E. C. (1857), AGE THIRTEEN.

MY DAYS AND DREAMS

BEING AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

BY

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WITH PORTRAITS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

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VII

SHEFFIELD AND SOCIALISM

DURING my absence in the United States, my friend Harold Cox, who had just left Cambridge, came down to Millthorpe and spent a good part of the summer there—remaining a bit after my return home. He wanted to get manual and farm and garden experience, and that same autumn he plunged into farming—took a farm at Tilford in Surrey, and inducted a little colony into it. But the land was mere sand, and the experience of one winter and spring was enough! In less than a year he gave the place up, and went out, by way of a change, to India, to the Anglo-Mohammedan College at Futtehgur. While in India he went in '85 or '86 for a tour in Cashmere, and from Cashmere he sent me a pair of Indian sandals. I had asked him, before he went out, to send some likely pattern of sandals, as I felt anxious to try some myself. I soon found the joy of wearing them. And after a little time I set about making them. I got two or three lessons from W. Lill, a bootmaker friend in Sheffield, and soon succeeded in making a good many pairs for myself and various friends. Since then the trade has grown into quite a substantial one. G. Adams took it up at Millthorpe in 1889; making, I suppose, about a hundred or more pairs a year; and since his death it has been carried on at the Garden City, Letchworth.

In 1885 I published the second edition of *Towards Democracy*—still through John Heywood; and early in '86 quite an important local event occurred in the establishment of our Sheffield Socialist Society. One or two of us beat round the town and got together a few Socialists and advanced Radicals; we persuaded William Morris to come down (early in March)—and the result of that was the formation of the Society.

At that time, William Morris, having with a few others parted from Hyndman and the S.D.F., had founded the Socialist League—branches of which were springing up merrily all over the country. And it was William Morris's great hope, often expressed in the *Commonweal* and elsewhere, that these branches growing and spreading, would before long "reach hands" to each other and form a network over the land—would constitute in fact "the New Society" within the framework of the old, and destined ere long to replace the old. No doubt the forces of reaction—the immense apathy of the masses, the immense resistance of the official and privileged classes, entrenched behind the Law and the State, and the immense and growing power of Money—were things not then fully realized and understood. There seemed a good hope for the realization of Morris' dream—and we most of us shared in it. But History is a difficult horse to drive. In this matter of the Socialist movement, as in other matters, it has always been liable to take the most unexpected turns; and the little League societies after flourishing gaily for a few years—suddenly began to wane and die out; I believe indeed that at this moment there is not one of them left. Morris saw with some sadness that his hope was not going to be fulfilled—and though I do not think that he altogether lost heart

he was fain in his last years to bury his disappointment in a return to his art work, and even to favour as a forlorn hope the Parliamentary side in revolutionary politics! It is curious indeed in this matter to see how, of all the innumerable little societies—of the S.D.F., the League, the Fabians, the Christian Socialists, the Anarchists, the Freedom groups, the I.L.P., the Clarion societies, and local groups of various names—all supporting one side or another of the general Socialist movement—not one of them has grown to any great volume, or to commanding and permanent influence; and how yet, and at the same time, the general teaching and ideals of the movement have permeated society in the most remarkable way, and have deeply infected the views of all classes, as well as general literature and even municipal and imperial politics. Perhaps it is a matter for much congratulation that things have turned out so. If the movement had been pocketed by any one man or section it would have been inevitably narrowed down. As it is, it has taken on something of an oceanic character; and if by its very lack of narrowness it has lost a little in immediate results, its ultimate success we may think is all the more assured.

The real value of the modern Socialist movement—it has always seemed to me—has not lain so much in its actual constructive programme as (1) in the fact that it has provided a text for a searching criticism of the old society and of the lives of the rich, and (2) the fact that it has enshrined a most glowing and vital enthusiasm towards the realization of a new society. It is these two points which have always drawn and attached me to it. The constructive details of the future are things about which there may and indeed must be different opinions.

The necessity of organization in society, and of united action, the avoidance of officialism and bureaucracy, the handling of the land so as to afford the most general access to it, the barring of monopolies and of all industrial parasitism, the liberation of labour to dignity and self-reliance, the conduct of public ownership, the questions of taxation, representation, education, etc.—these are all most complex affairs whose united and detailed solution can only proceed step by step, by slow trial and experience. We must expect mistakes and differences of opinion here. Nevertheless I think we may say that in the broad lines of its constructive policy Socialism has taken the right course and the one which time will justify. It has laid down in fact once for all the principles that parasitism and monopoly must cease, and it has set before itself the ideal of a society which while it accords to every individual as full scope as possible for the exercise of his faculties and enjoyment of the fruits of his own labour, will in return expect from the individual his hearty contribution to the general well-being, and at least to claim nothing for his own which (or the value of which) he has not by his own effort produced. Towards the fulfilment of these aims Socialism has proposed a guarded public ownership of land and of some of the more important industries (guarded, that is, against the dangers of officialism), and it seems likely that this general programme is the one along which western society will work in the near future; that is, till such time as the State, quâ State, and all efficient Government, are superseded by the voluntary and instinctive consent and mutual helpfulness of the people—when of course the more especially Anarchist ideal would be realized.

As I say, while there is practically no dissent

about the future form of society as one which shall embody to the fullest extent the two opposite poles of Communism and Individualism in one vital unity, there may and naturally must be differences on the question of the detailed working out of the problem, and indeed it may well be that the solution will take somewhat different forms in different places and among different peoples.

It has not been, I repeat, the belief in special constructive details as panaceas which has led me into the Socialist camp, so much as the fact that the movement has been a distinct challenge to the old order and a call to the rich and those in power to remodel society and their own lives ; and that other fact that within the Socialist camp has burned that wonderful enthusiasm and belief in a new ideal of fraternity—which however crude and inexperienced it may at times appear is surely destined to conquer and rule the world at last.

It is this latter side of the movement which by the outsider is so little known and understood. Those who stand outside a revolutionary agitation, or who look down on it from above, necessarily only see the defiant subversive elements of it, they do not guess the glowing heart within. To me, passing from time to time from one stratum of life to quite another, it was a strange experience and not without its comic side, to see the wildly different features which one and the same movement wore to those within and those without ; to hear Socialism spoken of from above, as nothing but an envious shriek and a threat, a gospel of bread and butter, a grab, a " divide up all round "—the work of unscrupulous demagogues and tinsel politicians ; and then the next moment to pass into the heart of the thing and to find oneself in an atmosphere of

the most simple fraternity and idealism, where the coming of the kingdom of Heaven, a kingdom of social order and decency, was entertained with a childlike faith that might almost make one smile ; where it seemed only necessary to go out into the streets and preach the better ideals for crowds to flock to the standard ; and where, if a betterment of conditions was the main thing sought for, it was a betterment of social life and a satisfaction of the needs of the heart fully as much as an increased allowance of bread and butter. It was a strange experience to pass from cold to hot, and from hot to cold, as it were, and to realize how little those in the one current could understand what was going on in the other.

Certainly from what experience I have had of a movement at one time thought very revolutionary, I am inclined to think that most revolutions must have been pretty well justified before they took place. One hears of dangerous mobs led by demagogues and fed on fancied wrongs ; and of course there are such things in every movement as self-seeking blusterers, or designing misleaders ; there is ignorance and non-reasoning exasperation ; but my experience of the (British) masses is that instead of being too inflammable, they are surely only too *slow* to move, too slow to perceive the burdens which they bear, or to point out the cause of their own suffering ; and—in the Socialist agitation—the number and influence of the blusterers and self-seekers compared with the genuine leaders has always been very small. No, revolutions do not take place without cause ; and I doubt whether in any case the excesses accompanying a rising have exceeded the cruelties and injuries of the preceding tyranny. There is such a heart of tenderness and

patient common sense in the mass of the people—everywhere I believe—as to convince one that, notwithstanding the slanders that have been heaped up by the arm-chair historian, they are really more inclined to endure than to accuse, more ready to forgive than retaliate. No—the general Socialist movement (including therein the Anarchist) has done and is still doing a great and necessary work—and I am proud to have belonged to it. It has defined a dream and an ideal, that of the common life conjoined to the free individuality, which somewhere and somewhen must be realized, because it springs from and is the expression of the very root-nature of Man.

Our "Sheffield Socialists," though common working men and women, understood well enough the broad outlines of this ideal. They hailed William Morris and his work with the most sincere appreciation. I found among them the most interesting personalities, saturated for the most part, as I have said, with the thought of fraternity and fellowship; and I made one or two lifelong friends.

We organized lectures, addresses, pamphlets, with a street-corner propaganda which soon brought us in amusing and exciting incidents in the way of wrangles with the police and the town-crowds. At first an atmosphere of considerable suspicion rested upon the movement, and dynamite and daggers were assumed by outsiders to be indispensable parts of our equipment; but as time went on, and after a few years, this died away—and where there had been only jeers or taunts at first, crowds came to listen with serious and sympathetic mien. A dozen or twenty at most formed the moving and active element of our society—though its membership may have been a hundred or more; and these disposed themselves

G. E. H.

(One of the first "Sheffield Socialists.")

to their various functions. Mrs. Usher, large-bosomed and large-hearted, would move on the out-skirts of our open-air meetings, armed with a bundle of literature. She was an excellent saleswoman and few could resist her hearty appeal "Buy this pamphlet, love, it will do you good!" Even in the streets or the tramcars the most solemn and substantial old gentlemen fell a prey to her. Her brothers, the two Binghams, were among our two speakers, and both of them pretty effective, the one in a logical, the other in a more oratorical way. They were provision merchants in the town; and their business suffered at first, but afterwards gained, by the connection. Then there was Shortland, handsome, fiery and athletic, an engine fitter, always ready for a row and to act as 'chucker out' if required. Or J. M. Brown, who took quite an opposite part. He (tailor by trade) the very picture of kindness and broad good-nature would move among the crowd as if he hardly belonged to us, and engaging persuasively in conversation, first with one and then with another, would draw many a doubter into the fold; or George E. Hukin, with his Dutch-featured face and Dutch build—no speaker, nor prominent in public—but though young an excel-lent help at our committee meetings, where his shrewd strong brain and tactful nature gave his counsels much weight; and always from the beginning a special ally of mine; or George Adams, afterwards associated with me at Millthorpe, with his amusing quips and sallies, and plucky antagonisms, a good friend and a good hater, and always ready for an adventurous bout; or Raymond Unwin, who would come over from Chesterfield to help us, a young man of cultured antecedents, of first-rate ability and good sense,

healthy, democratic, vegetarian, and now I need not say a well-known architect and promoter of Garden Cities.

Then at one time there was Fred Charles—who was afterwards accused of an anarchist plot and sentenced, most unfairly, to ten years' hard labour. He was already leaning to the Anarchist side of the movement, but was ready to work with us ; and certainly was one of the most devoted of workers. No surrender or sacrifice for the 'cause' was too great for him ; and as to his own earnings (as clerk) or possessions, he practically gave them all away to tramps or the unemployed. The case was tried at Stafford in March '92 by Justice Hawkins, and though the incriminating evidence was quite slender yet, there being a panic on at the time with regard to Anarchism, there was an obvious determination to convict. I appeared in the box to testify to Charles' excellent character and public spirit, but needless to say without success. Or there was Burton, engine-tenter, rather a type of the stout, somewhat self-satisfied and ignorant street-speaker, who would get us into trouble shouting "The land for the people!" or other cant phrases of the period, with really no clear idea of what they meant, and would have to be rescued when attacked or challenged by some keener critic among the audience; or again, Jonathan Taylor, the very opposite in type to these, tall, lean, logical and conclusive to the last degree; who with a kind of homely unconquerable humour, compelled his hearers from finger to finger, and from point to point, of his argument, and somehow always succeeded in holding the most restive crowd, and for any period. He had been on the school-board at one time, and was useful to us also by his knowledge of local and municipal expediencies. Or

again, John Furniss : he was a remarkable man, and perhaps the very first to preach the modern Socialism in the streets of Sheffield. A quarryman by trade, keen and wiry both in body and in mind, a thorough-going *Christian* Socialist, and originally I believe a bit of a local preacher ; he had somehow at an early date got hold of the main ideas of the movement ; and in the early 'eighties used to stride in—he and his companion George Pearson —five or six miles over the Moors, to Sheffield in order to speak at the Pump or the Monolith ; and then stride out again in the middle of the night. And this he kept up for years and years, and when later he migrated to another quarry about the same distance from Chesterfield did exactly the same thing there ; for perhaps twenty years, with marvellous energy and perseverance, he must have kept up this propaganda ; and the amount of effective influence he must have exercised would be hard to reckon.

Such were some of the characters with whom I found myself associated, and for five or six years we carried on the Society with the utmost friendliness, accord and enthusiasm. It was a most interesting time. I knew all those mentioned and many others, very intimately, was familiar in their houses, stayed with them, knew all their goings-out and comings-in, and something of the details of their various trades.

In 1887 we took a large house and shop in Scotland Street, a poor district of the town ; and opened a café, using the large room above for a meeting and lecture room, and the house for a joint residence for some of us who were more immediately concerned in carrying on the business. We had all sorts of social gatherings, lectures, teas, entertainments in the Hall—the wives and sisters of the

" comrades " helping, especially in the social work ; we had Annie Besant, Charlotte Wilson, Kropotkin, Hyndman, and other notables down to speak for us ; we gave teas to the slum-children who dwelt in the neighboring crofts and alleys (but these had at first to be given up on account of the poor little things tearing themselves and each other to pieces, perfect mobs of them, in their frantic attempts to gain admittance—a difficulty which no arrangement of tickets or of personal supervision seemed to obviate) ; and we organized excursions into municipal politics ; and country propaganda. This last was often amusing as well as interesting. While, in the towns, as time went on, audiences grew in numbers and attentiveness, it still remained very difficult to capture the country districts. The miners would really not be uninterested, but in their sullen combative way they would take care not to show it. Many a time we have gone down to some mining village and taken up our stand on some heap of slag or broken wall, and the miners would come round and stand about or sit down deliberately *with their backs to the speaker*, and spit, and converse, as if quite heedless of the oration going on. But after a time, and as speaker succeeded speaker, one by one they would turn round—their lower jaws dropping—fairly captivated by the argument. It was much the same with the country rustics—but as a rule less successful. I remember on one occasion seven or eight of us, armed with literature, going for a long country walk to Hathersage in the Derbyshire dales. We had Tom Maguire with us, from Leeds, an excellent speaker, full of Irish wit and persuasiveness. We set him upon a stoneheap in the middle of the village and standing round him ourselves while he spoke, acted as decoy ducks to

bring the villagers together. The latter full of curiosity came, in moderate numbers, but not one of them would approach nearer than a distance of twenty or thirty yards—just far enough to make the speaker despair of really reaching them. In vain we separated and going round tried to coax them to come nearer. In vain the speaker shouted himself hoarse and fired off his best jokes. Not a bit of it—they weren't going to be fooled by us ! and at last red in the face and out of breath and with a string of curses, Tom descended from his cairn, and we all, shaking the dust of the village off our feet, departed !

I meanwhile and during these years, not only took part in our local work, but spoke and lectured in the Socialist connection all round the country—at Bradford, Halifax, Leeds, Glasgow, Dundee, Edinburgh, Hull, Liverpool, Nottingham and other places —my subjects the failures of the present Commercial system, and the possible reorganization of the future. As to the Café, we were only able to hold to it for a year. Though quite a success from the propagandist point of view, financially it was a failure. The refreshment department was not patronized nearly enough to make it pay. The neighborhood was an exceedingly poor one. And so we were obliged to surrender the place, and retire to smaller quarters. During that year however I really lived most of the time at the Scotland Street place. I occupied a large attic at the top of the house, *almost* high enough to escape the smells of the street below, but exposed to showers of blacks which fell from the innumerable chimneys around. In the early morning at 5 a.m. there was the strident sound of the ' hummers ' and the clattering of innumerable clogs of men and girls going to their

work, and on till late at night there were drunken cries and shouting. Far around stretched nothing but factory chimneys and foul courts inhabited by the wretched workers. It was, I must say, frightfully depressing; and all the more so because of tragic elements in my personal life at the time. Only the enthusiasm of our social work, and the abiding thoughts which had inspired *Towards Democracy* kept me going. I spent my spare time during the year in arranging and editing the collection of songs and music called *Chants of Labour*—a thing which might have been much better done by some one else, but I could find no one to do it. And it was a queer experience, collecting these songs of hope and enthusiasm, and composing such answering tunes and harmonies as I could, in the midst of these gloomy and discordant conditions.

As I say, we only stayed a year here, and as far as my health was concerned I don't think I could have endured it much longer. I realized the terrible drawback to health and vitality consequent on living in these slums of manufacturing towns, and the way these conditions are inevitably sapping the strength of our populations.

so conspicuous throughout his political life, was shared by his brother Assheton; and it used to be said that the two brothers never enjoyed themselves more thoroughly than when sitting knee to knee they spent an hour or so in 'imparting facts to each other'!

Another politician of my time, though a little younger than myself, was Augustine Birrell. Even in those days he was chiefly known for his quaint humours and jokes—though the term 'birrelling' had not then been adopted. But being, as an undergraduate, somewhat interested in politics and not at all interested in rowing, he did not bulk largely in the eyes of his contemporaries, and I fear was a little neglected. In a late letter to me he chaffs me in his own native style on my academic and clerical past, saying "I have the most vivid recollection of you as Junior Tutor. The marvellous neatness of your now discarded *white tie* lives especially in my untidy mind!"

Socialism and Millthorpe, I need hardly say, swept me out of these academic and semi-political surroundings into a different world—the world of a new society which was arising and forming within the structure of the old. William Morris represented this new society more effectively and vitally than any one else of that period; because away and beyond the scientific forecast he gave expression to the emotional presentment and ideal of a sensible free human brotherhood—as in *John Ball*, or *News from Nowhere*. His sturdy, brusque, sea-captain-like figure, with his fine-outlined face and tossing hair, his forcible unpolished speech, yet all so direct, sincere, enthusiastic—brought inspiration and confidence wherever he went; and for a time, as I have

already said, there was a widespread belief that the Socialist League was going to knit up all the United Kingdom in one bond of new life.[1] Having set the "Sheffield Socialists" going in '86, he came one day not long after to speak at Chesterfield, and stayed at Millthorpe a night or two. I remember his arriving from the train with Jefferies' book *After London* in his hands—which had just come out. The book delighted him with its prophecy of an utterly ruined and deserted London, gone down in swamps and malaria, with brambles and weeds spreading through slum streets and fashionable squares, and pet dogs reverting to wolfish and carrion-hunting lives. And he read page after page of it to us with glee that evening as we sat round the fire. He hated modern civilization, and London as its representative, with a fierce hatred—its shams, its hypocrisies, its stuffy indoor life, its cheapjack style, its mean and mongrel ideals; with a hatred indeed which, I cannot but think, thousands and hundreds of thousands following him will one day share. Once he said to me, talking about his own life: "I have spent, I know, a vast amount of time designing furniture and wall-papers, carpets and curtains; but after all I am inclined to think that sort of thing is mostly rubbish, and I would prefer for my part to live with the plainest whitewashed walls and wooden chairs and tables." He certainly was no drawing-room sort of man. His immense energy did not run to small talk. As a rule in conversation, seized by his subject, and oblivious of the arguments of others, he would jump from his chair and stride up and down the room in ardent monologue—condemning the present or picturing the future or the past. I once asked his daughter, May,

[1] See p. 125, *supra* (Ch. VII).

what he did in the way of recreation. "My father never takes any recreation," she said, "he *merely changes his work*." And so it was. When he had been toiling at Merton Abbey all day, and preaching Socialism at a street corner all the evening, then at night—sick of the ugly life around him—he would come home and dream himself away into the fourteenth century, and for his recreation produce a masterpiece like *John Ball*. Be it said, nevertheless, that he did sometimes relax, and that when in the humour, no one enjoyed a pipe and a glass and the jovial company of friends and the telling of good stories, more than William Morris.

My friend Henry Salt tells me that he heard more than once Morris recite the following stanza —apparently delighting in its quaint grace—but whether Morris composed it himself or had found it elsewhere he does not know :—

> See o'er the sea Flamingos flaming go,
> The Lark hies high, the Swallow follows low,
> The Bees are busy on their threshold old,
> And Lambs lament within their threefold fold.

Among those who came from time to time to speak for our Socialist group in Sheffield or to stay at our "Commonwealth" Café were, besides William Morris, two notable personalities—Peter Kropotkin and Annie Besant. Their work and influence, both worldwide—the one in the Anarchist, and the other in the Theosophist, field—have been really important. Though never myself strictly identified with either of these movements I have been in touch with them, and consequently in more or less friendly relation with their two leading spirits during a long period —now nearly thirty years. Both characters are certainly remarkable for their vigour, their sincerity,

their ability and devotion. Kropotkin at the age of seventy and after fifty years of passionate conflict with 'government' and 'authority' still retains his sunny and almost child-like temperament and still believes in the speedy oncoming of an age of perfectly voluntary and harmonious co-operation in the human race. Indeed it is mainly due to him that this magnificent dream has spread so far and wide over the world, and has done so much as it has towards its own realization. The dramatic circumstances too of Kropotkin's own life have greatly helped—his early escapes from prison and from death, his abandonment of a princely inheritance to become the companion and fellow-prisoner of criminals and outcasts, his later life spent in poverty and among obscure circles of enthusiasts—these things combined with encyclopædic knowledge and a high scientific reputation have compelled attention and respect. As in the case of many ardent social reformers, and certainly in the case of most notorious Anarchists, there is a charming naïveté about Kropotkin. It is so easy—if you believe that all human evil is summed up in the one fatal word 'government' (or it may be that the word is 'white-slave-traffic,' or 'war,' or 'drink,' or anything else) —to order your life and your theories accordingly. Everything is explained by its relation to one thing. It is easy, but it is misleading. And Kropotkin's writings, despite their erudition, suffer from this naïveté. Whether it be History (his *French Revolution*), or Natural History (his *Mutual Aid*) or economic theory (his *Paroles d'un Revolté*) the reader finds one solution for everything, and the countervailing facts and principles consistently—though certainly not intentionally—ignored. This detracts from the value of the writings; though

in justice it should be said that the principles on which Kropotkin so vigorously insists—i.e. individual liberty and free association—*are* of foundational importance. In a country like Russia—obsessed by authority and officialism—it is not unnatural that its reformers, such as Tolstoy and Kropotkin, should be almost over-conscious of the governmental evil ; and this fact rather encourages the hope that Russia may one day after all be the leader in the great European reaction towards a freer and more voluntary state of society.

The naïveté of the social reformer explains too the common fact that the Anarchist who is in theory " thirsting for the blood of kings " and occasionally perhaps capable of perpetrating a deed of violence himself, is generally (like Kropotkin) the gentlest and mildest of men, who " would not hurt a fly." It is only such men—having the love of humanity in their hearts—who are able to believe in the speedy realization of an era of universal goodwill ; and again it is only such men—being innocent enough to believe that the only impediment to the realization of this era is a certain wicked person in ' authority '—who can spur themselves on to the bloody dispatch of such person.

If the career of Kropotkin has been romantically varied in one way, that of Mrs. Besant has been equally so in another. To begin as a curate's wife, with a vivid strain of religious devotion ; to break away into Broad Churchism and then into boundless disbelief ; to become an ardent Secularist, companion of Bradlaugh and propagandist of anti-population doctrines ; to suffer imprisonment, persecution, and embitterment of spirit ; to espouse the cause of Socialism and do battle in the ranks of Labour ; to float into the haven of Theosophy and

be made the mouthpiece of invisible Mahatmas and of the by no means invisible Mme. Blavatsky ; and finally to complete this quaint circle by becoming the high-priestess of a religious movement and the guardian of the herald of the coming Christ—such a career ought to satisfy the most picturesque ambition. Yet it would be unfair to doubt Annie Besant's sincerity. Having known her so long as I have I feel sure that she has been urged onward from point to point by a perfectly genuine mental evolution, largely directed no doubt at each turn of the road by some dominant mind whom she has met, and largely coloured by that naïveté of which we have already spoken—a naïveté indeed which has made it possible for her to take herself very seriously and to fulfil her adopted rôle always with a strong sense of duty and a comparatively weak perception of the humour of the situation.

From the hour when, alone in the pulpit of her husband's church, Annie Besant discovered her own great oratorical gift, her future career, one may say, was decided. With an excellent capacity for logical and clear statement she became the exponent in succession of large and important blocks of modern thought. She helped to batter down the ruins and remains of the stupefied old Anglican Church ; she gave the general mind a wholesome shock on the Malthusian question ; she dotted out clearly the main lines of the Socialist movement ; she formed a new channel for religious thought by making the words ' Karma ' and ' re-incarnation ' familiar ; and she sought to bring the Western public into touch with the great agelong ideas and inspirations of the old Indian sages. In all these ways she has done splendid work, and helped vastly in the construction of that great twentieth century bridge which