

THEODORE LESLIE CROMBIE

B.A., BAR-AT-LAW

FRIEND OF INDIA

By

ETHEL BESWICK

INTERNATIONAL BOOK HOUSE (PRIVATE) LTD.

BOMBAY—BANGALORE

THEODORE LESLIE CROMBIE

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B.A., BAR-AT-LAW

1879-1938

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PREFACE

WHEN this small book was already in page proofs Shri B. P. Wadia passed away unexpectedly on August 20th. Thus closed a life of selfless service. His vast insight, his courage and the breadth of his mind made him a builder of those things in life that are foundational to true living. He was an example to all of what life should be. His compassionate heart, his utter devotion to the work he had undertaken, his self-sacrifice in time, energy and money, made his life a monument of strength to those who knew him personally, and the work that he did has inspired and will continue to inspire countless human beings all over the world in their struggle through life.

As so much of this little book deals with his work for Theosophy it would perhaps be good to include here a reference to his work along another line. His love of justice and his sorrow for the suffering of his fellow men caused him in the early years to take an active interest in the working people of India. He founded the first Labour Union in India in 1918, but he gave up active work along these lines when he fully realised that to deal with effects is a slow way to human happiness. Only when the cause of sorrow is dealt with can innumerable effects be destroyed. Others could carry on the work he had begun for Labour but he himself would give his energy to help to eliminate the cause of the troubles in the world, namely, ignorance and the selfishness for which ignorance is responsible—ignorance of man's nature, of his evolutionary journey towards perfection, of the laws that govern the world in which he lives, and of the long line of spiritual teachers from the dawn of mankind through the present into the distant future.

Knowledge is necessary. This knowledge is embodied in the philosophy of Theosophy, the restatement of those aspects of the Ancient Wisdom which lie buried in the sacred books of India and other countries of the ancient world, which are necessary for humanity at this stage of its evolution. Knowledge is not to be understood as intellectual knowledge only, but as that which should and must lead to the development of character, of love for one's brother man and for all nature, and so lay the foundation of a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood, the most permanent contribution that can be made to the future of a world at peace.

Let me end by quoting a few lines from his first speech in 1918, fifty years ago, to the textile workers of three mills in Chulai, Madras, at the first meeting called in an endeavour to improve their lot:—

To me there is no failure. I am absolutely sure of success, and if by chance I die before success comes, there is the promise of Shri Krishna that those who die in righteous work come back to carry on the battle till victory is gained. From that point of view, we know of no defeat.

E.B.

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THEODORE LESLIE CROMBIE

AN APPRECIATION

Theodore Leslie Crombie was born at Aberdeen, Scotland, on August 31st, 1879. Shortly after he left Oxford University he contacted Theosophy and the Theosophical Society and when he went East on a visit he called on Mrs. Besant at Adyar. There he also met Shri B. P. Wadia and a friendship grew up between them which lasted till his death on November 17th, 1938. On this visit he decided to dedicate his life to the cause of Theosophy and of India, and returning to England settled his affairs so that he was able to take up his new life under Shri B. P. Wadia at Adyar in 1912. Few realize how much India and the resuscitation of pure Theosophy owe to his devotion, sacrifice and selfless work from these early days until his death. Therefore, now, twenty years after his passing, this little book pays homage to him by giving a short history of his work and life. All who knew him personally held him in great regard, respect and love, for, apart from the example he gave of devotion to his accepted path, his whole character endeared him to his friends. Tolerant, sympathetic and gay, T.L.C., as he was affectionately known to many, had no enemies, and he felt enmity to none. His kindly feelings towards all brought their due recompense in that he had the devoted love of all those who knew him. When he died a light went out of life for many, and though his memory lives evergreen in the heart and mind, the personal contact is sadly missed.

In 1912 he started work with Mrs. Besant in her campaign for India's freedom, writing for her paper THE COMMONWEAL, always in close collaboration with Shri B. P. Wadia, the Assistant Editor of NEW INDIA, THE THEOSOPHIST etc., and Manager of The Theosophical Publishing House. He wrote also for THE THEOSOPHIST and helped in the tedious work which is connected with publishing. Many of his articles and stories make good reading today as will be seen from those included here.

In 1915 he published his little book TOWARDS LIBERTY in which he showed clearly that his knowledge of Theosophy had made him see the necessity of freedom for the individual, whether a person or a State, with its corollary of individual responsibility in the common good. He saw that India had to be free to accept her responsibility towards the nations of the world.

In 1919 his book of poems, *VERSE AND NOTHING ELSE*, was published. Here we get a glimpse into his inner nature and yearnings, and there is a lightness of touch that is delightful.

Through the years his great love for India and her people never ceased and much of his life was spent in the country. In the short obituary note in *THE ARYAN PATH* of January 1939 the following extract from one of his early writings was given. It shows his intuitive grasp of the great service that a free India could give to the world.

India does not want to extend her territory; she does not demand colossal wealth beyond her needs; she wants to realize on her soil ideals that by silent precept may influence the rest of the world. Not hers the hand to rule Empires, but hers the strength and spirituality to inspire and guide Emperors. But in order to accomplish this she must at least have the management of her own affairs. . . . Probably at first with Home Rule, she may make mistakes, but she must learn by these mistakes to realize herself. As she realizes herself, more and more will her true spirituality envelop the world bringing a blessing to all nations and all lands.

But as the years passed he became increasingly dissatisfied with the part played by the Theosophical Society in the world, for he realized more and more that Theosophy pure and simple was not being taught and the great mission of the Theosophical Movement of our century was being lost sight of. The psychic pronouncements of Mr. Leadbeater were ousting the works of Madame Blavatsky, and the great ideal of the Masters of Wisdom was being degraded. Living in Adyar itself he continued his friendship with B. P. Wadia and his respect grew. He recognised Shri Wadia's integrity of character and devotion to H. P. Blavatsky and Theosophy, and they discussed what could be done to bring the Society once again in line with the Original Impulse of the Movement. The Movement has its roots in the far past of the history of the human race, and from the great spiritual centre of divine knowledge have come the many spiritual revivals of the centuries. The present Theosophical Society was inaugurated to help the human mind at this cycle of its existence and to give that particular knowledge which would help it to grow towards the ideal. This had been forgotten, the teachings had been changed, the ideal lost, and the value of the Movement of our century had ceased. The question therefore arose as to what could be done to bring the Society back to the true lines. Could a change be brought about within the Society? If not then it would have to be done from outside. Plans began to be made so that if all efforts to bring the change within the Society failed another effort could be

made which would bring Theosophy pure and simple back into the world.

These plans included the founding of an international magazine in which writers of the world would be free to express their views, in which Theosophical principles could be expounded, and where writers who were struggling to pierce through the ordinary levels of thought into the universal could find expression.

Further, H. P. Blavatsky had said that it was the duty of the Society to see that its members were kept in touch with the organization, and a magazine THE VAHAN had been started in her time and sent free, at first, to members. Something along this line would be needed for those Theosophical students who wished to study Theosophy, and though it would not be sent free to all, the cost would be kept down to the minimum.

One other very important thing had to be done. One of the Founders of the Theosophical Society in 1875, Mr William Quan Judge, the faithful pupil and co-worker with H.P.B., who had died in 1896, had to be brought from the disgrace into which he had been thrust to his true position in the Theosophic world. If, as H.P.B. had stated in her first book *ISIS UNVEILED* it is the duty of a Theosophist to remove the slur on “calumniated reputations,” then it was surely a Theosophic duty to clear up the position as regards Mr. Judge. If this could not be done, after strenuous efforts, within the Society, then it would have to be done outside.

To have a permanent home in India the present house “Guru Mandir” in Ootacamund was bought.

Possibilities of a change within the Society looked poor in 1921 when Shri B. P. Wadia left India for Europe and America—his second visit. By July 1922 he had lost all hope of any such change and resigned his membership, stating his reasons in full in his *Statement of Resignation*. This was not an easy step to take especially owing to his personal affection for Mrs. Besant, but it had to be done.

Some months later Mr. Crombie left Adyar and resigned from the Society, also by no means an easy step for him to take.

From 1922 to 1928 Shri B. P. Wadia was in the United States working with the United Lodge of Theosophists, a body of students of Theosophy devoted to studying the works of Madame Blavatsky and Mr. Judge, without officials, dues or regulations. In collaboration with the Parent Lodge at Los Angeles, founded by Mr. Robert Crosbie in 1909, he founded Lodges in New York, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia. Plans were made for republishing the writings of

H.P.B. and W.Q.J. and in 1925, the fiftieth anniversary of the birth of the Theosophical Movement of this century, an edition was published of THE SECRET DOCTRINE, H.P.B.'S second book, in its original form, as written by her, unaltered in any way. Later followed the publication of other writings in their original form, and now almost all the works of H.P.B. and W.Q.J. are to be had, and are of very great value to students.

Mr. Crombie visited B. P. Wadia in New York and the plans already formulated took firmer shape. When Mr. Crombie returned to London he became one of the founding members of the United Lodge of Theosophists in that city, on November 17th, 1925.

In 1928 Shri Wadia's work in the U.S.A. being finished he left for India via London and the Continent. The U.L.T. was founded in Paris and plans were made for one in Amsterdam.

In 1929 he, with Madame Sophia Wadia who, as Miss Sophia Camacho had attended the U.L.T. meetings in New York in 1923, and was married to Shri Wadia in London in 1928, returned to India. Mr. Crombie soon followed with a small group of workers who had worked with Shri Wadia in New York and were going to India to help him in the work. Among these workers were Mr. and Mrs. Wm. D. TenBroeck, who have remained in India, stalwart workers for the Cause; Dr. (then Miss) Eleanor Hough, whose work throughout has been unknown except to the few, but whose whole life has been dedicated to the hard task of "behind the scenes" in the publishing work; Mr. and Mrs. Robert Stewart and Mr. D. C. Townsend, who have returned to the U.S.A. Left behind in London to carry out the plans were Mr. and Mrs. J. O. Mackenzie and myself. We had all worked with Shri Wadia in New York, I myself having worked with him already in India and London. Also Miss Margaret Thomas, a gifted journalist, came from New York to continue the work. To this little group a debt of gratitude is due, for without their combined efforts little could have been done.

The Bombay U.L.T. was started on November 17th, 1929.

While in London the plans had been further formulated, and in January 1930, the monthly journal THE ARYAN PATH was started. In the first issue, Shrivaka wrote:

So much "original" writing is done to-day, so much "self-expression" is indulged in that, in the clamour that is raised, the chants of the Gods remain unheard. One of our tasks is to bring home the truth that it is not derogatory to *repeat* the old age facts of the science of the soul. The study of the wise ancients convinces us that our forefathers knew better and more than we do. . . . It is one of the tasks of this journal to awaken an intelligent appreciation of the hoary past so that an intelligent adaptation of some of the old

truths to modern life and conditions may take place. Shravaka is an old Theosophist who has learnt the virtue and acquired the power of saying—"Thus have I heard."

The title "THE ARYAN PATH" was taken from the name of the Theosophical Lodge founded by Mr. Judge in America, "The Aryan Lodge," and his Theosophical Magazine THE PATH. It means The Noble Path.

The idea for the policy of the magazine comes from H.P.B.'s article "The Tidal Wave" published in her magazine LUCIFER, November 1889 and republished in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT August 1934. There H.P.B. had pointed out the need to "speak to the awakening Spirit of Humanity, to the human Spirit and the Spirit in man, these three in One and the One in All." She wrote of the great work done for humanity by such a writer as Dostoevsky, but she added that few have that talent. Yet "even in the absence of such great gifts one may do good in a smaller and humbler way by taking note and exposing in impersonal narratives the crying vices and evils of the day, by word and deed, by publications and practical example." She adds "Whether Theosophists, in the present or future, will ever work out a practical application of the suggestion is doubtful."†

The magazine was published by The Theosophy Co. (India) Ltd., and edited anonymously, so that few know that Shri Wadia, Mr. Crombie and Dr. Hough were the main workers until Mr. Crombie's untimely death in 1938. The London office was carried on by Miss Thomas and Dr. L. S. Doraiswamy until the former became ill and the latter returned to India. The work was then carried on by the faithful colleagues Mr. and Mrs. Mackenzie until they left for India after the last war to work with other parts of the plan in Bangalore. Back in India, in Bangalore, Dr. Doraiswamy worked with The Indian Institute of World Culture when it was founded in 1945 and gave full-time work to it in the last few years of his life, as Secretary. Glowing tributes were paid to him by people from all parts of the world when he died for, as Secretary, he had met lecturers and friends from many countries when they visited the Institute and they had all been struck by his charm, humility and capacity. Without Mr. Crombie the Movement would not have had this good worker (or his wife Shrimati Mirabai Doraiswamy) for, when a youth he, together with his brother, had been taken to London and educated at London University by Mr. Crombie.

Mr. Crombie's death left a gap that it has been hard to fill, for not only did he labour for THE ARYAN PATH but also in the other publishing work—the many pamphlets and books which were being

† Errata:- Mr and Mrs TenBroeck arrived in India in October 1928, Miss Hough in March 1931.

printed so that the full works of H.P.B. and W.Q.J. could be brought to light. As Shrivaka wrote in the Editorial of January 1955, the Silver Jubilee of the magazine:

The present writer has been associated with the silent task which several of us started in THE ARYAN PATH on 1st January 1930; he has rejoiced in its successes and has shared in its vicissitudes; he had the heart-satisfying joy which intimate association with its first editor brought. Theodore Leslie Crombie had the instinctual second sight of his native Scotland; he offered his Oxford culture in his editorial tasks; loyalty and devotion to the cause of pure Theosophy and to its Living Masters was ever his source of inspiration. These and other qualities laid deep the foundation of THE ARYAN PATH. The light of his mind and heart shimmers through the early volumes he painstakingly produced. His death removed him on the 17th November, 1938.

With his death a change was made. The magazine was no longer published anonymously by Theosophy Co. (India) Ltd., but Madame Sophia Wadia's name appeared as Editor.

In 1930 the second part of the original plan was put into operation. On the 17th November THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, a four-page monthly magazine, was started in which Mr. Crombie also worked. Though this was not sent free to members the price was so low as to be almost free—2d. per copy. From a four-page leaflet it has become, with the 17th November issue of 1957, a 40-page magazine. It is "a Magazine devoted to the Living of the Higher Life," the articles are anonymous, and it is edited anonymously.

Another part of the plan matured in 1945 with the founding of the William Quan Judge Cosmopolitan Home, and the Indian Institute of World Culture at Bangalore with the following objects:

- (i) To maintain a Centre affording opportunities for cultural, intellectual and ethical development;
- (ii) To spread correct ideas on education;
- (iii) To promote Cultural exchange among the various States in India and with other countries for the establishing of true national and international unity, concord and co-operation;
- (iv) To raise the consideration of the world's problems to the plane of moral and spiritual values;
- (v) To promote Literature, History, Science and the Fine Arts and their study and the diffusion of useful knowledge.

In furtherance of these aims public lectures and meetings are held, Transactions published, etc., etc., while an important part is played by the Hostel, named after William Quan Judge. This is on a non-communal basis, wholesome food is supplied and "The discipline . . . will be specially directed to encouraging habits of

cleanliness, tidiness, punctuality and responsibility. There will be daily short gatherings of all the students in residence and any of the public who may wish to attend, for non-sectarian devotional readings and talks.”

The Institute possesses a Reading-Room and a large and growing Library as well as a Children’s Library section.

Though Mr. Crombie was not then living his influence permeates the Institute for all these activities need money and, from the beginning, Mr. Crombie was as generous with his money as with his time and energy. Though many friends have contributed to these works by far the largest contributions have come from Shri Wadia and Mr. Crombie who, at death, bequeathed his money to Shri Wadia for the work.

With the completion of the new Library building at the Institute and the new “Home” of the kindred activities at Bombay, it is fitting that this staunch devotee and worker should be saluted so that posterity can know something of the work he did.

Perhaps his qualities of humanity, sympathy and aspiration are best described by his short poem from VERSE AND NOTHING ELSE.

The other night
I longed to take flight,
Leave this temple of common clay
And lave myself in the Milky Way,
Mingle my being in its glowing fire
In an ecstasy of desire.

Am I a moth, that I long for a star?
Nay, the moth prefers the candlelight;
The lesser flame shines more nearly bright,
But I ache for the greater radiance afar.

I tangle myself in the heavenly zone
That circles itself ’neath the Mother’s breasts
With their nourishment of the milk of light,
And drink the immortal draught—alone
With the Fatherhood that the space suggests
Revealed to the mystic sight.

Again I come down to my shuttered clay,
Again I look forth on Earth’s darkened day:
Too great the glory of my desire.
Too pure the radiance of Heaven’s fire.
The Master Hand gently placed my soul back
But with infinite mercy left a crack—
Just a little chink through which part of me
May catch a glimpse of the mystery.

It will widen, perhaps, as the years go by
So that once again I may dare to fly
Back to the heart of the Milky Way,
A little longer this time to stay.

Such is the thought that came to me,
And who shall say that it cannot be?

May the great Living Masters to Whom his devotion was whole heartedly
given, forward the Work he so valiantly helped to found!

Salutations to him!

INDIA'S FREEDOM—A PERSONAL VIEW*

A great man once wrote: “We must change to remain the same,” and the truth of this saying must be apparent to anyone of mature years who looks over his past life. The beliefs of youth are shattered, the things on which we depended have failed us, our ideals have shifted their ground, disappointments have courted despair—and yet, despite all this, our identity persists. We are the same in essence, only richer in experience. Outwardly we are different, but we could not possibly have been our real selves—pulsating, expectant, eager for experience—unless we had suffered outward change. In the innermost there has been no change; there has been only the constant endeavour for self-realization and self-expression. We still pursue the root aims and ideas we have always had at heart; our means of expression alone are different. As to the origin of these aims and ideas there may be difference of opinion, but to the writer they are simply the fruitage in this life of experience in former lives.

Accident, apparently, brought me to India in 1912, and in this country I stayed practically continuously until 1923. During these years I learned not only to love the country and its people, but to feel that it was in some way my duty (the only word I can find to express the Sanskrit work, *dharma*, to do what little I could for the welfare of India. Problems confronted me, religious, educational, social, political, and it is scarcely wonderful that when in 1914 the political campaign for Swaraj received a fresh impetus, I was caught in the political toils.

Political freedom was claimed to be the panacea for all the woes under which India laboured. The sorrows of a subject race were keenly felt, and the tyranny of a bureaucracy strongly resented. In 1915 I ventured to write a small book, entitled TOWARDS LIBERTY, which indicates that with political emancipation India would have solved all her problems. The one fact of political subjection was the cause of all her miseries. With the blindness of an enthusiast, I would not see that there might be something to be said for the English point of view.

In those years England had her own pressing problems, and they were terribly grave. India's destiny could not be to her of the exclusive and supreme importance that it was to India. In the pressure of work for India's political freedom, the enthusiast had no

*THE ARYAN PATH, Vol. I, p. 165. January 1930.

time but to be one-sided. Justice holds the scales evenly, the fanatic can never be just. He has his own axe to grind, however philanthropically that axe may be disguised. He may and does frequently make use of shibboleths—such as freedom, justice, equality, brotherhood—but these are mere catchwords to support a party, or even a national cause. In Justice there can be no party, no nationality; but the partisan has his uses if at moments he strives to see and think dispassionately. When he does this, his views of life change. To long for the freedom of any country is a praiseworthy thing; to work for it is a praiseworthy thing; but the end can be bought at the too dear price of injustice to others.

So when I look back on these years in India, I see that I spent myself on what I now consider to be effects not causes. I should never have seen this, had I remained in the thickest of the fray. By 1920 I had begun to realize that it was necessary to step aside and gradually withdraw from political activity, and in 1923 I left this country for a sojourn of several years in western lands.

In England, I found there were all the corresponding problems to be dealt with that I had found in India. The ever-present difficulties, religious, educational, social and political—especially pressing after the War—were being tackled. Just as India was self-absorbed in her own peculiar destiny, so was England.

In the end of 1923 I visited the United States, and there met with a like situation generally. There too were political dissensions; there too was a colour question of the first importance, there too was a growing autocracy of wealth. The United States were first and foremost interested in themselves. So it seems to be with every country. Self-interest is the ruling factor. There is neither time nor room for consideration of others. Right *versus* Might had been effective for a few years in Europe as a slogan; but with little real practical result. This is because fundamentally nearly everyone has his own private purpose to serve. There are, alas, too few self-sacrificing souls. The Conservative (he exists in every country) fights for his privileges at the expense of Labour. Labour fights for its “rights” at the expense of capital. The white man vaunts his superiority over the coloured man, thereby generating a hatred which will sometime come to a very ugly fruition. If one tries to examine dispassionately, one sees that there is something to be said for all the views that drive parties to antagonistic action. The Conservative is not altogether a villain; Labour is not entirely grasping; the white man may suffer from arrogance, but the Indian suffers from a lack of initiative which seeks to disguise itself in noisy and

empty talk.

Not long ago an American lady wrote a book entitled MOTHER INDIA, in which she sought to “show up” India to what she considers as the civilized world; that is, she gave a picture of India unbeautiful and really untrue. But she cited many isolated and undeniable facts from which she generalized and the outside world mistook her generalisations for truth. If one regards solely the stains on a fine piece of embroidery, one will be oblivious to its real beauty. That is what Miss Mayo has done. In this connection it may not be inapt to recall an ancient Christian legend. One day, as Jesus was walking with his disciples, they came suddenly on the dead body of a dog in an advanced stage of decay. The disciples vied with one another in their remarks on the disgusting spectacle, emphasizing every unlovely point. Thereupon the Master spoke and said: “Pearls are not equal to the whiteness of its teeth.” Miss Mayo seems not to have noticed the “whiteness of the teeth” in the land she visited for but a few months. The Indian world could not be expected to give Miss Mayo’s book a cordial reception. It felt keenly that she had interfered in an affair which was no concern of hers. In reply, several books in defence of India were written, and recently a new book by an Indian, entitled UNCLE SHAM, has been published, which uses, one hears, Miss Mayo’s own methods, but directs them against her own country. This book was for a time banned in the United States. A *tu quoque* argument is essentially weak, and it is to be regretted that an Indian has felt goaded to employ one.

The truth is that every country has its faults, its black spots— but it has also its virtues. It would be possible to write a book such as MOTHER INDIA of any country in the world, but it would be utter waste of time. Concentrate on the faults, and the virtues which counterbalance will be obscured. No constructive work will have been done.

Wherein, then, can some real change be effected for the betterment of India? It is useless to be angry with Miss Mayo and her kind, for they have a certain amount of truth in their view, and it is exclusively their own business if their interest be concentrated on that which is unlovely and of ill repute. It seems to me, after having wandered in western lands for the last few years, that something may be done for India by developing the virtues of the country and not by dwelling on its faults. “Hatred ceaseth not by hatred, but by love.” No true friend of India would deny that there is much need of reform, but the reform must proceed from within, must be self-energized.

I have just returned to India after seven years and find a change. There may be a surface improvement in the relations between European and Indian, but certainly there is on the one hand more of the old contempt, and on the other more of the old distrust. In the political world there is much clamour for independence or dominion status, but should India be given her independence tomorrow, and should all Europeans then quit her shores, how could she carry on? The political situation is no affair of mine. A political situation exists and must exist in every country, and as in India, so in every country, politics but touch the fringe of the greatest problem of all.

Love is described as blind, but the real love is far-seeing. The only solution for India, as for the rest of the world, is to energize herself from within, and in this respect India has a peculiar advantage. For centuries she has been the custodian of the Ancient Wisdom which points out the Path leading men to the only freedom worth having, the Inner Freedom. Why do her people no longer pursue it? Why do they go seeking after false gods becoming followers of materialism, and adopting the vices rather than the virtues of the western world? If India is a subject race, her philosophy teaches her that this condition is the result of deeds done in the far past, and this Karma must be worked out. The time of working out will inevitably be longer unless India takes herself in hand and does it for herself. Useless repining only extends the period of subjection on this physical plane of existence. Whether it be a subject nation or a subject class, the Soul can never be fettered save by its own action.

A book has recently been published in Germany by Dr. Kohn in which he says that the War has left three great political groups of peoples, one of which is the Asiatic group. He makes the very interesting statement that the Oriental group is starting on an era of nationalism just when Europe is coming away from that ideal. If that be so, it would be a retrograde step for India. The increasing development of religious feuds within India, the growing reluctance to have anything to do with the foreigner, is opposed to her real genius. It would be unfair not to say that she may have been pushed into such a position by very injudicious and at times very unjust treatment at the hands of those whom she once harboured as her guests, but who subsequently became her rulers. If India becomes national, in the sense that that word is used nowadays (namely as a hundred per cent. American or a Fascist) she will do so at the expense of her soul. The Ancient Path which her seers and her sages

have ever taught, is a Path for all; and if India's political emancipation spells abandonment of that Path, she will have forfeited her birthright for a mess of pottage. I am not to be understood to mean that I do not think India should be politically free. I long for the hastening of that day, but my fear is that India in her attempts to secure this freedom, may sacrifice her greatest treasure—her spirituality.

Politics as we know to-day are profoundly unspiritual, and the only way to spiritualize them is by self-improvement of the individual. If every man acted according to the highest that is in him, there would be no political conflicts. Differences of opinion there must be, but the motive of all being correct, that is altruistic, such differences could be harmoniously adjusted.

For India, as I now view her, with clearer eyes, and removed from political conflict, I see but one path of progress—the revival of her Ancient Wisdom. This I take to be the aim of THE ARYAN PATH which seeks to spread far and wide the old Teachings, invaluable not only specially to India, but to the world at large. If but even a few brave souls in India will be guided and ready to act by the inner light which shines within every man, a great reform can be effected in this country in all directions—political, social, educational, religious. Then, and then only, it seems to me, will India work out her Karma satisfactorily and gain normally and naturally the freedom which she has lost.

Should anyone care to correspond with me on any point in this article, I shall be pleased to answer to the best of my ability. Letters may be sent to me, to 18D. Rashid Mansions, Colaba, Bombay.

SOME ODD HAPPENINGS

In these days when psychic experiences are being more openly talked about, one finds that scarcely any of one's friends has been without some glimpse into the unseen, and so one gradually gains confidence and begins to tell one's own little tale.

I have experienced four incidents which have made an indelible mark on my memory: the first two of these can scarcely be called psychic, because a purely physical reason could be found to explain them, and must, of course, be accepted, whatever I personally think of such an explanation. The remaining two are certainly lifted above the plane of the everyday world.

In all four, however, there have been no events that led up obviously to these experiences, no eerie forebodings of psychic power, nothing at all out of the ordinary course of events. This makes them all the more valuable to me, as often and often I have felt as if I were about to pierce the veil of the unseen world, and though in such moods I have never seen anything, yet if I had, the vision would probably have been ably assisted by my imagination. In the cases recorded, I was taken completely unawares.

As has been said, my first two experiences have possibly nothing to do with the unseen; they are interesting inasmuch as they are rather curious, and similar in character, and so I give them for what they are worth.

When I was about ten years of age, I lost my temper rather badly, and rushed out of the dining-room in a huff—we had just finished lunch. To go to the schoolroom, which was my harbour of refuge, I had to pass through a heavy swing-door, and then down a long corridor. I pushed the door open, roughly in my rage, and fled down the passage. When I got to my destination, I became full of revengeful thoughts, and the idea came into my head to go back to the swing-door, and place in front of it a heavy iron weight, which was used to keep the door open if required. My sister would, on trying to push open the door, meet with an unaccountable obstruction and might possibly fall.

Such were my thoughts, but fortunately my better nature came to my rescue, and I abandoned my fell design. A little later, my sister came running into the schoolroom, and upbraided me for my un-gentlemanly conduct in so placing the heavy door-weight as to cause her a possible accident.

I was much astonished at what she said, and told her at once that I had meant to do so, but had thought better of it as it would be “rather a low-down sort of thing.” She was good enough to take my word absolutely in the face of the most contrary evidence, but I have not to this day found a satisfactory explanation (to me) of how the weight was placed before the swing-door in the very few minutes that elapsed between my going to the schoolroom and my sister’s arrival there. Anyhow, I comfort myself with the knowledge that *I* did not put the weight there consciously.

The next experience occurred when I was in my second year at Oxford. I had just emerged from the rather invidious position of a freshman, and thought myself quite an important person. Before I had entered the University, I had spent some weeks in the town of Oxford, coaching for the First Public Examination, properly known as ‘Responsions,’ but familiarly known as ‘Smalls.’

My coach was then in his fourth year at the University and was brilliantly clever: he was also one of the most charming men, and knowing that I was alone in ‘digs,’ and furthermore had no acquaintances in the town, he introduced me to many of his friends, and gave me a thoroughly good time.

One of his friends, a particularly brilliant student, had a brother coming into residence the following year, and I looked forward to our being freshmen together. However, when I eventually did come up to Oxford I never got introduced to young Brown, and as my coach went very shortly afterwards to the other side of the world, it seemed likely that I should have to bide my time until I found a common friend to introduce us. Thus the whole of my first year passed without our meeting.

The first term of my second year I arranged with a man at Christ Church who, I found, knew Brown quite well, to ask us to dinner together one night; and, as I now felt that we should eventually meet, I ceased to think any more about the matter. I have never yet understood why I made such efforts to get to know Brown, but my efforts were crowned with success.

There was a custom at Oxford in my day, and I suppose it still obtains, that, though it was the correct thing for a senior man to leave his visiting card on a freshman he might wish to know, the freshman, in returning the call, might not leave *his* card, if he found the senior man out, but had to call and call again until he found him in. I had discovered by chance that two or three freshmen on whom I had left my card, had made several vain attempts to return my call, and so, to make matters right, I asked them to tea. During

tea my scout brought in a letter, addressed to me in a handwriting unfamiliar. I opened it and read:

DEAR CROMBIE,

I am very sorry I cannot come to you this afternoon, as I am engaged to go to tea with a friend at Balliol.

Yours sincerely,
W. H. BROWN.

My astonishment was great. Of course I had never invited him, not knowing him, and my first thought was: "Thank heaven he did not come," for I should have been most embarrassed, and utterly at a loss. This awkwardness was spared me, and I turned to attend to the wants of the freshmen who devoured hot tea-cake and spoke very little.

When they had gone, I decided to call on Brown and ask for a personal explanation why he thought I had invited him. I went to his college. I had no friends there and was totally unfamiliar with the 'lie of the land.' A porter kindly directed me, and after some searching and much climbing of stairs, I found Brown's rooms. He was out, but on my return I met a man who looked at me for a moment, and then stopped me, asking if I were Crombie. It was Brown, who had recognised me from a photograph he had seen which belonged to my coach. He had heard of me, and said he was so sorry he had not been able to come to see me, and thought it was most kind of me to have waived all ceremony and asked him. He had found my visiting card on his table that morning, with the invitation written on the back of it. I asked to see the card. It had disappeared, so that avenue of inquiry was stopped. However, we had at last got to know each other, and the somewhat strange introduction led to an acquaintanceship which lasted during my time at Oxford—but no longer. Indeed it has always seemed strange to me that a friendship I had anticipated rather eagerly, should have been so utterly without anything to mark it save the manner of the introduction.

I sought in every possible way to discover *how* my visiting card had got into Brown's rooms. My friend at Christ Church had not called on him that term, so could not have left an old card of mine by mistake. All my friends at college denied any knowledge of it. My enquiries were searching, but personally I have never doubted since the moment I received Brown's letter that there was something weird in the whole incident, and I have always connected it with that extraordinary happening of my childhood just related.

My third experience is distinctly one recognised by modern psychism. I saw a thought-form. For me, henceforth, it is and must be a fact that “thoughts are things”; but I regret to say that, even so, thought-forms have never much interested me, and it is a matter of wonder to me that one of my few glimpses into the unseen should have been the vision of a thought-form, and also its effect on the person towards whom it was directed.

Late one afternoon, when living in a London boarding-house, I was sitting in a comfortable armchair, drawn up close to the fire. My mood was perfectly quiescent, and I was not best pleased when one of the boarders opened the door and disturbed my solitude. I remained perfectly still, but was somehow aware that the intruder had not shut the door. I have a great dislike to sitting in a room with the door open, and I thought instinctively, “I wish he would shut the door,” at the same time deciding that possibly it would be less disturbing to wait until my friend had sat down, and then go and shut the door myself. I felt that I had not the energy to form the words to *ask* him to do so. My sudden desire had taken form. I saw a greyish-blue object, shaped like a boomerang, issue from the back of my head, and strike my friend on the forehead before he had reached his chair. He hesitated perceptibly for a second and then went back and shut the door.

When I returned to a more ‘normal’ condition of mind, I marvelled how I could have seen anything coming out of the back of my head, and travelling behind me. I have since been able to reproduce in my mind the idea, but am conscious of effort and of the fact that in so doing I make a *series* of mental images, passing them in review in rapid succession, as in a cinematograph; whereas at the time I could see myself and my companion, simultaneously, and without difficulty, from several points of view.

So much for the solitary thought-form that has deigned to manifest itself to me.

My fourth experience is of the nature of clairaudience. Some years ago a friend played to me Rubinstein’s ‘Melody in F,’ and I was much struck by this, and whenever I could, I got her to play it. I am fond of music, but lack that essential quality of ‘ear’ to make me in any way a musician. I could never mentally reproduce the melody, and this vexed me, because I often tried to do so, without success.

One day on a bus in London, I heard, above the roar of the traffic, the ‘Melody in F’ being played, and I vaguely wondered whether my friend were playing it. The next moment the music

ceased, and I had no power to recall it. Several times, and in different places—once while in Italy—I heard the ‘Melody’ thus played. It suddenly began to ‘play itself,’ if I may use the phrase, but the playing resembled that of my friend. I could not establish the fact that I was really hearing her playing at a distance until one December.

I was spending Christmas with my brothers in Aberdeen and Mrs. R— was in London. At dinner, when I was in the midst of enjoying the customary turkey, and thinking of nothing beyond the very physical plane, I heard the ‘Melody in F’ played from beginning to end, most clearly. I believe my brother spoke to me. I did not answer, but after the music ceased, I recovered my manners.

The time was about 8-30 p.m. We dined at 8, and I knew Mrs. R—usually dined at 7, so there would be time for her to have finished and to be playing in her drawing-room.

I made subsequent enquiries. Just about 8-30 p.m. of that night, she began playing Rubinstein’s piece, and her son said: “I do wonder if Mr. Crombie will hear it this time.” I did. The fact was established, for me, that I had been hearing at a distance. Since then I have never heard it again. The power has come to me to recall the tune whenever I will, and I have lost the ability to listen to my friend playing over the many miles that separate us.

Such are my four experiences.

I have had a few others which rather baffle any sort of description. I have been consciously out of my body and painfully aware of the re-entry into my physical frame. I have felt a vast depression being raised from, or purified out of, my bodies, leaving me free, light, and happy, but so utterly surprised that it took me nearly ten minutes to realise that I was no longer depressed, even though I had felt the depression go, as if it were some physical weight being lifted off me.

Once on waking, I found myself in a state of happiness I have seldom experienced. Every nerve of me had soothing; I felt in a condition of perfect rest, and the reason was, I knew, that I had come into contact with someone on another plane who had surrounded me with, and bathed me in, the quality of Gentleness.

These experiences cannot be described, nor are they of any particular value to others. But they are of value personally, for they bring a reality where there was formerly a doubt, and they confirm one’s belief in those who see further than we see, but at whom the world scoffs as charlatans and impostors.

THE BEGGAR DANCE

I

The following story was found amongst some old papers of a novelist who has recently died. Permission has not been given to reveal the name, but it may be noted that his work was characterised by a wonderful insight into life, and by the peculiar literary charm which he brought to bear on every incident he portrayed. The story given below must have been one of his earliest efforts, as it bears distinct marks of immaturity and gives few indications of the literary greatness to which the author afterwards attained. It has, however, a certain touch of realism which makes the reader wonder whether or not "The Beggar Dance" may be a fragment of autobiography.

II

Cold, sleet, slush, fog—one of these ghastly November evenings which bring despair to the hearts of the homeless and make even the rich shiver beneath their furs. The Thames rolls its brown waters unconcernedly, heeding not the poor wretches that lean over its bridges and wonder whether it were not best to fling themselves into the murky depths and for ever find rest. The lamps shine strangely on the Embankment, each surrounded by a misty halo. Up Northumberland Avenue it is a little clearer, the lamps shine brighter, life takes on a less gloomy shade. Across Trafalgar Square, down Charing Cross Road, there is still more light, great patches of bright haze proclaiming the presence of theatres.

This evening the Crown Music Hall stood forth with a certain dignity. Large posters, well-illuminated, displayed the full-length portrait of a woman—a beautiful woman—and underneath the portrait was written: "To-night at 9-30 *Constance Réveillon* in her famous *Beggar Dance*." In letters of fire, round the porch of the theatre the same tale was repeated—"Constance Réveillon—*The Beggar Dance*."

And here I found myself this dreadful night. Only one sixpence between myself and beggary. I, a gentleman by birth, but fallen so low as scarce to remember even that. Educated?—yes; but with the education of some twenty years ago that was worse than useless. Fit for nothing, unable to get any work after weeks of honest striv-

ing. The one poor room which I inhabited would to-morrow be no longer mine, for I could not find the rent; henceforth I must be one of the homeless wanderers. My God! how the mother who gave me birth would weep if she could see me now—and yet the worst had not happened. I had not yielded, though so strongly tempted, to the seduction of the river. I must and would fight it out.

I was standing near the stage door when a motorcar drew up from which emerged a lady clad in beautiful sables. I knew her at once; she was the great Réveillon. And then to meet her came a tall man, a typical manager, and the two stopped on the street, talking earnestly. I was near enough to hear what they said, but they took no notice of me. Why did they not go inside the theatre? It was cold enough. But fate plays many games, and in this one she had decided to include me.

“But Mr. Barker, what is it you would tell me? My beggar is run over at Wimbledon, so? poor devil. Unable to play—Eh! But of course: the understudy? A fool I know, but he will do all right though. I will dance, Oh heaven, I will dance so that they shall not know whether there is a beggar or not.”

“Madame, you do not understand,” replied the agitated manager. “The understudy, Irwin, has telegraphed us he cannot come to-night. He has got pneumonia. He will not be here, and there is no one.”

The despair in the manager’s voice roused La Réveillon.

“Mon Dieu! What *can* we do? Is there no one?”

“We must find some one—but at such short notice, barely an hour. I wired Jacques if he would help us out, but he is on at a show in the Frivolity, and I can think of no one. Stay! there is Mark Lord; he would do at a pinch *if we can get him in time*. . . .”

So saying the manager rushed off to the telephone, leaving La Réveillon alone on the street.

“Madame, *I* will play the part,” I said moving forward as if impelled by some irresistible impulse.

“You,” she exclaimed, glancing at me half angrily, half critically. “You,” she repeated, and then she laughed.

I should have been abashed, I should have turned away with an apology, but the words framed themselves again on my lips and I repeated:

“Madame, I will play the part.”

She looked again at me, more carefully; the light from one of the lamps caught my face, and she gazed for a few seconds earnestly; then she grew pale, seemed almost to stumble forward, but recovered

herself instantaneously. Her right hand was pressed against her heart. Just then the manager hurriedly returned:

“Wire engaged,” he explained briefly “They’ll ring me up in a moment. A thousand apologies for having left you. Let us come in out of the cold.”

“I have been well entertained,” Madame replied laughingly. “This man, he has offered to what you call ‘save the game,’ ” and she pointed to me a little derisively.

The manager turned on me angrily. “Has he annoyed you, Madame? Be off with you. Poor devil, he looks a bit down on his luck though.”

My impulse had been to move away, but I was held, as it were by force, to the spot. My clothes and shoes were evidence of my ill-fortune, if evidence were needed. This was only another rebuff. What did it matter? But the woman looked at me again.

“Poor devil,” she murmured, “he has a queer face. After all there isn’t much to do, and he is better than nothing. Come,” she said, “I have a presentiment. You shall act to-night with me. We will do great things together, you and I, and you shall have as your reward the money they throw you on the stage. For to-night then? To-morrow—what matters to-morrow? Is it agreed then? Come.”

A fervour of gratitude rose in my breast. I had never realised before to such an extent my utterly desperate state. Tears dimmed my eyes, as I half unconsciously offered her my hand to seal our contract. She took it, and we three passed within the precincts of the theatre, the manager expostulating in vain. The French blood of La Réveillon was revealed in her impetuosity, her obstinacy, and her kind heart.

III

I stood before a mirror, clad in appalling rags—a veritable beggar. My face was emaciated by recent starvation, but the make-up brought this out even more strongly. I gaped at myself. In fifteen minutes more I should be on the stage. Several thoughts, unbidden guests, coursed through my brain, strange questionings obsessed me. What strange freak of fortune had ever made me dare to approach La Réveillon? *Then* I felt strong, purposeful, impelled as it were to some end. *Now* my courage was completely gone. The next hour loomed before me in horrid guise. I knew not what it would bring forth. What was the part that fortune had cast for me? A man had come and told me what I was to do. I had been shown where to stand—near the footlights, to the side. I was to appeal dumbly for

money, raising my sightless eyes to the audience for pity, while she danced for me and claimed by her art the charity which would have been denied to my rags. Above all I was not to get in the way. This was all I could remember. While it was explained to me, I seemed to grasp it all, to understand, and my informant appeared pleased. He had called me “intelligent,” and said he thought we should get through all right. But now! now it was all going from me, and a chill terror was possessing me.

Great heavens! Only ten minutes more! No, I could not do it. I must escape while there was yet time. I turned; surely there was some one in the room; yet where? I looked round, there was no one. I glanced back towards the mirror; I *looked* the part, a new courage seemed to be coming to me. *Could* I go through with the thing? Again, the impression stronger this time, I felt I was not alone; again I turned and gazed upon nothingness. Yet stay! A shadowy misty figure was forming itself by the corner near the door. As I looked, my fears seemed gradually to disappear, my courage seemed to strengthen, yet I could not speak. Closer and closer drew this figure, still shadowy, yet the form more clearly defined, but the face was clouded and misty. At length it came near to me, so near that I could have touched it. I even wished to do so, but the power to move seemed to have left me. Slowly it approached, and still I could not move. Fascinated I watched; at last so near it came, I could not understand why it did not touch me. Nearer even yet, and I lost the sense of its outline. It was there, I knew, and now I could not see it. At last I realised; it had *passed partly through me*, enveloped me, and stopped.

There are some things which cannot be written down. I was now possessed of an indescribable sensation. I was myself, and one other. There was one part me, and another part not me, and this other part was in command. What did it all mean? It was now time to go on the stage. I looked once again in the mirror and saw myself —myself yet not myself. Some one now came to call me. A thrilling inspiration filled my being. I was no longer Stephen Margrave; I was the beggar for whom the lady danced. Confidently I pursued my way to the wings. The mocking glances of the stray players I met did not touch me, although they eyed me curiously. Were they conscious of the change in me, I dimly wondered; and then my other self impelled me forward. La Réveillon met me, and scarcely heeding me said:

“Go on first, and stand there, and don’t get in my way. Courage! I come immediately behind you.”

I nodded. All fear had left me now and, lost to everything save an overwhelming sense of excitement, I stepped upon the stage.

IV

Strange and conflicting emotions held me as I took my place close by the footlights. At first I had no fear; I shuffled on, just as a sightless man might do, groping my way to the destined position, my right hand grasping pathetically some sort of bowl in which to receive the charity of the casual passer-by. My eyes were open, gazing, as it were, into an impenetrable darkness. In truth, the glare of the footlights at first dazzled them, but soon I became aware of a sea of shadowy faces, and tier upon tier of figures with eyes intently turned towards me. The sense of duality which had taken hold of me in the dressing-room and borne me safely behind the footlights seemed to be deserting me. The other presence began to recede from me. As in a dream, I observed that "it,"—the other me—had deserted me for a while and was standing close to where La Réveillon would make her entrance.

She was coming—only fifteen seconds after my entrance, but what an eternity these fifteen seconds had seemed. A hush fell upon the audience, a silent expectancy made itself felt. *She* was coming— and a ripple of applause, growing louder and louder, heralded her coming.

She came on quietly, apparently unconscious of everything save her desire to dance for the beggar, to bring to an unfortunate fellow-being some of the happiness that was surely hers. Her movements were grace personified, and she approached me with a smile full of heavenly pity. Closer she came, and behind her glided the shadowy figure. When she was almost at my side, the figure moved forward more quickly, and once more enveloped me. Again I was Stephen Margrave and one other, again courage possessed me; all strangeness left me.

The dance began; La Réveillon stretched forth her hands towards me with a gesture of exquisite compassion, and then turned thus towards the audience in a mute appeal for help. Slowly she swayed to and fro, as if possessed by a sense of her own inability to aid; then her movements became gradually more quick, almost imperceptibly so, until at last a realisation came to me that she was caught in the toils of her art, lost in the maze of a wonderful whirl of movement. Not a sound could be heard in the theatre, save the weird music from the orchestra, which wafted to my ears as it were the strains from some other world.

I could not be still. The Presence yet with me seemed utterly to possess me. A blind man often displays powers which seem incredible to those with sight. He develops a sixth sense; thus was I. I had ceased to be Stephen Margrave, had ceased to be the Presence; *I was the beggar*. Seeing nothing, yet governed by this sixth sense, I turned and followed with my sightless eyes, wide open, staring, every movement of La Réveillon's dance. For one moment the audience gave their attention to me. I pleaded with my hands, I showed by my gestures the work of mercy this wonderful woman was doing by dancing for me, a beggar from the street. My adoration for her was manifest in my every movement, and it was not feigned; it was a reality. Love—I had never known what it meant before—filled my being. I loved Constance Réveillon, or was it the Presence that loved her, for it dominated me completely now? My actions shewed my love. I moved towards her as if to bid her cease her work of mercy, as if to tell her how unworthy I was. My face was turned towards hers. For an instant she met my look, seemed to falter. Again, as at the stage door, her hand sought her heart; an answering look of love leaped into her eyes, succeeded by a puzzled and disappointed expression. On she danced, but every moment the triumph of her dancing was more and more apparent. I moved from side to side of the stage—all orders forgotten—worshipping her, asking the people to crown the appreciation of her art, by rewarding her in the way she would have wished—by rewarding me.

My musings were suddenly disturbed. Something whizzed through the air, struck me and rolled to the floor. It was a sovereign. Carried away by the impelling magic of the scene, some spectator had thrown it. It fell at my feet unheeded. The spirit of art had entered into me. I would not spoil her dance by groping on the stage for a sovereign. More coins were thrown, even some jewellery—charity for the beggar.

At last the movements of La Réveillon grew slower, slower, still slower. I moved back to my original position, holding out my hands once again to the people. Then a strange thing happened. She came close behind me, laid her hands lightly on my shoulders, bent forward and smiled.

“Thank you! my beggar—my mascot—you and I will dance for ever, will we not?”

One last gesture of appeal from her, a shower of coins, a bow, and she drifted from the stage, amidst thunders of applause. I stood where I was, the Presence was leaving me. I was conscious of gold lying at my feet. I bent down as if to feel for it; the curtain had

begun to fall. Another burst of applause, as the audience were slowly hidden from my sight.

Could it be that this applause was for me ?

V

The memory plays strange trick with one. I have but a confused recollection of what happened to me between the time of the fall of the curtain and my waking up next morning in my dingy little lodging in Pimlico. The first thing my eyes lit on were my clothes, still wet with the rain of the night before, lying as if hastily thrown about the room. How I had returned from the theatre I could not remember. Suddenly a wave of doubt came over me. The whole thing was a dream, an elaborately constructed dream, a fantasy born of my wretched state to cheat me of my misery. But it had been marvellously realistic. Even now, I could scarcely reconcile myself to the theory that it was all a dream, albeit I had no evidence to prove that the wonderful events I have just set down had ever taken place, but for my knowledge that I had been out on the streets for hours last night as my wet clothes testified.

I got up wearily. To-night must be spent entirely on the streets; save for my sixpence I was utterly destitute. Then suddenly something lying on a table in the corner of the room attracted my attention. It was a bag, and to that bag was attached a card. A flood of recollection swept over me. I remembered, at first dimly, then more clearly, that after I had left the stage, I had changed my clothes, and then some one had given me a bag—the very bag lying on the table before me—tied up with *La Réveillon's* card, and on it, pencilled in her handwriting: "From the Lady to the Beggar." A message had also come; she wished to see me in half an hour. Had I gone to see her? I could not tell. Perhaps in time I should remember details. Now all was vague, shadowy, except the bag; it was tangible. I opened it; and the glint of gold caught my eye. My recent experiences had dulled my brain, or I would surely have known what it must contain; but perhaps this was because my thoughts were elsewhere recalling the wonderful dance, or rather fragments of the wonderful dance I had seen. Still man must live. Our contract came before me; the bag contained my earnings. I turned them out on the table—a diamond ring, a gold bracelet, fifteen sovereigns, six half-sovereigns, twelve half-crowns, and four shillings. In all, nineteen pounds, fourteen shillings. Riches, indeed! I counted the money over and over again, mentally assessing the value of the ring and bracelet. For the moment the theatre, the dance, all were forgotten; my

horizon was limited by nineteen pounds, fourteen shillings, a diamond ring, and a gold bracelet. La Réveillon had nobly kept her part of the contract. The sudden revulsion from hopeless poverty to comparative wealth overwhelmed me. I sat down, unnerved, put my face in my hands, and wept.

After a little, I began to grow accustomed to my change of fortune. Then the thought of the theatre again swept over me. La Réveillon's whispered words as she left the stage came back to me:

“You and I will dance for ever, will we not?”

She had not understood; that was it, she had not understood. How should she know of the Presence, how should she guess that, had not something that was not me allied itself to me for a brief hour, I should have ruined and not helped her dance? I could not go back to the theatre. Having once tasted the fruits of a success which was not mine, could I bear the horror of a failure which would be mine alone? It was impossible. Still she counted on me—that I knew—and in a few short hours would expect me. And I must not go, for something within me told me firmly and inevitably that the Presence would not come again. Better surely she should think me faithless, than that I should fail to repeat the wonderful performance of last night—and my performance had been wonderful. The beggar had been no adjunct of the dance, he had been part of it; in his way, he had performed his duty as marvellously as she, and surely no dancer had ever danced as she did last night.

I sat and argued with myself, but all my deliberations ended in one determination; I would not act to-night. Still, I must warn her. I would send a telegram to her, breaking my engagement, if engagement it had ever been. Sooner starve than go with the certainty of spoiling her triumph.

£19. 14s. I could well spare sixpence on a telegram. I would spend the very sixpence that had stood between me and beggary. The idea appealed to my imagination. I dressed hastily and went out quietly. Somehow I wished to avoid my landlady, a person whose mental horizon never extended beyond the idea of her rent. I could satisfy her now, but I would not see her yet. I was cold and faint for want of food. There was an A. B. C. shop close by. I should have toast, poached eggs and coffee—a glorious meal. Anticipation hastened my steps.

Just at the door of the shop a boy was selling newspapers. I must allow myself one luxury. I bought one, changing a shilling,— my sixpence I kept for the telegram—but I did not open it until I had given the order for my breakfast. A penny paper must not be

treated lightly. I was perusing the advertisements first when my ear was caught by a sound outside. My newsboy was calling out in strident tones: "Sudden death of a famous Dancer."

Something in the tragedy of the words struck me, and I opened my paper feverishly, but I knew before I opened it what I should read.

We regret very much to announce the sudden death of Mme. Constance Réveillon this morning at her residence in Eccleston Place, The death was due to failure of the heart, and must have occurred in the early hours, for her maid found her dead when she took in the morning tea.

Then followed an account of the actress's career. I read it eagerly; all the facts had been pigeon-holed by some enterprising journalist, in readiness to be brought out when occasion arose. They were well strung together. Further on I read:

Last night Mme. Réveillon seemed to have reached the height of her triumph. Many spectators say that she has never before danced so divinely. One curious incident occurred prior to the performance. We believe that the part of the beggar, owing to an accident to Mr. Devereux, and, almost simultaneously, the sudden illness of his understudy, was left absolutely unfilled, until just at the last moment an actor out of work offered his services, which were, *faute de mieux*, accepted. What threatened to ruin Mme. Réveillon's dance proved only to enhance its perfection. The stray "beggar" acted marvellously, interpreting the part in a new and inspiring manner, and Mme. Réveillon declared last night that she would never dance her Beggar Dance again unless this man acted with her. His name is unknown, but his acting was so fine that he is sure never to be overlooked in the future. His performance was reminiscent of the work of Arthur Gerrard who, it will be remembered, died under painful circumstances only a year ago. He was at the time of his death engaged to be married to Mme. Réveillon, and it is said that the heart trouble from which she suffered and from which she eventually died was largely accentuated by her grief.

VI

La Réveillon dead! I tried to realise it, to understand all it signified, but even at such moments when we would be most alone, the outer world interrupts. A waitress came, bringing my meal. The thought of food sickened me. I gave her some money and went towards my lonely lodging almost dazed. Up the long stairs I slowly climbed, and then having reached my room, I locked the door and sat down to think.

La Réveillon dead! I understood now what the world would never know. The love of Arthur Gerrard for Constance Réveillon had lasted beyond death. Have the dead prophetic insight? Did he know she was so soon to join him? Be that as it may, it was he and he only who had inspired me that wonderful night. His love for Constance had brought him back to the physical world to do one last service for her. And in a sense she had known this, for twice—once at the stage door, once during the dance when the stranger completely dominated me—she had faltered, and pressed her hand against her heart as if to quieten its beating.

Surely it was the inspiration of his presence that had made her dance that night as she had never danced before, gaining a veritable triumph, reaching the culminating point of her art.

While I was thus musing, my mind came back with a sudden jerk to practical affairs. £19. 14s, will not keep a man for ever. I must get work, the future must be faced. And as I was grappling with my problem, once again the strange, the weird, the supernatural occurred. The Presence was again with me. I felt, rather than saw, this time. For about five minutes it seemed to linger with me, and then left me, as it were, reluctantly; but a distinct impression remained with me that it had tried to do me some service for what I had done for her in her hour of need.

The impression persisted, and gradually, as if from some other world, an idea seemed to filter down into my brain. I could not act, and yet I had the instinct for art. It has many branches, and I might be true to her in one though false to her in another. A fresh hope began to take birth in me. Was it not possible? One thing at least I could do. I might try to write the story of that wonderful night. Filled with the idea, I found a pen, some paper and wrote for a couple of hours the story which is here set down. But I owe it to her that it should never see the light of day, for it holds a part of her life-history which is known to but three persons—herself, Arthur Gerrard and myself. And two of these are dead. Still the hope remains. . . .

[The manuscript here comes suddenly to an end.]

“REMEMBER GAETA”

I am already an old man and unless I set down now my tale, I fear I shall not have a chance again. I never thought to draw out from my memory of the past this particular incident which I am now about to relate, but events have happened within the last few years that make me feel it my duty to do so.

I have spent most of my time in India, the reputed land of mysteries and marvels, and if you are a believer in the travellers' tales you hear, you would think that every Indian was a magician and every act he performed was a miracle. All I can say is that, after twenty years' experience in that land, I never came across one single marvel nor one single magician to my knowledge. It is true, however, there are many Indians who are much interested in the science of occultism, a science to which if I had had the time and the will, I should have liked to have devoted myself, for in it I am quite sure may be found the real reason for our existence. I was fortunate enough to come across two or three of my Indian friends who were interested in this science and they spoke quite solemnly of as truths, what the normal average Anglo-Indian considers myths. So-called miracles of the Bible were but to them the outcome of the use of natural laws unknown generally to man. They also told me of Great Teachers—and those they spoke of with profound reverence—who had climbed up the ladder of evolution far beyond the ken of the normal man and who lived in the fastnesses of mountains, sending forth their power and wisdom for the upliftment of humanity. This was all very interesting, but I cannot say that I was convinced. However, a young fellow with whom I was very friendly was much taken up with that sort of thing. His name was Charles Norman, and though he was much younger than I was, yet somehow or other we were very good companions. He must have had rather eccentric parents apparently, because he had been brought up with extraordinary ideas, and it was rather a boast of his that never from boyhood had he touched meat. We had a mutual friend in a most cultivated native, Ram Singh, and the three of us went about a great deal together, but it was quite easily seen that Ram Singh's interest was for some mysterious reason concentrated on Charles.

Now I believe, but I do not know, that Ram Singh could do queer things. I have heard, and I think it was true, that he was in some psychic communication with his Guru as he called him, and

that this Guru was one of the great Sages known, and believed in, by the Indians. However that may be he never showed me anything of his psychism and I am sure that Charles was not psychic at all. Sensitive maybe, but not psychic. However, that seemed to make no difference to Ram Singh. Often and often I used to find him in Charles's rooms philosophising in a most extraordinary way and Charles calmly taking it all in as if he were recalling something he had previously learnt and not as if he were endeavouring to learn something new. Perhaps he was; for both he and Ram Singh were staunch believers in the doctrine of Reincarnation, and I must say for myself, that it seemed to me likely to be true. In later years, I have become convinced of it.

These two were very good to me. I must say they never made me feel in the way, and Charles used to say that Karma linked us together. To this remark Ram Singh once nodded his head rather meaningfully and when I asked for some explanation of the matter I was told that I would know before I died. It is because I think that I do know now that I have sat down to write this story.

The day that my story begins was a very hot one—it can be extremely hot in India—and I had spent most of the time under the *punka* trying to persuade myself that I was undergoing the necessary preparation for that after-life which is accorded to recalcitrant Christians. However, later in the afternoon a semblance of a breeze manifested itself and I thought I would look round on Charles. There is little privacy in India, and so I went in unannounced and found him lying on a long chair on the balcony of his bungalow. I called him: “Hello, Charles, and how have you got through the day?” But there was no answer and as I got closer I saw he was deadly white and unconscious of my approach. I thought he was in some sort of fit and was very much alarmed because I am not apt to deal with such a case. I was about to call his servant when suddenly, absolutely quietly, Ram Singh made his appearance. He looked at me and then went straight over to Charles, bent across him for a few seconds, gazing at his face, and then slowly the boy's eyelids began to flutter. Gradually life seemed to flow into his body and he half rose. Ram Singh straightened himself up and came over to speak to me. Just at that moment—I remember this very clearly because it made a great impression on me—Charles spoke:—“Remember Gaeta” he said, “remember Gaeta,”—and that was all. Then he rubbed his eyes and, as it were, came back into the world.

“What are you two people doing here?” he demanded.

“We just looked in to see you,” I replied.

“I have just had an extraordinary experience” he said, “I thought I was going to die.”

Then he turned to Ram Singh:

“You know, Ram Singh, it was about—.”

“Yes, yes,” said Ram Singh. “You have not been very well. Do not speak for a little.”

Then Ram Singh looked round and said to me: “I think he ought to be quiet just now, Mr. Mowbray. If you wouldn’t mind, it would be better if you left him to me for a little. He will be all-right by the evening.”

I had been in India several years; I knew and liked Indians and I am sure that they liked me; I had never felt that peculiar feeling which is called the colour feeling until this moment, but I must say that as I quitted the balcony in obedience to Ram Singh’s command (I can call it nothing else) I felt a spasm of race prejudice. Who was he, an Indian, to dare to order me, a European, to leave my friend when he was ill? I was ashamed of this feeling a moment afterwards because I admitted to myself that the stronger man had won. When it came to a question of obedience between Ram Singh and myself it was Ram Singh who would win. Although neither of them ever spoke directly to me of the incident again, yet I noticed that Charles after this attack seemed to be strangely nervous and perplexed. He suffered also from fits of depression, varied by moods of extraordinary exaltation. In one of the former, when I was trying to cheer him up ineffectually, Ram Singh again came in and when Charles was not thus easily to be roused, he looked at him strangely and said:

“Remember Gaeta.”

It must have been six months after this that Charles left India on a long furlough. I went with him to Bombay and saw him off. It was my turn to be depressed. Charles seemed to have entirely got over his sudden illness, had thrown off all his depression and was starting for home with the happiest anticipations. I was the gloomy one, and as I shook hands with him I said, somewhat prophetically I think:

“I wonder if I shall ever see you again?”

He looked at me for a moment, and then half laughed and answered: “Oh yes, you will see me again right enough, old chap, only perhaps I won’t see you.”

The warning off bell from the boat prevented my enquiring into the meaning of this cryptic and somewhat rude remark, but it stuck in my mind and in the light of subsequent events I cannot help

thinking that Charles meant it so to stick.

I told Ram Singh about it and all his comment was a baffling smile. There have been moments when I have wished that Ram Singh wouldn't smile like that.

I missed Charles very much, and I did not see a great deal of Ram Singh because it was not long before he too left the station. Charles was not a good letter writer, and consequently, beyond a few postcards en route to England and a letter announcing his arrival there, I did not hear from him for several months. When I did get something which might be called a communication I was so astonished that I could scarcely believe my eyes. Charles wrote from Gaeta. I do not know anything about Gaeta, I do not want to know particularly. I believe it is somewhere in Italy near the sea-coast and I have no doubt it is a most beautiful place. Charles's letter was not a guidebook and all I know of the place has been gathered from the *ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA*. What Charles was concerned with was a certain Count Baroni whom he had apparently run across in Gaeta. He was, he wrote me, a great Sage and had penetrated far into the mysteries of Occult Science. How Charles ever came to go to Gaeta has never appeared but I daresay Ram Singh could tell me something about that if he only would. For myself I am satisfied that it was written in the book of fate that Charles had to go to Gaeta and that when he left Bombay he left with the firm intention of going there. The Count Baroni seems to have been very friendly to Charles and he told me that he had mentioned my name and his friendship with me to the Count, and that the Count was pleased to be interested. The Italians are always polite.

The Count dwelt in a very charming house and I gathered that Charles saw him for the greater part of each day. He lived a retired life and was thought by the people round to be somewhat eccentric but harmless. That, in a nutshell, was the substance of Charles's letters to me, only there was an interesting P.S. "Cheer up, you will see me again all right, old fellow." And that was the first letter I had from Gaeta from Charles, and the last.

Six weeks later an Italian newspaper was sent to me. I looked through it in a desultory manner thinking that there must be something of interest to me in it as it must have come from Charles, although it was not addressed in his handwriting; but the postmark was Gaeta and he was the only person who could have sent it. I found two paragraphs marked with blue pencil. The first told of the death of Count Baroni who had been found dead in his Villa, a victim of sudden heart disease. Truthfully this did not interest me

very much, but I supposed Charles would be sorry, and I thought it was nice of him to send me the paper. I then proceeded to read the second paragraph. That gave me one of the greatest shocks of my life. It told of a terrible landslide in the neighbourhood of Gaeta and one of the victims of this landslide was a young Englishman who had been staying for the last two or three months in Gaeta and who had been seen walking in the neighbourhood at the time of the disaster. As he had not, after the lapse of several days, returned, and as he had apparently gone out for his customary afternoon walk, it was presumed that he must have perished. The paper said further that the body of this young Englishman, Charles Norman, had not yet been recovered. In fact it seemed unlikely that it should be recovered. The record mentioned that he had been on very friendly terms with Count Baroni and the curious coincidence of the death both of Charles and the Count on the same day was commented upon.

I have one more thing to record as far as this part of the story is concerned and that was the state of absolute bewilderment into which I was thrown by trying to answer myself the apparently simple question: "Who sent me the paper?" I wrote my news at once to Ram Singh, and he replied in kindly fashion giving his sympathy to me but not expressing any particular regrets as to Charles's death. One wouldn't have expected that of him, however, because he viewed death differently from most people, and yet behind the letter I seemed to see his quiet baffling smile.

Time: Fifteen years later. Scene: The Opera at Covent Garden. I had quitted India for good. I was sorry enough to go but still after all home is home and I had many friends who kept me in touch with what was going on in India. Of Ram Singh I had not heard for years and of Charles—well, he had faded rather into the background of my memory. Now I was attending the Opera like a good English music lover, and was witnessing a superb performance of LA BOHEME. It is sufficient to say that Mme. Melba was taking the part of Mimi. I was sitting in the stalls. During one of the intervals I scanned the house. There was the usual gorgeous display of dress and jewels in the boxes and as I ran my glasses round the tiers I saw a man's figure that seemed strangely familiar but one that I could not for the moment place. His back was towards me. When he turned I think I nearly fainted for the man's face was the face of Charles, not the same Charles that I had known in India, but an infinitely grander and mightier Charles; not the same Charles but yet undoubtedly the same man. A miracle was before my eyes. Charles was no older than

he had been fifteen years ago. Here was the same young-looking man of thirty and he ought by all laws of nature to have shown some traces of advancing years. I looked and looked, and if I had any doubt as to his identity it was dispelled because I could see distinctly on the little finger of his left hand a curious ruby ring which I had given him when we were in India. At last he turned his gaze on me. Straight through the theatre he looked, and then I had the experience of my life. It was the look of a far greater man than Charles had ever been; it was a look which burned, purified, and restored at the same moment. All that I had been, was, or could be seemed to be revealed to this marvellous gaze, and yet although I was stripped bare mentally and morally, there was no feeling of resentment for the gaze was absolutely impersonal. I have no words to describe it. Words are poor things in a spiritual experience, yet truthfully I am speaking of what *I know*. It was all over in a moment and then Charles, as I must call him, smiled across the glittering space and in his smile was infinite compassion. Afterwards he turned away. The lights were lowered, the music began again. When the next interval came, I tried to see him again, but he had gone. I left the Opera. I had been in the presence of a man of men, and as he had left so I went. As I was going, there seemed to waft into my ears the sentence of long ago:—"You will see me again all right, old chap, even if I do not see you." The knowledge that Ram Singh had said would come to me was beginning to dawn.

I wrote to Ram Singh. I wanted, oh, how I wanted some definite explanation of this marvellous thing. The letter has just reached me, returned, address unknown. So all that I can do is to speculate and what will seem wild speculation to those who do not know seems to me the purest truth. It may be that some superhuman being who had desired a temple of habitation had chosen the body of Charles. That is how it seems to me, and to this Being I owe my best and greatest allegiance, for I feel that in lives to come I shall serve Him, as undoubtedly Charles and Ram Singh must have served Him in this life with knowledge and wisdom. The veil has been lifted for me from the mystery of the Gaeta incident.

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