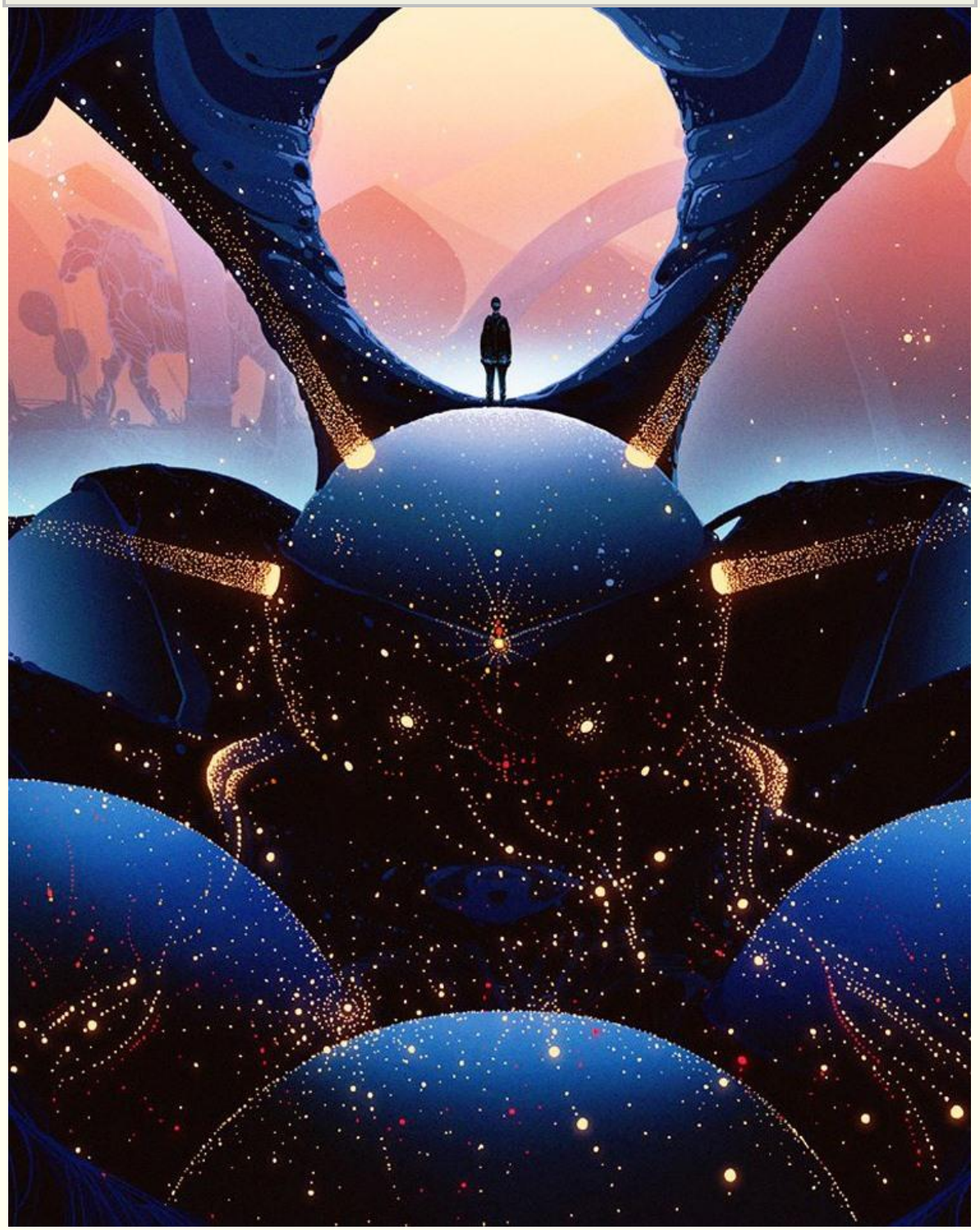
Death, before whose majestic tranquillity so many shudder with fear, has no terrors.



Abstract and train of thoughts[1]

The book of Futurity, which has been wisely closed to every mortal eye, now opens its pages to many sons of the earth.

Among the workings of the inner life within us, which we may experience but cannot explain, are there any more remarkable than those mysterious moral influences constantly exercised either for attraction or repulsion, by one human being over another? 4

Corroborated presentiments of death.

Modern astronomy profits by the works of ancient astrology, and kicks it out of sight.

During the dissolution of the Etheric Double the darkness of our ignorance beginning to be dispelled, there are many things we can see. 9

It is through the throbs of dissolution that horizons of vaster and profounder knowledge are drawn on, bursting upon our mental vision and becoming with every hour plainer to our inner eye. 9

The nearer some people approach death, the brighter becomes their long lost memory, and the more correct the previsions because the unfoldment of inner faculties increases as life-blood becomes more stagnant. 9

Modern science and spiritualism are two opposite poles.

Life and death are as much of a mystery to the man of science, as they are to the spiritualist and the profane unbeliever. 12

Materialistic scientists keep unweaving the rainbow. Unconscious necromancers reject every other philosophy save their own. 13

Death, before whose majestic tranquillity so many shudder with fear, has no terrors. And yet people make too much fuss over death, and too little over the birth of every new candidate for it. 13

Suggested reading for students.

On the soul of the spiritual man lit by its own light. 15

[1] Frontispiece by Kilian Eng.

The book of Futurity, which has been wisely closed to every mortal eye, now opens its pages to many sons of the earth.

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THE CURRENT OF PUBLIC ATTRACTION runs towards psychic phenomena and is becoming in Europe stronger every year. Even German science and philosophy are beginning to feel interested: Professor Virchow of Berlin[1] — once the sternest opponent of the claims of mediumship and the personal enemy of Dr. Slade,[2] is said to have fallen a victim to evidence, and is preparing to investigate psychic manifestations with scales and crucible. On the other hand, the well-known philosopher, E. von Hartmann[3] has just published a new work, called *Der Spiritismus* [1885]. [342]

The writer of these lines is not yet acquainted with the views held on spiritualism *proper* by that distinguished disciple of Schopenhauer;[4] but the probability that he attributes most of its phenomena to "illusion," is very great. The evening takes its character generally from the day that has preceded it; hence the *Philosophy of the Unconscious* should find itself reflected in *Der Spiritismus*. Phenomena will not be denied, but their objective and subjective, their physical and mental manifestations will be grouped together, and crammed within the narrow boundaries of that philosophy of negation that would see in our notions of matter the "mere illusions of our senses" — in each and every case.

However this may be, we would bring to the notice of those of our readers who are interested in the question several new cases that have been mentioned in European papers; and which, having been thoroughly investigated and found as authentic as undeniable, have greatly puzzled some learned materialists, who refuse to account for them.

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[1] [Rudolf Ludwig Carl Virchow, 1821–1902, German physician, anthropologist, pathologist, prehistorian, biologist, writer, editor, and politician. He is known as the father of modern pathology, and as the founder of social medicine, and to his colleagues, as the "Pope of medicine." He received the Copley Medal in 1892. He was a foreign member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences and was elected to the Prussian Academy of Sciences, but declined to be ennobled as "von Virchow."]

[2] [Henry Slade, 1835–1905, far-famed medium who lived and practiced in Europe and North America.]

[3] [Karl Robert Eduard Hartmann (ennobled as Karl Robert Eduard von Hartmann in 1862), 1842–1906, German philosopher, independent scholar, and author of *Philosophie des Unbewussten* (Philosophy of the Unconscious), 1869; 3-vols., which now include his, originally anonymous, self-criticism, *Das Unbewusste vom Standpunkte der Physiologie und Descendenztheorie*, and its refutation. English translation by William Chatterton Coupland, 1884]

[4] [Arthur Schopenhauer, 1788–1860, German philosopher, best known for his 1818 work *The World as Will and Representation* (expanded in 1844), which characterizes the phenomenal world as the product of a blind and insatiable metaphysical will. Building on the transcendental idealism of Immanuel Kant, Schopenhauer developed an atheistic metaphysical and ethical system that rejected the contemporaneous ideas of German idealism. He was among the first thinkers in Western philosophy to share and affirm significant tenets of Indian philosophy, such as asceticism, denial of the self, and the notion of the world-as-appearance. His work has been described as an exemplary manifestation of philosophical pessimism.]

Among the workings of the inner life within us, which we may experience but cannot explain, are there any more remarkable than those mysterious moral influences constantly exercised either for attraction or repulsion, by one human being over another?

It is difficult to find a man or a woman who has lived and died without ever having experienced some feeling of presentiment, generated with no visible cause, yet justified after days, weeks, or perchance long years. The book of Futurity, which is said to has been wisely closed to every mortal eye, opens, nevertheless, its pages to many among the sons of earth; to so many, indeed, that an impartial observer may find it awkward now to regard such cases as simple exceptions to the rule. As Wilkie Collins[1] so justly remarks

> . . . among the workings of the hidden life within us, which we may experience but cannot explain, are there any more remarkable than those mysterious moral influences constantly exercised, either for attraction or repulsion, by one human being over another? In the simplest, as in the most important affairs of life, how startling, how irresistible is their power![2]

And if no biologist or physiologist can as yet explain to us, in accordance with the canons of his science, why it is that we prophesy so often and so truly to ourselves "the approach of friend or enemy just before either has really appeared"; — or another daily [343] and quite common occurrence even among the most sceptical — why we become convinced

> . . . so strangely and abruptly, at a first introduction, that we shall secretly love this person and loathe that, before experience has guided us with a single fact in relation to their characters.

If the causes of such frequent mental phenomena are left unexplained by our latter-day philosophers, how shall they account for the following facts, that are now being commented upon in all the St. Petersburg and Warsaw papers?

A poor seamstress[3] living at St. Petersburg had, by perseverance and hard work, become a clever dressmaker. Finding her only baby troublesome and an impediment to her work, and unable to hire a nurse to take care of the little girl, she entrusted the child, for a small remuneration, to a friend who lived in the country. During the eighteen months of the child's stay in the friend's family, the poor mother visited her occasionally, and remained each time very well satisfied with the care her baby was receiving. She had meanwhile worked harder than ever, and during that period had

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[1] [William Wilkie Collins, 1824–1889, English novelist and playwright known for *The Woman in White* (1859) and *The Moonstone* (1868). The last has been called the first modern English detective novel. Born to a London painter, William Collins, and his wife, the family moved to Italy when Collins was twelve, living there and in France for two years, so that he learned Italian and French. He worked at first as a tea merchant. On publishing his first novel, *Antonina*, in 1850, Collins met Charles Dickens, who became a friend and mentor. Some Collins works appeared first in Dickens's journals *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. The two also collaborated on drama and fiction. Collins reached financial stability and an international following in the 1860s from his best-known works, but began to suffer from gout. He took opium for the pain, but became addicted to it. His health and his writing quality declined in the 1870s and 1880s. Collins was critical of the institution of marriage: he later split his time between widow Caroline Graves, with whom he had lived most of his adult life, treating her daughter as his, and the younger Martha Rudd, by whom he had three children.]

[2] [*Basil*: *A Story of Modern Life*, 1852, Part I, VII]

[3] [Mrs. L * * * *]

succeeded in her business so well that she had already begun to contemplate the possibility of taking her child home once more.

About the end of April last, a few days after one of her country trips, which she had decided would be the last one, as she had now the means of hiring a nurse — she was visited by two acquaintances. Happy in having found her little girl so rosy and healthy, she was sitting with her two friends at her afternoon tea, talking merrily with them about her intention of fetching the child home. A lady had dropped in, a rich and well known "patroness" with an order for a costume to be made without delay. These are the three witnesses — the wealthy aristocrat, and the two poor seamstresses — who, later on, vouch for the truth of the strange occurrence that took place in their presence.

The mother was at the window, with the rich material brought by the lady in her hands, measuring it and discussing with her customer the mysteries of its transformation into a Spring attire, when the door-bell was suddenly rung. Mrs. L **** (the name of the dress-maker) opened [344] the door and let in a little old woman, modestly dressed in deep mourning, and very delicate in appearance. All those present were struck with the livid pallor of her face and the great sweetness of her tone and manners. The newcomer was evidently a lady.

"Are you Mrs. L **** ?" she asked, addressing the dressmaker, and upon receiving an answer in the affirmative, added: "I have brought you some work. Here is a piece of fine white muslin — You will kindly prepare out of it a little cap and a long gown for a dead child, a baby two years old, one of my grandchildren."

"Your order, of course, has to be executed immediately and I have other work to do, that cannot be put aside" — remarked the dressmaker sympathetically.

"Not at all" was the quick answer. "I shall not need it until this day fortnight, not one hour earlier. My little girl has been taken ill with measles today, and *will not die before that time*."

Mrs. L **** could not help smiling in answer to the rather amused looks of her rich customer and her own female friends, at such a careful preparation in anticipation of a possible future event. But she said nothing and undertook to prepare the order for the day named.

Two days later she received a letter informing her that her own child had been taken ill with measles, and on the very morning of the visit of the mysterious old lady in black. The disease had become serious and the mother was summoned in all haste. Thirteen days later the child died, *just a fortnight after the order received* for the funeral clothes. But the little old woman never came to claim them for *her* grandchild. A month passed, and "the little cap and long gown" are there still as a living remembrance to the bereaved mother of her own loss and sorrow.

This weird event reminds one of the story told of the way in which Mozart's "Requiem"[1] came into existence — remarks the correspondent of *Swyet*, a Russian paper.

Another puzzling fact which attracted attention, owing to its principal hero having belonged to the highest [345] nobility, is copied by all the principal papers of Germany and Russia.

A well-known resident of Warsaw, the rich Count O * * * * of B * * * *, finding himself in the first stage of consumption, and when there was as yet no immediate danger to his life, called his friends and relatives into the house of his parents and declared to them that he was going to die on the following day at 12 o'clock precisely, notwithstanding the protests of those present. He coolly gave an order for a coffin to be made and brought into his room on that same night. After that, he sent for a priest, and paid him in advance for a certain number of masses and *requiems*; made his will, and ended by sending printed letters of invitation to his own funeral to a number of his friends and acquaintances. The black-bordered cards were addressed by himself, in his own hand-writing, and appointed the exact date and hour of the solemn ceremony for the transfer of the body from the house to the cathedral; as also the day of the burial. On the next day, as foretold, he dressed himself in a black evening suit, white tie, and gloves which he carefully buttoned, after which, placing himself in the coffin a few minutes before the clock struck twelve, he *laid himself out* in prescribed form, and expired at the appointed hour. The case appeared so strange to the authorities, that an autopsy was ordered: but no traces of poison or violent death by other means were found.

Was this *prevision*, or a consequence of a fixed idea; of an imagination so strongly overexcited, that death had to become subservient to the thought? Who can say?

[1] [The Requiem in D minor, K. 626, is a requiem mass by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, 1756–1791. Mozart composed part of the Requiem in Vienna in late 1791, but it was unfinished at his death on 5th December the same year. A completed version, dated 1792 by Franz Xaver Süssmayr, was delivered to Count Franz von Walsegg, who commissioned the piece for a requiem service to commemorate the anniversary of his wife's death on 14th February.

The autograph manuscript shows the finished and orchestrated Introit in Mozart's hand, and detailed drafts of the Kyrie and the sequence Dies iræ as far as the first eight bars of the *Lacrymosa* movement, and the Offertory. It cannot be shown to what extent Süssmayr may have depended on now lost "scraps of paper" for the remainder; he later claimed the Sanctus and Benedictus and the Agnus Dei as his own.

Walsegg probably intended to pass the Requiem off as his own composition, as he is known to have done with other works. This plan was frustrated by a public benefit performance for Mozart's widow Constanze. She was responsible for a number of stories surrounding the composition of the work, including the claims that Mozart received the commission from a mysterious messenger who did not reveal the commissioner's identity, and that Mozart came to believe that he was writing the requiem for his own funeral.]

Corroborated presentiments of death.

The first symptom of approaching death, Wakley[1] tells us,

> . . . is, with some, the strong presentiment that they are about to die.

Then, the author mentions Ozanam, the mathematician,[2] who, while in apparent good health, rejected pupils,

> . . . from the feeling that he was on the eve of resting from his labours.

He expired very soon after of an apoplectic stroke.

Mozart wrote his "Requiem" mentioned above under the firm belief that this *chef-d'oeuvre* of his genius, was written for himself; that it would be heard for the first [346] time over his own remains. When death was fast approaching he called for the *partiture* and addressing those present, musingly asked:

> Did I not tell you truly that it was for myself that I composed this death chant!

The order for the latter was given to him as is well known in a strange vision or dream, and Wakley thinks that John Hunter has solved the mystery of such presentiments in one sentence — "if mystery it can be called" he adds sceptically. Says the great physiologist:

> We sometimes feel within ourselves that we shall not live; for the living powers become weak, and the nerves communicate the intelligence to the brain.

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[1] [Thomas Wakley, 1795–1862, English surgeon. He gained fame as a social reformer who campaigned against incompetence, privilege, and nepotism. He was the founding editor of *The Lancet*, a radical Member of Parliament, and a celebrated coroner.]

[2] [Jacques Ozanam, 1640–1718, French mathematician. He came from a Jewish family that had converted to Catholicism. As the younger of two sons he was educated for the clergy, but chemistry and mechanics interested him more than theology. He was said to be generous, witty, and gallant; and probably he was too tolerant to have made a good churchman of his day. Except for a tutor who may have helped him slightly, Ozanam taught himself mathematics.

Four years after Ozanam had begun studying for the church, his father died; he then devoted himself to mastering mathematics, with considerable success. He taught mathematics at Lyons without charge until the state of his finances led him to charge a fee. A lucky circumstance took him to Paris, where his teaching brought him a substantial income. Being young and handsome, his gallantry as well as his penchant for gambling drained his resources; Ozanam sought a way out by marrying a modest, virtuous young woman without means. Although his financial problems remained unsolved, the marriage was happy and fruitful; there were twelve children, most of whom died young. After his marriage Ozanam's conduct was exemplary; always of a mild and cheerful disposition, he became sincerely pious and shunned disputes about theology. He was wont to say that it was the business of the Sorbonne doctors to discuss, of the pope to decide, and of a mathematician to go straight to heaven in a perpendicular line.

Following the death of his wife in 1701, misfortune quickly befell Ozanam. In the same year the War of the Spanish Succession broke out; and many of his students, being foreign, had to leave Paris. From then on, the income from his professional activities became small and uncertain. The last years of his life were melancholy, relieved only by the dubious satisfaction of being admitted as an élève of the Academy of Sciences. Ozanam never regained his customary health and spirits, and died of apoplexy, probably on 3rd April 1717, although there is some reason to believe that it may have been between 1st April and 6th April 1718.

Ozanam is not to be confounded with a contemporary geometer, Sébastien Leclerc (1637–1714), who upon occasion used the pseudonym Ozonam.]

To this Wakley also adds that certain circumstances when health is failing, are often accepted *as omens*. He says,

> The order for the "Requiem" with Mozart, the dreams with Fletcher, turned the current of their thoughts to the grave.

But forthwith the learned sceptic contradicts his own theory by narrating the case of Wolsey,[1] reminding us somewhat of the one just mentioned that happened at Warsaw. The probability of near dissolution, can certainly turn "the current of the thought" to an intimate assurance of death; when, however, that assurance makes us foresee and point out the exact hour, to the minute, of our death, there must be something besides the "natural current of thought," to help and guide our intuition so unerringly. In Wakley's own words, "The case of Wolsey was singular." The morning before he died he asked Cavendish[2] the hour and was answered, "Past eight." Said Wolsey:

> Eight! that cannot be; — eight of the clock, nay, nay, it cannot be eight of the clock, for by eight of the clock shall you lose your master.

The day he miscalculated, the hour came true. On the following morning, as the clock struck eight, his troubled spirit passed from life.

While rejecting the theory of Cavendish that Wolsey had received a *revelation*, Wakley suspects

> . . . from the way in which the fact had taken possession of his mind — that he [Wolsey] relied on astrological prediction, which had the credit of a revelation in his own esteem.

Modern astronomy profits by the works of ancient astrology, and kicks it out of sight.

Astrology, notwithstanding the scorn of the nineteenth century, is not always a vain pretence. Astronomy and [347] Astrology are twin-sisters, that were equally respected and studied in antiquity. It is but yesterday that the dogmatic arrogance of Western astronomers reduced the elder sister to the position of the Cinderella in the household of Science: modern astronomy profits by the works of ancient astrology and kicks it out of sight. Says Cicero:

> The contemplation of celestial things will make man both speak and think more sublimely and magnificently when he descends to human affairs.

The West will yet return to astrology and thus vindicate the intuition of the East, where it has been always cultivated.

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[1] [Thomas Wolsey, 1473–1530, English archbishop, statesman and a cardinal of the Catholic Church. When Henry VIII became King of England in 1509, Wolsey became the King's almoner. Wolsey's affairs prospered, and by 1514 he had become the controlling figure in virtually all matters of state. He also held important ecclesiastical appointments. These included the Archbishopric of York — the second most important role in the English church — and acting as papal legate. His appointment as a cardinal by Pope Leo X in 1515 gave him precedence over all other English clergy.]

[2] [Gentleman usher to Thomas Wolsey]

> The body being only the covering of the soul, at its dissolution, we shall discover all the secrets of nature and darkness shall be dispelled.

Such is the "ideation" of the sage Seneca.

> **During the dissolution of the Etheric Double the darkness of our ignorance beginning to be dispelled, there are many things we can see.**
>
> **It is through the throbs of dissolution that horizons of vaster and profounder knowledge are drawn on, bursting upon our mental vision and becoming with every hour plainer to our inner eye.**
>
> **The nearer some people approach death, the brighter becomes their long lost memory, and the more correct the previsions because the unfoldment of inner faculties increases as life-blood becomes more stagnant.**

MAN is composed of two bodies, the *internal* and the *external*; the inner one being moreover, double, *i.e.*, having, in its turn, a semi-physical outer shell which serves as the *astral* being only during the life-time of man; while the latter is still in seeming health, the dissolution of the former, or rather of its outer shell, may have already begun. For during its captivity in the living body the "double" — or that covering of the astral form that alone survives — is too closely bound by its jailor (man), too much encumbered with the physical particles derived from the prison of flesh within which it is confined, not to imperiously require, before the astral form proper is set entirely free, to be thrown off from the latter. Thus, this preliminary process of purification may be justly called "the dissolution of the *inner* man," and it begins much earlier than the agony or even the final disease of the physical man. Let us admit so much and then ask: why should we require, in such a case, in order to account for the insight some persons have of the hour of their death — to explain the phenomenon by "revelation" from *without*, supernaturalism, or the still more unsatisfactory hypothesis of a purely physiological character as given by Hunter and Wakley, and that explain to us moreover nothing at all? During and after [348] the dissolution of the "double,"[1] the darkness of our human ignorance beginning to be dispelled, there are many things we can see. Among these, things hidden in futurity, the nearest events of which, overshadowing the purified "soul," have become to her as the present. The "former-self" is making room for the *actual*-self, the latter to be transformed in its turn, after the final dissolution of both the "double" and the physical body into the "Eternal Ego." Thus the "*actual*-self" may pass its knowledge to the physical brain of man; and thus also we may see and hear the precise hour of our death striking on the clock of eternity. It is made visible to us through the decaying nature of our dying "double," the latter surviving us during a very short period,

[1] That such dissolution *has* to precede that of the physical body, is proved to us by several things. One of these is the well ascertained *fact* (to those, of course, who believe in such facts) that the astral doubles of living men — of *sorcerers* for instance — fear steel, and may be wounded by sword or fire; their wounds, moreover, reacting upon and leaving marks and scars upon the physical shells — whereas the astral bodies of even the "Elementary apparitions" — *cannot be hurt.* — *H.P. Blavatsky.*

if at all,[1] and through the newly acquired powers of the purified "soul" (the higher *tetractys* or quaternary)[2] as yet in its integral whole, and which is already possessing itself of those faculties that are in store for it, on a higher plane. Through our "soul" it is then that we see, clearer and still clearer, as we approach the end; and it is through the throbs of dissolution that horizons of vaster, profounder knowledge are drawn on, bursting upon our mental [349] vision, and becoming with every hour plainer to our inner eye. Otherwise, how account for those bright flashes of memory, for the prophetic insight that comes as often to the enfeebled grandsire, as to the youth who is passing away? The nearer some approach death, the brighter becomes their long lost memory and the more correct the previsions. The unfoldment of the inner faculties increases as life-blood becomes more stagnant.

Truly is life on earth like a day passed in a deep valley surrounded on all sides by high mountains and with a cloudy, stormy sky above our heads. The tall hills conceal from us every horizon, and the dark clouds hide the sun. It is only at the close of the stormy day, that the sunshine, breaking through the clefts of the rocks affords us its glorious light to enable us to catch occasional glimpses of things around, behind and before us.

Another subject has interested the mystically inclined of the capital of the Russian Empire; namely, a lecture given, March 27th, at the "Pedagogical Museum," by Prof. N. Wagner,[3] the eminent naturalist and no less eminent spiritualist. Whatever the views of that great man of science about the powers that may be behind the so-called mediumistic manifestations, the professor has evidently assimilated the Vedāntic and even the Advaita theories about "Life and Death" — the subject of his lecture.

The vexed question about Life and Death, said the lecturer, preoccupied many other philosophers besides Hamlet. Eminent naturalists, physicians and thinkers have vainly endeavoured to solve the great mystery. Various men of science have given us various definitions of life. Bichat,[4] for instance, defines life as a faculty to withstand

[1] When the "double" of the living man has been disintegrated before the death of man, it is annihilated for ever. When, however, death comes suddenly, it may survive the body that held it captive, but then, the process of dissolution going on outside of the dead body, the "soul" suffers, and *in its impatience tries often to throw off the particles that encumber its freedom and chain it to the earth, upon the living* — says the MSS. of the Copt Terentius. The cases of accidental *deaths and suicides* are fairly described in Mr. A.P. Sinnett's "Fragments of Occult Truth" by a Lay Chela (See *The Theosophist*). Suicides fare the worst. — *H.P. Blavatsky.*

[This text can also be found in Chapter vi of *Esoteric Buddhism*, by A.P. Sinnett. — *Boris de Zirkoff.*]

[2] [Consult "The Eleven Faces of the Pythagorean Tetractys," "The Holy Four of Pythagoras is Logos in its latent state," "The One Ray strides through 7 Regions in 3 Steps," and "The Pythagorean World, Root of Illusion," in our Secret Doctrine's First Proposition Series. — ED. PHIL.]

[3] [Nikolai Petrovich Wagner (Николай Петрович Вагнер), 1829–1907, Russian zoologist, editor, essayist, and writer. H.P. Blavatsky translated into English Wagner's articles concerning séances with French medium Brédif. See the short-lived *Spiritual Scientist*, Boston, Mass., June 3rd, 10th, and 17th, 1875. — *Boris de Zirkoff.*]

[4] [Marie François Xavier Bichat, 1771–1802, French anatomist and pathologist, known as the father of modern histology. Although he worked without a microscope, Bichat distinguished 21 types of elementary tissues from which the organs of the human body are composed. He was also the first to propose that tissue is a central element in human anatomy, and he considered organs as collections of often disparate tissues, rather than as entities in themselves.]

natural laws, while another scientist says that life represents a series of modifications and is a faculty in living beings to oppose and resist the destructive powers of nature. Cuvier,[1] the famous physiologist, finds that life is the faculty in creatures of constant change, preserving meanwhile certain particles, and ridding themselves on the other hand of those [350] elements which prove to them useless and would be injurious if left. Kemper tells us that life is only a constant modification of substances.

According to Herbert Spencer, "life is a co-ordination of action" and "an adaptation of the interior processes to external conditions."

All of the above definitions are found incorrect by Professor Wagner, as well they may be. They sketch only the external side of life without touching its essence. The universal manifestation of life, said the lecturer, rises progressively in all its phenomena from the simplest forms toward the most complex. He asks:

> What then may be the causes, what are the forces that govern life and modify it? It is from this standpoint that we shall examine the life-phenomenon. Life is a chemical manifestation, we are told by the majority of our physiologists. *Chemism* is the prominent feature in vegetable and animal organisms.

Kant[2] has defined life as the motion of composition and decomposition, in which chemical action plays the most prominent part.

Schelling[3] declared that

> . . . life is an aspiration toward individuality; it is the synthesis, harmonizing those processes that are accomplished in the organism.

Then how can we believe, enquires the lecturer [Wagner],

> . . . that this *individuality* disappears with our death? The soil of the province of Champagne consists of microscopical shells, the whole city of Paris is built on a soil that is the remaining relic of organic life. In nature, that which *was is* ever preparing that which *will be*. Life is an ENERGY.[4] *All individual energies have, sooner or later, to merge into, and become one with, the* UNIVERSAL ENERGY.

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[1] [Georges-Frédéric Cuvier, 1773–1838, French zoologist and palæontologist. He was the younger brother of noted naturalist and zoologist Georges Cuvier. He was the head keeper of the menagerie at the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris, from 1804 to 1838. He named the red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*) in 1825. The chair of comparative physiology was created for him at the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle, in 1837. He was elected as a foreign member of the Royal Society in 1835. Cuvier is mentioned in Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (Ch. VII) as having worked on animal behaviour and instinct, especially the distinction between habit and instinct. He is also mentioned in Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* (Ch. 32) as having written on the topic of whales.]

[2] [Immanuel Kant, 1724–1804, German philosopher and one of the central Enlightenment thinkers. Kant's comprehensive and systematic works in epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and æsthetics have made him one of the most influential figures in modern Western philosophy.]

[3] [Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, 1775–1854, (after 1812, von Schelling), German philosopher. Standard histories of philosophy make him the midpoint in the development of German idealism, situating him between Johann Gottlieb Fichte, his mentor in his early years, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, his one-time university roommate, early friend, and later rival.]

[4] [The ONE LIFE of Esoteric Philosophy? — *H.P. Blavatsky*.]

Thus saith the lecturer. It is, as Longfellow[1] has it:

> Ah, the souls of those that die
> Are but sunbeams lifted higher.[2] [251]

The spiritual SUN within which they merge finally, not to disappear but to return to earth as other sunbeams, is no "Land" from whence visitors can appear to us in their *individuality*. A little heat left behind is *not* the sunbeam, but the remnant of its chemical action, as the *photograph* is not the person it represents but his reflection. But:

> Spirits, they say,
> Flit round invisible, as thick as motes
> Dance in the sunbeam. If that spell,
> Or necromancer's sigil can compel them
> They shall hold council with me . . . [3]

If for "necromancer" we write "medium," the lines quoted will represent the hidden spirit and object of the learned lecturer who, nevertheless, winds up his lecture by a remark that no Vedāntin would disavow. Prof. Wagner is a well-known *orthodox* spiritualist. How then can he, who shows on undeniable and scientific grounds that all the "individual energies," *i.e.*, "souls," merge into, and finally become one with "universal energy" (the PARABRAHM of the Vedanta) or the universal soul; how can he harmonize this belief with that in the "spirits" of spiritualism? It is a strange contradiction. For our spirit is either *the* "sunbeam" of Longfellow's poetical metaphor, or it is only "dancing in the sunbeam" agreeably to James Duff's imagery. It cannot be both.

Modern science and spiritualism are two opposite poles.

Life and death are as much of a mystery to the man of science, as they are to the spiritualist and the profane unbeliever.

Life and *death* are as much of a mystery to the man of science, as they are to the spiritualist and the profane unbeliever. The less they talk of it, in the present chaotic state of knowledge with reference to that great riddle, the better for the truth. Modern science and spiritualism[4] are two opposite poles. One denies point-blank everything outside chemical action and matter, the other by its own fanciful arrangement sets both at nought; and thus the middle ground of sound philosophy and logic is abandoned. Science will not hear of the metaphysics of the spiritualists, and the latter will not admit the theory of even that transcendental chemical action that the Theosophists show as playing a more important part in the likenesses of their [252] dead — that so bewilder people — than the *spiritual* "energy" of disembodied friends.

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[1] [Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1807–1882, American poet and educator whose works include "Paul Revere's Ride," *The Song of Hiawatha*, and *Evangeline*. He was also the first American to translate Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* and was one of the Fireside Poets from New England. Longfellow wrote many lyric poems known for their musicality and often presenting stories of mythology and legend.]

[2] [In *Christus*: *A Mystery*. Part II, "The Golden Legend."]

[3] [Jame Duff, opening quotation in Sir Walter Scott, *The Monastery*, ch. 17]

[4] [Consult "Blavatsky against Spiritualism," in our Blavatsky Speaks Series. — ED. PHIL.]

Materialistic scientists keep unweaving the rainbow. Unconscious necromancers reject every other philosophy save their own.

However, that is as moot question that we shall leave the combatants who are directly interested to settle among themselves. Both claim to be guided by the *logic of facts*, and both claim for their respective opinions the name of "philosophy," and so far — both are right and both are wrong. The method of materialistic exact science is that philosophy that

> . . . Will clip an angel's wings,
> Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
> Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine —
> Unweave a rainbow . . . [1]

The "philosophy" of the spiritualists consists in rejecting every other philosophy save their own. They will prove a formidable foe to the former however. The men of science call spiritualism a "mischievous superstition" as Pliny and the men of his day called rising Christianity "a most pernicious sect." They and the leaders of Spiritualism have a mutual right to complain of each other; for as Fielding[2] has it,

> . . . if superstition renders a man a fool — scepticism makes him MAD.

Neither of the two enemies, however, knows anything of the mysteries of life and death; though both behave as if each of them had become the sole confidants of Nature, in whose ear the weird Sphinx[3] had whispered the word of her great riddle.

- The Materialist *scorns* death, he fears him not, he says, for in his sight there is no "hereafter."
- The Spiritualist welcomes "the Angel with the amaranthine wreath,"[4] singing "Oh Death, where is thy sting?"[5] etc.

And yet, ten to one, the majority on both sides prefer life to that change which, according to their respective views, disintegrates the one into chemical molecules, and transforms the other into a dematerialized Angel!

Death, before whose majestic tranquillity so many shudder with fear, has no terrors. And yet people make too much fuss over death, and too little over the birth of every new candidate for it.

Which of them is right and which wrong, time alone — that great Revealer of hidden truths — will decide. To the writer, who rejects the speculations of both, keeping on the safe side of the middle path, Death, before whose [353] majestic stillness and

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[1] [John Keats, *Lamia*, Part II, lines 234-37]

[2] [Henry Fielding, 1707–1754, English novelist and dramatist known for his earthy humour and satire, and as the author of the comic novel *Tom Jones*. He and Samuel Richardson are seen as founders of the traditional English novel. He also holds a place in the history of law enforcement by using his authority as a magistrate to found the Bow Street Runners, which some have called London's first active police force.]

[3] [Consult "Oedipus and Sphinx unriddled," in our Constitution of Man Series. — ED. PHIL.]

[4] [Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Complete Poetical Works*, 1893, Birds of Passage, Flight the First. "The Two Angels," line 30]

[5] [*1 Corinthians* xv, 55-56, KJV:

> O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?
> The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

tranquillity so many shudder with fear — has no terrors; perhaps, because he does not endow it with any more mystery than needed. Death is "the old, old fashion" that crept to the little Paul Dombey's rescue;[1] and life, but the swift river that bears us all to that Ocean of rest . . .

> Put me quietly in the earth, place a sun-dial over my grave, and let me be forgotten,

prays John Howard,[2] who found, perhaps, as we do, that people make too much fuss over death and too little over the birth of every new candidate for it. Life is at best a play, often a drama, but far more frequently partaking of the element of a low comedy. It "is a phenomenon" after which the curtain is dropped, the lights extinguished, and the hero tired out, drops into his bed with a feeling of delicious relief. As Shakespeare expresses it,

> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more: it is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing . . . [3]

BETA

[1] [Cf. *Dombey and Son*, a novel by English author Charles Dickens. It follows the fortunes of a shipping firm owner, who is frustrated at the lack of a son to follow him in his footsteps; he initially rejects his daughter's love before eventually becoming reconciled with her before his death.

Master Paul Dombey (Little Dombey) was born as the novel begins; he is weak and often ill. A gentle child, he is adored by his sister Florence and beloved of his schoolmates. He dies of an unspecified illness in Chapter 16.]

[2] [A philanthropist and social reformer, Howard was dedicated to prison reform and public health improvements. He was born in Hackney, east London in 1726, the son of a partner in an upholstery business. On his father's death in 1742, he inherited considerable wealth and settled on an estate in Bedfordshire.

In 1773, he was appointed high sheriff of Bedfordshire and supervision of the county jail became of one his responsibilities. He was shocked by the conditions he found there and visited others in England, where the situation was no better. Jailers were not salaried but lived off fees paid by prisoners for food, bedding and other facilities. This system meant that poorer prisoners lived in terrible conditions. Many jailers demanded payment before prisoners were released, meaning that some stayed in jail even if they were innocent or had served their sentences.

Howard's concerns led to two 1774 parliamentary acts — one abolished jailers' fees, the other enforced improvements in the system leading to better prisoner health. Howard, however, felt that the acts were not strictly obeyed. In 1775, he embarked on a tour of prisons in Europe visiting Scotland, Ireland, France, Holland, Flanders, some German states and Switzerland. He travelled on a similar route two years later, and in 1781 added Denmark, Sweden and Russia to the list. He visited Spain and Portugal in 1782. At a time when travel was uncomfortable and frequently dangerous, he travelled nearly 80,000 kilometres, making seven major journeys between 1775 and 1790, the first two of which are described in his book "The State of Prisons in England and Wales . . . and an Account of Some Foreign Prisons." While examining Russian military hospitals, Howard contracted typhus in Kherson, Ukraine, and died there on 20th January 1790. In 1866, the Howard League for Penal Reform was founded in his honour.]

[3] [*Macbeth*, Act V, scene 5, lines 2381-85]

Suggested reading for students.

On the soul of the spiritual man lit by its own light.

Insights to our divine ancestry and human nature may be gleaned from the following titles in the same series:

- A CONGENITAL PREPONDERANCE OF FIRE ELEMENTALS
- ANCIENT BELIEFS IN THE IMMORTALITY OF SOUL
- ANCIENT OPINIONS UPON PSYCHIC BODIES
- APOLLONIUS COMFORTS A BEREAVED FATHER
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- ATMAN IS A RAY FROM A SPARK OF UNCREATED RAY
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- BLAVATSKY ON OCCULT DEVELOPMENT
- BLAVATSKY ON THE DUAL ASPECT OF WISDOM
- BLAVATSKY ON THREE ESSAYS BY É. LÉVI
- BLOOD IS THE FIRST INCARNATION OF UNIVERSAL FLUID
- CHINESE BELIEFS ABOUT THE HUMAN SOUL
- CICERO'S DREAM OF SCIPIO AND MACROBIUS' COMMENT
- CLASSIFICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES IN MAN
- COMMON-MISCONCEPTIONS-OF-THEOSOPHICAL-DOCTRINES
- CONCERNING THE DOCTRINES OF THE THEOSOPHISTS
- CONSTITUTION OF MAN - DRAWING
- CONSTITUTION OF MAN - ESOTERIC
- CONSTITUTION OF MAN - OVERVIEW
- COSMOS AND DEITY IN MAN - DRAWING
- DAS' SCIENCE OF THE EMOTIONS (1908)
- DEATH AND IMMORTALITY
- DEATH AND POST-MORTEM STATES
- DEVACHAN, DREAM REALM WHERE PURE SOULS ARE REWARDED

- DREAMLESS SLEEP
- ELIPHAS LEVI ON DEATH AND SATAN
- EMOTIONS' TRIUNE NATURE
- EVOLUTIONARY TRANSMIGRATION OF MATERIAL PARTICLES IN NATURE
- FACING SEVEN VIRGINS IN THE HALL OF JUDGMENT
- FROM THE STRONGHOLD OF YOUR SOUL, CHASE ALL YOUR FOES AWAY
- HAIR IS THE RETAINER OF PRANA
- IN DEEP SLEEP WE DREAM NO MORE AND CONFABULATE WITH THE STARS
- IS SUICIDE A CRIME
- JUDGE ON THE INNER CONSTITUTION OF MAN
- JUDGE ON THE OCCULT NATURE OF MAN
- LÉVI ON DEATH BEING THE BIRTH-PANG OF LIFE
- LIFE IS AN INDESTRUCTIBLE UNIVERSAL FORCE
- LOW BUFFOONERY AND MOCKING LAUGHS
- LYMPH IS A MASQUE FOR NYMPH
- NEED OF A SPIRITUAL VOCABULARY
- NO NEED FOR EXPENSIVE FUNERALS
- NOUS AUGOEIDES OF THE NEOPLATONISTS
- NOUS MOVES MAN
- OEDIPUS AND SPHINX UNRIDDLED
- OSIRIS AND TYPHON, HIGHER TRIAD AND LOWER TETRAD
- PLATO ON THE APPLE OF THE EYE
- PLATO'S TWO HORSES
- PLUTARCH COMFORTS APOLLONIUS
- PLUTARCH COMPARING PASSIONS AND DISEASES – TR. WHITE
- PLUTARCH ON BOASTED WISDOM, FORTITUDE, MAGNANIMITY, AND TEMPERANCE
- PLUTARCH ON EXERCISES PROPER FOR A SCHOLAR
- PLUTARCH ON PLATO'S PROCREATION OF THE SOUL
- POST-MORTEM WANDERINGS OF THE WICKED SOUL
- PREMATURE AND PHENOMENAL GROWTHS
- PSYCHOLOGY LACKS ENTIRELY KNOWLEDGE OF THE SOUL
- PSYCHOMETRY IS THE NATURAL BUT LATENT FACULTY IN US
- REAL DREAMS ARE ACTIONS OF THE TRUE SELF

- RELEASING THE ASTRAL SOUL FROM ONE'S ASHES
- SEPTENARY IS THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN
- SIXTH SENSE IS REASON OVER INSTINCT
- SPECULATIONS ABOUT REINCARNATION AND MATERIALIZED SPIRITS
- SPIRIT AND PERISPIRIT
- SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHS ARE OBJECTIVE COPIES FROM SUBJECTIVE IMAGES
- SUBBA ROW ON KAMA-LOKA
- SUBBA ROW ON THE SEVENFOLD PRINCIPLE IN MAN
- SUBBA ROW ON THOUGHT TRANSFERENCE
- SYNESIUS CONCERNING DREAMS
- THE AQUILINE NOSE IS ROYAL AND NOBLE
- THE DEVOTIONAL LOVE AND NOBLE ASPIRATIONS OF LOWER MANAS
- THE ESOTERIC PHYSIOLOGY OF MAN
- THE HEART IS THE ORGAN OF SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS
- THE IMAGE-MAKING POWER
- THE KARMIC EFFECTS OF INVASION, CIVILIZATION, AND VULGAR SPECULATION
- THE LIFE PRINCIPLE
- THE MOON REGULATES THE PRANA OF NATURE AND MAN
- THE OCCULT INFLUENCE OF MAN'S ACTIVE WILL
- THE PERISPIRIT OF ALLAN KARDEC
- THE PROPHECY OF GENERAL YERMOLOV
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- THE VOICE OF THE WILL IS THE ATOMIC POINT
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - MAN, THE JEWEL OF THE UNIVERSE
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - SEPTENARY ANTHROPOS
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - THE CYCLE OF LIFE
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - THE PATH OF ACTION
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - THE PATH OF RENUNCIATION
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - THE SUTRATMAN OF THE UPANISHADS
- THREE CUBITS OF THE EAR, FOUR OF THE STALK
- TIBETAN TEACHINGS ON AFTER-DEATH STATES
- TROUBLES FROM UNDISSOLVED EX-DOUBLES

- TWO SPIRITS UNITED IN THE ELYSIAN FIELDS
- WHEN INNER AND OUTER MAN ARE OFF-KILTER
- WHEN THE GREEN IS OVERCOME WITH AZURE
- WHEN THE SERPENT SLOUGHS OFF HIS SKIN
- WHY SECLUDING WOMEN DURING THEIR MENSTRUAL PERIOD
- WOE FOR THE LIVING DEAD