

CHAPTER V.

THE RESULTS OF RECESSION.

The wisest of the Popes, on being shown some miracles, refused to be impressed, remarking that he did not believe in them, he had seen too many. The result of the Meditation practices and their results, following those of Magick, was to give our student a conception of the Universe which was purely mental. Everything was a phenomenon in mind. He did not as yet see that this conception is self-destructive; but it made him sceptical, and indifferent to whatever happened. You cannot really be impressed by anything which you know to be nothing more than one of your own thoughts. Any occurrence can be interpreted as a thought, or as a relation between two thoughts. In practice this leads to profound indifferentism, miracles having become commonplace. But what would be the amazement of the priest who, placing the Host upon his tongue, found his mouth full of bleeding flesh! At the period of writing, it is evident for what purpose our student was led into this state. It was not to the Magician, not to the mystic, it

was to a militant member of the Rationalist Press Association that the great Revelation was to be made. It was necessary to prove to him that there was in actual truth a Sanctuary, that there was in sober earnest a body of Adepts. It matters nothing whether these Adepts are incarnated or discarnated, human or divine. The only point at issue is that there should be conscious Beings in possession of the deepest secrets of Nature, pledged to the uplifting of humanity, filled with Truth, Wisdom and Understanding. It is practical to prove the existence of individuals whose knowledge and power, although not complete - for the nature of Knowledge and Power is such that they can never be complete, since the ideas themselves contain imperfections - are yet enormously greater than aught known to the rest of humanity.

It was of such a body that our student had heard in the "Cloud upon the Sanctuary"; admission to its adyta had been the guiding hope of his life. His early attainments had tended rather to shake his belief in the existence of such an organization. He had not yet reckoned up the events of his life; he had not yet divined the direction and the set purpose informing their apparently vagrant course. It might have been by chance that whenever he had been con-

fronted with any difficulty the right person had instantly come forward to solve it, whether in the valleys of Switzerland, the deserts of Mexico, or the jungles of the East.

At this period of his life he would have scouted the idea as fantastic. He had yet to learn that the story of Balaam and his prophetic ass might be literally true. For the great Message that came to him came, not through the mouth of any person with any pretensions to any knowledge of this or any other sort, but through an empty-headed woman of society. The plain facts of this revelation must be succinctly stated in a new chapter.