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IT is four hundred and seventy-seven years since the trouble in the Monastery. There were assembled many holy men from every part of the civilised world, learned doctors, princes of the Church, bishops, abbots, deans, all the wisdom of the world ; for the Question was important—how many teeth were there in a horse's mouth.

For many days the debate swung this way and that, as Father was quoted against Father, Gospel against Epistle, Psalm against Proverb ; and the summer being hot, and the shade of the monastery gardens pleasant, a young monk wearied of the discussion, and rising presumptuously among those reverend men, impudently proposed that they should examine the mouth of a horse and settle the question.

Now, there was no precedent for so bold a method, and we are not to be surprised that those holy men arose right wrathfully and fell upon the youth and beat him sore.

Having further immured him in a solitary cell, they resumed debate ; but ultimately "in the grievous dearth of theological and historical opinion" declared the problem insoluble, an everlasting mystery by the Will of God.

To-day, their successors adopt the same principles with regard to that darkest of horses, the A ∴ A ∴. They have

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not only refused to open our mouths, but have even refused to look into them when we ourselves have gone to the length of opening them wide before them.

However, there have been others. Whether we were too confident or they too easily discouraged is a question unnecessary to discuss. We hoped to sever at one blow their bonds; at least we should have loosened them. But their struggle, which should have aided our efforts, seemed to them too arduous. They have been perplexed rather than illumined by the light which we flashed upon them; and even if it showed a road, gave no sufficient reason why it should be followed.

Of such we humbly crave the pardon; and in answer to a seemingly widespread desire to know if we mean anything, and if so, What? we request those who would know the Truth of Scientific Illuminism to look into the open mouth of its doctrine, to follow its simple teachings step by step, and not to turn their backs on it and, walking in the opposite direction, declare so simple a problem to be an everlasting mystery.

We are therefore not concerned with those who have not examined our doctrine of sceptical Theurgy, or scientific illuminism, or that which lies beyond. Let them examine without prejudice.

Some, too, have raised weapons against us, thinking to hurt us. But malice is only the result of ignorance; let them examine us, and they will love us. The sword is not yet forged that can divide him whose helmet is Truth. Nor is the arrow yet fledged that will pierce the flesh of one who is clothed in the glittering armour of mirth. So here, and now,

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and with us; he who climbs the Mountain we point out to him, and which we have climbed; he who journeys by the chart we offer to him, and which we have followed, on his return will come in unto us as one who has authority; for he alone who has climbed the summit can speak with truth of those things that from there are to be seen, for HE KNOWS. But he who stands afar off, and jests, saying: "It is not a Mountain, it is a cloud; it is not a cloud, it is a shadow; it is not a shadow, it is an illusion; it is not an illusion, it is indeed nothing at all!"—who but a fool will heed him? for not having journeyed one step, HE KNOWS NOT concerning those things of which he speaks.

To make ourselves now utterly plain to all such as have misunderstood us, we will formulate our statement in many ways, so that at least there may be found one acceptable to each seeker who is open to conviction.

I

1. We perceive in the sensible world, Sorrow. Ultimately that is; we admit the Existence of a Problem requiring solution.

2. We accept the proofs of Hume, Kant, Herbert Spencer, Fuller, and others of this thesis:

The Ratiocinative Faculty or Reason of Man contains in its essential nature an element of self-contradiction.

3. Following on this, we say:

If any resolution there be of these two problems, the Vanity of Life and the Vanity of Thought, it must be in the attainment of a Consciousness which transcends both of

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them. Let us call this supernormal consciousness, or, for want of a better name, "Spiritual Experience."

4. Faith has been proposed as a remedy. But we perceive many incompatible forms of Faith founded on Authority—The Vedas, The Qurán, The Bible; Buddha, Christ, Joseph Smith. To choose between them we must resort to reason, already shown to be a fallacious guide.

5. There is only one Rock which Scepticism cannot shake; the Rock of Experience.

6. We have therefore endeavoured to eliminate from the conditions of acquiring Spiritual Experience its dogmatic, theological, accidental, climatic and other inessential elements.

7. We require the employment of a strictly scientific method. The mind of the seeker must be unbiased: all prejudice and other sources of error must be perceived as such and extirpated.

8. We have therefore devised a Syncretic-Eclectic Method combining the essentials of all methods, rejecting all their trammels, to attack the Problem, through exact experiments and not by guesses.

9. For each pupil we recommend a different method (in detail) suited to his needs; just as a physician prescribes the medicine proper to each particular patient.

10. We further believe that the Consummation of Spiritual Experience is reflected into the spheres of intellect and action as Genius, so that by taking an ordinary man we can by training produce a Master.

This thesis requires proof: we hope to supply such proof by producing Genius to order.

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II

1. There is no hope in physical life, since death of the individual, the race, and ultimately the planet, ends all.

2. There is no hope in reason, since it contradicts itself, and is in any case no more than a reflection upon the facts of physical life.

3. What hope there may be in Investigation of the physical facts of Nature on Scientific lines is already actively sought after by a powerful and well-organised body of men of perfect probity and high capacity.

4. There is no hope in Faith, for there are many warring Faiths, all equally positive.

5. The adepts of Spiritual Experience promise us wonderful things, the Perception of Truth, and the Conquest of Sorrow, and there is enough unity in their method to make an Eclectic System possible.

6. We are determined to investigate this matter most thoroughly on Scientific lines.

III

1. We are Mystics, ever eagerly seeking a solution of unpleasant facts.

2. We are Men of Science, ever eagerly acquiring pertinent facts.

3. We are Sceptics, ever eagerly examining those facts.

4. We are Philosophers, ever eagerly classifying and co-ordinating those well-criticised facts.

5. We are Epicureans, ever eagerly enjoying the unification of those facts.

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6. We are Philanthropists, ever eagerly transmitting our knowledge of those facts to others.

7. Further, we are Syncretists, taking truth from all systems, ancient and modern ; and Eclectics, ruthlessly discarding the inessential factors in any one system, however perfect.

IV

1. Faith, Life, Philosophy have failed.

2. Science is already established.

3. Mysticism, being based on pure experience, is always a vital force ; but owing to the lack of trained observation, has always been a mass of error. Spiritual Experience, interpreted in the terms of Intellect, is distorted ; just as sunrise shows the grass green and the sea blue. Both were invisible until sunrise ; yet the diversity of colour is not in the sun, but in the objects on which its light falls, and their contradiction does not prove the sun to be an illusion.

4. We shall correct Mysticism (or Illuminism) by Science, and explain Science by Illuminism.

V

1. We have one method, that of Science.

2. We have one aim, that of Religion.

VI

There was once an Inhabitant in a land called Utopia who complained to the Water Company that his water was impure.

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“No,” answered the Water Man, “it can’t be impure, for we filter it.”

“Oh, indeed!” replied the Inhabitant, “but my wife died from drinking it.”

“No,” said the Water Man; “I assure you that this water comes from the purest springs in Utopia; further, that water, however impure, cannot hurt anybody; further, that I have a certificate of its purity from the Water Company itself.”

“The people who pay you!” sneered the Inhabitant. “For your other points, Haeckel has proved that all water is poison, and I believe you get your water from a cesspool. Why, look at it!”

“And beautiful clear water it is!” said the Water Man. “Limpid as crystal. Worth a guinea a drop!”

“About what you charge for it!” retorted the incensed Inhabitant. “It looks fairly clear, I admit, in the twilight. But that is not the point. A poison need not cloud water.”

“But,” urged the other, “one of our directors is a prophet, and he prophesied—clearly, in so many words—that the water would be pure this year. And besides, our first founder was a holy man, who performed a special miracle to make it pure for ever!”

“Your evidence is as tainted as your water,” replied the now infuriated householder.

So off they went to the Judge.

The Judge heard the case carefully. “My good friends!” said he, “you’ve neither of you got a leg to stand on; for in all you say there is not one grain of proof.—The case is dismissed.”

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The Water Inspector rose jubilant, when from the body of the Court came a still small voice.

“ Might I respectfully suggest, your Worship, that the water in question be examined through my Microscope ? ”

“ What in thunder is a Microscope ? ” cried the three in chorus.

“ An instrument, your Worship, that I have constructed on the admitted principles of optics, to demonstrate by experience what these gentlemen are arguing about *à priori* and on hearsay.”

Then they both rose up against him, and cursed him.

“ Unscientific balderdash ! ” said the Water Man, for the first time speaking respectfully of Science.

“ Blasphemous Nonsense ! ” said the Inhabitant, for the first time speaking respectfully of Religion.

“ Wait and see,” said the Judge ; for he was a just Judge.

Then the Man with the Microscope explained the uses of this new and strange instrument. And the Judge patiently investigated all sources of error, and concluded in the end that the instrument was a true revealer of the secrets of the water. And he pronounced just judgment.

But the others were blinded by passion and self-interest. They only quarrelled more noisily, and were finally turned out of court. But the Judge caused the Man with the Microscope to be appointed Government Analyst at £12,000 a year.

Now the Water Man is the Believer, and the Inhabitant the Unbeliever. The Judge is the Agnostic—in Huxley’s sense of the word ; and the Man with the Microscope is the Scientific Illuminist.

Curious as it may seem, all this was most carefully ex-

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plained in No. 1 of this Review, in Mr. Frank Harris's "The Magic Glasses."

Mr. 'Allett is the Materialist, Canon Bayton the Idealist, the Judge's daughter is the Agnostic, and Matthew Penry the Scientific Illuminist. If the little girl had been able to "follow up the light," she might there have seen Penry standing, his head and his feet white like wool, and his eyes a flaming fire!

This, then, in one language or another, is our philosophical position. But for those who are not content with this, let it be said that there is something more behind and beyond. Among us are those who have experienced things of a nature so exalted that no words ever penned could even adumbrate them faintly. The communication of such knowledge, so far as it is at all possible, must be a personal thing; and we offer it with both hands.

It is simple to write to the Chancellor of the A. ∴ A. ∴ at the care of the publishers, 23 Paternoster Row, E.C.; a neophyte of the Order will be detailed to meet the inquirer. He will read to him the History of the Order and explain the task of the Probationer. For we give to each inquirer a year's study; mutual, so that he may decide whether we can indeed give that which he wishes, and so that we may know exactly what training is suitable for him.

Also, because we are subtle of mind, many are offended. For we wished to test the world by the touchstone of THE EQUINOX. Those who perceived the essential gold that lay hidden in that hard rock are now busy delving out the same; many are thereby become rich.

So I who write this for the Brethren, with all humility and

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awe, do seriously summon all men unto the Search, even those who are offended because I laugh, gazing into the Eyes of the Beloved ; and those who are offended because I hate the veil of words that hides the face of the Beloved ; and those who are offended because my passion for the Beloved is too virile and eager to suit their awe ; perhaps they forget that passion means suffering.

But let them know that my Beloved is mine and I am his ; he feedeth among the lilies.

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THE EQUINOX

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This work made possible by donations from:

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