

ANNIE BESANT: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY. T. Fisher Unwin, Third Impression, 5s.

It is a splendid oasis in the desert of silly memoirs, this sturdy and valiant record of a very noble life.

How surely and steadily has Mrs. Besant moved, urged by the one unselfish thought, high-minded love for humanity, from her Eden through the hell of revolt to the Paradise that so few earn! And she is still fighting in the flesh, though her spirit has its peace.

Priceless and unenvied reward of suffering!

True it is, that the chosen of the Masters must leave all. The lightest breeze can stir the Feather of our Lady Maat; there must be no breath of passion or thought, if we would live in those Halls of Hers,

“ Elysian, windless, fortunate abodes

Beyond Heaven’s constellated wilderness.”

And to one who shares, however humbly, her high hope, and love exalted, and faith transcending, who is confronted by the same foes that she has beaten, assailed by the same slanders that she has lived down, her book comes as a direct message from the Masters: "Courage, child!—there lies a great reward immediately beyond. Nay! but for the work’s sake, work! Though thou perish, let them be saved. And remember: there is not one single grain of dust that shall not attain to Buddhahood."

Self-doubt, and self-distrust: these find little place in Mrs. Besant’s story; yet surely they attack all of us alike who strive to those calm heights. Is it that they are ultimately forgotten, like all lesser ills? Is the spectre, self, laid beyond remembrance, even, of its horror; that horror which seems branded into the brain of whoso has beheld it?

Long years are they through which Mrs. Besant fought with hardly a friend or a helper; must it be so for all of us? Yes, for we are all too blind to know our friends, our wardens, the Stones in the great Wall of Arhans that guards humanity.

We have been with James Thomson and watched the dreadful seeker go his unending round to the death-places of love and faith and hope; we have passed out of the doomed triangle into the infinite circle of emerald that girdles the Universe, the circle wherein stands he, the Master whose name is Octinomus.