

Chapter 19

The Dharma Sala of The Vaidya

**DAWNING LIGHT-THE BROTHERHOOD-SUBTERRANEAN
REVELATIONS-THE SECRET TEMPLE-THE BYGA-
THE YOGEE AND THE SAINTED IRDHI-THE PRINCE OF PEACE.**

How the hours lagged! and how wearily I won my way through the duties of the day which must elapse ere I should again meet with the Byga—that man who seemed so singularly able to medicine my restless spirit to peace. In his presence and listening to his wonderfully soothing voice, I had experienced a calm and tranquillity to which I had been for years a stranger. There was nothing remarkable in the words he uttered, still less could I regard the prospect of a visit to his "home," as he was pleased to call the hole in the mountain where he claimed to dwell, as an inviting one; yet I felt a strange longing to be there, and when I speculated upon the appearance of that "dark line dividing the bushes," which he had pointed out to me, I seemed to see white hands reaching from the mountain side and beckoning me up its savage and almost unattainable heights. I had intended to take some sleep before commencing my pilgrimage, but I was detained on business all day at Aurungabad, the capital city of the province, and could only partake of a late dinner with some brother officers, ere it was time to set off on my long ride in order to reach Ellora by midnight. I succeeded in gaining the ravine by a little after eleven, and having there stabled my horse, proceeded on foot to the temples, which I reached a few minutes before the appointed hour.

The moon was obscured by the driving clouds which predicated the approach of a storm. The table-land of the amphitheatre around which towered the red granite rocks that formed "the great religious city," was destitute of all signs of life or movement as I approached it. Solitude the most profound, desolation the most complete, cast a spell upon the entire panorama.

By an impulse I could not account for, unless it was the necessity of keeping pace in quick motion with the throbbing pulsations of my eager spirit, I moved on from point to point, scrutinizing every cleft in the rocks, every opening and sculpture, looking for I know not what, and striving to find out the meaning of my own feverish research. At length I paused before one of the most ancient of the cave temples, whose deep recesses were, as I well knew, to be reached only by passing through long rows of gigantic elephants, whose effigies I had often before gazed at by the gloomy light admitted through the vast portico or the fitful glare of torches. I knew the interior of the cavernous hall thoroughly, and had traversed its colossal colonnades again and again, yet now something seemed to repel my

advance, and make me hesitate ere I took the first step onward. In this moment of indecision I suddenly recollected that my appointment with the Byga was at a spot from which I had strayed away nearly a mile.

Provoked at my own unaccountable restlessness, and fearing lest I might fail in my trust, I turned hastily to retrace my steps, when I was violently seized from behind, my arms drawn back and tightly pinioned, a scarf tied across my eyes and another over my mouth; and all this was done with such an amount of force and incredible rapidity that before I had a moment's time to offer the least resistance I was gagged, pinioned, and blindfolded, and in this helpless position, with hands of iron grasping me on either side, I felt myself dragged on in the direction of the temple and through its long colonnades until I reached a point where there was a slight pause, and the aroma of a damp, subterranean atmosphere became distinctly palpable. After this interruption my course was always descending, sometimes by rough steps, sometimes by very narrow, winding tracks. Occasionally the passages we traversed were so confined that my conductors were obliged to advance before and behind me, and again the chill air assured me we were traversing vaults or large halls. Strange to say, my usual clairvoyance, in this unexpected captivity, utterly forsook me. There seemed to be a will stronger than my own operating to crush down or subdue my spiritual perceptions, and for some time I was too stunned to attempt resistance. In all this long descent into the very bowels of the earth I heard no other sound than that of my own footsteps. No voice spoke, no footfall broke the portentous silence.

The strong grip of my captors was the only evidence that I had companions. Just as we reached a certain point and when I realized that I was being forced to descend an almost interminable stairway, the idea occurred to me that by planting myself firmly on my feet I might at least manifest my determination of going no farther. This poor show of resistance, however, was instantly met by a push so violent that had I not been held by hands of iron I should have been precipitated to whatever depths awaited me below; then, as if to convince me of my utter helplessness, I was lifted up from the ground, and despite the fact that my conductor carried a burden of six feet in height with a proportionate amount of diameter, I was borne along for some time in the grasp of this Titan as if I had been an infant. Happily, as I deemed it, the next passage was too low and narrow to admit of such a mode of locomotion, and I was again set on my feet, whilst the iron grasp of one giant before and another behind me, sufficiently advised me of the uselessness of further demonstrations on my part.

At length I experienced a marked change both in the atmosphere around me and the ground on which I trod. The air became soft, balmy and perfumed with the odor of aromatic essences, and the floor was smooth and hard as if formed of polished stones. Presently I felt busy hands about me removing the gag, bandage, and thongs, and then it was that a sight burst upon my eyes such as no language of mine can do justice to. I stood in a subterranean temple of immense extent, fashioned in the shape of a horse-shoe, the large oval of which was arranged as an auditorium, with luxuriously cushioned seats in ascending circles, on the plan of an amphitheatre. The lofty roof was surrounded with highly-wrought cornices, sculptured with emblems of Egyptian and Chaldaic worship, interspersed with sentences emblazoned in gold, in Arabic, Sanskrit, and other Oriental languages. In the midst of the roof which sloped upwards, was a magnificent golden planisphere, formed on an azure plane, and so skilfully designed that the interior of the temple was illuminated from the representations of the heavenly host that gleamed and sparkled above my head.

The walls were hewn out of the same red granite which composed the mountains of the district, but they were thickly adorned with gigantic images of the Hindoo and Egyptian gods, surmounted by a border of gorgeous has relievos, some of which represented ancient

Chaldaic tablets; others were engraved with planispheres, astrological charts, and scenes in Babylonish, Assyrian, and Chaldaic history. At the small opening of the horseshoe was a second cavern, hewn out of the solid rock, and so designed as to form an immense raised platform or stage, on the floor of which was spread a carpet of grassy turf, or an imitation so finely executed that the difference could not be detected. A pair of gigantic sphinxes supported either side of this noble rostrum, and an immense image of the winged bull of Nineveh was suspended, in all probability by magnetic force, in mid-air, between the high vaulted roof and the grassy carpet beneath. The walls and ceiling of this huge, cavernous stage, were otherwise destitute of adornment. A golden hand held a scroll suspended over the auditorium, inscribed with a word in Arabic which corresponds to Neophytes, whilst a similar hand and scroll appeared over the cornice which served as proscenium to the stage, with the Arabic inscription signifying Hierophants.

Ranged in a semicircle midway on the platform were seven tripods supporting braziers, from which ascended colored flames and wreaths of deliciously perfumed vapors, whose intoxicating odors filled the temple. Behind each tripod, seated on thrones fashioned of burnished silver, so as to represent a glittering star, were seven dark-robed figures, whose masked faces and shrouded forms left no opportunity of judging of their sex or semblance. Around me, some reclining, some sitting in Oriental fashion, but all seemingly engrossed in deep abstraction, were multitudes of men attired mostly in European, but with some Hindoo costumes. Their faces were concealed, however, for they all wore masks. I observed that those who had removed the bandage from my face had invested me also with a mask, leaving my eyes entirely free, and thus enabling me to make an uninterrupted survey of the remarkable scene around me.

In all I gazed upon, there was no minutiae of detail; all was colossal, distinct, magnificent, whilst every design, however vast its size, was executed in a style of the most perfect workmanship. The light diffused from the gorgeous planisphere of the roof was soft yet brilliant, and by an arrangement since explained to me, large shafts were so constructed as to communicate with the upper air and thus introduce a perfect supply of fresh atmosphere even into the deep abysses of this subterranean chamber.

For the first few moments of my liberation, astonishment, delight, and awe kept me motionless. It was whilst I was thus gazing around me that I beheld the entire assemblage directing their masked faces towards me, but from every quarter giving me the signs of brotherhood in one or more of the different fraternities to which I belonged. I have since learned, and believe I then understood, that there was not a person present who had not been initiated into one or more of the occult societies with which I was myself connected. The recognition of this fact placed me at once upon a footing of understanding with my companions and indicated the line of conduct that was expected from me. There was, and still is, an unspoken cipher of signals existing amongst certain brotherhoods, far more terse and significant than speech, and this I found in practice with my new associates. By this method I learned the special ideas upon which I was expected to rely that night. The first was the sentiment of brotherhood extended from one particular order to as many as would represent humanity at large. The next was an understanding that the aim of our gathering was the discovery of occultism and our methods of research were to be occult likewise. Another piece of instruction was, never in the most distant way to allude to the Society, its existence or any of its members whom I should chance to meet in the world, the object in this prohibition being to avoid discussion on the nature of the intelligence communicated.

I was required to reflect upon it within myself, or, if I chose to adopt its revelations as my own opinions, to communicate them to others, not members of the Society; also I might

allude to the existence of such an association and describe its aims, but never reveal the names of its members or guide strangers to the many scenes where its sessions were held. The final charge impressed upon me was to be strictly attentive to the proceedings, in virtue of which I fixed my eyes upon the seven masked and robed figures on the platform, who I at first thought were simply effigies, but as soon as the whole assembly were seated and in order, I observed they arose, one after the other, each one making his sign of intelligence and then resuming his seat and moveless attitude. The first command issued in this way was for Pythagorean silence during each session. The next required from all, Platonic submission to the order during our connection with it. The third assured us of divine protection. The fourth apprised me in especial, that my most secret wishes were penetrated. The fifth (still addressed to me) promised me complete gratification of those wishes. The sixth was a universal charge for discretion in the use of the knowledge I was to receive, virtue in its application, and fraternal love in its distribution. The seventh sign I am not at liberty to explain, but I was advised by one of the masked figures near me that propositions for complete initiation would be given me hereafter.

During the time that these ciphers were being enacted, the entire auditorium was becoming enveloped in gloom, so that when this part of the proceedings ended, I found the light greatly subdued and the radiance of the noble planisphere modified to a soft twilight, such as would be dispensed by the moon and stars. And now my most imperfect sketch of the fine temple and the opening scenes of the grand drama ended, let me essay to describe those which followed.

A deep hush reigned on every side of me, a silence that could be felt pervaded the assembly, when I perceived that the entire of the vast cavern that formed the stage at the small opening of the horse-shoe, was melting away. Walls, ceiling, hierophants, silver thrones, and braziers, all vanished, and in their place I beheld illimitable wastes of what seemed at first to be impenetrable darkness. Presently I observed there was motion, an ever-increasing, wave-like motion, and a gradually diminishing hue in this thick blackness, which became refined into a gray, silvery vapor, and at last melted entirely away. Then I saw a boundless univervoelum, in which were represented myriads of hemispheres. Above, below, around, stretching away into endless horizons, and ascending from thence beyond every imaginable limitation, were piled up hemisphere upon hemisphere, densely massed yet all separate from one another, and all blazing with systems, every system sparkling with suns, planets, comets, meteors, moons, rings, belts, and nebulae.

Millions and millions of these systems swarmed through the spaces of the universe, yet all differed the one from the other, whilst all moved in the same resplendent order, swinging around some mighty and inconceivable pivotal center. And in this stupendous scheme of harmony, every newly created cluster of fire-mist seemed as admirably adjusted to its relative point of space in the universe as the huge astral systems with their galaxies of suns, stars, and revolving satellites. I saw the spaces of the universe divided up into hemispheres—hemispheres into sidereal heavens—heavens studded with suns, forming systems of created worlds in every stage of progression, from unparticled fire-mist to the central sun of a perfected system.

I merely thought of the order in which the movements of the universe transpired, when I instantly discovered that the motions of bodies in space were not, as I had deemed them, a mere automatic revolution around a central orb. It is true that each one moved in an axial orbit of its own, having direct relation to its solar centre; that its path was circular, and bent or deflected only at its points of aphelion and perihelion; but as the observant gaze became able to master the details of planetary motion, unappreciable at first by reason of its incon-

ceivable rapidity, it detected subordinate motions, which impressed upon every flying orb the character of an individualized life, and showed it to be endowed with an animation of its own. These sparkling worlds swam, danced, sported, floated upwards and darted downwards, with all the erratic mobility of zigzag lightning. Could they be really living, sentient beings—glorious organisms not moved upon, but breathing, burning, rejoicing lives, acting in the inimitable procedures of fixed law? but no more so than the child who wins its way from point to point, yet is ever turning to gather flowers and butterflies in erratic divergence from the line of its path; no more so than the man whose fixed destiny between the cradle and the grave is checkered by all the turnings and windings which a mobile fancy and wandering imagination can prompt.

Could they be all living organisms, and the immensity of the universe be filled, not with billions of manufactured automata, but with legions of living creatures, rushing through the orbits of illimitable space in the joy and glory of life everlasting? Could our own burning sun and its shining family of planetary orbs be all creatures of parts and passions, organs and susceptibilities, with a framework of rocky ribs and mountain bones and sinews; veins and arteries coursed by the fluid-life of oceans and rivers; heaving lungs aerated by the breath of winds and atmospheres; electric life evolved from the galvanic action of metallic lodes threading their way like a gigantic nervous system through every globe; vast reservoirs of polar force generated in the Arctic North and Antarctic South; the brain and feet of the living creature, realms of supply for the waste of physical life, in the relation which every satellite sustains to its solar center, and one vast collective soul in the aggregated mass of soul atoms that maintain a parasitical life upon the surface of every planet? In the Apocalyptic vision now presented to my dazzled sight, every sun, star, planet, comet, moon, every fully-formed body in space, in short, was a living being, a body and soul—a physical form destined to sustain a transitory material existence, composed of infinitesimal physical beings of its own grade and order—an immortal spirit moulded and grown through the formative element of matter, destined to survive its dissolution, and live eternally as a perfected soul, carrying with it all the freight of soul atoms which is sustained and unfolded, like the leaves and blossoms of its own parental germ seed.

I know this thought will seem like the rhapsody of a delirious fancy to those who have not read the universe in its occult page of unfoldment as I have, but the time will come when the Cabala of existence shall be read as an open page. This "madness" will then be accepted as true philosophy; until then, the revelating angel bids me write—and I obey.

And next I pondered on the unknown, perhaps the unknowable, central source front which and to which, I perceived, every body in space tended, around which infinity itself becomes a revolution. I saw that millions and millions of hemispheres were swept on in paths as strictly orbital as the smallest planet of a single system. The whole vast arcanum of the universe, then, must move around some definite pivotal point.

As I reflected, the answer came. The universe of matter became translucent, and throughout its illimitable spaces I saw that creation was filled with piercing beams from the central sun of being. In a space less in magnitude than a degree marked on a child's school-map, I might have counted millions upon millions of such beams, yet the wondrous constituents of their nature were plainly revealed to me. The external or visible shaft of every ray was formed of physical light, or matter in its most sublimed condition. This shaft was lined by a ray of astral light or force, and this again by spiritual light, or the element from which is formed the imperishable soul. Conceive of the whole universe filled with these rays so thickly planted that space becomes annihilated; trace them to their source; and you will resolve them all back to one illimitable realm, into which no worlds, suns, systems, bodies in space, spirits,

souls, nor men have ever penetrated; where thought becomes madness, ideality is lost; from which light, life, force, motion, matter, government, order, power go forth, but to which nothing that it returns again, and know then the source from which those rays of living light emanate; know then the central sun the body and soul of the universe, the God, of whom man cannot even think and live.

One of my favorite studies at college was the chemistry of the sunbeam, and I have spent many an hour in delighted observation of such experiments as discovered the constitution, direction, and effect of this marvelous agent, in the economy of life, light, and growth; but how tame. dull, and insignificant, what mere child's play with shells and husks, became the memories of all that physical science could reveal, compared with the broader, grander vistas of causation, opened up to my view, as I penetrated into the arcanum of spiritual science. Could the dreams of the fire-worshiper, then, have a better foundation in divine truth than the asseverations of the theologian? asked my questioning soul.

The revelating angel answered by a fresh series of visions. I beheld a single planet, my own perhaps, with the light of the parent sun removed, and lo! as by an instantaneous blight, all color, beauty, shape, and form ceases. Now I beheld a world from which the heat of the sun is withdrawn, and instantly life is suspended. A dull, leaden, crystalline death sets in, the wheels of being stop short, and being itself is at an end.

I behold the centripetal force of the sun withdrawn from our solar system, and planets, moons, asteroids, comets, meteors, and all the array of embryonic elements held in solar paths fly off in ungoverned space, and become lost in endless ruin.

I see the centrifugal force withdrawn, and the solar system rushing to a point, is absorbed, swallowed up in the parent mass, and the parent mass itself becomes a mere wreck of worlds. If such are the life-giving, life-sustaining potencies of the physical sun, what must be the correlative action of the spiritual sun on the realm of immortal being?

If such is the actual physical relation of the sun of our system to the world, and to the forms which it has sown in the garden of the skies, what may we not dream of, and aspire to know, when in future ages of progression we may ascend to the heaven of heavens, and comprehend the mystery of God! Again I saw the universe outrolled and upon its shining surface worlds, with all their freight of material life, vitalized by force and inspired by spirit; and this trinity of being ranged from the gelatinous masses that floated in ancient seas to the sparkling suns that blazed and burned in the depths of sidereal heavens.

With each fresh phase of the vision, fresh questions rose like waves in the surging sea of my storm-tossed mind.

To the next craving appeal for "light, more light," came stealing on my senses the tones of this mild rebuke: "Seek not, child, to compass eternity in a single hour of time. Be patient, and all shall be revealed, which is good for thee to know." For many and many a night, during many succeeding weeks of almost ecstatic life, these precious promises were kept to me by revelations of a similar character to that which I have noted down, and that, not in language worthy of the sublime and stupendous light that poured in on my soul, but in the simplest, plainest phrases, I could summon to my aid. As all language is unworthy when matched against thoughts which speech fails to interpret, so do I employ a form of expression so rude, that my utter powerlessness will be shown in every line I write. Enough that the themes which an Apocalyptic angel alone could demonstrate, were shown to me in those magnificent visions, until a complete cosmic scheme was revealed, of which the following

may be named as some of the subjects treated of. World building and builders, constitution of the solar universe. Of gods, men, spirits, angels, the fall, growth, and reconstruction of the spirit. The realm and destiny of souls. Light, heat, physical, astral, and spiritual light. The human soul, its powers, possibilities, forces, and destiny. Will; occult and magical powers, forces, and objects. The relation and influence of planetary bodies upon each other; the human mind, the necessity of theological myths. The permanence of being, cycles of time, cyclones of storm and sunshine in human life, etc., etc.

Of these stupendous themes the treatment was ever grand, original, bold, and conclusive.

A scheme was presented, upon which, as I now solemnly believe and hope, the foundations of a new, true, and religious science and scientific religion will yet be upreared. The thoughts which shone in resplendent imagery before the eyes of my associates and myself a quarter of a century ago, have gradually been leavening the lump of civilized society during that whole period of time. They have been seen in vision, felt in soul, and taught in isolated fragments by many a solitary pioneer of the new church that shall be; but chiefly has their influence been realized as the radiation of an unknown force, whose subtile potencies are making for themselves a lever of public opinion, a giant whose will is sufficient to raise up every stone in the new temple and put them all in place, a concrete and glorious whole, when the stones of thought shall have been hewn each in its separate quarry, when every stone shall be fair and square and true, and ready in its separate perfection to form a part of the sublime erection.

That the midnight assemblies gathered together in the subterranean vaults of one of the most ancient of ancient India's cave temples has had its share in leavening the mass of public opinion in the nineteenth century. I know, by the experience of better soldiers in the army of metaphysical progress than myself; but as no mortal tongue or pen can do justice to the gorgeous imagery with which it was our great privilege to be favored, as these mere magazine sketches, moreover, are not the fit channels for the publication of the glowing ideality which these visionary representations inspired, I shall presently disclose to my readers the singular *modus operandi* by which the visions of our fraternity were impressed on the recipients, and write of them no more.

At the close of the first grand drama enacted before my eyes, I suddenly felt the encompassing arms of strangers tying my hands and fastening thick bandages over my face. This time I had no desire to resist the movements of my captors; on the contrary, I rose at their touch and suffered them to reconduct me through another series of passages, for such I had instinctive reasons for knowing was my mode of exit, until we reached a very distant point of the amphitheatre of mountains from that at which we had entered. The bandages were removed as rapidly and noiselessly as they had been adjusted; but my conductors were gone before I had fairly recovered my sense of liberty. They left me with the mask I had worn in my hands and a strip of paper attached to it, on which were inscribed in fine Sanskrit characters these words: "The night after to-morrow at 12 midnight. Chundra ud Deen."

Who can doubt that I was faithful to my appointment? and I deemed myself sufficiently rewarded when I gained the plateau to see the tall form and monastic robes of my mysterious acquaintance there before me. He greeted me with warmth and the peculiarly sweet courtesy which had distinguished his manner at our first interview. Before I could make any inquiry concerning his agency in my late adventure, he spoke of it, with apologies for the rough mode of my first initiation. He gave me ample reasons for the mystery in which it was deemed necessary to veil the entrances to those vast crypts and subterranean retreats, which I well knew undermined so many of the ancient temples and not infrequently exceeded in

size and grandeur the superstructures themselves. He informed me that my true initiation was to take place that night, provided I was sufficiently interested in what I had seen to desire association with the fraternity I had visited.

My name, standing, character, and Spiritualistic proclivities were all known to this brotherhood: indeed, none ever had been or could be introduced amongst them who were not already known and selected for the qualities which were in harmony with the association. My mysterious friends had the advantage of me at every point, but I was entirely willing to trust them, and that night saw me a sworn brother of their order.

Amongst the many items of occult lore I learned in that wonderful convention of true spiritual scientists, was the singular and original method by which their gorgeous dramatic representations were made.

The whole temple was furnished with fine metallic lines, every one of which converged to six powerful galvanic batteries attached to the silver thrones occupied by six of the adepts. These persons, adepts in the loftiest and most significant sense of the term, received their inspiration from the occupant of the seventh throne, a being who, though always present, was not always visible, although as on the first night of my attendance a presence from the realms of supernal being was always there.

The office of the adepts was to centralize and focalize the inspiration received. The thoughts of each were first focalized into one idea on the rostrum, and from thence distributed to every neophyte in the auditorium. This universal impression was produced, first, by the harmonious spirit of accordance which pervaded the assembly; next, by the influence of strong, and concentrated psychology; and finally by the distributive power and force of the galvanic lines extending, as before stated, from the rostrum to every member in the auditorium.

The negative pole of this complete battery was formed by the neophytes, the positive pole by the hierophants; and I solemnly swear, as a man pledged only to record the truths of that higher realm of being into which I have been permitted most reverently to look, that the whole of the gorgeous representations enacted before my eyes during several consecutive weeks of three sessions each week were psychological images impressed upon the adepts by the presiding angel of our holy gathering, and from thence distributed and transmitted mentally to the seat of consciousness by psychology, and physically by connecting links of electric force to every member of our vast assemblage. Let no sneering skeptic doubt the possibility of transmitting thought even through the physical methods here roughly indicated.

Well-practiced biologists will never question the possibility of the mental action described, except as regards the vast number operated upon at once; but on this point permit me to assure my readers that no inconsiderable part of East Indian magic depends upon psychological impressions produced by single adepts upon vast multitudes. The science of illusion—a term which in translation but ill represents the original idea—is one in which every adept, ancient and modern, must become *au fait* if he would succeed as an "enchanter" or a good "magician." The rationale of magic is will or psychology; the success of psychology or the operation of will depends upon the entire absence of intervening obstacles.

Thus, if you will a thought to reach another at any distance, long or short, your thought will surely reach its object, provided it encounters no psychological obstacle more potent than itself. Man possesses inherently the power to effect any phenomenon in or upon matter that spirits can do, provided his spiritual forces encounter no cross currents of magnetism, no opposing lines of force.

The potencies of will have been exalted, known, felt, and practiced by the mystics, magians, seers, and prophets of all ages. Why will ever fails to accomplish its end arises from the fact that thousands, perhaps millions, of other wills are traversing space in opposing lines and contrary currents, and so the force of one will, which might else prove irresistible if directed under carefully arranged conditions and suffered to operate unhindered upon its object, becomes thwarted, and a single failure of this kind will be immediately quoted as an illustration of the hollow pretensions which psychologists make for the sovereign potency of will. The association of which I have been speaking originated centuries ago, in a keen perception, on the part of one mighty metaphysician, that the powers and forces of the human soul might be so concentrated as to imitate the creative action, and give an actual sensuous embodiment to ideas. I shall not here enter into the results of experiments persevered in, as I have hinted, during centuries of time with varying success—success proportioned to the excellence or indifference of the subjects by whom they were conducted.

The discovery and application of electric force as a means of stimulating mental power, created a complete new era in this remarkable fraternity, and urged forward its adepts to a class of fresh experiments, some of which have been of the most stupendous character. The privilege of explaining and enlarging upon them is not at present accorded to me, otherwise I could more than justify the immense claims I advance for the potency of the human will, especially when strengthened by scientific appliances.

In reference to the transmission of thought by aid of electromagnetism, I have repeatedly proved its possibility, nay, demonstrated its infallibility, by experiments conducted with my friend, Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten. We had already become experts in the processes of mental telegraphy, which we were enabled to practice with invariable success; but with the potential, although still more material agency of electricity evolved from mineral substances, we arrived at a means of energizing the subtile though variable powers of vital magnetism, which tended to render its operation more than ever reliable and uniform.

In fine, I feel authorized to say that none are qualified to pronounce a verdict of "unreliability" against my statements, unless they have themselves experimented in the same direction, and that with all the advantage of well-prepared conditions. The fraternity of which I have given so very brief a description surrounded their practices with a perfect bulwark of psychological defences, against which the intrusion of unfavorable conditions was impossible. Every member of that venerable association was selected for the peculiar endowments which its interests demanded. No disqualified person could, by the remotest possibility, have access to its sessions. The psychic rulers were not only adepts in the mental force necessary for their office, but practical "magicians," whose knowledge and experience of the occult in Nature placed her mysterious elements of power at their command. The teachings given in that society were derived, not only from the cumulative wisdom of the ages, but also from the inspiration of higher realms than those of mortality, and by researches into those realms through all the aids which man's spiritual endowments could supply him with.

Spiritual as well as material science was ransacked in search of truth. Practice and theory were deemed equally essential for the formation of just opinions, and from the profoundest depths of the earth's center to the sublimest heights of astral systems, from the force which crystallizes the diamond to that which is supposed to rarefy the finest realms of ether, these philosophers continued to explore the universe in search of absolute truth. They were all Spiritualists in the best sense of the term, and their sessions were invariably composed of spiritual as well as earthly searchers. They were not ashamed of aspirational worship, never felt their manhood lowered by the act of prayer, nor did they disdain to acknowledge their dependence on higher beings than themselves, nor abstain from soliciting their protection

and inspiration. They believed in sacred places and consecrated things, and whilst they esteemed and cultivated scientific knowledge as the highest aim of the human mind, they ever subordinated the mind to the soul, and deemed that spiritual science must be the complement to material science, and without the union of the two, the body and soul of true knowledge could not subsist.

Neophytes on first entrance, indeed so long as it was deemed desirable, were appointed teachers, who in private sessions rendered them all the instruction and assistance they required. Such a teacher was assigned to me, and if I had gained no other advantage in this admirable fraternity, I should forever feel indebted to its leaders for procuring me the life-long friendship of Nanak Rai, the noble Brahmin to whose learning, piety, and manhood the charge of my initiatory studies was assigned.

During the many subsequent years of steady friendship that have subsisted between Nanak and myself, I have never known him to utter a word or perform an act unworthy of the most exalted saint in the Christian calendar. What model religionist can transcend such a spotless record? Soon after my admission to the fraternity of which I write, I became selected as one of their adepts, an office I endeavored to excuse myself from accepting, on the ground of inevitable absorption in other duties and too frequent absence from the places of assemblage.

The latter objection was overruled in a mode which impels me to record the fact of my election to the position of adept. I was induced to accept the nomination, after having occupied the seventh throne spiritually, on three occasions when my body lay sleeping at a distance of several hundreds of miles from the scene of assemblage. If my readers shrink from this acknowledgement in utter or even partial disbelief of its veracity, I can only say they have not as yet crossed the threshold of that temple which initiates them into a knowledge of their own souls' powers and forces.

They, like me, are immortal spirits, infinite in capacity, boundless in power. The only horizon which limits the executive functions of their spirits is not so much the clog and fetter of a material body, as the lack of knowledge how to control and subdue that body. So long as that body is entirely subjected to the will by abstinence, asceticism, chastity, and discipline, it is a mere fleshly vehicle, enabling the soul to come into contact with matter. The moment the sway of the passions or even the mental emotions, compels the spirit to yield to the impulses of the body, the spiritual reign is ended, and henceforth the spirit exercises only a temporary, broken, and spasmodic rule over its own transcendent faculties, just as "material conditions" are favorable or otherwise for that exercise. I candidly present my own case in evidence of both positions.

When I was first elected to the supreme power of an adept in the nameless fraternity alluded to in this chapter, I was a spirit rather than a man, in the world, but not of it. Every function of humanity was subordinated to the power of my soul and its spirit allies, and I scarcely realized, in the midst of all life's active duties and pressing cares, that my mortal body was more to me than the garments I put on and off at pleasure. I do not contend for the naturalness or reasonableness of such a condition; I only claim it is possible and attainable, and I dwell upon it the more forcibly to illustrate the complete subversion of those exalted powers when, a few short years later, the wear and tear of human passion and passionate emotion had enveloped my spirit and its exalted transcendentalism in robes of mortality more dense and clinging than the garments which now shelter me. Be it so!

Perhaps the highest perfection of the soul hereafter can only be attained through a

complete realization of the pathetic words, "He was a man of sorrows." Perhaps the Magdalene shall win her way to the kingdom more readily than the dainty lady who never sinned because she was never tempted. In the touching legend of the Christian God's crucifixion, the penitent thief will surely gain that Paradise which the Pharisee seeks in vain. And yet I would have gladly lived and died a spiritual ecstatic, but the Lord of life had willed it otherwise.

