce it to the notice of our readers, we therefore bring our remarks to a close with an earnest recommendation to all to read and study the story for themselves.

"THE LEGEND OF THOMAS DIDYMU."

The above is the title of a book by James Freeman Clarke, recently issued by Lee and Shepard of Boston. In the preface the author states his purpose to be, "to reproduce the times in which Jesus appeared, the characters who surrounded him, the opinions, beliefs, and prejudices of the Jewish sects and people." "Especially have I endeavoured to enter into his (Jesus) own purpose and expectation, his own view of the Messiah and his Kingdom."

Of all pen-pictures of the life of Jesus this is the most real, because the most rational and true. It nowhere taxes credulity or staggers belief. The author follows the fortunes of an *earnest seeker*. Skeptical though loyal, through the schools of the Rabbis, the sects of Therapeutæ and Essenes the "separate ones" the philosophy of the Academy seeking a sign whereby God and immortality may be brought to light, and finally when the divine man comes upon the stage, he follows him through the crucifixion to the resurrection and the *life*. The author is a Unitarian clergyman, of great ability and high standing, but he has struck the key-note of theosophy and written as though he comprehended the Society's objects and aims. No student of theosophy can fail to be interested in, benefitted by, reading the book, which is moreover specially interesting, as showing how the heaven is working in more than one measure of meal. The class to which it specially appeals, the Unitarians, are noted for intelligence and liberality, but repudiating the orthodox idea of the trinity, and drifting from rationalism into agnosticism. They have been lacking in that organising power which orthodoxy so well knows how to wield. They are indifferent to religious matters, though foremost in every charitable and benevolent enterprise. Though many of them are spiritualists, yet as a class they are incredulous and critical, anxious for evidence not to be obtained in dark circles. Mr. Clarke has pointed out the only source whence such evidence as is desired can ever come, viz. the heavenly Kingdom *within man's own soul*; and this by no fine-spun theory difficult of comprehension, but by elucidation of the life and teachings of Jesus the Divine Man, and I feel after having

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