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A table of contents for *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_jtvi-01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jtvi-01.php)

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EDITED BY THE HONORARY SECRETARY,  
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guard, against what appears to me to be the greatest danger we have to encounter—namely, ignorance of ignorance. There are so many of those among us who can speak with authority on subjects on which they are entirely in accord with us, and yet who do not seem to realise the need for it; they are sure in their own minds of the self-evident fact that truth cannot contradict itself; but, at the same time, they are ignorant of the ignorance of others. In the clearness of their own judgment they little know how utterly unable is the ignorance of which I speak to follow out the conclusions arrived at by the leaders of science, or to understand the real bearings of that science; and the result is that they do not take their proper part in guarding the truth against abuses—in guarding the progress of science against an utter misunderstanding of what has really been arrived at. Therefore I ask you, who take an interest in science, to help us in this matter, so that we may guard against the abuse of Ignorance, and the unintentional evil caused by the misuse of the progress of science. True it is that the truth will take care of itself; what we should aim at is to see that we all do our part in fighting on the right side.

Sir M. MONIER-WILLIAMS then delivered the "Annual Address."

*MYSTICAL BUDDHISM IN CONNEXION WITH THE  
YOGA PHILOSOPHY OF THE HINDUS.* By SIR  
MONIER MONIER-WILLIAMS, K.C.I.E., D.C.L., LL.D.,  
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THE first idea implied by Buddhism is intellectual enlightenment. But Buddhism has its own theory of enlightenment—its own idea of true knowledge, which it calls Bodhi, not Veda. By true knowledge it means knowledge acquired by man through his own intellectual faculties and through his own inner consciousness, instincts, and intuitions, unaided by any external or supernatural revelation of any kind.

But it is important to observe that Buddhism, in the carrying out of its own theory of entire self-dependence in the search after truth, was compelled to be somewhat inconsistent with itself. It enjoined self-conquest, self-restraint, self-concentration and separation from the world for the attainment of perfect knowledge and for the accomplishment of its own *summum bonum*—the bliss of Nirvāna—the bliss of deliver-

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\* In this paper some of the diacritical marks, required for the accurate representation of Oriental words in the Roman character, have been omitted.

ance from the fires of passion and the flames of concupiscence. Yet it encouraged association and combination for mutual help. It established a universal brotherhood of celibate monks, open to persons of all castes and ranks, to rich and poor, learned and unlearned alike—a community of men which might, in theory, be co-extensive with the whole world—all bound together by the common aim of self-conquest, all animated by the wish to aid each other in the battle with carnal desires, all penetrated by a desire to follow the example of the Buddha, and be guided by the doctrine or law which he promulgated.

Cœnobitic monasticism, in fact, became an essential part of true Buddhism and a necessary instrument for its propagation.

In all this the Buddha showed himself to be eminently practical in his methods and profoundly wise in his generation. Evidently, too, he was wise in abstaining at first from all mystical teaching. Originally Buddhism set its face against all solitary asceticism and secret efforts to attain sublime heights of knowledge. It had no occult, no esoteric system of doctrine which it withheld from ordinary men.

Nor did true Buddhism at first concern itself with any form of philosophical or metaphysical teaching, which it did not consider helpful for the attainment of the only kind of true knowledge worth striving for—the knowledge of the origin of suffering and its remedy—the knowledge that suffering and pain arise from indulging lusts, and that life is inseparable from suffering, and is an evil to be got rid of by suppressing self and extinguishing desires.

In the *Mahā-parinibbāna-sutta* (Rhys Davids, 11-32) is recorded one of the Buddha's remarks shortly before his decease.

“What, O Ananda, does the Order desire of me? I have taught the law (*desito dhammo*) without making any distinction between esoteric and exoteric doctrine (*anantaram abahiram karitvā*). In the matter of the law, the Tathāgata (*i.e.*, the Buddha) has never had the closed fist of a teacher (*ācariya-mutthi*)—that is, of a teacher who withholds some doctrines and communicates others.”

Nevertheless, admitting, as we must, that early Buddhism had no mysteries reserved for a privileged circle, we must not shut our eyes to the fact that the great importance attached to abstract meditation in the Buddhist system could not fail in the end to encourage the growth of mystical ideas.

Furthermore, it is undeniable that such ideas were, in some countries, carried to the most extravagant extremes. Efforts to induce a trance-like or hypnotic condition, by abstracting the thoughts from all bodily influences, by recitation of mys-

tical sentences and by superstitious devices for the acquisition of supernatural faculties, were placed above good works and all the duties of the moral code.

We might point, too, to the strange doctrine which arose in Nepal and Tibet—the doctrine of the Dhyāni-Buddhas (or Buddhas of Meditation)—certain abstract essences existing in the formless worlds of thought, who were held to be ethereal and eternal representatives of the transitory earthly Buddhas.

Our present concern, however, is rather with the growth and development of mystical Buddhism in India itself, through its connexion with the system called Yoga and Yogācāra.

The close relationship of Buddhism to that system is well known. The various practices included under the name Yoga did not owe their origin to Buddhism. They were prevalent in India before Gautama Buddha's time; and one of the most generally accepted facts in his biography is that, after abandoning his home and worldly associations, he resorted to certain Brāhman ascetics who were practising Yoga.

What then was the object which these ascetics had in view?

The word Yoga literally means "union" (as derived from the Sanskrit root "yuj," to join), and the proper aim of every man who practised Yoga was the mystic union (or rather re-union) of his own spirit with the one eternal Soul or Spirit of the Universe, and the acquisition of divine knowledge through that union.

It may be taken for granted that this was the Buddha's first aim when he addressed himself to Yoga in the fifth century B.C., and even to this hour, earnest men in India resort to this system with the same object.

In the *Indian Magazine* for July, 1887 (as well as in my *Brāhmanism and Hindūism\**) is a short biography of a quite recent religious reformer named Svāmī Dayānanda Sarasvatī, whose acquaintance I made at Bombay in 1876 and 1877, and who only died in 1883. The story of his life reads almost like a repetition of the life of Buddha, though his teaching aimed at restoring the supposed monotheistic doctrine of the Veda.

It is recorded that his father, desiring to initiate him into the mysteries of Saivism, took him to a shrine dedicated to the god Siva; but the sight of some mice stealing the consecrated offerings and of some rats playing on the heads of the idol led him to disbelieve in Siva-worship as a means of union with the Supreme Being. Longing, however, for such union

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\* Published by John Murray, Albemarle Street (see p. 529).

and for emancipation from the burden of repeated births, he resolved to renounce marriage and abandon the world. Accordingly, at the age of twenty-two, he clandestinely quitted his home, the darkness of evening covering his flight. Taking a secret path, he travelled thirty miles during the night. Next day he was pursued by his father, who tried to force him to return, but in vain. After travelling farther and farther from his native province, he took a vow to devote himself to the investigation of truth. Then he wandered for many years all over India, trying to gain knowledge from sages and philosophers, but without any satisfactory result, till finally he settled at Ahmedabad. There, having mastered the higher Yoga system, he became the leader of a new sect called the Ārya-Samāj.

And here we may observe that the expression "higher Yoga" implies that another form of that system was introduced. In point of fact, the Yoga system grew, and became twofold—that is, it came in the end to have two objects.

The earlier was the higher Yoga. It aimed only at union with the Spirit of the Universe. The more developed system aimed at something more. It sought to acquire miraculous powers by bringing the body under control of the will, and by completely abstracting the soul from body and mind, and isolating it in its own essence. This condition is called Kaivalya.

In the fifth century B.C., when Gautama Buddha began his career, the later and lower form of Yoga seems to have been little known. Practically, in those days earnest and devout men craved only for union with the Supreme Being, and absorption into his essence. Many methods of effecting such union and absorption were contrived. And these may be classed under two chief heads—bodily mortification (tapas) and abstract meditation (dhyāna).

By either one of these two chief means, the devotee was supposed to be able to get rid of all bodily fetters—to be able to bring his bodily organs into such subjection to the spiritual that he became unconscious of possessing any body at all. It was in this way that his spirit became fit for blending with the Supreme Spirit.

We learn from the *Lalita-vistara* that various forms of bodily torture, self-maceration, and austerity were common in Gautama's time.

Some devotees, we read, seated themselves in one spot and kept perpetual silence, with their legs bent under them. Some ate only once a day or once on alternate days, or at intervals of four, six, or fourteen days. Some slept in wet clothes or on ashes, gravel, stones, boards, thorny grass, or spikes, or

with the face downwards. Some went naked, making no distinction between fit or unfit places. Some smeared themselves with ashes, cinders, dust, or clay. Some inhaled smoke and fire. Some gazed at the sun, or sat surrounded by five fires, or rested on one foot, or kept one arm perpetually uplifted, or moved about on their knees instead of on their feet, or baked themselves on hot stones, or entered water, or suspended themselves in the air.

Then, again, a method of fasting called very painful (*aticricchra*), described by Manu (xi. 213), was often practised. It consisted in eating only a single mouthful every day for nine days and then abstaining from all food for the three following days.

Another method, called the lunar fast (vi. 20, xi. 216), consisted in beginning with fifteen mouthfuls at full moon, and reducing the quantity by one mouthful till new moon, and then increasing it again in the same way till full moon.

Passages without number might be quoted from ancient literature to prove that similar practices were resorted to throughout India with the object of bringing the body into subjection to the spirit. And these practices have continued up to the present day.

A Muhammadan traveller, whose narrative is quoted by Mr. Mill (*British India*, i. 355) once saw a man standing motionless with his face towards the sun.

The same traveller, having occasion to revisit the same spot sixteen years afterwards, found the very same man in the very same attitude. He had gazed on the sun's disk till all sense of external vision was extinguished.

A Yoghi was seen not very long ago (Mill's *India*, i. 353) seated between four fires on a quadrangular stage. He stood on one leg gazing at the sun, while these fires were lighted at the four corners. Then placing himself upright on his head, with his feet elevated in the air, he remained for three hours in that position. He then seated himself cross-legged, and continued bearing the raging heat of the sun above his head and the fires which surrounded him till the end of the day, occasionally adding combustibles with his own hands to increase the flames.

I, myself, in the course of my travels, encountered Yogis who had kept their arms uplifted for years, or had wandered about from one place of pilgrimage to another under a perpetual vow of silence, or had no place to lie upon but a bed of spikes.

As to fasting, the idea that attenuation of the body by abstinence from food, facilitates union of the human soul with

the divine, or at any rate promotes a keener insight into spiritual things, is doubtless as common in Europe as in Asia; but the most austere observer of Lent in European countries would be hopelessly outdone by devotees whose extraordinary powers of abstinence may be witnessed in every part of India.

If we now turn to the second great method of attaining mystic union with the Divine Essence, namely, by profound abstract thought, we may observe that it, too, was everywhere prevalent in Buddha's time.

Indeed, one of the names given by Indian philosophers to the One Universal Spirit is Cit, "Thought." By that name of course, is meant pure abstract thought, or the faculty of thought separated from every concrete object. Hence, in its highest state the eternal infinite Spirit, by its very nature, thinks of nothing. It is the simple thought faculty, wholly unconnected with any object, about which it thinks. In point of fact, the moment it begins to exercise this faculty, it necessarily abandons for a time its condition of absolute oneness, abstraction and isolation, to associate itself with something inferior, which is not itself.

It follows, therefore, that intense concentration of the mind on the One Universal Spirit amounts to fixing the thought on a mere abstract Essence, which reciprocates no thought in return, and is not conscious of being thought about by its worshipper.

In harmony with this theory, we find that the definition of Yoga, in the second aphorism of the Yoga-sūtra, is, "the suppression (nirodha) of the functions or modifications (vritti) of the thinking principle (citta)." So that, in reality, the union of the human mind with the infinite Principle of thought amounts to such complete mental absorption, that thought itself becomes lost in pure thought.

In the *Sakuntalā* (vii. 175) there is a description of an ascetic engaged in this form of Yoga, whose condition of fixed meditation and immovable impassiveness had lasted so long that ants had thrown up a mound as high as his waist, and birds had built their nests in the long clotted tresses of his tangled hair.

Not very dissimilar phenomena may be witnessed even in the present day. I, myself, not many years ago, saw at Allahabad a devotee who had maintained a sitting, contemplative posture with his feet folded under his body, in one place near the fort for twenty years.

During the Mutiny cannon thundered over his head, and bullets hissed all around him, but nothing apparently disturbed his attitude of profound meditation.



It is clear, then, from all we have stated, that, supposing Gautama to have made up his mind to renounce the world and devote himself to a religious life, his adoption of a course of Yoga was a most ordinary proceeding.

In the first instance, as we have seen, he tested the value of painful self-mortification by a long sexennial fast. Then, after discovering the uselessness of mere bodily austerities, he took food naturally, and adopting the second method, applied himself to profound abstract meditation.

A large number of the images of Buddha represent him sitting on a raised seat, with his legs folded under his body, and his eyes half-closed, in this condition of abstraction (*samādhi*)—sometimes called *Yoga-nidrā*; that is, a trance-like state, compared to profound sleep, or a kind of hypnotism.

According to the account given in the *Mahā-vagga* (i. 1), he seated himself in this way under four trees in succession, remaining absorbed in thought for seven days and nights under each tree, till he was, so to speak, re-born as Buddha "the Enlightened." Till then he had no right to that title.

And those four successive seats probably symbolised the four recognised stages of meditation\* (*dhyāna*) rising one above another, till thought itself was converted into non-thought.

We know, too, that the Buddha went through still higher progressive stages of meditation at the moment of his death or final decease (*Pari-nirvāna*), thus described in the *Mahā-parinibbāna sutta* (vi. 11):

"Then the Venerable One entered into the first stage of meditation (*pathamajjhānam*); and rising out of the first stage, he passed into the second; and rising out of the second, he passed into the third; and rising out of the third, he passed into the fourth; and rising out of the fourth stage, he attained the conception of the infinity of space (*ākāsāna-cāyatanam*); and rising out of the conception of the infinity of space, he attained the conception of the infinity of intelligence (or second *Arūpa-brahma-loka*). And rising out of the idea of the infinity of intelligence, he attained the conception of absolute nonentity (*ākīñcaññāyatanam*); and rising out of the idea of nonentity, he entered the region where there is neither consciousness nor unconsciousness; and rising out of that region, he entered the state in which all sensation and all perception of ideas had wholly ceased."

This strange passage shows that even four progressive

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\* I give this as a theory of my own. M. Senart considers that the sun's progress is symbolised. I am no believer in the sun theory as applicable to this point.

stages of abstraction did not satisfy the requirements of later Buddhism in regard to the intense sublimation of the thinking faculty needed for the complete effacement of all sense of individuality. Higher and higher altitudes had to be reached, insomuch that the fourth stage of abstract meditation is sometimes divided and sub-divided into what are called eight vimokhas and eight samāpattis—all of them forms and stages of ecstatic meditation.\*

A general name, however, for all the higher trance-like states is *Samādhi*, and by the practice of *Samādhi* the six transcendent faculties (*Abhiññā*) might ultimately be obtained, viz., the inner ear, or power of hearing words and sounds however distant (clair-audience, as it might be called), the inner eye or power of seeing all that happens in every part of the world (clair-voyance), knowledge of the thoughts of others, recollection of former existences, the knowledge of the mode of destroying the corrupting influences of passion, and, finally, the supernatural powers called *Iddhi*, to be subsequently explained.

But to return to the Buddha's first course of meditation at the time when he first attained Buddhahood. This happened during one particular night, which was followed by the birthday of Buddhism.

And what was the first grand outcome of that first profound mental abstraction? One legend relates that in the first watch of the night all his previous existences flashed across his mind; in the second he understood all present states of being; in the third he traced out the chain of causes and effects, and at the dawn of day he knew all things.

According to another legend, there was an actual outburst of the divine light before hidden within him.

We read in the *Lalita-vistara* (chap. i.) that at the supreme moment of his intellectual illumination brilliant flames of light issued from the crown of his head, through the interstices of his cropped hair. These rays are sometimes represented in his images, emerging from his skull in a form resembling the five fingers of an extended hand.

Mark, however, that it is never stated that Gautama ever attained to the highest result of the true Yoga of Indian philosophy—union with the Supreme Spirit. On the contrary, his self-enlightenment led to entire disbelief in the separate existence of any eternal, infinite Spirit at all—any Spirit, in fact, with which a spirit existing in his own body could blend, or into which it could be absorbed.

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\* These are described in Childers's *Pāli Dictionary*, s.v.

If the Buddha was not a materialist, in the sense of believing in the eternal existence of material atoms, neither could he in any sense be called a "spiritualist," or "spiritist."

With him Creation did not proceed from an Omnipotent Spirit evolving phenomena out of itself by the exercise of almighty will, nor from an eternal self-existing, self-evolving germ of any kind. As to the existence of any spiritual substance in the Universe which was not matter and was imperceptible by the senses, it could not be proved.

Nor did he believe in the eternal existence of an invisible, intangible, human self or Ego, commonly called Soul, as distinct from a material body. In this he differed widely from the Yoga. The only eternity of early Buddhism was in an eternity of "becoming," not of "being,"—an eternity of universes, all succeeding each other, and all lapsing into nothingness.

In short, the Buddha's enlightenment consisted, first, in the discovery of the origin and remedy of suffering, and, next, in the knowledge of the existence of an eternal Force—a force generated by what in Sanskrit is called *Karman*, "Act." Who, or what, started the first act the Buddha never pretended to be able to explain. He confessed himself in regard to this point a downright Agnostic.

All he affirmed was that every man was created by the force of his own acts in former bodies, combined with a force generated by intense attachment to existence (*upādāna*). The Buddha himself was so created, and had been created and re-created through countless bodily forms; but he had no spirit or soul existing separately between the intervals of each creation. By his protracted meditation he attained to no higher knowledge than this, and although he himself rose to loftier heights of knowledge than any other man of his day, he never aspired to other than the extraordinary faculties which were within the reach of any human being capable of rising to the same sublime abstraction of mind.

He was even careful to lay down a precept that the acquisition of transcendent human faculties was restricted to the perfected saints called *Arhats*; and so important did he consider it to guard such faculties from being claimed by mere impostors, that one of the four prohibitions communicated to all monks on first admission to his monastic Order was that they were not to pretend to such powers.

Nor is there any proof that even *Arhats* in Gautama's time were allowed to claim the power of working physical miracles.

By degrees, no doubt, powers of this kind were ascribed to them as well as to the Buddha. Even in the *Vinaya*, one of

the oldest portions of the *Tripitaka*, we find it stated that Gautama Buddha gained adherents by performing three thousand five hundred supernatural wonders (in Pāli *pātihāriya*). These were thought to be evidences of his mission as a great teacher and saviour of mankind; but the part of the narrative recording these, although very ancient, is probably a legendary addition of later date. It is interesting, however, to trace in other portions of the first literature, the development of the doctrine that Buddhahood meant first transcendent knowledge, and then supernatural faculties, and finally miraculous powers.

In the *Akkanheyya Sutta* (said to be written in the fourth century B.C.) occurs this remarkable passage, translated by Professor Rhys Davids (p. 214):—

“If a Monk should desire through the destruction of the corrupting influences (*āsavas*), by himself, and even in this very world, to know and realise and attain to Arhatship, to emancipation of heart, and emancipation of mind, let him devote himself to that quietude of heart which springs from within, let him not drive back the ecstasy of contemplation, let him look through things, let him be much alone.

“If a Monk should desire to hear with clear and heavenly ear, surpassing that of men, sounds both human and celestial, whether far or near; if he should desire to comprehend by his own heart the hearts of other beings and of other men; if he should desire to call to mind his various temporary states in the past, such as one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand births, or his births in many an age and æon of destruction and renovation, let him devote himself to that quietude which springs from within.”

Then, in the *Mahā-parinibbāna-sutta* (i. 33) occurs the following:—

“At that time the Blessed One—as instantaneously as a strong man would stretch forth his arm, or draw it back again when he had stretched it forth—vanished from this side of the river, and stood on the further bank with the company of the brethren.”

And, again, the following:—

“I call to mind, Ānanda, how when I used to enter into an assembly of many hundred nobles, before I had seated myself there, or talked to them, or started a conversation with them, I used to become in colour like unto their colour, and in voice like unto their voice. Then, with religious discourse, I used to instruct, incite, and quicken them, and fill them with gladness. But they knew me not when I spoke, and would

say, 'Who may this be who thus speaks? a man or a god?' Then, having instructed, incited, quickened and gladdened them with religious discourse, I would vanish away. But they knew me not even when I vanished away; and would say, 'Who may this be who has thus vanished away? a man, or a god?'" (*Mahā-parinibbāna-sutta*, iii. 22.)

Such passages in the early literature afford an interesting exemplification of the growth of supernatural and mystical ideas, and account for the ultimate association of the Northern Buddhistic system, with Saivism, demonology, magic, and various spiritual phenomena connected with what has been called "Esoteric Buddhism."

These ideas, however, originated in India, and we may now proceed to trace their development in the later *Yoga* or "aphorisms of the Yoga philosophy," composed by Patanjali, to which I have already referred.

In that work eight requisites of Yoga are enumerated (ii. 29); namely, 1, abstaining from five evil acts (*yama*); 2, performing five positive duties (*niyama*); 3, settling the limbs in certain postures (*āsana*); 4, regulating and suppressing the breath (*prāṇāyāma*); 5, withdrawing the senses from their objects (*pratyāhāra*); 6, fixing the thinking faculty (*dhāraṇā*); 7, internal self-contemplation (*dhyāna*); 8, trance-like self-concentration (*samādhi*).

These eight are indispensable requisites for the gaining of Patanjali's *summum bonum*—the complete abstraction or isolation (*kaivalya*) of the soul in its own essence and for the acquirement of supernatural faculties.

Taking now these eight requisites of Yoga in order, we may observe, with regard to the first, that the five evil acts to be avoided correspond to the five commandments in Buddhism, viz., "kill not," "steal not," "commit no impurity," "lie not." The fifth alone, "abstain from all worldly enjoyments," is different, the Buddhist fifth prohibition being "drink no strong drink."

With regard to the second requisite, the five positive duties are—self-purification, both external and internal (both called *saucha*); the practice of contentment (*santosha*); bodily mortification (*tapas*); muttering of prayers, or repetition of mystical syllables (*svādhyāya*, or *japa*), and contemplation of the Supreme Being.

The various processes of bodily mortification and austerities have been already described.

As to the muttering of prayers, the repetition of mystic syllables such as Om (a symbol for the Triad of Gods), or of any favourite deity's name, is held among Hindūs to be

highly efficacious.\* In a similar manner among Northern Buddhists the six-syllabled sentence: "Om mani padme hūm"—"Reverence to the jewel in the lotus. Amen"—is used as a charm against the sixfold course of transmigration. The Jewel may mean Avalokitesvara, the patron saint of Tibet, fabled to have sprung from a lotus, or it may contain a *double-entendre*—an occult allusion to the Sāṅkhya Puruṣa and Prakṛiti, or to the Linga and Yoni of Śaivism, as symbolising the generative force of Nature. No other prayer-formula in the world is repeated so often.

Other mystical syllables (such as sam, yam, ram, lam) are supposed to contain some occult virtue.

The third requisite—posture—would appear to us a somewhat trivial aid to the union of the human spirit with the divine; but with Hindūs it is an important auxiliary, fraught with great benefit to the Yogī.

The alleged reason is that certain sitting postures (āsana) and cramping of the lower limbs are peculiarly efficacious in producing bodily quietude and preventing restlessness. Some of the postures have curious names, for example:—Padmāsana, "the lotus posture"; vīrāsana, "the heroic posture"; śinhāsana, "the lion posture"; kūrmasana, "the tortoise posture"; kukkūtāsana, "the cock posture"; dhanur-āsana, "bow posture"; mayūrāsana, "peacock posture." In the first the right foot is placed on the left thigh, and the left on the right thigh.

In short, the idea is that compression of the lower limbs, in such a way as to prevent the possibility of the slightest movement, is most important as a preparation for complete abstraction of soul.

Then, as another aid, particular twistings (called mudrā) of the upper limbs—of the arms, hands, and fingers—are enjoined.

In Europe violent movements of the limbs are practised by devotees with the view of uniting the human spirit with the Divine. Those who have seen the whirling and "howling" dervishes of Cairo can testify to this. The fainting fits which result from their violent exertions, inspirations, expirations, and utterances of the name of God are believed to be ecstatic states in which such union is effected.

The fourth requisite—regulation and suppression of the breath—is perhaps the one of all the eight which it is most difficult for Europeans to understand or appreciate; yet with Hindūs it is all-important (being called Hatha-vidyā). Nor are the ideas connected with it wholly unknown in Europe.

\* See my *Brāhmanism and Hindūism* (John Murray), p. 105.

According to Swedenborg,\* thought commences and corresponds with respiration :—

“When a man thinks quickly his breath vibrates with rapid alternations; when the tempest of anger shakes his mind his breath is tumultuous; when his soul is deep and tranquil, so is his respiration.” And he adds: “It is strange that this correspondence between the states of the brain or mind and the lungs has not been admitted in science.”

The Hindū belief certainly is that deep inspirations of breath assist in concentrating and abstracting the thoughts and preventing external impressions. But, more than this, five sorts of air are supposed to permeate the human body and play an important part in its vitality. The Hatha-dīpikā says: “As long as the air remains in the body, so long life remains. Death is the exit of the breath. Hence the air should be retained in the body.”

In regulating the breath, the air must first be drawn up through one nostril (the other being closed with the finger), retained in the lungs, and then expelled through the other nostril. This exercise must be practised alternately with the right and left nostril. Next, the breath must be drawn forcibly up through both nostrils, and the air imprisoned for as long a time as possible in the lungs. Thence it must be forced by an effort of will towards the internal organs of the body, or made to mount to the centre of the brain.

The Hindūs, however, do not identify the breath with the soul. They believe that a crevice or suture called the Brahma-randhram at the top of the skull serves as an outlet for the escape of the soul at death. A Hindū Yogī's skull is sometimes split at death by striking it with a sacred shell. The idea is to facilitate the exit of the soul. It is said that in Tibet the hair is torn out of the top of the head, with the same object.

In the case of a wicked man the soul is supposed to escape through one of the lower openings of the body.

The imprisonment of the breath in the body by taking in more air than is necessary for respiration, is the most important of the breath exercises. It is said that Hindū ascetics, by constant practice, are able by this means to sustain life under water, or to be buried alive for long periods of time. Such feats of endurance would be wholly impracticable in the case of Europeans. It seems, however, open to question, whether or not it may not be possible for human beings of particular constitutions to practise a kind of

\* Quoted in Colonel Olcott's *Yoga Philosophy*, p. 282.

hibernation like that of animals, by some method of suspending temporarily the organic functions. A certain Colonel Townsend is said to have succeeded in doing so.

A well-known instance of suspended animation occurred in the Punjab in 1837. A certain Yogī was there, by his own request, buried alive in a vault for forty days in the presence of Runjit Singh and Sir Claude Wade; his eyes, ears, and every orifice of his body having been first stopped with plugs of wax. Dr. McGregor, the then residency surgeon, also watched the case. Every precaution was taken to prevent deception. English officials saw the man buried, as well as exhumed, and a perpetual guard over the vault was kept night and day by order of Runjit Singh himself. At the end of forty days the disinterment took place. The body was dried up like a stick, and the tongue, which had been turned back into the throat, had become like a piece of horn. Those who exhumed him followed his previously-given directions for the restoration of animation, and the Yogī told them he had only been conscious of a kind of ecstatic bliss in the society of other Yogīs and saints, and was quite ready to be buried over again.

What amount of fraud, if any, there may be in these feats it is impossible to say. The phenomena may possibly be accounted for by the fact that Indian Yogis have studied the habits of hibernating animals for ages.

I may add that it is commonly believed throughout India that a man whose body is sublimated by intense abstract meditation never dies, in the sense of undergoing corruption and dissolution. When his supposed death occurs he is held to be in a state of trance, which may last for centuries, and his body is, therefore, not burnt, but buried—generally in a sitting posture—and his tomb is called a samādh.

With regard to the fifth requisite—the act of withdrawing the senses from their object, as, for example, the eye from visible forms—this is well compared to the act of a tortoise withdrawing its limbs under its shell.

The sixth requisite—fixing the principle of thought—comprises the act of directing the thinking faculty (*citta*) towards various parts of the body, for example, towards the heart, or towards the crown of the head, or concentrating the will-force on the region between the two eyebrows, or even fixing the eyes intently on the tip of the nose. (Compare *Bhagavad-gītā*, vi. 13.)

The seventh and eighth requisites—viz., internal self-contemplation and intense self-concentration—are held (when conjoined with the sixth) to be most important as leading to



the acquisition of certain supernatural powers, of which the following are most commonly enumerated :—(1) *Animan*, “the faculty of reducing the body to the size of an atom”; (2) *Mahiman*, or *Gariman*, “increasing the size or weight at will”; (3) *Laghiman*, “making the body light at will”; (4) *Prāpti*, “reaching or touching any object or spot, however apparently distant”; (5) *Prākāmya*, “unlimited exercise of will”; (6) *Isitva*, “gaining absolute power over one’s self and others”; (7) *Vasitā*, “bringing the elements into subjection”; (8) *Kāmāvasāyitā*, “the power of suppressing all desires.”

A *Yogī* who has acquired these powers can rise aloft to the skies, fly through space, pierce the mysteries of planets and stars, cause storms and earthquakes, understand the language of animals, ascertain what occurs in any part of the world, or of the universe, recollect the events of his own previous lives, prolong his present life, see into the past and future, discern the thoughts of others, assume any form he likes, disappear, reappear, and even enter into another man’s body and make it his own.

Such were some of the extravagant ideas which grew with the growth of the *Yoga* system, and all these exist in the later developments of Buddhism. The Buddha himself is fabled by his followers to have ascended to the *Trayas-trinsa* heaven of *Indra*, walked on water, stepped from one mountain to another, and left impressions of his feet on the solid rock; although in the well-known *Dhamma-pada* it is twice declared (254, 255), “There is no path through the air.”

Of course it was only natural that, with the development of Buddhism and its association with *Saivism*, the Buddha himself should have become a centre for the growth and accumulation of supernatural and mystical ideas. It is in this way that the later doctrine makes every Buddha have a threefold existence or possess three bodies, much in the same way as in *Hindūism* three bodies are assigned to every being.

The first of the Buddha’s bodies is the *Dharma-kāya* “body of the Law,” supposed to be a kind of ethereal essence of a highly sublimated nature and co-extensive with space. This essence was believed to be eternal, and after the Buddha’s death, was represented by the Law or Doctrine (*Dharma*) he taught. Its *Brāhmanical* analogue is probably *Brahman*, “the Universal Spirit,” which, when associated with *Illusion* (or the *Kāraṇa-sarīra*), may assume a highly ethereal subtle body, called *Linga-sarīra*.

The second body is the *Sambhoga-kāya*, “body of conscious bliss,” which is of a less ethereal and more material nature than the last. Its *Brāhmanical* analogue appears to be

the intermediate celestial body belonging to departed spirits, called Bhoga-deha, which is of an ethereal character, though it is composed of sufficiently gross (sthūla) material particles to be capable of experiencing happiness in heaven.

The third body is the *Nirmāna-kāya*, "body of visible shapes and transformations," that is to say, those visible concrete material forms in which every Buddha who exists as an invisible and eternal essence, is manifested on the earth or elsewhere for the propagation of the true doctrine. The Brāhmanical analogue of this third body appears to be the earthly gross body, called *Sthūla-sarīra*.

There is a well-known legend which relates how the great Brāhman sage Sankarācārya entranced his gross body, and then, having forced out his soul along with his subtle body, entered the dead body of a recently deceased king, which he occupied for several weeks.

In connexion with these mystical ideas, I may here allude to the belief that certain modern Eastern sages, skilled in occult science, have the power of throwing their gross bodies into a state of mesmeric trance, and then by a determined effort of will projecting or forcing out the ethereal body through the pores of the skin, and making this phantasmal form visible in distant places.\*

We learn from Mr. Sinnett that a community of Buddhist "Brothers" called Mahātmas, are now living in secluded spots in the deserts of Tibet, who have emancipated their interior selves from physical bondage by meditation, and are believed to possess "astral" or ethereal bodies (distinct from their gross bodies), with which they are able to rise in the air, or move through space, by the mere exercise of will.

I am not aware whether the Psychological Research Society has extended its researches to the deserts of Tibet, where these phenomena are said to take place.

In curious agreement with these notions, are the beliefs of various uncivilised races. Dr. Tylor, in his *Primitive Culture* (i. 440), relates how the North American Indians and others believe that their souls quit their bodies during sleep, and go about hunting, dancing, visiting, etc.

Old legends relate how Simon Magus made statues walk; how he flew in the air; changed his shape; assumed two faces; made the vessels in a house seem to move of themselves (Yule's *Marco Polo*, i. 306). Friar Ricold relates that "a man from India was said to fly. The truth was that he

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\* Colonel Olcott and Mr. Sinnett mention this faculty as characteristic of Asiatic occultism.

did walk close to the surface of the ground without touching it" (Yule's *Marco Polo*, i. 307).

As to the phenomena of modern spiritualism, these are declared by Mr. Sinnett to be quite distinct from those of Asiatic occultism. He maintains that modern spiritualism requires the intervention of "mediums," who neither control nor understand the manifestations of which they are the passive instruments; whereas the phenomena of occultism are the "achievements of a conscious living operator," produced by a simple effort of his own will. The important point, he adds, "which occultism brings out is, that the soul of man, while something enormously subtler and more ethereal and more lasting than the body, is itself a material body. . . . The ether that transmits light is held to be material by any one who holds it to exist at all; but there is a gulf of difference between it and the thinnest of the gases." In another place he advances an opinion that the spirit is distinct from the soul. It is the soul of the soul.

And again: "The body is the prison of the soul for ordinary mortals. We can see merely what comes before its windows; we can take cognisance only of what is brought within its bars. But the adept has found the key of his prison, and can emerge from it at pleasure. It is no longer a prison for him—merely a dwelling. In other words, the adept can project his soul out of his body to any place he pleases with the rapidity of thought."\*

It is worth noting that many believers in Asiatic occultism hold that a hitherto unsuspected force exists in nature called Odic force (is this to be connected with Psychic force?), and that it is by this that the levitation of entranced persons is effected. Some are said to have the power of lightening their bodies by swallowing large draughts of air. The President of the Theosophical Society, Colonel Olcott, alleges that he himself, in common with many other observers, has seen a person raised in the air by a mere effort of will.

Surely these phenomena may be mere feats of conjuring. In the *Asiatic Monthly Journal* for March, 1829, an account is given of a Brâhman who poised himself *apparently* in the air, about four feet from the ground, for forty minutes, in the presence of the Governor of Madras. Another juggler sat on three sticks put together to form a tripod. These were removed, one by one, and the man remained sitting in the

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\* *The Occult World*, by A. P. Sinnett, Vice-President of the Theosophical Society, pp. 12, 15, 20.

air. On the other hand, it is contended, that "since we have attained, in the last half-century, the theory of evolution, the antiquity of man, the far greater antiquity of the world itself, the correlation of physical forces, the conservation of energy, spectrum analysis, photography, the locomotive engine, electric telegraph, spectroscope, electric light, and the telephone, who shall dare to fix a limit to the capacity of man?"\* Few will be disposed to deny altogether the truth of such a contention, however much they may dissent from Colonel Olcott's theosophical and neo-Buddhist views.

There may be, of course, latent faculties in humanity which are at present quite unsuspected, and yet are capable of development in the future.

I may also refer to the statement of Sir James Paget, in his recent address on "Scientific Study," that many things now held to be inconceivable and past man's imagination are profoundly and assuredly true, and that it will be in the power of Science to prove them to be so.†

Clearly mystical Buddhism is far too big a subject to be compressed within the limits of a single paper.

I will merely, in conclusion, express my doubts whether Asiatic occultism, as connected with the Yoga philosophy, and as believed in by Colonel Olcott, Mr. Sinnett, and many others, will ever bear the searching light of European scientific investigation.

Nevertheless, it seems to me to be a subject which ought not to be brushed aside by our scientists as unworthy of consideration. It furnishes, in my opinion, a highly interesting topic of inquiry, especially in its bearing on the so-called "Spiritualism," "neo-Buddhism," and "Theosophy" of the present day. The practices connected with mesmerism, animal magnetism, clairvoyance, thought-reading, &c., have their counterparts in the Yoga system prevalent in India more than 2,000 years ago. "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun."

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\* Colonel Olcott's *Lectures on Theosophy and Archaic Religions*, p. 109.

† Report in the *Times* newspaper.

The BISHOP OF DUNEDIN.—I believe I owe it to the absence of a more important individual than myself that I have been asked to propose the resolution I now have the honour to submit,—namely, “That our best thanks be presented to Sir Monier Monier-Williams for the Annual Address now delivered, and to those who have read papers during the session.” It is one of the many pleasures and gratifications afforded to a Colonial bishop in the very occasional visits he makes to the home country to find himself once more plunged, as I do to-night, into the very centre of the world’s emotions and currents of thought—indeed, one may say, into what is almost the focus of the thought of the whole world. I have been astonished to find, during my short residence in England since I returned from New Zealand, how prominent a place the old religions of human origin, and those systems of philosophy which we have been accustomed to regard as not very materially affecting us, have of late taken in the minds of men. I find that on every side these things are the subjects of thought and comment. I was myself invited by some friends in another part of London to address a meeting this evening on the subject of Mahommedanism, so that, while in one place there is a discussion on that subject, in another a meeting is being held on the system of Buddha. The reason why so much interest is now taken in these matters, as compared with what was the case in former times, appears to be that there is an idea abroad that these ancient religions and systems of philosophy conflict with, if they do not overturn, the claims of Christianity. I think it is this idea that has brought these subjects to so great a prominence at the present day. I propose, in the short space of time permitted to me in moving this resolution, to address myself to one or two points which seem to me to be of some importance to bear in mind, as marking out, in a clear and definite manner, the lines of distinction between Christianity and these ancient religions. One hears on every side that Christianity is on its trial; as if there ever had been a time since the commencement of the Christian faith when it was not upon its trial. I think that perhaps the true meaning of such an expression is, that there is a new phase of trial to which Christianity is now being subjected. There was a time which, doubtless, most of us remember when, in our younger days, people were content to accept Christianity largely because they knew nothing of any other system which they could put into comparison with it. Such knowledge has, however, now been forced upon them, not only by the spirit of inquiry of the present day, but,

perhaps, even more largely by the necessities of a certain class of literary men, who have to produce articles of an interesting and novel kind for their several publications from month to month, and who, therefore, ransack all sorts of subjects and bring them to the front, so that people are obliged to know something, though probably too little, of these things; the little they are made to know being somewhat startling to them, particularly if the matter relate to religion, while they do not learn enough to enable them to compare what is put before them with that which they were aware of long ago. It seems to me that this, to some extent, accounts for the condition, almost of alarm, which appears to prevail in some quarters, from the facts I have mentioned; and, on the other hand, for the premature pæans of triumph which elsewhere resound in regard to these matters. If we knew a little more about such things, we should probably not witness this alarm, nor perceive these premature notes of triumph. Therefore, we are greatly indebted to those who present such subjects as that of this evening's Address in all their details, so that we may come to see how vastly different are the systems they relate to from the Christianity in which we have rejoiced so long. It is said by those who would present these matters to us as conflicting with Christianity, that there are points of resemblance between Buddhism and the Christian faith which they would have us believe are a proof that Christianity owes its origin to these more ancient philosophies. I do not intend to detain you to-night, after what we have heard,—indeed, it would be presumptuous in me to do so; but I may say, in passing, that the amount of mystery connected with the Yoga philosophy is one reason why it becomes so attractive, while, at the same time, the general ignorance which prevails in regard to these things renders it possible for any writer to indulge in such random expressions, and to enter into as many almost wild speculations with regard to them as he may deem fit, because he knows he is perfectly safe in presuming on the ignorance of those for whom he writes. I would here say a word or two on the relationship, or rather on the contrast, between Buddhism and Christianity. We are told there is a connexion between the Yoga philosophy and Buddhism, and that one has been largely adopted by the other. I think we may say it has been proved by those who have examined the subject that such resemblance as may exist between Buddhism and Christianity has been the resemblance which has grown up in the later rather than in the earlier ages of

Buddhism,—that is to say, if we examine Buddhism before Christianity, we do not find those resemblances which are pointed out, and perhaps purposely exaggerated, to support the idea that all religions are of human origin. We have heard about the ascension of Buddha, and that is compared with the Ascension of Christ. We are also told of the footmarks on the mountain, and so on ; but it has been shown that these resemblances had their origin 400 or 500 years after the existence of Christianity. Therefore, it is possible that something has taken place in the history of Buddhism which resembles what in natural history is termed mimetic analogy. We know that there are particular insects which owe their safety from their natural enemies to the fact that they closely resemble another species possessed of an armature or means of self-defence,—it may be some essential oil, the smell of which is not liked, and which prevents the insect being seized as prey,—the insect which has a resemblance to it thereby escaping capture. It may be that the Buddhists of later times, having found a living, vital force in Christianity, have endeavoured to give life to their system of philosophy by copying a virtue, not innate in their own doctrine, but which is possessed by Christianity. This is in favour of Christianity, for the better does not imitate the worse. If you will allow me to make some comparison between the nature of Christianity and that of Buddhism, I would say that Christianity is essentially and professedly an intervention on the part of the Divine Being for the good of His creatures ; while Buddhism is an effort on the part of man himself to work out a deliverance from experienced evils. There is no sort of connexion between the two things, and the case is not altered because we find that in the pursuit of this object the professors of Buddhism have attained what are undoubtedly some noble conceptions, have worked on principles which may to some extent call forth our admiration, have made careful observation of the character of the human mind and of nature generally, and have carried out their observations with intense thought and care. The essential difference between the two systems is not thereby affected. The position of the Buddhist is, after all, not greatly dissimilar from that condition which we find prevailed in ancient times, and which finds its illustration in the efforts of the Babel builders to reach heaven by the construction of a material fabric. In one case you have a number of men seeking to reach celestial spheres through physical instrumentality, while in the other you have the idea that man can by mental and moral process

sublimate himself, and obtain by his own efforts contact with God. If we examine still more closely the apparent resemblances between the two systems we find them to be only in appearance, not in fact. It is pointed out that both alike prescribe self-abnegation, and that therefore the morality of Christianity is not original. But there is a whole realm of difference between *self-mortification* and *self-denial*. One is reducible to innate selfishness and pride, the other to God-like and God-given desire to promote the good of others. The one is the moral of Buddhism, the other of Christianity, and the qualities are neither the same in themselves nor in their motive. There is, therefore, this essential difference between Buddhism and Christianity,—the one is distinctly human, and, at its best, can only be described as an exalted system of philosophy, while the other is Divine, and is nothing less than the impartation of the nature of God Himself to mankind. I have great pleasure in moving the resolution.

Mr. W. S. SETON-KARR (late Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, and Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University).—I feel that my only excuse for rising to second this motion lies in my old friendship with Sir Monier Monier-Williams, from whom you have had so interesting an Address. I shall not attempt to follow the Bishop of Dunedin in his admirable remarks as to the points of contact and of dissimilarity between Buddhism and Christianity, beyond saying that, having had some practical experience of Hindooism, Mahomedanism, and Buddhism, I am convinced that, whatever morality or civilisation may be found among the exponents of those systems, whenever Christianity is confronted with them it is perfectly able to hold its own. Nor will I follow Sir M. Monier-Williams into his extremely interesting and instructive Address on the connexion between the Yoga philosophy of the Hindus and the system of mystical Buddhism. But I may say something with regard to what he has stated about the juggler who was apparently suspended in the air without any visible support. I say that I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw this very feat performed at Jessore. How it was done I, of course, do not pretend to say; but I saw what Sir Monier Monier-Williams has described. I do not ask any one here present to believe it, because, although I saw it, I hardly believe it myself. With regard to the paper generally, I can only add that, in order to be able to deliver such an address to such an assembly as this, it must be necessary that the writer should not only have been a deep and careful student of Oriental literature, but



that he should also have visited India, so as to become acquainted with what Pundits have said and done, and with what the Oriental system of religion is in practice.

The motion was unanimously agreed to.

Sir MONIER MONIER-WILLIAMS, K.C.I.E.—I will first thank you, on behalf of those who have read papers during this session, for your kind vote. As regards myself, I will only say that I am much obliged to my friend, Mr. Seton-Karr, for what he has just said, and also to all who are here for the very kind way in which they have received me, and the attention with which they have listened to what I have had to say upon this subject. My best thanks are due to all.

Sir H. BARKLY, K.C.B., G.C.M.G., F.R.S.—It affords me the greatest pleasure to move, "That the thanks of the meeting be presented to the President." All who are acquainted with the multitudinous engagements that have to be fulfilled by Professor Stokes\* will feel deeply grateful to him for the interest he has taken in the work devolving upon him as President of this Institute during the last two years, and more especially for the able and profound Address which he delivered to us at the last annual meeting,—an Address which, apart from its great interest, coming from one in his distinguished position as a scientific man holding the office of President of the Royal Society of Great Britain, cannot fail to have had the greatest influence in conducing to the successful progress of the Institute referred to in the report to-night. It seems to me that it would be impossible to appreciate too highly the independence of spirit and the moral courage that have been displayed by Professor Stokes in placing himself, in these days of aggressive agnosticism, at the head of an institute whose avowed object it is to investigate those questions of philosophy and science which bear upon the great truths revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures. I say "aggressive agnosticism," because, as we all know, there is a great deal of aggression in the agnosticism of the present day. The agnosticism springing from honest doubt and genuine difficulty in reconciling the natural phenomena with Divine Revelation we are all bound to speak of with the utmost respect and the deepest sympathy; but we know, on the other hand, that there are a great many agnostics who not only profess not to know, but who really do not wish to know, anything about the Christian religion. Still, we must rejoice that there are men of eminence in the scientific world

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\* Now Sir G. G. Stokes, Bart.

who are equally desirous with many of these agnostic gentlemen that the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, should be taught in matters of philosophy, science, and history, and who choose to come boldly forward and associate themselves with an institute like this, which is striving, and has been striving zealously for the last twenty years, to promote the full and free discussion of these subjects in their religious aspect. I will not detain the meeting longer by dilating on the claims of Professor Stokes to our gratitude, but will at once ask you to join me in according a hearty vote of thanks to him for his great kindness in fulfilling the duties of President of this Society.

The Rev. ROBINSON THORNTON, D.D., V.P.—At the end of a long meeting like this, when the audience may be supposed to have been reduced to the condition of *pratyahāra*, a virtuous state, which consists in the withdrawal of the senses from all external objects, I will not attempt to detain you at any length in seconding this resolution; for I may say that the condition I have mentioned is one I have observed to be produced by long after-dinner speeches, by lengthy addresses towards the close of a meeting, and also by a certain class of sermons. I shall therefore not trespass on your time very long, and, in what I have to say, will merely endeavour to answer a question put by Sir M. Monier-Williams in his paper. Towards the end he asks whether the Psychical Research Society have extended their researches into the phenomena said to be displayed by the community termed Mahātmas. As a member of that Society, I may say that we made inquiries as to whether there were any Mahātmas at all, and the replies we obtained were such that we are extremely doubtful about their existence. But, even if they do exist, I do not think it would be any use to send out a commission of inquiry, inasmuch as no one, we are told, can see a Mahātma unless he is a Mahātma, or next door to one, himself. I have now only to second the vote of thanks which Sir Henry Barkly has proposed to our President, assuring him of the pleasure we all experienced in electing him to the office he holds, and of the satisfaction we feel in his presence here this evening.

The resolution having been unanimously accorded,

The PRESIDENT said:—I have to return you my thanks for the kind way in which you have received this motion. I feel that I have been very backward in what I have been able to do for the Society; but, as you are aware, I have a great many irons in the fire, and, that being the case, I am unable to give that minute

attention to the affairs of the Institute of which it is really deserving. This, however, I will say, that my best wishes are with you; and with regard to one remark which fell from Sir Henry Barkly, I would observe that, having a large acquaintance with scientific men, I know what numbers of them there are who are not agnostics at all, but the reverse.

The Members, Associates, and their friends then adjourned to the Museum, where refreshments were served.

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