

## THOUGHT-FORMS.

As knowledge increases, the attitude of science towards the things of the invisible world is undergoing considerable modification. Its attention is no longer directed solely to the earth with all its variety of objects, or to the physical worlds around it, but it finds itself compelled to glance further afield, and to construct hypotheses as to the nature of the matter and force which lie in the regions beyond the ken of its instruments. Ether is now comfortably settled in the scientific kingdom, becoming almost more than a hypothesis. Mesmerism, under its new name of hypnotism, is no longer an outcast. Reichenbach's experiments are still looked at askance, but are not wholly condemned. Röntgen's rays have rearranged some of the older ideas of matter. Magnets are found to be possessed of almost uncanny powers, transferring certain forms of disease in a way not yet satisfactorily explained. Telepathy, clairvoyance, movement without contact, though not yet admitted to the scientific table, are approaching the Cinderella-stage. The fact is that science has pressed its researches so far, has used such rare ingenuity in its questionings of nature, has shown such tireless patience in its investigations, that it is receiving the reward of those who seek, and forces and beings of the next higher plane of nature are beginning to show themselves on the outer edge of the physical field. "Nature makes no leaps," and as the physicist nears the confines of his kingdom he finds himself bewildered by touches and gleams from another realm which interpenetrates his own. He finds himself compelled to speculate on invisible presences, if only to find a rational explanation for undoubted physical phenomena, and insensibly he slips over the boundary, and is, although he does not yet realize it, contacting the astral plane.

One of the most interesting of the high roads from the physical to the astral is that of the study of thought. The western scientist, commencing in the anatomy and physiology of the brain, en-

deavours to make these the basis for "a sound psychology." He passes then into the region of dreams, illusions, hallucinations, and as soon as he endeavours to elaborate an experimental science which shall classify and arrange these, he inevitably plunges into the astral plane. Dr. Baraduc of Paris has nearly crossed the barrier, and is well on the way towards photographing astro-mental images, to obtaining pictures of what from the materialistic standpoint would be the results of vibrations in the grey matter of the brain.

It has long been known to those who have given attention to the question that impressions were produced by the reflection of the ultra-violet rays from objects not visible by the rays of the ordinary spectrum. Clairvoyants were occasionally justified by the appearance on sensitive photographic plates of figures seen and described by them as present with the sitter, though invisible to physical sight. It is not possible for an unbiassed judgment to reject *in toto* the evidence of such occurrences proffered by men of integrity on the strength of their own experiments, oftentimes repeated. And now we have investigators who turn their attention to the obtaining of images of subtle forms, inventing methods specially designed with the view of reproducing them. Among these, Dr. Baraduc seems to have been the most successful, and he has now published a volume—reviewed last month in our columns—dealing with his investigations and containing reproductions of the photographs he has obtained. Dr. Baraduc states that he is investigating the subtle forces by which the soul—defined as the intelligence working between the body and the spirit—expresses itself by seeking to record its movements by means of a needle, its "luminous" but invisible vibrations by impressions on sensitive plates. He shuts out by non-conductors electricity and heat. We can pass over his experiments in Biometry (measurement of life—by movements), and glance at those in Iconography—the impressions of invisible waves, regarded by him as of the nature of light, in which the soul draws its own image. A number of these photographs represent etheric and magnetic results of physical phenomena, and these again we may pass over as not bearing on our special subject, interesting as they are in themselves. Dr. Baraduc obtained various impressions by strongly thinking of an object, the effect produced by the thought-form appearing on a sensitive-plate; thus he tried to project a portrait of

a lady (then dead) whom he had known, and produced an impression due to his thought of a drawing he had made of her on her death-bed. He quite rightly says that the creation of an object is the passing out of an image from the mind and its subsequent materialization, and he seeks the chemical effect caused on silver salts by this thought-created picture. One striking illustration is that of a force raying outwards, the projection of an earnest prayer. Another prayer is seen producing forms like the fronds of a fern, another like rain pouring upwards, if the phrase may be permitted. A rippled oblong mass is projected by three persons thinking of their unity in affection. A young boy sorrowing over and caressing a dead bird is surrounded by a flood of curved interwoven threads of emotional disturbance. A strong vortex is formed by a feeling of deep sadness. Looking at this most interesting and suggestive series it is clear that in these pictures that which is obtained is not the thought-image, but the effect caused in etheric matter by its vibrations, and it is necessary to clairvoyantly see the thought in order to understand the results produced. In fact, the illustrations are instructive for what they do not shew directly, as well as for the images that appear.

It may be useful to Theosophists to put before them, a little more plainly than has hitherto been done, some of the facts in nature which will render more intelligible the results at which Dr. Baraduc is arriving. Necessarily imperfect these must be, a physical photographic camera and sensitive plates not being ideal instruments for astral research; but as will be seen from the above, they are most interesting and valuable as forming a link between clairvoyant and physical scientific investigations.

The pictures of thought-forms herewith presented were obtained as follows: two clairvoyant Theosophists observed the forms caused by definite thoughts thrown out by one of them, and also watched the forms projected by other persons under the influence of various emotions. They described these as fully and accurately as they could to an artist who sat with them, and he made sketches and mixed colours, till some approximation to the objects was made. Unfortunately the clairvoyants could not draw and the artist could not see, so the arrangement was a little like that of the blind and lame men—the blind men having good legs carried the lame ones,

and the lame men having good eyes guided the blind. The artist at his leisure painted the forms, and then another committee was held and sat upon the paintings, and in the light of the criticisms then made our long-suffering brother painted an almost entirely new set—the most successful attempt that has hitherto been made to present these elusive shapes in the dull pigments of earth.

We may now turn to the detailed exposition of the matter in hand.

All students know that what is called the Aura of man is the outer part of the cloud-like substance of his higher bodies, interpenetrating each other, and extending beyond the confines of his physical body, the smallest of all. They know also that two of these bodies, the mental and desire bodies, are those chiefly concerned with the appearance of what are called thought-forms. But in order that the matter may be made clear for all, and not only for students already acquainted with Theosophical teachings, a recapitulation of the main facts will not be out of place.

Man, the Thinker, is clothed in a body composed of innumerable combinations of the subtle matter of the mental plane, this body being more or less refined in its constituents and organized more or less fully for its functions, according to the stage of intellectual development at which the man himself has arrived. The mental body is an object of great beauty, the delicacy and rapid motion of its particles giving it an aspect of living iridescent light, and this beauty becomes an extraordinarily radiant and entrancing loveliness as the intellect becomes more highly evolved and is employed chiefly on pure and sublime topics. Every thought gives rise to a set of correlated vibrations in the matter of this body, accompanied with a marvellous play of colour, like that in the spray of a waterfall as the sunlight strikes it, raised to the  $n^{\text{th}}$  degree of colour and vivid delicacy. The body under this impulse throws off a vibrating portion of itself, shaped by the nature of the vibrations—as figures are made by sand on a disk vibrating to a musical note—and this gathers from the surrounding atmosphere matter like itself in fineness from the elemental essence of the mental world. We have then a thought-form pure and simple, and it is a living entity of intense activity animated by the one idea that generated it. If

made of the finer kinds of matter, it will be of great power and energy, and may be used as a most potent agent when directed by a strong and steady will. Into the details of such use we will enter later. Such a thought-form, if directed to affect any object or person on the astral or physical planes, will pass from the mental into the astral world, and will take to itself a covering of astral materials, of fineness correlated to its own, from the elemental essence of the astral world. A thought-form, then, is a shape caused by the vibrations set up in the mental body by the activity of the Ego, clothed in the elemental essence of the mental plane, and possessing an independent life of its own with freedom of motion, but its consciousness being limited to the thought of which its essence, or informing soul, consists. It may or may not have—but generally has—an additional coating of astral elemental essence. Elemental essence is a name used to cover a vast variety of combinations respectively of mental and of astral matter, ensouled by Âtmâ-Buddhi—technically called the Monad—in its evolution *downwards*. So the thought-form is a shape whose body is of elemental essence and whose soul is a thought. It is very often spoken of as an artificial elemental, because of this bodily constitution, and such elementals, when made by White or Black Magicians, are of tremendous potency.

When the man's energy flows outwards towards external objects of desire, or is occupied in passional and emotional activities, this energy works in a less subtle order of matter than the mental, in that of the astral world. What is called his desire-body is composed of this matter, and it forms the most prominent part of the aura in the undeveloped man. Where the man is of a gross type, the desire-body is of the denser matter of the astral plane, and is dull in hue, browns and dirty greens and reds playing a great part in it. Through this will flash various characteristic colours, as his passions are excited. A man of a higher type has his desire-body composed of the finer qualities of astral matter, with the colours rippling over and flashing through it fine and clear in hue. While less delicate and less radiant than the mental body, it forms a beautiful object and as selfishness is eliminated all the duller and heavier shades disappear.

This desire (or astral) body gives rise to a second class of



entities, similar in their general constitution to the thought-forms already described, but limited to the astral plane, and generated by the mind under the dominion of the animal nature.

These are caused by the activity of the lower mind, throwing itself out through the astral body—the activity of Kâma-Manas in Theosophical terminology, or the mind dominated by desire. Vibrations in the body of desire, or astral body, are in this case set up, and under these this body throws off a vibrating portion of itself, shaped, as in the previous case, by the nature of the vibrations, and this attracts to itself some of the appropriate elemental essence of the astral world. Such a thought-form has for its body this elemental essence, and for its animating soul the desire or passion which threw it forth; according to the amount of mental energy combined with this desire or passion will be the force of the thought-form. These, like those belonging to the mental plane, are called artificial elementals, and they are by far the most common, as few thoughts of ordinary men and women are untinged with desire, passion or emotion.

It may be well to remark that, in this last respect, our illustrations are a little misleading, for the thought-forms of which the air is full are far more composite than those selected as examples. These drawings represent simple thoughts and passions, of characteristic types, whereas most of those seen by the clairvoyant are exceedingly mixed; love is mixed with selfishness, or ambition, or jealousy, and each of these feelings throws its own vibrations, *i.e.*, its own colour, into the emotion, and the intermixture of course changes the shade, or perhaps combines with the original into a new and distinct colour. But the principles which underlie the production of thought-forms will be most easily appreciated by studying them in their simpler expressions, and when the student has grasped these, he can readily analyse the more complicated cases which, should he happen to be clairvoyant, will come under his immediate observation. In mental chemistry as in physical it is advisable to study simple substances at the beginning, and to take up the analysis of complicated compounds when some facility has been gained.

Three general principles underlie the production of all thought-forms;

1. Quality of thought determines colour.
2. Nature of thought determines form.
3. Definiteness of thought determines clearness of outline.

*Colour.* Colours depend on the number of vibrations that take place in a second, and this is true in the astral and mental worlds as well as in the physical. If the astral and mental bodies are vibrating under the influence of devotion, the aura will be suffused with blue, more or less intense, beautiful and pure according to the depth, elevation and purity of the feeling. In a church, such thought-forms may be seen rising, for the most part not very definitely outlined, but rolling masses of blue clouds (Fig. 1). Too often the colour is dulled by the intermixture of selfish feelings, when the blue is mixed with browns and thus loses its pure brilliancy. But the devotional thought of an unselfish heart is very lovely in colour, like the deep blue of a summer sky. Though such clouds of blue will often shine out golden stars of great brilliancy, darting upwards like a shower of sparks.

Anger gives rise to red, of all shades from lurid brick-red to brilliant scarlet; brutal anger (Fig. 4) will show as flashes of lurid dull red from dark-brown clouds, while the anger of "noble indignation" is a vivid scarlet, by no means unbeautiful to look at though it gives an unpleasant thrill.

Affection, love, sends out clouds of rosy hue (Fig. 7), varying from dull crimson, where the love is animal in its nature, rose-red mingled with brown when selfish, or with dull green when jealous (Fig. 10) to the most exquisite shades of delicate rose like the early flushes of the dawning, as the love becomes purified from all selfish elements, and flows out in wider and wider circles of generous impersonal tenderness and compassion to all who are in need.

Intellect produces yellow thought-forms (Fig. 11), the pure reason directed to spiritual ends giving rise to a very beautiful delicate yellow, while used for more selfish ends or mingled with ambition it yields deep shades of orange, clear and intense (Fig. 12).

*Form.* According to the nature of the thought will be the form it generates. In the thought-forms of devotion the flower which is figured was a thought of pure devotion offered to One worshipped by the thinker, a thought of self-surrender, of sacrifice (Fig. 2).

Such thoughts constantly assume flower-like forms, exceedingly

beautiful, varying much in outline but characterized by curved upward-pointing petals like azure flames. It is this flower-like characteristic of devotion that may have led to the direction, by those who saw, of offering flowers as part of religious worship, figuring in suggestive material forms that which was visible in the astral world, hinting at things unseen by things seen, and influencing the mind by an appropriate symbology. A beam of blue light, like a pencil of rays, shot upwards towards the sky, was a thought of loving devotion to the Christ from the mind of a Christian. The five-pointed star (Fig. 3), was a thought directed towards the LOGOS, a devotional aspiration to be in harmony with cosmic law, as the expression of His nature, and it was these latter elements which gave it its geometrical form, while the mental constituents added the yellow rays. Thoughts which assume geometrical shapes, such as the circle, cube, pyramid, triangle, pentacle, double triangle, and the like, are thoughts concerned with cosmic order, or they are metaphysical concepts. Thus if this star were yellow, it would be a thought directed intellectually to the working of law, in connexion with the LOGOS or with rational man.

The lurid flash from dark clouds (Fig. 4) was taken from the aura of a rough and partially intoxicated man in the East End of London as he struck down a woman; the flash darted out at her the moment before he raised his hand to strike, and caused a shuddering feeling of horror, as though it might slay. The keen-pointed stiletto-like dart (Fig. 5) was a thought of steady anger, intense and desiring vengeance, of the quality of murder, sustained through years and directed against a person who had inflicted a deep injury on the one who sent it forth; had the latter been possessed of a strong and trained will, such a thought-form would slay, and the one nourishing it is running a very serious danger of becoming a murderer in act as well as in thought in a future incarnation. Fig. 6 is a thought of anger of an explosive kind, with elements of mentality mixed with it, rendering it far more dangerous than it would have been if merely passionate.

Among the thought-forms of affection Fig. 8 is very good—a thought of love, clearly defined and definitely directed towards its object. Fig. 9 is a thought which is loving but appropriative, seeking to draw to itself and to hold. In Fig. 10 love has become quite



FIG. 1.



FIG. 2.



FIG. 3.



FIG. 4.



FIG. 5.



FIG. 6.



FIG. 7.



FIG. 8.



FIG. 9.



FIG. 10.



FIG. 11.



FIG. 12.



merged in jealousy, and we have here a type of thought which comes rolling out, suffusing the whole aura, and setting up troubled, irregular, vibrant motions of a character most distressing to the creator of them, and unpleasant to all whom he approaches.

Fig. 12 is a characteristic form of a strong and ambitious thought; it was taken from the aura of a man of keen intellect and noble character, who was ambitious (and worthy) to wield power, and whose thoughts were turned to the public good. The ambitious element contributes the hooked extensions, just as the grasping love in Fig. 9 causes similar protrusions.

*Clearness of outline.* This depends entirely on the definiteness of the thought, and is a comparatively rare thing. Contrast Figs. 1, 2, and 3. Vague, dreamy devotion yields the cloudy mass of Fig. 1, and comparatively few worshippers show anything but this. So the great majority of people when thinking send out such clouds as Fig. 11. The creator of Fig. 2 knew just what he meant, and so did the creator of Fig. 3. There was no drifting, no "wobbling," clear, pure and strong were the thoughts of these devotees. The sharpness of outline is very noticeable in Figs. 4 and 5; there is no indecision, no hesitation, and this is often the case with angry thoughts, for they are roused by a definite object, and strike directly at that object with passion and force. So again the person who generated the form represented by Fig. 8 had a very clear and definite love directed towards a specific object, and the maker of Fig. 12 meant to carry out the thought there outlined.

A thought-form may assume the shape of its projector; if a person wills strongly to be present at a particular place, to visit a particular person, and be seen, such a thought-form may take his own shape, and a clairvoyant present at the desired spot would see what he would probably mistake for his friend in the astral body. Such a thought-form might convey a message, if that formed part of its content, setting up in the astral body of the person reached vibrations like its own, and these being passed on by that astral body to the brain, where they would be translated into a thought or a sentence. Such a thought-form, again, might convey to its projector, by the magnetic relation between them, vibrations impressed on itself.

A thought of love and of desire to protect directed strongly



towards some beloved object creates a form which goes to the person thought of and remains in his aura as a shielding and protecting agent ; it will seek all opportunities to serve, and all opportunities to defend, not by a conscious and deliberate action, but by a blind following out of the impulse impressed upon it, and it will strengthen friendly forces that impinge on the aura and weaken unfriendly ones. Thus may we create and maintain veritable guardian angels round those we love, and many a mother's prayer for a distant child thus circles round him, though she knows not the method by which her "prayer is answered."

In cases in which good or evil thoughts are projected at individuals, those thoughts, if they are to directly fulfil their mission, must find in the aura of the object to whom they are sent, materials capable of responding sympathetically to their vibrations. Any combination of matter can only vibrate within certain definite limits, and if the thought-form be outside all the limits within which the aura is capable of vibrating, it cannot affect that aura at all. It consequently rebounds from it, and that with a force proportionate to the energy with which it impinged upon it. This is why it is said that a pure heart and mind are the best protectors against any inimical assaults, for such a pure heart and mind will construct an astral and a mental body of fine and subtle materials, and these bodies cannot respond to vibrations that demand coarse and dense matter. If an evil thought, projected with malefic intent, strikes such a body, it can only rebound from it, and it is flung back with all its own energy ; it then flies backward along the magnetic line of least resistance, that which it has just traversed, and strikes its projector ; he, having matter in his astral and mental bodies similar to that of the thought-form he generated, is thrown into respondent vibrations, and suffers the destructive effects he had intended to cause to another. Thus "curses [and blessings] come home to roost." From this arise also the very serious effects of hating or suspecting a good and highly-advanced man ; the thought-forms sent against him cannot injure him and they rebound against their projectors, shattering them mentally, morally, or physically. Several such instances are well known to members of the Theosophical Society, having come under their direct observation. So long as any of the coarser kinds of matter connected with evil and selfish

thoughts remain in a person's body, he is open to attack from those who wish him evil, but when he has perfectly eliminated these by self-purification his haters cannot injure him, and he goes on calmly and peacefully amid all the darts of their malice. But it is bad for those who shoot out such darts.

I have but opened a big subject, but sufficient is here said perhaps, to help the readers of LUCIFER to a clearer understanding of what is meant by the familiar term "thought-forms."

ANNIE BESANT.

