

J. Arthur Thomson: <sup>The System of</sup> Animal Nature.  
Fraser. Harris : Gl Design 272

JAT: " If we were told that the contrivance we admire  
was not made by an artificer at all but was turned  
out by an automatic machine, our admiration would  
simply be shifted to the designer of the original automatic  
machine."



To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake. How could I have looked him in the face?

! not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.

Epi 9



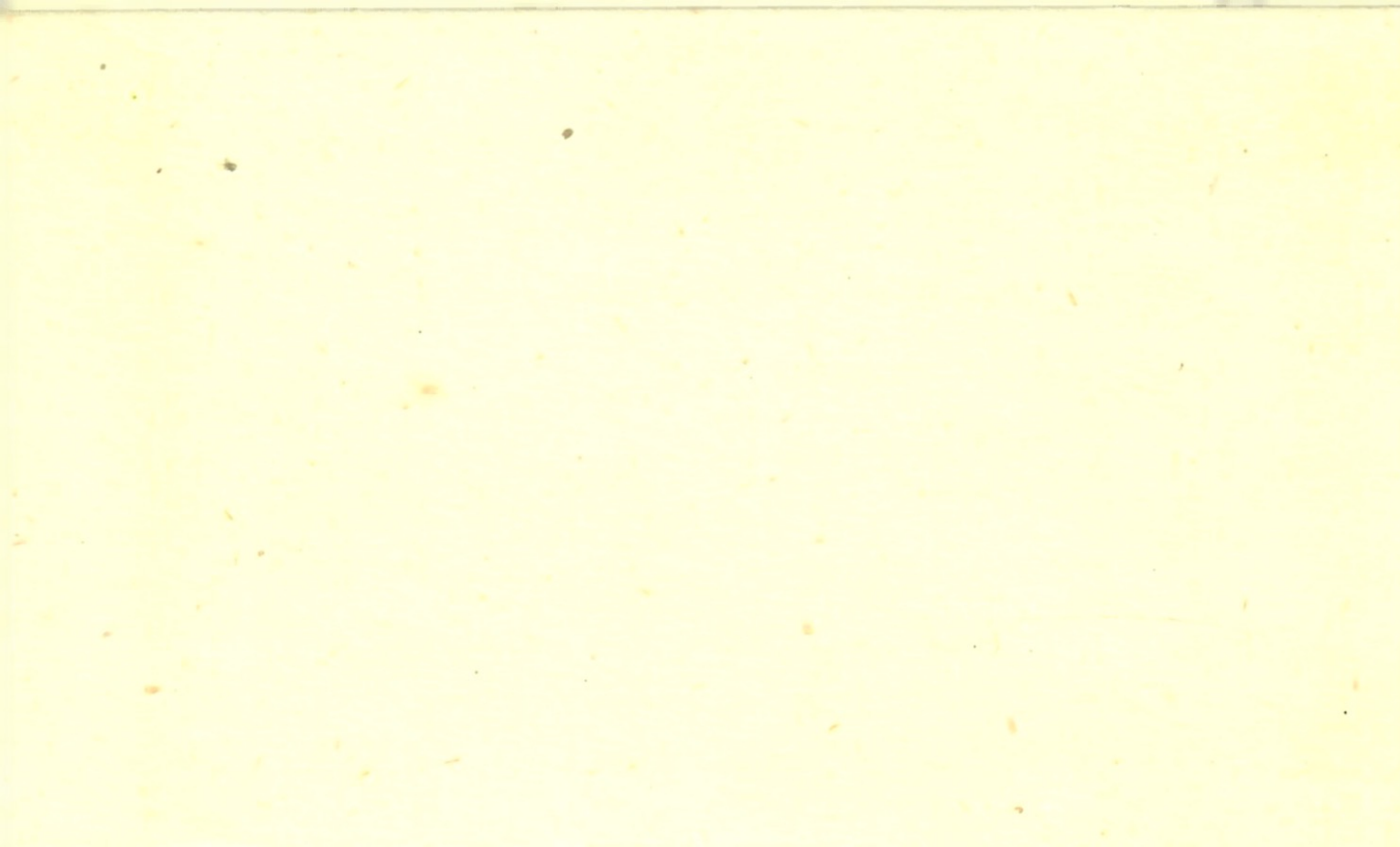


Walden 92 ft

News - how futile.

News anything, news anyway

All men gossip.



Walden 319 ft

Spent references to

① C.S. as snoring

② Know thyself - wonder in us.

② Scientific

③ Fear

④ Ends - value

⑤ Association

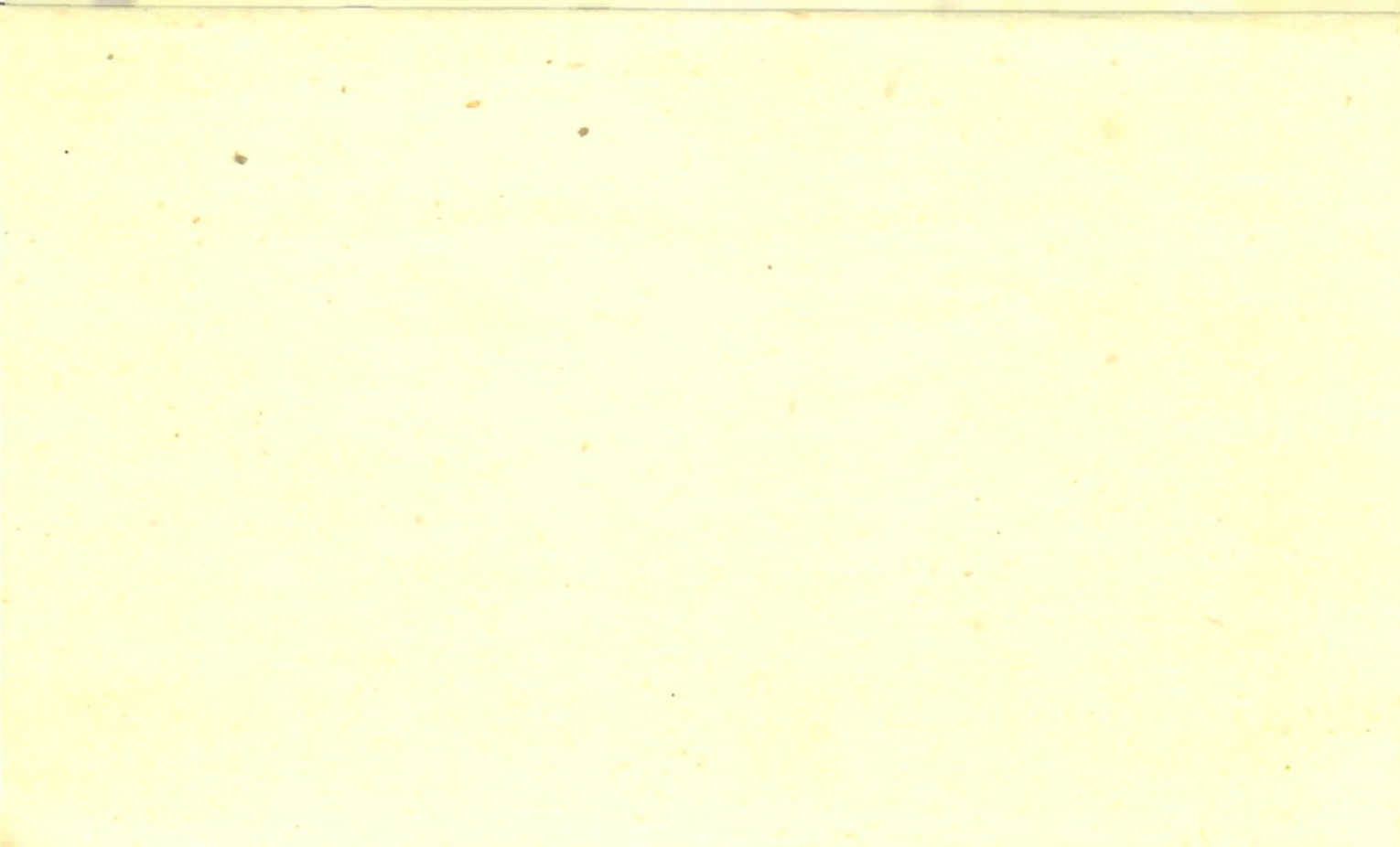
⑥ Little & Often?

⑦ Exaggerated Claims?

①

Getting rid of encumbering goods. Man the victim  
of his possessions.





V

XII

TITRASHER

Mannheim: in This Changing  
World.

Sociologist called Thrasher studying Chicago gangsters  
(1313 gangs) - each gang peculiar world with  
peculiar climate. Influence of g. so strong that members  
unable to adjust themselves to tasks outside the life of  
the group. Conclusion: reform not individuals  
but group: 'the only way of reaching them is  
through the group'. Important lesson for future.  
M: That fictitious being: the individual as such  
atomistic thinking.

Individual self is always correlated with  
existing group centers from which his codes & values  
emanate. Spheres of self correlated with each  
group. All group configuration & you alter  
individual.

Cause of crisis is larger scale of groups whose  
problems can only be solved by conscious interference.



# The Craft of Dying

J. M. COHEN on the Tibetan 'Book of the Dead'

THE Tibetan *Book of the Dead*\* is a work of theosophy, that is to say of traditional wisdom which requires a special teaching for its understanding. It is a statement concerning the wheel of recurring lives and deaths, and it assumes some form of reincarnation. As such, it is immediately suspect not only to contemporary rationalist thought, but to the majority of the religious as well. For church authorities have denied, for at least the last 1,500 years, that there is any attainable knowledge concerning the nature of man that is not embodied in their creeds, and sharply disciplined such of their own mystics as have trespassed on the ground common to all religions, the perennial philosophy. Meister Eckhardt is an example.

mysteries in all times and places. But also, in east and west alike, it is assumed by the secret doctrine to be a creature of many lives, not one alone. His task is to escape from the wheel of repeated birth and death—the necessity, that is, of ceaseless reincarnation—by securing rebirth upon another plane; and to do this he must give himself over entirely to the work of self-change in his present life.

This *Book of the Dead* considers only a single aspect of the subject—the possibility of escape from the wheel at the moment of death and the forty-nine days—a symbolic number—that elapse between death and reincarnation. It is in general use as a book of services, to be recited by a priest on each of those forty-nine days during which the dead man

is assumed to be in what they call Bardo, or intermediate world. He is supposed to be listening in that incorporeal state, to the prayers said on his behalf here on earth; and the purpose of the ceremonial is to awaken him to his situation in the world and to his opportunities of escape from it. Consequently, from the book itself and the editor and translator's commentary, we get as clear a detailed picture of the after-death state as exists in any literature. I am not going to describe the three stages of Bardo, or life on the intermediate plane: anyone seriously concerned with this kind of thought will prefer to read of them *in extenso*. I am, however, going to discuss two aspects of the

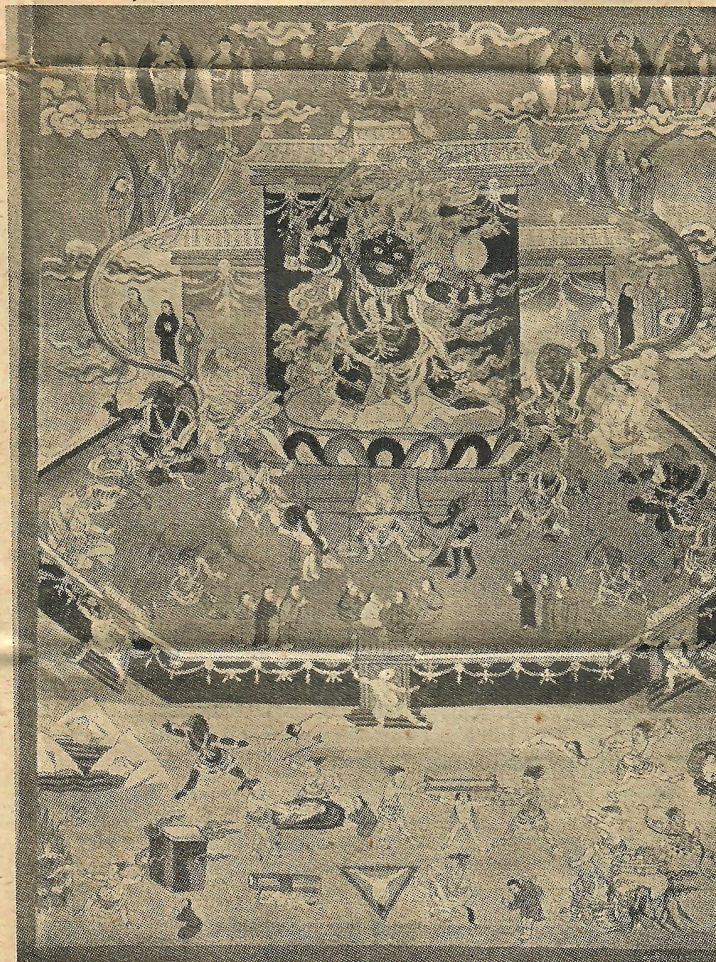


Folio of the MS of the Tibetan *Book of the Dead*

In general, theologians in the west can accept only one teaching, the dogma of their particular faith; to their eastern counterparts—or some of them—at the kernel of every faith there is a common esoteric wisdom, transmitted from teacher to pupil, studied in groups or schools and concerned with the reality behind forms and ceremonies, the change that man must make in his own nature in order to be one with God. This underground teaching has existed in the west both inside and outside organised religion. Inside most churches, it has been so disciplined that its essentially undogmatic nature has never been revealed; the straitjacket of theology has seen to that. Outside, it has persisted in disguise; but when it has come into the open, and especially when it has gained any number of adherents, it has been suppressed as heresy.

I am not suggesting that every heresy marks an outcropping of the perennial philosophy. But from the Egyptian priests who composed their *Book of the Dead*, as a guide to the departed through the world of shades, to the theosophy of Madame Blavatsky, and no doubt into more recent times, there has persisted this belief in the secret or esoteric doctrine, to be learned only by adepts who have undergone instruction by masters, who have received the wisdom in the same way and practised it throughout their lives. The Greek mysteries, Platonism, the school of Plotinus, Gnosticism, are all representatives of this teaching; and there seems to me to be ample evidence in the Gospels that it was at the heart of the very earliest Christianity too. There are consequently a number of scriptures or fragments setting forth this wisdom in symbolical language, scriptures that are as hard to interpret now as the Apocalypse of St. John, for the clue to their meaning was always provided by the teacher, and now the traditional key is lost. In the Tibetan *Book of the Dead*, however, we have one of these books which has survived to the present day complete with its traditional exposition. Its translator, a Tibetan Lama who spent much of his life in India, explains his text in the light of the instruction he himself received from his guru or master, and in terms of western thought, with which he was familiar. Furthermore his editor, Mr. Evans Wentz, relates the contents even more closely to contemporary ideas: the editorship and translation were, one feels, a work of most sensitive collaboration.

The hallmark of all such books of theosophy—in the broader sense—is their insistence on the theme of death and rebirth: the death of man as we know him, with all his worldly desires, and the emergence of a new man, a god-centred being. This is the fundamental teaching of the



Tibetan monastic painting of the Judgment. In the centre is Dharmakara, King of Truth or Administrator of Justice. In front of him Sprehu-Ga, the Monkey-headed One, weighs good and evil deeds in the form of white and black pebbles. Beneath are shown various hells



the experience of the moment of death and the last judgment, in order to relate them to more familiar ideas, Christian and Platonic.

'Thou shalt understand that it is a science most profitable, and passing all other sciences, for to learn to die'. I am quoting a fifteenth-century Christian tract called *Orologium sapientiae*, but I could draw a similar extract from any one of a little group of writings contemporary with it, which were assembled some years ago under the title of *The Craft of Dying*. 'For a man to know that he shall die', it continues, 'that is common to all men, as much as there is no man that may ever live or hath hope or trust thereof; but thou shalt find full few that have this cunning to learn to die . . . I shall give thee the mystery of this doctrine'. Mystery, by the way, in this sense means a doctrine beyond human understanding. The purpose of these little tracts was to stress the importance of retaining consciousness right up to the moment of death, and to instruct priests for their task of assisting men upon their death beds. One of them however complains, 'that there be full few that have the cunning of this craft'.

### Temptations of the Dying

Dying men were, in their view, beset with the 'greatest and most grievous temptations, and such as they never had before in all their lives'. There were five: loss of faith, despair, impatience, complacency, and love of friends and riches. To the medieval Christian, wakefulness was necessary in order to resist these temptations; the Buddhist of Tibet demands it too, but in order to take advantage of a supreme opportunity—the temptations come later. 'At the point of death', explains the translator of the *Book of the Dead*, 'the mind will be confronted by the Clear Light, and the conscious recognition of this Clear Light will induce an ecstatic condition such as mystics in the west have called Illumination'. Meister Eckhardt is speaking of this same Light when he says that the soul is sevenfold clearer than the sun; it was for his realisation that the soul itself is a spark of the divine that he was posthumously excommunicated. He did not draw a distinction wide enough to suit the theologians, between the spark and the fire of which it is a part. This light, in Tibetan thought, is the light of the soul itself, free from the veils of physical existence, sensation, feeling, consciousness and everything that makes of man a separate being; and the illumination will be long or short according to the spiritual experience of the deceased in his life on earth.

It may last four days or only 'so long as it would take to snap a finger'. Life for them is, therefore, in one sense a preparation for death; for by following the secret teaching in life they prepare themselves for the leap beyond the circle of birth and death at the moment of death. In this they must be assisted up to the last by the attendant priest. 'If the person dying', says the book, 'be disposed to sleep, or if the sleeping state advances, that should be arrested, and the arteries pressed gently but firmly'. The purpose of this would seem to be to keep the blood in the brain. The dying man must remain conscious up to his last moment, or he will not be able to take advantage of the Clear Light. For at that point alone he is free from all the attributes of worldly existence, including all shadow of separateness. Return to bodily existence, after his sojourn in Bardo, will follow upon any clinging to any sort of personal identity at the moment of the Clear Light; at that moment we are united with God—to use western language—but unless we recognise the unreality of everything that is not God, we shall be drawn back to the ceaseless round of birth and death, from which this escape is the only one possible; and according to the Tibetan book, descent through thickening veils of illusion follows remorselessly from failure at this point. But at no stage in the intermediate world is the Clear Light quite dimmed or opportunities of escape utterly denied. We return to earth because we cling to existence, and the rest of our sojourn in Bardo is spent in the gradual reassumption of consciousness, feeling and thought in preparation for the body that we shall possess once more at the end of the forty-nine days.

What manner of life the next will be is determined at the Judgment. And here I want to draw a parallel between the teaching of the book and Plato's, in his Myth of Er, which he interpolated in *The Republic*. Er, you will remember, went down with the dead and was present at the Judgment. But on the twelfth day, as he was lying on the funeral pile, he returned to life, for his body was found unaffected by decay; and he told what he had seen in the other world. He said that when his soul left the body he went on a journey with a great company, and they came to a mysterious place where there were judges seated, who commanded the just, after they had given judgment on them and had bound their sentences in front of them, to ascend by the heavenly way;

and in like manner the unjust were bidden to descend by the same way; these also bore the symbols of their deeds, but faster than the just. The judgment in the *Book of the Dead* is similar, the marked, however, by black and white pebbles. After the judgment, Plato's myth, the heroes are shown in their Bardo preparation, and each choosing a new life consonant with his previous life. Orpheus as a swan, Agamemnon as an eagle, and so on, till Odysseus, of whom Plato wrote, 'Now the recollections of his previous life had disenchanted him of ambition, and he went about for a considerable time in search of the life of a private man who had been neglected by everyone else'. Now Odysseus' choice was not one because it broke with the pattern of his previous life, but because enchantment with the ambitions of the world opened up possibilities of self-change that were closed to the other heroes. The Tibetan book recommends a detachment of another kind, a complete detachment from the circumstances in which one's Karma, or fate, comes to be born. 'Even though the womb may appear good', the priest tells the dead man, 'do not be attracted; if it appear bad, have no interest towards it. To be free from repulsion and attraction, or from the desire to take or to avoid—to enter in the mood of complete impersonality is the most profound of arts'.

There are parallels between this book and other authoritative Hindu and Buddhist. The Bardo condition was described in detail by Swedenborg. The symbolism varies from faith to faith, but the essential statement is the same. Yet, as I have said, we have over centuries progressively ignored all such teaching, and the intellectual society interest in the life beyond death is assumed to be a sign of failure to adjust oneself to worldly reality. It is commonly considered, first, that we cannot know anything about the life beyond death, and, secondly, that the survival of the race with a steady standard of civilisation is all the immortality we can desire. The view of view begs so many questions that the gap between the theoretical and the practical in the broad sense—and the rationalist, or even the ethical, has become too wide even to speak across. For to me the gap between reality lies in such books as this and the only immortal teaching I have conceived of is the state beyond earthly existence, which the Buddhist would dismiss as non-existence. To him Nirvana means no more than the end of the cycle of birth and death. This is the issue and crown of Being. This is the state which the Tibetan book would have the dying man leap at the moment of the Clear Light is most aptly described in a passage by Lin Yutang in his recently published *Wisdom of India*.

### What Nirvana Means

'When we read', Lin Yutang says, 'that Nirvana is "neither being nor not being", we realise that the words being or not being are no longer adequate. If we could think of a world without our present notions of space and time, that is an unconditioned world, we would have a fair notion of what Nirvana means. The doggedly logical, finite mind can never rise to this conception, and therefore it is hard for modern scholars to grasp its significance'. This is true of theosophy and of religious teaching in general; to logical, finite minds it makes no sense. Taking what is symbolic for literal statement, they would dismiss a book as this as a work of superstition, emanating from a low standard of civilisation. Such travellers as Mme. David have given us quite an opposite view of Tibet; they show us a country where science and religion are a reality, though social organisation is of a primitive kind. Such islands in a mounting tide of mass movements, of standardised semi-culture are rapidly diminishing. But in the few countries a few thinkers—one thinks first of C. G. Jung—are beginning to realise the psychological distress which our extraverted civilisation is bringing in its train. Once a man has begun to doubt the perfection of men in society, he must begin to consider what change is possible for the individual man. This involves a re-examination of the social message, but for their essential teaching, which has always been, ultimately, esoteric: 'Unto you [the disciples] I have revealed the mystery of the Kingdom of God, but unto them [the masses] I have said without all these things are done in parable; that seeing they may not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand'. This book is valuable because it gives us a fresh statement of the teaching and sufficient commentary by its initiated translator for us to grasp of its meaning. Turning back from it, we may glimpse other signs in the scriptures of the west; for it is one of those very rare books that can set one's thoughts going in entirely new directions.



# Russia learns from Mars

PLANT life discovered on Mars is being studied by Soviet scientists who think it will help them develop new varieties of frost-resisting plant life for Soviet agriculture, Moscow radio reported last night.

The radio quoted statements by 75-year-old Prof. Gavril Tikhov, who said he had discovered evergreens and deciduous plants on Mars, which led him to the conclusions that the earth is too warm for certain types of vegetation, and that Mars plant life has adapted itself to the severe climate.

## Temperature extremes

*The Science Editor writes:* Astronomers do not nowadays rule out the possibility of life on Mars. The atmosphere of Mars is rarefied, with very little oxygen and water vapour. Temperature varies between about 50 degrees Fah. at midday in equatorial regions and 130 degrees Fah. below zero at night. The prevailing view is that any vegetable life on the planet is likely to be in the form of lichens or mosses.

26-11C. Nov. 28/49

...d by the  
— News Chronicle  
...respondent.

# Evergreens on Mars, says professor

Professor Grigori Tikhov has discovered that Mars contains evergreens as well as plants, which shed their leaves each year, Moscow radio said yesterday.

The professor, well known for his studies of Mars, has noticed patches which retain their green colour in winter as well as summer, the radio said.—Reuter.

N.C. June 18/49

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Seventy-five year old Professor Gavril Tikhov, claims to be the founder of the Institute of Astro-Botany. While bourgeois astronomers are still interested in establishing beyond dispute that vegetation exists on Mars, Comrade Tikhov is already trying to adapt the frost-resisting plants there to Soviet Arctic agriculture. He says that he has discovered evergreens and deciduous plants on Mars and that this adaptation should have practical value to the U.S.S.R. Since his observations depend on the fact that green plants reflect infra-red rays—a fact well known to anyone who indulges in infra-red photography—it is difficult to see how he proposes to reproduce, botanically, such varieties from a remote planet. It would be extremely useful for Arctic development if it were known what the character of Martian plants really is, since in the course of a day the temperature ranges, even in the equatorial regions, from 50 degrees F. in the heat of the day to 130 degrees F. below zero at night. Moreover, it is known that the atmosphere is extremely rarified—Wells got this quite right; a man could jump three times as high and as far on Mars as on earth—with very little oxygen and water vapour, but, according to the latest observations, quite a lot of carbon dioxide. It has been generally assumed that the vegetation must be of lichen or moss types, purely superficial, which would account for the seasonal disappearance of what were once thought to be “seas” on the planet, but which are more likely to be tides of vegetation.



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F of L. XIX 499

F. Tolney & H.A. Riley: The Forms & Functions  
of the Central Nervous System. (p. 68)  
(Kenneth Walker: Diagnosis of Man)

The Brain. "Extension" a function of lower centres? Penfield states that  
function of frontal lobes is 'appreciation, memory, spatial orientation,  
abstraction, initiative, planned administration'. T. & R. state  
that lesions in that area: "cause a gradual distortion of the two  
concurrent streams in consciousness. Knowing & feeling, so that the  
patient (no longer attaches the proper feeling-tone to his recognition  
words)... If asked how he feels, he replies that he never felt better  
in his life. Everything in his horizon undergoes a marked  
expansion. He believes he is the wealthiest, the most powerful, &

the most capable person living. He is unable to correct this mis-  
apprehension by introspection, or by reference to the objects around  
him. This disproportion of the normal concurrence in the affective  
& cognitive streams of consciousness seems to be due to disarray  
in the frontal area. It may, however, be the case that the split-  
ting off of these two elements from each other will result in  
extreme depression..." K.W: Other changes noted as result  
of damage of this area are unusual levity, or sense of  
immortality, or of everything becoming small. [K.W: 69.

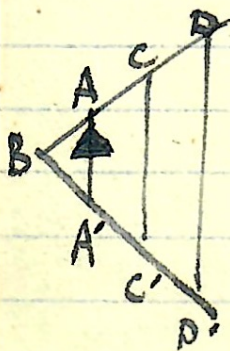
Structure of frontal lobes explains correlation of thought & emotion  
Thought must be activated by feeling before any bodily reaction  
occurs, & this blending achieved through impulses from the cogni-  
tive sense areas of the brain being connected by special fibres with



②

Tilney + Riley

frontal lobes, while to same region run fibres from thalamus, centre of the emotions. In frontal lobes cognitive & emotional streams blend. [One does the Explorers of Ch 25, the Extension-mood, take one to a lower centre? No. And to a higher.



Truth lies in you. You can find it by probing along the line  $A', C', D'$  etc. but only because the path you tread is also the  $A, C, D$ , path. B is the position of the frontal lobes - & I don't minimize their centrality. But, in addition to developing here, we must recede - advance to the  $AA', CC'$ , level. ② The reduction of jump



- casting aside, in this case, the higher frontal lobes, has as its correlate the expansion of the self. ③ The savage, the animal is more expanded. Only man has, at B, pinned himself down to this little body. ④ By the growth, in Chapter 25, of your Body towards the whole, you somehow are using or taking the point of view of your lower brain lobe. ⑤ Dissociation of thought & feeling: mystic profoundly moved (gift of tears) by a flower, a patch of colour... but may accept great personal loss with equanimity. The function of philosophy is to detach feeling from its usual objects, & attach it to new objects. This means rearranging, & to some extent ignoring, some of the paths of the frontal lobes.