

SINCE the separation of this journal from the fortnightly News Sheet, which is now sent to all Members of the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain, it has fortunately been unnecessary to refer to matters which are subjects of dissension in the General Anthroposophical Society. I cannot help feeling, however, that there would be a sort of affectation in passing over without any comment at all the fact that the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain was, on April 14th last, declared by a large majority in General Meeting at Dornach, to be no longer a recognised Group of the General Society, while our own General Secretary, Mr. Dunlop, and Mr. Kaufmann were (with five other leading Members), declared to be no longer Members.

While the identity of the Society which passed this resolution with the Society founded by Rudolf Steiner is no longer admitted, it would, nevertheless, be stupid to make light of this event, idle to pretend that the manner in which it has been brought about does not affect our spirits and tend to sap insidiously our very faith in the power of Anthroposophy to mould character and foster community. I do not feel called upon to expatiate further on the event itself or the long disputes which preceded it, but as editor of an Anthroposophical Journal I do feel disposed to comment briefly on the document entitled *Denkschrift*, 154 pages long, which has been translated into English under the name *Memorandum*, and is, I am told, receiving an extensive circulation among Members in this country and elsewhere.

In truth, comment is difficult enough. What can one say of a book, signed by twelve well-known anthroposophists and purporting to give a sort of inner history of the Society for the last ten years, which is, nevertheless, pervaded throughout by a sustained ebullition of personal rancour that would be disgusting even if the facts were as represented? Nor is this the whole of the matter. Those who have not actually seen this astonishing "White Book" will hardly believe that the plentiful charges which it brings against named individuals (serious charges of more than one of the seven deadly sins) are interlarded with (*horresco referens*) playful, almost kittenish, slaps of sarcasm bodied in epithets, asides, dashes, exclamation-marks and inverted commas. The style in which this affair is conceived and written is to me the most baffling thing about it. It is not content with insinuating clearly and repeatedly that the persons against whom it is directed are unmitigated egoists and liars; it cannot refrain from poking them simultaneously in the ribs; it chucks them under the chin; it taps them archly on the shoulder with a fan and looks coyly away with a side-glance down. I have never met anything like it before and hope never to do so again. Here is one example of the way in which ill-nature, in its anxiety to lose no opportunity of stinging, degenerates into a positive silliness, that is unanswerable because it is unintelligible.

On page 96 a Report signed by eight members of the Executive Council of the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain of a meeting held in Dornach on November 29th, 1930, is quoted in full. This Report contained the following sentence:

"With great earnestness Dr. Wachsmuth placed before the members the picture that had never been absent from the minds of many—the Goetheanum - the needs of the Goetheanum on the physical plane and the liability of the Society for its maintenance."

On the next page of the Memorandum this sentence is described as "a peculiar example of Mr. Kaufmann's sentimental style." Nothing more is said of it. Just that. No reason is given for saying it; no inference drawn; no suggestion made. Simply: "Then follows a peculiar example of Mr. Kaufmann's sentimental style."

I confess that this sort of remark produces in me a great sense of hopelessness than do the pointed, and of course libellous, comments which precede it, accusing the eight signatories to the report of conspiring to deceive the English Members; for this sort of remark appears to me to be not only motiveless, but actually meaningless. I simply do not understand it at all. I follow the grammar and syntax; everything else about it is totally incomprehensible to me. Of what kind of

consciousness can it be the expression?

One can remonstrate even with malignity. One can respect indignation - even mistaken indignation and endeavour to avoid irritating it further. One can argue with a person who has lost his temper, for one is at least still in communication with him. But to those who speak as if they had lost their reason at the same time, there is no reply but silence. Incidentally, I happen to have not merely signed, but actually written this Report myself; but I do not think that is of any particular importance.

As to the facts alleged it requires no legal training, the most rudimentary sense of natural justice will dismiss this Memorandum as worth considerably less than the paper it is written on. If the authors themselves believe what they say (and I must believe that they do), there is reason for a proper judicial enquiry at which both sides would be heard. Meanwhile, calumnies uttered not in the presence of the accused by witnesses who have not stood up to cross examination are not evidence one way or the other. They are simply mud.

Here at any rate I am concerned with this ill-starred Memorandum only from the point of view of the object for which this journal exists, that is, the furtherance through the Anthroposophical Society, founded by Rudolf Steiner, of the spreading of the knowledge of Anthroposophy among English-speaking peoples. Now this knowledge is also spreading in other ways. Rudolf Steiner's books are published and their greatness is such that it cannot fail to be perceived more and more clearly as time goes on. It cannot be doubted that there are already in this country many close students of Rudolf Steiner's writings who take no notice whatever of this Society or any other. It is possible to look, say fifty, say one hundred years ahead and to ask oneself whether by that time what is now known as the Anthroposophical Society will have anything more than a historical connection with the main stream of Anthroposophical thought in this country. Will it still comprise the main body of the students of Rudolf Steiner's work or will its membership be limited to a small and outlandish sect? If the Anthroposophical Society becomes identified in any way with documents of this amazing description, the answer to this question admits (the English temperament being what it is) of no doubt whatever. When mud is thrown, some of it always sticks. But the most powerful and the only lasting effect of this very very muddy Memorandum, as far as England is concerned, must be to render Anthroposophy both ludicrous and odious in all eyes. If it is placed by well-meaning zealots in the hands, let us say, of people who are deliberating whether to join the Anthroposophical Movement or not, then the difficulty will be, not to convince these persons that Herr this did really (or did not really) say this that and the other to Frau so-and-so, and all the rest of it (a question in which they will not be in the slightest degree interested) - the only difficulty will be to reassure them that it is possible to become an Anthroposophist working in association with other Anthroposophists without going completely off one's rocker.

Reputations, especially questionable ones, are easy to acquire, hard to dispel. Artillery which destroys the base from which it is discharged is not worth employing, even if it does some damage to the target. Will not the authors, publishers and disseminators of this deplorable document think carefully whether the damage which they hope to inflict on their now openly declared enemies is worth the damage which they must inflict on themselves, on the name of Rudolf Steiner, on all of us? I do not know whether this is "a peculiar example of Mr. Kaufmann's sentimental style." I do know that I mean it.

OWEN BARFIELD.

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