

Review
***The Initiate in the Dark Cycle*, by His Pupil (Cyril Scott)**
(George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., London)
By “C.W.L.” (C.W. Leadbeater)
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This is the third of a series of books which began some years ago with a volume called *The Initiate*, by His Pupil. This third volume seems to me to have more story in it than its predecessors, and there is a distinct Theosophical flavour in many of the conversations. It is evident that the writer is well acquainted with the magnificent system which we usually label as Theosophy; but in saying that, I do not at all mean to insinuate that he has merely borrowed the teaching from older books. Madame Blavatsky introduced the system to the Western world, and showed us the way in which her statements might be verified. Some of us, following her directions, *have* verified for ourselves an enormous number of those statements, and have thus proved *to ourselves* that the system is truly described—that the great facts of nature are as therein stated. That is, of course, no actual proof to anyone else; but it *is* a piece of evidence which any impartial critic ought to take into account.

But those facts of nature exist for the investigation, examination and study of anyone who will qualify himself for that arduous work; they may be seen, and undoubtedly have been seen, by many who for various reasons have not enrolled themselves among her pupils or joined her Society. We must beware of the illusion that we alone possess the key of the Mysteries, that none can have access to the great Masters of the Wisdom except through this one Theosophical channel. There are many pitfalls in the way of the investigator, many possibilities of deception or delusion; we may perhaps venture to claim for ourselves that those who have devoted half a century to the close study of these subjects, and have been specially trained to avoid those pitfalls, are on the whole less likely to stumble into them than the less experienced inquirers; but that, I think, is the most that can be said.

[114] Regarding the book for the moment merely as a novel, one would say that it is clever and brightly written; some of the characters are very lifelike and well-portrayed. Many interesting remarks are made, some of which one would unreservedly endorse, while others one would receive with considerable caution; but they often express a new and striking point of view. I am glad to notice that our author mentions both Madame Blavatsky and our President (Dr. Besant) in a respectful and appreciative manner.

A point which is arousing some controversy is that he has a good deal to say about Krishnaji also, with much of which I cannot quite agree, though there is some truth in it. He seems to think that Krishnaji has failed in his mission, has been largely left to himself, and will soon be superseded by a female teacher, who is to draw the whole world into her train. I do not know anything about this lady, but I do not consider that Krishnaji is a failure. I admit that some of his statements have been

inaccurate, a little fanatical, and not always tactfully put; but he is doing a difficult and important piece of work to the best of his ability.

(I should recommend all our members who are interested in this part of the subject to read with great care a remarkable article in the earlier part of this magazine, headed: " Krishnamurti's World of the Intuition.")

I do not know the name of the author of this book; there was a persistent rumour that Bishop Wedgwood was the Initiate, and Mr. Cyril Scott the pupil; the first part of that story, however, is explicitly denied in this volume. It is clear that the author belongs to a certain group of students, one of whom has recently written a book which he has entitled *Through the Eyes of the Masters*, which will probably also attract some attention. It contains several chapters, each of which is supposed to have been written or dictated by one of the Masters. There is nothing harmful in them, though somehow they do not quite "ring true," and are hardly up to the level one would expect. They are accompanied by nine illustrations, intended to be portraits of our Masters; some of them are quite good faces, but they emphatically do *not* resemble those Great Ones whom we know so well. I cannot recommend *that* book, because the portraits are all inaccurate, and I cannot but doubt the alleged authorship, though I feel sure that the writer fully believes in his own impressions and visions.

It must also always be borne in mind that *all* attempted portraits of the Great Adepts are necessarily drawn from memory, and must [115] therefore represent the seer's impression of the Face; and the impression of one man may differ quite widely from that of his brother student. *All* attempts to reproduce on this lower plane those wonderful Faces are foredoomed to failure, though one may come nearer to success than another. One portrait alone we have which was painted with ordinary physical colours in the house of, and in the actual presence of, the Master whom it represents; but even so His pupils are by no means satisfied with it!

But *The Initiate in the Dark Cycle* is different from this; it reminds me in some ways of Mr. Sinnett's novel *Karma*; there are many nice passages in it, and I think on the whole it will do more good than harm.

C.W.L.