

member of a religion he had just scornfully and unanswerably proven false. A second became a defaulter and absconded with his employer's money — the latter also a Theosophist. A third gave himself up to gross debauchery, and confessed it with ineffectual sobs and tears, to his chosen Guru. A fourth got entangled with a person of the other sex and fell out with his dearest and truest friends. A fifth showed signs of mental aberration and was brought into Court upon charges of discreditable conduct. A sixth shot himself to escape the consequences of criminality, on the verge of detection! And so we might go on and on. All these were apparently sincere searchers after truth, and passed in the world for respectable persons. Externally, they were fairly eligible as candidates for Chelaship, as appearances go; but "within all was rottenness and dead men's bones." The world's varnish was so thick as to hide the absence of the true gold underneath; and the "resolvent" doing its work, the candidate proved in each instance but a gilded figure of moral dross, from circumference to core. . . .

In what precedes we have, of course, dealt but with the failures among Lay Chelas; there have been partial successes too, and these are passing gradually through the first stages of their probation. Some are making themselves useful to the Society and to the world in general by good example and precept. If they persist, well for them, well for us all: the odds are fearfully against them, but still "there is no impossibility to him who WILLS." The difficulties in Chelaship will never be less until human nature changes and a new sort is evolved. St. Paul (*Rom.*, vii, 18-19) might have had a Chela in mind when he said "to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is (good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." And in the wise *Kirâtârajuniya* of Bhâravi it is written:

"The enemies which rise within the body,
Hard to be overcome — the evil passions —
Should manfully be fought; *who conquers these*
Is equal to the conqueror of worlds." (11.32.)