

THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

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VOL. II

APRIL, 1912

NO. 4

HE who does not practise altruism; he who is not prepared to share his last morsel with a weaker or poorer than himself; he who neglects to help his brother man, of whatever race, nation, or creed, whenever and wherever he meets suffering, and who turns a deaf ear to the cry of human misery — is no Theosophist.

H. P. Blavatsky

CERTAIN WELSH TRADITIONS IN THE LIGHT OF “THE SECRET DOCTRINE”: by Kenneth Morris

I



BY many, tradition will hardly be looked upon as a field for profitable study; especially this class of Welsh tradition which can not be so much called, for the most part, folk-lore, as *bard-lore*, and has come down with a certain class or order, rather than with the peasantry as a whole.

Folk-lore indeed is studied; but — ! Most commonly, “we murder to dissect.” Folk-lore, and bard-lore, before they will yield their values, must be approached in a very different way. Indeed he who deals with them must look for values, not for logical proof. This point cannot be too much insisted upon. Your true tradition, like a good teacher, leaves the work to be done by yourself; it suggests, hints, lights a little fire in the mind, and appeals foremost to the intuition. I contain this much of truth, it says; but will not force it upon you with the cudgels and bayonets of logic. You shall read it for yourself if you can; or else leave it for him who can. I contain within myself, it says, the seed and possibility of poems, romances, dramas; innumerable uplifts for the soul, innumerable indications of historic and mystic truth. But you shall have nothing from me unless you treat me with due respect. I will not be thrust through with a pin, and neatly docketed under a glass case.

Tradition proves nothing, but suggests all. But the beauty of any

really true thing is, that it cannot be proven; otherwise the intuitive faculty might be let go atrophe. Of the things that can be proven to the brain-mind the value is relatively small; all beauty and nobility makes appeal to that which is greater. One must frankly lay aside the test-tube-cum-crucible frame of mind before one approaches tradition, or expect to gather nothing but Dead Sea fruit. So it may be that what there is of cultural value — and there is indeed very much of it — in these ancient, beautiful, and haunting ideas, will remain mainly for an age that has outgrown our modern, puerile exactitudinarianism, and can pluck the apples of the Hesperides, beauty and wisdom, where it may find them growing. We have been so cheated by dogmatism that we look askance at everything imponderable, and cry "*Proof! Proof!*" to our own souls. We have worshiped stranger divinities so long that now we will have no competitor for good, practical Mammon; we have set an embargo on the divine. To walk cautiously is well; for every wolf in the world of thought, sheep's clothing is the only wear. What a host of perverted fantastical creeds have sprung up in revolt against materialism! If you *will* set aside the soul, until you can put it down in fractions of an ounce and of an inch; if you *will* put the beauty of the world through a test-tube, and snip off truth by the centimeter, you must look to be flung and banged from one reaction to another, and take no account of that wholesome and stable central point where there is peace and vision.

We shall never be able to judge the merits of any question, until we rediscover our own divinity; for that divinity is the touchstone for everything. To whatsoever thing is good, noble, excellent, and pure, it responds, and asks no proof—save that glow of recognition. The permanent factor in man is the spirit, a divine element, a blazing glory within him; dimmed and overlaid indeed with all this pother and rout, opinions, theories, ignorance, passions, turbulence, animality, desires. So the things that come from the spirit are true, beautiful, and permanent, and can be recognized as such, even after the lapse of many ages, even if there is no sort of satisfying proof to them. But the recognition will be by the soul, and because of the light of beauty and nobility that shines through them. That is the only proof that the soul demands, or will take any cognizance of.

So the distinction between what we call the strictly historical and the merely traditional, becomes largely meaningless when we take this into account. History is written from day to day in our newspapers;

and a large part of it contradicted the day after. The best of historians is treading on the most unstable of ground. A war arises somewhere, and the world begins to echo with contradictory reports. The siftings of these, in the light of the result, pass into recorded history; but what does your historian know of the realities? As to the ultimate and real causes of the war he is dumb; because those causes are set to work behind the scenes of ordinary human action. Even eye-witnesses disagree; and there is the whole matter of personal and national bias to be taken into account. History from the standpoint of England is one thing; from that of France, another. What dependence, then, can be put *absolutely* on what this or that historian has recorded? In the last resort it comes before your own soul again, to believe or reject what it will, and to form its own judgments; and these will be nearer to, or farther from, the truth, according to what power of judgment may be in you. A great soul incarnates to perform a great work; and performs it, drives it through in the face of the world and the opposition of all the forces of evil. He comes down to us, say, as a tyrant and evil liver, a cruel egotistical bully on the throne. But who shall say? "By their fruits ye shall know them." And the fruits of his life were: so many centuries of prosperity and swift growth for his nation, and the loosening of the shackles of a great part of the world. Is it to be supposed that those malignancies whom he disinherited will allow his reputation to come down scatheless? Is it to be supposed that his very beneficiaries will have the wisdom and far sight to defend him rightly? It rarely happens so; for the sheep cannot read the mind of the shepherd. But what cares he, being a great soul, that all history brands him, and that the future ages that reap his benefits shall hold him to have been the worst of men? His work was done, and to that sole end he came; not to win for that one personality of his a great name or human gratitude. Put no absolute dependence upon historical evidence so-called; for there are many that are interested to distort it; and heaven only knows to what extent it may have been tampered with.

Tradition, on the other hand, that seems to have so much less sure a foundation, has its own methods of self-protection. Its root of truth is in the soul and memory of the race. Cut and trim the leaves how you will; distort the visible growth to any extent; still the root is down there in the truth, and the tradition remains, a symbol, for those who can read symbology. It presents, one might say, like Portia,

its three caskets to every generation; and relies on it that for a thousand Moroccos and Aragons, a Bassanio will appear now and again through the ages. It will have an aspect upon all the planes of thought; and although on the outward ones it may appear distorted and fantastical, there yet remains the innermost beyond distortion. Those who most loved the dead-letter, would only the better preserve the symbol. And because the tradition was the genuine property of the national soul, molded by that to its own peculiar delicate forms, the work of the conscious distorter would stand out and easily be recognized for inferior workmanship, just as one can easily recognize the botchings of the Spanish kings in the Alhambra. A tradition is like a folk-song and bears the same national imprint. If one succeeded in composing anything that had the sound and feeling of a Welsh, or an Irish air, it *would be* a Welsh or Irish air; it would have come, just as much as any other, from the racial soul of Ireland or Wales. What the composer would have done, would have been to have won an entrance, for the time being, into that racial soul, and heard some fragment of the music that is always sounding there. That the one who did it was a Pole, or a Dutchman, or a Chinese, would make no difference, for that matter.

Now a race is composite, and has its seven principles like a man; and it would appear that some phase of memory inheres in each one of them. You will have the mere popular rumor of some historic battle, murder, or sudden death, on the one hand; and on the other, the spiritual and poetic tradition, a remote glow from the arcana of the gods. Which is the better, the more important? Which is the *truer*, as opposed to the more *exact*? History will set itself to considering the former only; but tradition deals the more lovingly with the latter. When the Welsh peasant tells you that on such and such a mountainside his ancestors fought the Flemings or the French (Normans) — “Oh, a long time ago indeed — over a hundred years, I shouldn’ wonder ” — one sees how little the race mind heeds the externalia that history battens on; for the Norman and Fleming wars came to an end in the thirteenth century. In such details there are no spiritual values; and tradition makes light of them. But when one hears that he who sleeps in the cave of Snowdon, or on the rock of Cadair Idris, will either die or go mad in the night, or come down an inspired bard in the morning — then one is walking on surer ground altogether; for here there is a spiritual value; here there is some-

thing important to remember. This is the stuff that Poems are made of.

For a Bard meant an Exalted One, a spiritual teacher, an initiate into the Sacred Mysteries; and it was because the bards among the ancient Britons or Welsh taught the people by means of poetry, and because religion and poetry were one and the same thing, that the word has come down to us with the meaning of poet. And this becoming a bard is a very real thing, and does actually involve the passing through trials and terrors of initiation, which do kill some, and make others mad. How should it be otherwise, when the object of it is to strip the candidate of personality, selfhood, the sense of separateness, all private interests and desires? It is the purification of the whole nature of a man, the great overcoming, the second birth. Wales is crowded with reminiscences of this. There was the Pair Dadeni, the Cauldron of Regeneration; when the dead were put into it, they came forth alive. That is, the selfish self must die and be eliminated, before the glory of the human soul can be born in the candidate for initiation. Little Gwion, it will be remembered, having obtained the drops of Wisdom, was reborn from Ceridwen, the Mighty Mother, as Taliesin, the Chief of Bards, whose forehead shone like the morning star. "Unto him that overcometh shall be given a new name"; because he is in a sense a new being; he is Taliesin, the soul, who was formerly Gwion Bach, the personality. We get a relic of this in the Welsh Gorsedd of today, where the man that is made a bard has a new name given him, which quite supersedes the old one, so far as the public is concerned.

There have always been those in Wales who would maintain that there was such a thing as the Wisdom of the Ages, and that it was anciently in possession of the druids and bards. That there should be is just as necessary as that there should be a stable center within the consciousness of man, a divine soul. No one could imagine it, unless it were true; because each part of our mentality imagines and dwells upon that which is upon its own plane. The animal in us imagines animal possibilities and gratifications; the hero imagines the heroic. That which conceives of wisdom and divine being, by all the laws of analogy and correspondence must be itself divine and wise.

II

So this tradition indicates to us that these two sacred mountains — you will not dispute the epithet if you know them — were of old centers of initiation, places of the Mysteries. And who would wonder?

Theirs was no dream, O monarch hill
 With heaven's own azure crowned,
 Who called thee what thou shalt be still,
 White Snowdon's holy ground.

Earth has indeed her places where the veil is slight between the material and eternal Beauty, and drawing near them, you seem to approach the Soul of things. Beauty and mystery and majestic loveliness mark such spots, and — well, we will say nothing about the beauty and the proud glory of Eryri Wen and Cadair Idris.

Cadair Idris is the seat of Idris, who, according to the tradition, was a giant and astronomer in the ancient days. From the head of the mountain he watched the stars; vast rocks in the valley below, are the pebbles he shook out from his shoes. Would you be surprised to hear of him again — in Arabia? In his *Historia Anteislamitica*, Abul-Feda says that the Sabaeen language (astronomy) was established by Seth and Idris. The historian Ahmed-ben-Yusûf Eltifâs speaks of him as of Sabaeen origin, and “the author of thirty books.”

Having established the rites and ceremonies of primitive worship, he went to the East, where he constructed one hundred and forty cities, of which Edessa was the least important, then returned to Egypt, where he became its king.

Now let the champions of their lord god Coincidence charm never so loudly, thoughtful people will desire to inquire into it when they find Idris, a giant and an astronomer (for the Arabs make him a giant also), appearing in Welsh and Arabian legend. One common factor — the name — would be mildly interesting. Two would be enough to attract attention. But with three — it cannot be ignored. By all means let us inquire into it. The place in which to make such inquiries is, as will be generally recognized some day, Madame Blavatsky's magnum opus, *The Secret Doctrine*. Cast prejudice aside then, if you are troubled with it; the book is, amongst other things, an encyclopaedia of abstruse learning, and draws unfamiliar information from every quarter of the globe. H. P. Blavatsky does not mention our Welsh Idris; but explains him nevertheless. She says:

Those who in the *Kurân* (see Surât xix) are generically termed the *Edris*, or the “Learned” (the Initiated), bore in Egypt the name of “Thoth,” the

inventor of arts, sciences, *writing* or letters, of music and astronomy. Among the Jews the *Edris* became "Enoch," who, according to Bar-Hebraeus, "was the first inventor of writing," books, arts, and sciences, the first who reduced to a system the progress of the planets. In Greece he was called Orpheus, and thus changed his name with every nation. The number Seven being attached to, and connected with, each of those primitive Initiators.—Vol. II, p. 529

One would not dogmatize; one would not claim to have *proven* anything, after the manner of the schools. But it is strange, is it not? that we should find this Idris identified with the hierarchy of ancient Initiators:

"Sons of the Serpent-god," or "Sons of the Dragon," the name under which the Hierophants of Egypt and Babylon were known before the Deluge, as were their forefathers, the Atlanteans.—*Ibid.*, p. 530

says H. P. Blavatsky; and that we should find in Wales (to which Madame Blavatsky makes no reference here) that Cadair Idris, Idris' Seat, the sacred mountain, is traditionally a place of Initiation, one where a man might pass through the trials that make of him a bard. "Sons of the Dragon" — what a familiar sound has that, too, to Welsh ears! *Wyf Sarff, wyf Dryw*, says Taliesin in the *Buarth Beirdd*: "I am a Serpent; I am a Druid"; thus associating the serpent or dragon with the order of initiate priests. And how intimately the Dragon was connected with the leaders of the Cymry, both bardic and regal — until it passed into its familiar place on the national flag. Coincidences? Well, well; perhaps indeed! Only, from China to Peru (excellent old phrase!) we find traces of the Dragon of Wisdom, and that the initiates into and possessors of the esoteric wisdom, the Illuminated, were called the Sons of the Dragon.

But to return to our Idris; we find him connected with Arabia, North Africa, Egypt. Thoth-Hermes was his Egyptian paradigm; and there is a tale told of Thoth which reminds one of the Welsh tradition of the three Wands of Hazel that sprang from the grave of Einigan Gawr, and had all Wisdom inscribed upon them. (It will be remembered that Einigan Gawr in his lifetime possessed all Wisdom, arts, and sciences, even to the Secret Name.) Thoth, we are told, buried his books of wisdom beneath certain stone pillars; and after, found the wisdom inscribed upon the pillars. One's mind runs somehow to certain stone pillars, in whose arrangement and conformation, in a sense, the wisdom of the bards is inscribed; a great circle of them in the midst of a wide plain in the Island of the Mighty; and their

traditional connexion with the druidic mysteries, and the fact that they do constitute a Gorsedd circle, such as is necessary for the bardic ceremonies. Who built Stonehenge? Our archaeologists do not know; here is a mystery on which science is wisely dumb. It is a poor compliment to pay to Christianity and modern civilization, to imagine that our old pre-Christian forefathers were a kind of Hottentots, cannibals, or barbarians. It was not that kind of people that set up the pillared circles on the plains. What says Welsh tradition? That the stones were brought over from Africa magically by Myrddin Emrys. What say you to that, O men of the schools? "Nonsense!" bawls Tweedledum officially; but adds, *sotto voce*: "but one of the stones *is* of a variety hardly to be found nearer than in northern Africa." Now, there is an instance of the value and methods of tradition. Myrddin, in the reign of Arthur, certainly did *not* bring those stones over or set them up. But Myrddin, again, is a figure symbolizing the Initiates into the ancient Magic. Tradition never shouts out truth upon the housetops; but leaves it embodied in a legend to travel down the generations; and he that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

H. P. Blavatsky teaches that all the druidical monuments — we will call them that for convenience, and because they did become druidical ages after — were erected by a race of Initiates who came up from Egypt in times when the configuration of seas and lands was very different from what it has been in historic times; who passed through Spain and France dryshod into Britain, establishing their sacred rites and temples wherever they came. Let it be noted here, that the grammar of the Welsh language is mainly Egyptian, although the vocabulary is mainly Aryan.

In a recent number of *Y Geninen*, one of the best of the Welsh magazines, Dr. Mary Williams of Paris writes very interestingly on the Mabinogion; and in the course of the article draws attention to a fact that has been too little noticed. Speaking of Bran the Blessed's invasion of Ireland, and how he crossed the rivers Lli and Archan, that at that time separated Wales from Ireland, she says:

The scribe has added on his own account that it was *after* this time that the sea divided these two kingdoms. This part of the story shows clearly how old it is. (The translation is ours.)

Dare we venture to add that it shows something else too — namely, how old is the primitive population of Britain? Rather perhaps, let us say, how old is mankind in northern Europe. Ireland and Wales

are, we believe, of kindred geological formation, very ancient; the eastern part of Britain being much more recent; and there was a time when the Irish Sea was (appropriately?), so to say, dry land. But that was not yesterday. It must be put back, conservatively speaking, we suppose at least some hundreds of thousands of years. We will not say that there were Welsh-speaking Welshmen in Gwynedd and Dyfed at that time; but if there had been no population, and if the population that there was had not been merged in the later incoming races, how did the old Welsh bards come by the memory or tradition of it, and embody the same in the Mabinogi of Branwen ferch Llyr? Were they good enough geologists to know the fact, and yet so ignorant as to suppose that it was as recent as the supposed date of Bran the Blessed, about the beginning of the Christian Era? To what pains will not some of us go, rather than accept obvious inferences! Before there was an Irish Sea, Britain and Ireland were inhabited; before there were Straits of Dover, men came into Britain through Gaul and Spain, from Africa. What about the Silurian and Berber or Iberic types among the Celts of today?

Now let us glance at the tradition of the *first* influx of population into Britain.

It is said that there was a great continent called Gwlad yr Haf, the Summer Country, which for its many sins was destined to be destroyed. As to the manner of its destruction, is there not somewhere a reference to the "oppression of waters"? Among the remnant of its inhabitants not stained by sin, were the Cymry, which word may mean "fellow-countrymen," or may perhaps be akin, as Borrow says, with the Sanskrit "Kumâra," with the meaning of the "unstained," the "pure." Under their leader Hu Gadarn they set sail, and came at last to Ynys Fel, the Honey Island (Britain), then uninhabited. As is usual with settlers in a new land, they gave names to certain parts of it which should commemorate themselves and the land they came from. Those parts, one may well think, would be the regions first settled. One such they called Gwlad yr Haf; the other Cymru, the land of the Cymry. Now Gwlad yr Haf, in English Somersetshire, is on the southern, and Cymru or Wales is on the northern shore of the Severn Sea. All of which suggests — mind, only *suggests* — that they came from the southwest, and sailed up the Severn Sea.

Which is against all received suppositions. But here again, Theosophy supplies a teaching which explains the Welsh tradition, and a

thousand things otherwise inexplicable all over the globe. Synthesis again throws light on that which analysis would cloud round with more than Egyptian darkness. The evidences for the existence of the continent and race of Atlantis, are much too numerous to be more than alluded to here. There are all the Cyclopean remains to be accounted for; and they are found all over the globe. There are the similarities in custom between ancient China and pre-Incaic Peru; architectural correspondences between the temples of Central America and Egypt; the Easter Island Statues, and the gigantic statues of Bamian in Central Asia; strange linguistic parallelisms between certain American and the Celtic tongues, and again between both and Egyptian; and so on, and so on. All of these things are not to be satisfactorily accounted for, unless we admit Atlantis. Plato tells us something of it; he in turn had it from the Egyptian priests. A great continent where now the Atlantic rolls; and colonies from it spread out over the earth, and flourished as mighty empires and civilizations long before the dawn of history, even the most conjectural; long before the first beginnings of the present Aryan race of humanity. The waves covered the last great island-remnant of Atlantis, according to H. P. Blavatsky, some nine thousand years B. C.; but the main part of it had succumbed to the "oppression of the waters," ages before that.

Now supposing that Hu Gadarn (or, perhaps, for a sop to the theorists, "someone else of the same name") did bring his ships up the Severn Sea; there would have been Atlantis for him to have come from. Or supposing that he came from Atlantis; it would have been very natural for him to have sailed up the Severn Sea.

Anthropology finds that the Welsh are a composite of three races, the latest of which was the Aryan Celts. Welsh tradition declares that the "men of the Island of the Mighty" (the Ancient Britons) were a composite of three races, the last comers being a race that crossed the continent of Europe as the Celts are supposed to have done. Of the second, *as such*, little is said in the traditions; but facts above stated would seem to indicate the coming of men from the south, from Egypt and north Africa, led by the initiates who are represented in tradition by the giant Idris; which race, or their Adept leaders, built Stonehenge, Avebury, and the cromlechs for the purposes of their Mystery-Religion. Science confirms, with the stone that came from Africa, the Iberian type among the Welsh, and the Egyptian grammar of the Welsh language. How should that last have come to be? In

those parts of Wales and Ireland where English is spoken, when English is spoken, it is an English that retains its Celtic grammatical construction; and this, indeed, would appear to happen invariably; when one language supplants another, it is the vocabulary, not the syntax, that is supplanted. If then, the language of Britain in those days was Egyptian, or akin to the Egyptian, the Egyptian syntax and construction would have been retained, even after the Aryan Celtic immigrants had imposed upon the island their own Aryan Celtic vocabulary. This is just what we find, to a very marked extent, in both the Gaelic and Cymric tongues. No; it is not a mere wild theory; it is well known to the authorities that this is so.

The three races of immigrants into Britain would be then, in Theosophic terminology:

(a) Atlanteans: the Cymry under Hu Gadarn, who was afterwards the chief of the Gods of the Welsh Pantheon.

(b) Aryo-Atlanteans from Egypt: the followers of certain Adepts who erected Stonehenge, and who are represented in the traditions by Idris Gawr, the Astronomer.

(c) Aryan Celts.

We shall be told that there is much, even in Welsh tradition, that conflicts with many of the points raised above. Certainly; but our plea is that tradition will not yield its truth to analysis; the legends of one single race will tell you little or nothing; the method of approaching them *must be synthetic*. The beauty of *The Secret Doctrine*, or rather one beauty of it, lies in the fact that it collates and synthesizes the traditions of all races, and shows them confirming certain teachings which have been handed down. Hardly at all does Madame Blavatsky mention Welsh tradition; yet Welsh tradition, when examined, like Scandinavian, Hindû, Chinese, ancient American, and Egyptian traditions, confirms her teachings, and receives from them a light, an elucidation, which is to be had from nothing else. In a short article such as this, one cannot but have done injustice to this great book; what is to be emphasized is the prodigious scope of the learning displayed in it; the rare sources from which it draws; the mastery of the thousand and one branches of modern discovery. It is to be hoped that the many in Wales who are studying and disputing over the ancient records, will come before long to recognize that their problems will be wonderfully solved, or that they will be aided wonderfully in the work of solving them, by study of *The Secret Doctrine* and the

teachings of Theosophy. It would open new and splendid worlds for the literature and drama of the future, throwing back our horizons, displaying for us wisdom, beauty, heroism; and the value, the true value, of many ancient, noble, and long-loved things that we stand in danger now of throwing by the board.

THE NUMBER SEVEN AND ITS MEANING:

by Ariomardes



AN astronomer in a recent lecture, discussing the Week and its origin, said there was little doubt that a week of seven days had been in general use for more than three thousand years.

It is usually said that this period was chosen because it is the nearest whole number of days to the lunar quarter. On the other side it may be pointed out that the lunation is $29\frac{1}{2}$ days, not 28, and that the number seven is the most ancient, universally diffused, and widely applied of all the sacred symbolic numbers, excepting, perhaps, the numbers three and four.

There have also been weeks containing five days, as in ancient Mexican calendars, and these certainly do not represent any celestial motion that we know of. It is often supposed that the seven planets were the cause of the seven-day week, and that the ancients ignorantly numbered the sun and moon with the planets, thus counting seven. But the number seven was established *a priori* and the sun and moon were included for the purpose of making up a septenate, because two of the planets were secret. Here we get a hint as to the relation between the numbers seven and five, just alluded to. Five seems to have been an outer number, and seven a secret one; and the five is sometimes made up to a septenate by the addition of two substitutes. The four cardinal principles of nature, often called the four elements, when counted with a parent synthesizing principle, make up five, as symbolized by a cross or four-spoked wheel with its stable center. But when the fifth principle is resolved into a triad, the five becomes seven.

The numbers four and seven are again seen in the fact that humanity on this globe is now in the Fourth out of Seven Rounds (or great cycles of time). We are told that to the four elements already manifested, a fifth is being added, which is now coming into manifestation, and to which the name Aether may be provisionally given. This agrees well with recent discoveries in physics and with the changes taking place in the human constitution.

The septenate is represented in nature by the hexagonal snow-crystals, built on a plan of six radii and a center. So the week has six ordinary days and one special day. The six directions of space, which may be represented by three mutually rectangular axes crossing at a central point, also show the septenate. Our musical scale has

seven intervals, and we have divided our prismatic scale of colors in the same way.

Number seven is made up of three and four, the numbers of spirit and matter. So the seven principles of man comprise the lower quaternary and the higher triad. Ever since the waves of materiality, martial conquest, imperial power, luxury, sensuality, and hard dogmatic religions, swept over the world, driving the ancient mysteries back into hidden oasis and trackless mountain, the true key to life has been lost, and we have had only the Four (symbol of materiality) as our emblem. Do we not set it on the tops of our towers and carry it into all quarters of the world? It may be remembered that the ancient Romans, according to a legend whose meaning many historians evidently fail to see, declined to purchase all of the Sibylline books; and doubtless the few they did buy related to material fortune alone. This complete number Seven is evidently concerned with missing keys of knowledge; it denotes the union of spirit and matter, the perfectly balanced life.

When we nowadays try to fathom the secret of happiness in life we can think only along material lines, as though everybody would be rendered happy and blest if material comforts were equitably dispensed. Yet, desirable as this is, regrettable as is the inequality and selfishness, happiness could never be achieved by this means alone, for the restless ungoverned human nature is the fruitful and ever-present source of affliction. We need other keys than this — something to enable us to preserve mental, moral, and physical health, to get rid of restless cravings, hates, fears, lusts. That key must surely be the recognition and due cultivation of the spiritual side of life.

Turning again to the main topic, the septenary week, we seem to see that ancient nations grouped the days under the seven planetary influences; and no doubt the occupations of these several days were adjusted to those influences, an observance of times and seasons thus constituting a part of their secret for adjusting man with nature. And here it is necessary to make a great allowance for difference of age. So accustomed are we to thinking in terms of our own ideals that it becomes very difficult to eliminate that factor from our reasoning. We forget that many of the things which we unquestioningly accept as inevitable concomitants of human nature are merely peculiar characteristics of our own civilization. Take, for instance, the spirit of rivalry and outdoing, which is ingrained in our fiber. In a newspaper

cartoon intended to illustrate the respective effects of two different kinds of mercantile policy, two nations are represented by two symbolic figures; one figure is a strong and healthy man, the other a poor decrepit old man. The strong man is outstripping the weak old man in a journey along a road, and chuckling to himself at his success and the sad plight of his comrade. This well illustrates the spirit of our times, for it is a typical cartoon. Nations are rivals, rejoicing (apparently) in each other's discomfiture; and our internal affairs are based on the same principle of outdoing and of swelling ourselves to the utmost possibility regardless of, or at the expense of, our neighbor. Yet there may have been ages when no such spirit prevailed, and when men's efforts, not wasted in friction and in tearing down each other's work, reinforced each other like the tones of an orchestra, evoking a harmonious response from Nature. Under such circumstances there would be knowledge where now there is but darkness concerning the greater possibilities of life.

The attainment of harmony is associated with the understanding of the meaning of this sacred number Seven.

CONCERNING SOME PROPOSED REFORMS: by G. H. B.

THERE was once a man, but he was a Fool, for he had a great mass of rough stones which for ages he had been trying to build into a temple. Some passers-by told him to put the small stones underneath, some the larger. When the small stones were at the bottom they were ground down and crushed by the weight of the larger ones; and when the larger ones were placed at the foundations the smaller stones could not be made to remain in the high places, but continually rolled to the earth. The temple could not be built, and exceeding great was the vexation of the Fool.

At length a wise man approached and said: "Thou Fool! seest thou not that the stones are not true and square, and that however placed no results will be obtained?"

"Go, true thy stones; when they are square and cut to measure the temple will stand with either large or small stones at the foundation."

THE DISCOVERY OF PLIOCENE MAN:

by H. T. Edge, B. A. (Cantab.)



P. BLAVATSKY cogently remarks in *The Secret Doctrine* that specialists, before they attack the Theosophical position, should first show better agreement among themselves; and she shows, as it was not difficult to do, how various and mutually conflicting are the views held by different people on many important subjects. A case in point is the antiquity of man; and such is the disparity of opinion that we fail to be impressed by even the most dogmatic and authoritative utterances. Next day we are sure to see them flatly contradicted and on equally positive authority. One of the dogmas still stoutly maintained is that man cannot be older than Pleistocene times; a view against which H. P. Blavatsky brings a battery of argument, quoting many scientific authorities themselves in support of her contention that man existed in Tertiary times (not to speak of Secondary).

Proof of the existence of Pliocene man is now brought forward by Sir E. Ray Lankester, who contributes an article on this subject to *The Daily Telegraph* (London) for November 20. He commences by giving his version of that familiar theory which divides prehistoric human time into a number of ages designated by the words Palaeolithic, Neolithic, etc. The basis of classification is the character of the stone implements found in the various strata. The deeper we go into these strata, the ruder are the implements we find; and this fact is considered as showing that the earlier men were ruder than their followers. But the calculations are from time to time upset by the discovery of implements in strata where they should not be — which inverts the order of ages.

A geologist points out that while Palaeolithic men were unacquainted with pottery and weaving, and show no signs of having had domestic animals or agriculture, whereas Neolithic men had looms, pottery, cereals, horses, and sheep; yet Palaeolithic men show great artistic ability in their engravings on horn, bone, and wood, while Neolithic men show no such ability. H. P. Blavatsky identifies the two races thus described as belonging to two entirely different migrations, the "Palaeolithic" men being Atlantean descendants who had preserved some artistic ability, and the "Neolithic" men being migrants from Asia and Northern Africa, forerunners of the great Aryan invasion. She also points out that we have at the present day the Eskimo, who

engrave in the same way, and also civilized artists contemporary with them, and asks why this may not have been the case in the past. The art of these Palaeolithic bone-engravers is superior to that of some Egyptians who lived seven thousand years ago, yet the Egyptians had a great civilization.

Moreover it is obviously unsafe to argue only from what is left, especially after so many ages; for by far the greater part of the appurtenances of human life must have decayed long ago, and thus the bulk of the evidence is missing. If our civilizations had come to end all that time ago, how much would be left of it? All the iron would be gone, and all the brass and copper; it is doubtful whether any metal at all would be left; all stone and brick would have disintegrated; and even paper, our typical material, would have passed back into the soil. Any implements made of the hardest kind of stones, such as flints, would be all that would be left. If, in the interval between our departure and the exploration of our site, any wandering tribe had settled down, their flint weapons and oyster-shells might be found; and possibly the said tribesmen might be our own degenerate descendants.

So though it may be admitted that the flint weapons found were made by rude men, we cannot say whether or not any great civilization existed at the same time, or before; because we simply do not know. All we can say is that such a civilization might have existed. And when it is the more recent strata we are dealing with, we may find that there are still a few bronze tools that have not decayed; so we call that the Bronze Age. And so with the Iron Age.

Passing over, therefore, Professor Lankester's classification and dating of these supposed ages, we come to the main point of his paper. A new discovery has just been made in regard to ancient man and the professor has examined the finds and the sites himself and duly authenticated them. Flint implements of a very definite and peculiar shape have been found in a bed at the base of the Red Crag (a Pliocene deposit) of Suffolk. A year or two having elapsed since the first discovery, other similar implements having been found, and eminent authorities having testified that they were undoubtedly from the undisturbed basal layer of the Red Crag, it is correct to say that the articles are the work of "pre-Crag man."

The implements differ from all the other kinds that have been found. They are shaped like the beak of an eagle, compressed from

side to side, with a keel or ridge extending from the front point backwards. Their shape may be compared to the hull of a boat with its keel turned upwards and its beak-like prow in front. They are from four to ten inches in length and are believed to be hammer-heads.

And when did *Homo precragensis* live and fashion these hammers? The professor says, "More — perhaps very much more — than 500,000 years ago." And he pictures the state of the map at that time, which was the beginning of the Glacial Epoch.

We cannot even epitomize the discussions and teachings of *The Secret Doctrine* on the question of the antiquity of man; for they are extensive and scattered all over the two large volumes of that work written more than two decades ago. But anyone who has any acquaintance with *The Secret Doctrine*, or even with Theosophy, knows how strong a point is made of the antiquity of man — and not merely the antiquity of man but the *antiquity of civilization*. Since the book was written very many confirmations of its teachings have occurred and very many of its predictions been fulfilled. The scheme of human races therein outlined requires that we place the beginning of *the present Fifth Root-Race* at an epoch of from 800,000 to 1,000,000 years back; and before the Fifth Root-Race were the Fourth and Third, (the First and Second not being what we should understand as physical). These figures may seem large, but they are nothing as compared to the figures demanded by science itself in other matters — the age of the sedimentary rocks, or of the earth since it was part of a nebula, for instance. Considering the progress archaeology is making, it may be expected gradually to admit more and more of the teachings of *The Secret Doctrine*. It is pertinent to ask why men of science should be unwilling to allow a great antiquity to the human race; can it be that mere habit of thought, engendered during the times of theological dogmas about the Creation, is responsible for this unwillingness?

However, we find that men of science are not conservative beyond a certain point; and we see now that Tertiary man is placed on an indisputable basis. It is predicted in *The Secret Doctrine* that Eocene man will be discovered in this century; and this discovery, the earliest anthropoid apes being Miocene, will be another blow to the theory that these were the progenitors of man; while, if both the Eocene man and the Miocene anthropoids were derived from a common ancestor, it becomes necessary to put that ancestor enormously farther back.

Another significant point about the ancient teachings is that Atlantis was finally submerged (with the exception of Plato's fragment, Poseidonis) in the Miocene period. This is enough to explain the destruction, or at least concealment, of vast quantities of human remains belonging to the Fourth Root-Race which inhabited Atlantis.

People accustomed to dwell much on the external aspect of things often get into a mechanical way of thinking, until the world whose evolution they are trying to sketch becomes a kind of fictitious creation, having but little relation to actual life. But when we reflect deeply and look at the inner or mental aspect of evolution, we cannot fail to find it strange that any race of animals, or even of savages, should be able *unaided* to evolve the faculties of civilized man. In the animal kingdom there is a marked lack of that creative principle which characterizes man; they do not originate but remain the same; and it is the same, though in a far less degree, with most of those human races which we call aboriginal.

History shows us that *the light is handed on* from one people to another, and all the old civilizations speak of their "semi-divine" or "heroic" teachers. History also provides us with plentiful instances of the decline of races. Periods of great prowess are prefaced by the almost simultaneous birth of a number of geniuses as in the Elizabethan age, for instance; after which comes a dull and dry period. In short, we discern the workings of cyclic law everywhere, just as we do in the order of the times and seasons. In the animal and plant kingdoms too the evolution of new forms has been accompanied by the extinction of old ones. And so civilizations rise and fall and succeed each other. To get at the meaning of the whole thing, and to avoid the conclusion that the process is a perpetual vain repetition, we must take a more comprehensive view. To attempt this at present would carry us beyond the scope of this writing, but the inquirer will find a lucid and fully comprehensive explanation in the study of Theosophy.

ANTIQUITY OF THE HUMAN RACE: by E. H.



THE antiquity of the human race is a theme upon which it is scarcely possible to dwell too much; nor can a magazine which aims to keep in touch with current thought ignore it, for current thought will not let the subject rest. It forms an integral part of the Theosophical teachings, which, in the opinion of all Theosophists, are of such vital import to the world at the present time. To those who have studied *The Secret Doctrine* from the days when it was first published (1888), and whose privilege it has been to know its author, H. P. Blavatsky, at the time when she was preparing the manuscript, the daily vindication of her teachings and fulfilment of her forecasts, which is now going on, is a continual source of satisfaction.

The *New York Times* of February 11, 1912, publishes an article on the recent significant discovery of a human skeleton beneath an undisturbed layer of boulders and clay in East Anglia, and quotes Professor Robinson, in his essay on history, to the following effect:

Now we are beginning to recognize the immense antiquity of man. There are palaeolithic implements which there is some reason for supposing may have been made 150,000 years ago; the eolithic remains recently discovered may perhaps antedate the palaeolithic by an equally long period.

Mere guesses and impressions, of course, this assignment of millenniums, which appear to have been preceded by some hundreds of thousands of years during which an animal was developing with "a relatively enormous brain case, a skilful hand, and in inveterate tendency to throw stones," and in general, as Ray Lankester expresses it, "to defeat aggression and satisfy his natural appetites by the use of his wits rather than by strength alone."

Attention may be called, in passing, to the habit of dwelling on the brutal and animal side of human nature, as well as to a certain levity that seems half-apologetic, as though the speaker were a little ashamed of the view he is offering. And certainly the picture of ancient humanity which is called up before the imagination by all this weighing of evidence regarding bones and stones is apt to seem a bit grotesque by contrast with actual work-a-day life. The article continues, with regard to the East-Anglian man:

So far so good: the anthropologists are pretty much agreed that the "human drama" was being played on earth before the great ice scene was set.

Now here's the rub: the anthropologists are equally well agreed that all the parts in the great ice scene were played by the Neanderthal man in his Simian make-up. But the cablegram from London says of this newly-unearthed skeleton

of alleged pre-Glacial man: "A singular feature of the discovery is that in most respects the skeleton resembles that of the modern Englishman, and is not of the more Simian type to which the Neanderthal man, though a very much later phenomenon, belongs."

An article in a literary review, in treating of this subject, remarks incidentally that the osteological remains of the early pleistocene are confined to two chance specimens, and that this leaves the way open for those who think that man existed before this age. It certainly does leave the way open, and a pretty wide one too. Not much basis on which to build anything—two chance specimens. The proportion of speculation to facts is very large here; quite the reverse of what is sometimes exacted by scientific men in cases where their sympathies are differently disposed. To quote again from the first-named article:

Says one English scientist: "Some people were hasty enough to discern in Neanderthal men with their monkey-like qualities evidence of the missing link. It is now clear that they were survivors of a stock which had deteriorated, and not progenitors of our race. If we have to accept the theory of evolution (and it is still only a theory) it is a puzzling fact that man has changed so little in 100,000 years."

At this point a few quotations from *The Secret Doctrine* will be appropriate. Speaking of certain skulls discovered, and how they are so like those of present man as to require the epoch of man's supposed divergence from his ape-like ancestor to be put enormously far back, H. P. Blavatsky, quoting Huxley, writes:

In consequence of all this we are notified that those skulls "clearly indicate that the first traces of the primordial stock whence man has proceeded, need no longer be sought by those who entertain any form of the doctrine in the newest Tertiaries; but that they *may be looked for in an epoch more distant from the age of the ELEPHAS PRIMIGENIUS than that is from us.*" (Huxley)—Vol. ii, p. 687

The *actual* time required for such a theoretical transformation is necessarily enormous. "If," says Professor Pfaff, "in the hundreds of thousands of years which you [the Evolutionists] accept between the rise of palaeolithic man and our own day, a greater distance of man from the brute is not demonstrable, (*the most ancient man was just as far removed from the brute as the now living man*), what reasonable ground can be advanced for believing that man has been developed from the brute, and has receded further from it by infinitely small gradations?"

—*Ibid.*, footnote

For our comparatively young civilization to have shaken off some of the fetters of dogmatism and to have rediscovered the grand principle of evolution was no doubt a thing to congratulate ourselves upon.

But it is evident that there is still a great deal to be known about evolution. That man has not evolved in the way hitherto supposed is abundantly proved; and even if he had, even then we have but studied the effects, and the causes remain undiscovered. For what is that power so mighty and wonderful that it can cause an animal to develop into a man, and a stone-throwing savage into the highest product of civilization? Most thinkers whose minds are not bound down to a biological groove will recognize the necessity for a *deus ex machina*, for invisible hands that shift the scenery to and fro. So those whose thoughts dwell more on deific powers can still find plenty of work for deity or creator to do, even if his time were occupied only in superintending this vast and wonderful scheme of evolution. But in truth the notion of a single creator managing the whole process by his fiat is as crude and elementary as any theory can be. It may be true in a sense to say that the hand of God is at work in every seed, germ, or atom; yet in the case of our own actions we recognize more immediate causes. It is not enough to say that God is the mover in all our thoughts and actions; we realize that our own will and intention are effective as immediate causes, even though these in the last analysis may be subject to the control of Eternal Wisdom. Why is it not so in the case of the intelligent powers that work behind the scenes of nature? Neither the explanation of the biologist nor that of the theologian is sufficient to explain the development of the seed or germ. The one refers it to some unknown and unimaginable power denoted by some newly-coined scientific name; the other dismisses the question with a generalization about Divine power. But the subject demands investigation and intelligent study. The key to the problem lies in the recognition of other forms of existence besides those which are materially manifest. For the material world shows us merely the organisms coming into visibility from an invisible source, but does not reveal that source. Our own thoughts are not physically manifest; they are not conditioned by physical space. Yet they are the source of actions; by their power we create all the complicated appurtenances of our civilization. Similar processes of building are going on in nature, of which man is the imitator; and the source is in the invisible that lies beyond the visible. It is a familiar remark that the productions of nature evince the qualities of artistic designing and construction in the highest possible degree. If all this is the work of "chance" or of any other such power, then "chance" or the other power is superior to mind. The logical inference

is that, wherever design is seen, it must be the work of mind. But this leads us up to a point in the argument where it is advisable to leave the student to his own studies. Much information is contained in *The Secret Doctrine*, calculated to set the doctrine of Evolution on a firm basis and to show it forth in its purity and reasonableness, free from the many absurdities that have grown up around it.

THE WORLD'S GREATEST WATERFALL: by H.

NIAGARA has been outmatched by the Victoria Falls on the Zambesi, and these latter appear to be excelled, in height at least, by what is described as the world's greatest waterfall, the Kaieteur Falls in British Guiana. A visit to these is described by Leonard Kennedy in *The National Geographic Magazine* (Washington, Sep. 1911) with photographs by the author. When he landed at Georgetown he was told that back in the bush was a waterfall five times as high as Niagara, discovered forty years ago, and his informant thought he was the only white man in America who had seen it. So he made arrangements to go by launch up the Demarara River and one of its branches the Potaro River as far as Potaro Landing, and after that to take Indian guides to the Falls. At Potaro Landing it was necessary to make a land journey to get around a cataract. After this the journey was continued for several days by paddling, with occasional portages, until the party entered the vast gorge which the Falls have cut during ages. Proceeding up this they arrived at a point where the river became too rocky for further paddling, and they climbed up the precipitous side of the gorge to a plateau. Here the jungle comes to an end, leaving the Kaieteur savanna, a barren stretch of level sandstone about a mile square. Plodding over this, they eventually dived into a clump of brush and suddenly emerged upon a precipice of eight hundred feet. Opposite rose the other side of the gorge, and to the right, about five hundred yards away, the Fall.

A smooth but rapid river nearly four hundred feet wide flows quietly to the brink and turns quietly downward. In its fall it breaks into soft white mist and reaches the bottom in a chaos of seething clouds. There is a gentle roar. Only now and then a deep thunderous growl arose from the hidden caverns at the bottom, giving some idea of the forces that contended there.

POETRY AND DOGMA: by C. Woodhead



IN these days the maxim cannot be too often repeated that the search for truth must be conducted on lines of least resistance. Our inward appreciation of what is true is of a subtle and delicate nature, situated in the very heart of our being, and growing out from the unseen like a tender seed which needs careful nurture.

Therefore it is not wise to make it subject to wordy explanations, which can, at best, only display an imperfect phenomenal appearance. Others will not and cannot recognize this appearance as a mask of reality, unless it suggests the wordless noumenal growth within themselves.

The attempt to define the wordless is dogma. Whereas poetry reveals hidden truth, not in the written words but in that which lies between and within them, and sometimes within their rhythmic utterance.

If it be conceded, as it finally must be, that the truest perceptions of man arise from his own illuminated spiritual consciousness, it will be evident that the discussion of these perceptions in words, is quite futile. We do not judge of a person's utterances by the words he uses, but by an undefined aroma (good or bad) which surrounds them. An argument, therefore, when conducted in a partisan spirit, is in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, an utterly useless exercise, which engulfs in smoke the delicate light of the inner perception. For it is well known that the meanings of words are as various as the people who use them. And most arguments are little else than a difference of opinion as to what that meaning *should* be. Each side attempts to convey to the other its own idea, usually through the murky atmosphere of a divided egotism.

A quarter of a century ago it was not unusual to find in the newspapers an account of a debate between a clergyman and a freethinker (so-called). The whole neighborhood flocked to the spectacle, having, one and all, made up their minds beforehand, which side they would take. The clergyman would advance certain dogmatic propositions which the freethinker would triumphantly demolish, and *vice versa*. As a matter of fact they were fighting in the dark with words which carried no conviction. And everybody went home discussing who had had the best of it. Perhaps the world has progressed a little since that time. Yet still, how many discussions today are conducted, not to bring out truth and justice, but to gain a point of personal value to

the debater. Surely this slow and tedious method of progressive enlightenment must give place to something more effective, as the sources of truth reveal themselves in the evolving thought of humanity.

The reason why the sacred books of the East, including the Bible, are not better understood in these days, is because their real meaning has been obscured by centuries of dogmatic interpretations. If read in the right spirit, they convey in a magnificent poetical symbology the truths about the history of the world, the nature of the human soul, and the means for its salvation. This has been conclusively proved by H. P. Blavatsky, in *The Secret Doctrine*. Let him who would be convinced of this, read and judge for himself.

Let us take, for instance, the Biblical incident of the Flood. This is a poetic symbol of world-wide significance. There have been many floods and there will be many more. As the cycles of time revolve, the races of men disappear from the earth only to reappear in another form. The gradual evolution of the human soul is marked on the clock of the universe by appropriate times and seasons which repeat themselves on higher and higher planes of being. Time after time the continents have been destroyed in the course of divine nature and re-born to progress another step.

And at the end of each of these ages, as the impulse which brought it into being became diffused, chaotic and degraded, the seeds of a new humanity were saved by divine wisdom, and carried over the cataclysm which destroyed the ancient continents. Thus there have been several "Noahs" and several "arks" in the ancient history of the world.

Applied in another way the poetic allegory refers to those periods when the great reformers have stepped in to re-establish order and righteousness in the chaos of the world's delusions. In each case the seeds of a new race have been gathered together and protected and have become the pioneers of progress. Many such periods occur in history. Then the old order of thought gradually passes away and the world is renewed. But these are lesser cycles within the larger ones which affect the earth as a whole.

Another much mistaken poetical symbol is that of the crucifixion. To grasp the full meaning of this, needs a deep study of the history of man, and of his dual (divine and animal) nature. But once the latter is recognized by the inner eye of intuition, the imagery is plain in several aspects.

The divine Christos within every man is crucified upon his material

body, that the salvation of both may be accomplished. The poetic imagery of the crucifixion is an allegory of the pain and sorrow of the world, produced by the dual nature of man himself. When, at last, the god within man becomes the King of his appointed realm the conflict is at an end. And such is the destiny of all humanity in the long ages of the future. Meanwhile happy is he who whilst exclaiming to the god within himself, "Father, if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me," can also add, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

When we read the precepts of the noble Galilean Initiate who became a teacher of men because he was qualified by the great attainment of self-mastery, we recognize their divine import by some power of judgment which we have within us. What is this innate power, unless it be of the nature of that which gave birth to these sayings? If after this recognition we neglect to carry them into our daily life, we are wilfully crucifying the Christos within us.

Those who have studied the literature of the East know that all religion, philosophy, and even history, is embalmed in a poetic imagery which is strange to Western literature. At first sight one might be inclined to suppose that it loses accuracy and truth on that account. But this is not borne out by a closer comparison. When one considers the countless number of volumes which fill our learned libraries explaining endless complications of modern ideas on theology and philosophy, we alter our opinion. Most of these are filled with system after system of speculative dogmatism. They are wordy efforts to explain the divine mysteries of man's inner nature which lie outside the merely lower mind. They cannot be synthesized into any approach to a consistent whole.

On the other hand, if we look to the East from whence all systems of philosophy and religion have been derived, we shall find that the deepest truths lie hidden in its ancient sacred books, and the more we study them the more we recognize a homogeneous unity of idea which binds and consolidates their teaching into a unity — that of the ancient Wisdom-Religion of humanity.

The Christian Bible is full of allegory from beginning to end. How could it be otherwise considering the source from which it sprang? To interpret it literally is to place ourselves at the mercy of children, and scoffers at the Truth. To read it intuitionally in its superb allegories is to drink at the fountain of divine wisdom known to the ancients.

BURNHAM BEECHES: by R. Machell

ONE of the most popular of the woodland spots available to Londoners for their picnic excursions is Burnham Beeches, situated near Windsor, some twenty-five miles from London and about one and a half miles from Maidenhead on the Thames, so well known to all lovers of the beautiful upper reaches of the river. These ancient monarchs of the departed woods are great wide-branching ruins. The peculiar character of these and many other old trees in England is owing to their having been pollarded, that is polled or decapitated. It was a common custom to cut trees short off about six or eight feet from the ground, and to continue to cut the young growth every few years, according to the purposes for which these "saplings" were required. There were more than thirty different purposes for which they were in demand, and in places where these pollards were maintained, the harvesting and annual sale of the bundles, and cords, and stacks of wythes, poles, rods, redes, and what not, was an important industry to within the last fifty years. But when the cutting of this top was suspended, then the trees grew into their present, or recent, magnificent wide-spreading form. The great limbs attain at last more weight than the trunk can support, there comes a heavy snow-storm without wind, and loads these great limbs with a double burden; then the woods resound with explosive sounds like the roar of artillery as the great limbs fall and the patriarchs of the forest are shorn of their glory.

It is hard to believe, when we visit these "spots" — mere islands of forest land dotted about in a wide ocean of fertile cultivation, fair fields, and fairer parks and gardens — that they were once linked forgotten in vast stretches of forest lands dense with the interlacing branches of immemorial oaks, elms, and ash trees, birch, beech, hornbeam and sycamore, and many other valuable timber trees; while the cultivated patches were like islands in these oceans of forest. Yet so it was in Saxon times, and when the Norman came, the hunter kings extended the forests and made them sacred to sport. The life of a stag was more precious in their eyes than the lives of many serfs, aye and even than that of the Saxon freemen.

But these same forests, created and preserved as hunting-grounds of kings, became natural fortresses for the protection of the rebellious forest-lords, who there gathered armed hosts and fought more or less successfully for the liberties of the people. Levying taxes within their territories, they were called nobles and free-booters; but many were

STUDIES IN ORPHISM: by F. S. Darrow, A. M., Ph. D. (Harv.)

I. THE MYTHICAL AND THE HISTORICAL ORPHEUS

(a) THE MYTHICAL ORPHEUS OR THE MAGICAL BARD



H. P. BLAVATSKY, the first of the three Theosophical Leaders, in *Isis Unveiled* says:

The fable of Aristaeus pursuing Eurydice into the woods where a serpent occasions her death is a very plain allegory, which was in part explained in the earliest times. *Aristaeus* is *brutal power*, pursuing *Eurydice, the Esoteric Doctrine* into the woods where the *serpent, emblem of every sun-god* — kills her, i. e., forces truth to become still more esoteric and seek shelter in the Underworld, which is not the hell of our theologians. Moreover, the fable of Orpheus torn to pieces by the Bacchanals is another allegory to show that the gross and popular rites are always more welcome than divine but simple truth.¹

The story of Orpheus and Eurydice has ever been a favorite theme with the greatest poets of ancient and modern times, but its significance has not in general been recognized because most of the extant traditions about Orpheus are mythical, that is, symbolical and allegorical truths, *not* historical facts. Nevertheless, it is possible to distinguish the historical kernel around which these have been grouped. Orpheus' supreme importance lies not in these legends but in the fact that he was a religious reformer, one of the first to teach to the *historical nations of Europe* the eternal truths regarding the origin of things, the divinity of humanity and the immortality of the soul — the Truths which were dramatically embodied in the rites of the Greek Orphic Mysteries.

The myth of Orpheus, the Magical Bard, contains seven symbolical moments: (1) his Divine Birth; (2) his Sacred Quest as the savior of the Argonautic expedition; (3) his Mystic Marriage with Eurydice and his mission as a divine teacher; (4) his First Agony at the first death of Eurydice; (5) his Descent into Hades; (6) his Second and Final Agony at the second death of Eurydice, culminating in (7) his Passion.

1. THE DIVINE BIRTH

Orpheus "the far-famed Bard, the father of song sent by Apollo"² was according to tradition born in Thrace on Mount Olympus, which district, according to Strabo, though in his day held by the Macedonians, had formerly belonged to Thrace, "for," he says, "Pieria and

1. *Isis Unveiled*, II, pp. 129-130. 2. Pindar, iv, *Pythian Ode*, vv. 176-7 (313-315).

Olympus and Pimpleia and Leibethra were of old Thracian mountains and districts, . . . and the Thracians who colonized Boeotia dedicated Helicon to the Muses and also the cave of the Nymphs called Leibethriades.”³ Orpheus was the son of the God of Light, the patron divinity of Music, Apollo, and the Muse of Epic Poetry, Calliope. When a mere child he was nearly killed by a venomous snake and was saved only by taking refuge in a nearby sanctuary of Helios. Therefore ever afterwards the Bard annually worshiped the sun on the anniversary of this event.⁴ Orpheus was then presented by his father Apollo with the God’s lyre and was given divine instruction until he had become the most marvelous of musicians, capable of moving by his music not only the gods and men, but also the wild beasts, the trees, and the very rocks of the field.

Orpheus with his lute made trees
And the mountain-tops that freeze
Bow themselves when he did sing:
To his music plants and flowers
Ever sprung; as sun and showers
There had made a lasting spring.

Everything that heard him play —
E’en the billows of the sea —
Hung their heads and then lay by.
In sweet music is such art,
Killing care and grief of heart
Fall asleep or hearing die.⁵

Where stern Olympus stands;
In the elm woods and the oaken
There where Orpheus harped of old,
And the trees awoke and knew him
And the wild things gathered to him,
As he sang amid the broken
Glens his music manifold.⁶

At his sweet strains the rushing stream
Its uproar stilled, and all its waves
Paused in forgetfulness of flight;
And while the waters stayed to hear,
The Tribes far down the Hebrus’ stream

3. Strabo, x, 3 §722, (Casaubon, 471). 4. The frequency with which the symbolic serpent reappears in the Orphic Myth is significant of the Bard’s inner connexion both with Helios and Apollo. 5. Shakespeare, *Henry the Eighth*, iii, 1. 3.

6. Euripides, *Bacchae*, vv. 651 ff. (Murray).

Deemed that the river was no more.
 All wingéd creatures of the wood
 And e'en the woods themselves came near
 To listen; or, if far on high
 Some bird was wheeling through the air
 To that sweet music swift he fell
 On drooping wings. The mountains came:
 Rough Athos with his Centaur herd,
 And Rhodope, its drifted snows
 Loosed by the magic of that song
 Stood by to hear. The Dryads left
 The shelter of their oaken trunks
 And gathered round the tuneful bard.
 The beasts came, too, and with them came
 Their lairs: hard by the fearless flocks
 The tawny Afric lion crouched;
 The timid does feared not the wolves;
 And serpents crawled forth to the light,
 Their venom quite forgot.⁷

And the spotted lynxes for joy of the song
 Were as sheep in the fold, and a tawny throng
 Of lions trooped down from Othrys' lawn,
 And her light foot lifting, a dappled fawn
 Left the shade of the high tressed pine,
 And danced for joy to that lyre.⁸

It is thus evident that there is a striking parallelism between this part of the Greek myth and Isaiah's vision of the rule of the Messiah during the millennium:

And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the hind; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together. . . . And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy *mountain*; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. . . . Unto him shall the nations seek and his resting-place shall be glorious.⁹

This parallelism was commonly recognized by the early Christians who on many of their sarcophagi placed an exact copy, drawn from Greek art, of the figure of Orpheus taming the Beasts by the power of

7. Seneca, *Hercules Oetaeus*, vv. 1033 ff. (Miller). 8. Euripides, *Alcestis*, vv. 579 ff. (Way), spoken of Apollo, the Father, but likewise true of Orpheus, the Son.

9. *Isaiah*, xi, 6-10.

his magical music, and used it to represent the Good Shepherd. Gradually, however, under ecclesiastical influence the wicked wild animals were weeded out until the entire congregation consisted merely of mild and docile sheep. The fact of this borrowing is further significant of the real internal connexion which exists between Orphism and Christianity. The early Church was correct in thus admitting that the prototype of the mythico-historical figure of Jesus, the Christ, was to be found in the noble and ascetic Orpheus.

2. THE SACRED QUEST: ORPHEUS AS THE SAVIOR OF THE ARGONAUTIC EXPEDITION

The Argonauts were able to accomplish their mission successfully only by the help of Orpheus, whose importance in the Saga of the Search for the Golden Fleece is in itself evidence of the notable connexion between Orpheus and Apollo and Helios, for the solar key unlocks many of the mysteries in the story of Jason's Quest.

The Argo could be launched only to the accompaniment of Orpheus' lyre, whereupon it glided into the sea of its own accord. The Argonauts themselves were rescued from the seductive pleasures on the Island of Lemnos only by means of the Bard's magical music. The Symplegadae, or the Twin Clashing Rocks, which threatened to crush the Argo between them, were stopped in the midst of their wild movement by the same means and forever anchored fast at the mouth of the Bosphorus in the Black Sea, where they have remained to this day. Then, too, the Heroes, when they neared the Flowery Isle of the Sirens, became so entranced that they would have landed on the fatal shore had not Orpheus saved them by striking upon his lyre. Thus all escaped safely, except Butes, who flung himself into the sea and strove to swim to the beach. Nevertheless, by the interposition of Aphrodite even he was ultimately rescued. Also, it was Orpheus who lulled to sleep the Colchian dragon which guarded the Golden Fleece. And finally, when the Argonauts, crowned with success and accompanied by the Princess Medeia, the witch grand-daughter of Helios, were returning, they were rescued from utter shipwreck only by the prayer which Orpheus directed to the Mystery Gods of Samothrace as he played upon the lyre — a myth which may indeed be the prototype or the source of the stilling of the tempest on the Sea of Galilee by Jesus.¹⁰

10. *Matthew*, viii, 23-27; *Mark*, iv, 35-41; *Luke*, viii, 22-25

3. THE MYSTIC MARRIAGE WITH EURYDICE; AND ORPHEUS' MISSION AS A DIVINE TEACHER

Hyginus and Apollodorus report that Orpheus was killed by a stroke of lightning while sailing with the Argonauts, but the usual form of the myth declares that after bringing the Heroes safely back to Greece the sacred Bard journeyed to Egypt where he was fully initiated by the hierophants.

His marriage with Eurydice is not a beautiful love-story, although so regarded often by the ancient poets and regularly by the modern, but in the words of H. P. Blavatsky, "a very plain allegory," for it is an almost inevitable characteristic of the God-man of the Mystery-Story among all nations to be represented as the Divine Bridegroom. The Sacred Marriage, or rather the two Sacred Marriages, form the intrinsic part of the Mystery-Story. The etymology of the name Eurydice is enlightening. The word means "She of Wide Power, Authority, or Justice," hence, "She who is rich by reason of the right of Succession"; and what is richer in hereditary rights than the "Secret Doctrine," which has been handed down from time immemorial by the "Golden Chain of Succession"? Also it is noteworthy that Orpheus won his bride by the magic power of his music. Hymen, the God of marriage, was invited to bless the nuptials with his presence; but although he attended, the omens were unpropitious, for his torch smoked and brought tears into the eyes of all the guests. It is likewise significant that after his Mystic Marriage Orpheus returned to Pimpleia on Mount Olympus, where he dwelt in a *cave* and devoted the rest of his life to civilizing and helping his savage neighbors by teaching them the Mysteries which thereafter in his honor were called Orphic.

4. THE FIRST AGONY AT THE FIRST DEATH OF EURYDICE

Eurydice (the "Secret Doctrine"), soon after her marriage to Orpheus (the God-man), was seen and pursued by Aristaeus (brutal power), who became enamored of her beauty. Thereupon Eurydice died from a bite upon her foot, inflicted by a poisonous snake (the solar emblem, as noted before). The heartbroken Bard sang his grief to all that breathed the upper air, gods and men alike. "Orpheus made thee (Eurydice), thee, all to himself on a lonely shore, thee at dawn of day, thee at set of sun, his unending song."¹¹

11. Virgil, *Georgics*, iv, vv. 465-6.

Eurydice, the Thracian dames
 Bewailed; Eurydice, the gods,
 Who ne'er had wept before; and they
 Who with forbidding, awful brows,
 In judgment sit and hear the crimes
 Long since committed, unconfessed,
 They sat and wept Eurydice.¹²

Finally, Orpheus wandered to the assembly of the gods on Mount Olympus and in his endeavor to regain his lost Eurydice, although warned of the perilous nature of the undertaking, obtained permission from Zeus, the Father of Gods and Men, to visit the Lower Regions *alive*.

5. THE DESCENT INTO HADES

The Descent into Hades, like the Mystic Marriage, the Agony, and the Passion, is an integral part of the Mystery-Story and will reappear in the Christ-Story. Orpheus descended by means of the cave upon the promontory of Taenarus, not far from ancient Sparta, and like those other heroes, Heracles, Theseus, Odysseus, and Aeneas, reached the Underworld alive. He charmed Charon, the aged ferryman of the Styx and appeased the rage of Cerberus, the three-headed dog of Hades, by his music, and finally reached in safety the thrones of Hades, the king of the Lower World, and of Persephone, his queen, to both of whom he sang his petition while he played his magical lyre. The dead wept; Tantalus, in spite of his endlessly unsatisfied thirst, stopped his straining after the ever-retreating water; the vultures ceased to tear and rend the ever-growing liver of Tityus; Ixion's wheel stood still; the Danaïds rested from their ever-lasting task of filling the leaky jar with the water drawn in a sieve; while Sisyphus sat on his rock to listen. Then for the first time the Furies wept, and Persephone and Hades her husband hastened to grant the poet's prayer by summoning the newly-arrived Eurydice who came, still limping because of her wounded foot. Orpheus was permitted to take her back to Earth but on condition that he should not turn around and look at her until they reached the upper air. Mindful of this the Bard led the way, while Eurydice followed. Unhindered they passed through the horrors of Hades while all things held their breath.

When through the doors of Taenarus
 He made his way to the silent land,

12. Seneca, *Hercules Furens*, vv. 578 ff. (Miller).

Sounding his mournful lyre the while,
 The glooms of Tartarus were filled
 With his sad song; and the sullen gods
 Of Erebus were moved to tears.
 He feared not the pool of the Stygian stream
 By whose dread wave the heavenly gods
 Make oath unbreakable.
 The whirling rim of the restless wheel
 Stood still, its breathless speed at rest.
 The immortal liver of Tityus
 Grew, undevoured, while at the song
 The spellbound birds forgot their greed.
 Thou, too, didst hear, O boatman grim,
 And thy bark that plies the infernal stream
 With oars all motionless came on.
 Then, first, the hoary Phrygian
 Forgot his thirst, although no more
 The mocking waters fled his lips
 But stood enchanted; now no more
 He reaches hungry hands to grasp
 The luscious fruit.
 When thus through that dark world of souls
 Sweet Orpheus poured such heavenly strains
 That impious rock of Sisyphus
 Was moved to follow him.¹³

They sat and wept Eurydice,
 Until the Lord of Death exclaimed:
 "We grant thy prayer. Away to Earth!
 But on this sole condition go:
 Do thou behind thy husband fare!
 And look thou not upon thy wife
 Until the light of day thou see
 And Spartan Taenarus appear."¹⁴

6. THE SECOND OR FINAL AGONY AT THE SECOND DEATH OF EURYDICE

Then did the goddesses of fate
 Renew the exhausted thread of life
 For fair Eurydice. But when,
 Unmindful of the law they gave,
 And scarce believing that his wife

13. Seneca, *Hercules Oetaeus*, vv. 1061 ff. 14. Seneca, *Hercules Furens*, vv. 582 ff.

Was following, the hapless man
 Looked back, he lost his prize of song;
 For she, who to the very verge
 Of life had come again, fell back
 And died again.¹⁵

But soon, too soon, the lover turns his eyes
 Again she falls, again she dies, she dies!

Now under hanging mountains,
 Beside the fall of fountains
 Or where the Hebrus wanders,
 Rolling in meanders,
 All alone
 Unheard, unknown
 He makes his moan.

Now with Furies surrounded,
 Despairing confounded,
 He trembles, he glows,
 Amidst Rhodope's snows.¹⁶

Dimly thy sad leave-taking face,
 Eurydice! Eurydice!
 The tremulous leaves repeat to me
 Eurydice! Eurydice!¹⁷

Orpheus tried for a second time to follow Eurydice into the Lower World, but Charon repulsed him and refused him passage. For seven days (a significant number) he remained on the banks of the Styx without food or sleep. Then for seven months Orpheus sat in chilly caverns or under the open sky beside the river Strymon, taking neither food nor drink.

Beneath a rock o'er Strymon's flood on high,
 Seven months, seven long continued months, 'tis said,
 He breathed his sorrows in a desert cave,
 And soothed the tiger, moved the oak with song.¹⁸

At the end of the seven months (again the significant number) the Bard withdrew to the higher and more wintry regions of Mounts Rhodope and Haemus so that he might mourn in still greater solitude.

Alone over Hyperborean ice and Tanaïs the snowy, and fields whose marriage

15. Seneca, *Hercules Oetaeus*, vv. 1083 ff. (Miller). 16. Pope, *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*, vi. 17. Lowell, *Eurydice*. 18. W. S. Landor, *Orpheus and Eurydice in Dry Sticks*.

bond with Rhipaeen frost is never severed, he would wander, mourning his lost Eurydice and Hades' cancelled boon.¹⁹

He chose a lonely seat of unhewn stone,
Blackened with lichens, on an herbless plain.

He does no longer sit upon his throne
Of rock upon a desert herbless plain,
For the evergreen and knotted ilixes,
And cypresses that seldom wave their boughs,
And sea-green olives with their grateful fruit,
And elms dragging along the twisted vines,
Which drop their berries as they follow fast
And blackthorn bushes with their infant race
Of blushing roseblooms; beeches, to lovers dear,
And weeping willow trees; all swift or slow,
As their huge boughs or lighter dress permit,
Have circled in his throne, and Earth herself
Has sent from her maternal breast a growth
Of starlike flowers and herbs of odor sweet,
To pave the temple that his poesy
Has framed, while near his feet grim lions crouch,
And kids, fearless from love, creep near his lair.
Even the blind worms seem to feel the sound.
The birds are silent, hanging down their heads,
Perched on the lowest branches of the trees;
Not even the nightingale intrudes a note
In rivalry, but all entranced she listens.²⁰

7. THE PASSION

While Orpheus, ever remembering his sorrow, was wandering on Mount Rhodope, it is said a band of Bacchanals, the Bassaridae, frenzied women-worshippers of Dionysus, met the wanderer and asked him to play for them some gay music that they might dance, but when he was unable to please the merrymakers because of his grief, the leader of the women enraged at his sad notes shouted: "See yonder our despiser!" and hurled her javelin, which, however, as soon as it came within the sound of the magical lyre, fell harmless at the Bard's feet. Thereupon the others began to throw stones, which also left him unharmed, until the voice of the lyre was overwhelmed by the uproar, when the maniacs tore him limb from limb and cast his head and his lyre into the river Hebrus, down which they floated ever murmuring sad music to which the shores responded.

19. Virgil, *Georgics*, iv, vv. 517-520. 20. Shelley, *Orpheus*.

See, wild as the winds, o'er the desert he flies;
 Hark! Haemus resounds with the Bacchanals' cries —
 Ah, see, he dies! he dies!
 Yet e'en in death Eurydice he sung.
 Eurydice, still trembled on his tongue,
 Eurydice the woods
 Eurydice the floods,
 Eurydice the rocks and hollow mountains sung.²¹

What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,
 The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,
 Whom universal nature did lament
 When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,
 His gory visage down the stream was sent,
 Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore.²²

The Muses gathered the fragments of the body and buried them in the district of Pieria on Mount Olympus at Leibethra, where ever since, it is said, the nightingale sings more sweetly over the grave than in any other part of Greece. Here too the river Helicon now flows for some distance underground, although legend declares that originally it flowed above ground throughout its entire course, but when the women who slew Orpheus wished to wash off the bloodstains in the Helicon, the river straightway rushed beneath the ground that it might not share in the pollution. Later, at the time of the destruction of Leibethra the urn with the ashes of the Bard and the pillar marking the grave were moved to the neighboring city of Dium. Upon this pillar was inscribed the following epigram; which, it should be noted, records a variant tradition from that described above, inasmuch as Zeus is said to have slain Orpheus by lightning because the Bard, like Prometheus, revealed the Mysteries of the Gods to men.

Here the Bard buried by the Muses lies
 The Thracian Orpheus of the golden lyre:
 Whom mighty Zeus the Sovereign of the skies
 Removed from earth by his dread lightning's fire.²³

After the murder, Dionysus is said to have metamorphosed the Basaridae into trees.

As the head floated down the stream the dead lips still murmured "Eurydice," and while his soul passed for the second time to Hades to rejoin his Mystic Bride, twice-lost, he incessantly called "Eurydice,"

21. Pope, *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*, vi. 22. Milton, *Lycidas*, vv. 58 ff.

23. Diogenes Laertius, *Proemium*, iv.

until the brooks, the trees, and the fountains he had loved so well, re-echoed the longing cry, repeating it over and over again.

Even, then, while the head, rent from that pale marble neck was carried floating down Oiafrican Hebrus' flood, Eurydice, the lifeless voice of the cold tongue with latest breath kept calling —Ah! my poor Eurydice! Eurydice! the banks returned all down the stream.²⁴

The head drifted across the Aegean and after a long lapse of time reached the Island of Lesbos, unharmed by the water, still singing and still freshly bleeding. Just as it touched the shore an infuriated serpent (again the solar emblem) strove to insert its fangs, but Phoebus Apollo drove the viper away and turned it into stone with its jaws still gaping. Then, at last, the Bard rejoined his lost Eurydice, at whose side in the Fields of the Blessed he walked, gazing his full without fear of penalty.

The head and the lyre were both preserved in the Island of Lesbos in an oracular hero-shrine within the sacred precinct of Apollo, to which in later times pilgrims flocked even from distant Babylon, and among those who thus sought the guidance of the dead Prophet was Cyrus the Great. It is also related that Neanthus, son of Pittacus, the Sage-tyrant of Mitylene, because of the many wonders formerly wrought by the magical lyre, was so eager to gain possession of it that he bribed the priest of Apollo. Whereupon the young man with the lyre in his bosom stealthily left the city by night and as soon as he reached the open country began to strike the strings under the belief that he too would be able to move rocks and trees, but he failed so miserably that the dogs of the neighboring villages straightway fell upon him and tore him to pieces. Now, the Lyre, at the intercession of Apollo and the Muses has been placed among the stars, where it forms the constellation Lyra. Such, in outline, is the ancient myth of Orpheus the Magical Bard. It conceals a historical basis to a consideration of which we shall now turn.

(b) THE HISTORICAL ORPHEUS OR THE EARLY RELIGIOUS REFORMER

Of the life of Orpheus, the man, the great religious teacher and reformer, who was born in Thrace, spent most of his life at Pimpleia on Mount Olympus, and lived (perhaps) about 1250 B. C., in contradistinction to the Magical Bard, little is known except possibly his father's name. Diodorus Siculus says:

24. Virgil, *Georgics*, iv. vv. 523-527.

Charops, grandfather of Orpheus, gave help to the god Dionysus, who in gratitude instructed him in his sacred Mysteries; Charops handed them down to his son Oiagros and Oiagros to his son, Orpheus. Orpheus was a man of natural genius and superlative training, who introduced many changes into the rites of the Mysteries: hence they called the rites which had their origin in Dionysus, Orphic.²⁵

In the *Rhesus* which has come down to us among the plays of Euripides, Orpheus is referred to as a God-man, the Prophet of Dionysus, who

'neath Pangaios' rock
Dwelt, god-revered by them that knew the Truth.²⁶

And Aristophanes declares:

First Orpheus withheld us from bloodshed impure, and vouchsafed us the *Great Revelation*.²⁷

Strabo adds:

Near the city of Dium is a village called Pimpleia where Orpheus lived. . . . He was a man of magical power in both music and divination and taught the rites of the Mysteries — thereby obtaining many followers and a great influence. . . . Some accepted him willingly but others . . . attacked and slew him.²⁸

It seems certain therefore that Orpheus, poet, philosopher, prophet, musician, and theologian, who came “not to destroy but to fulfil,” had that charm which has ever attended the greatest of the religious teachers — the charm which creates devoted followers and disciples; and on the other hand murderous enemies, traitors, and assassins.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the earliest traditions connect Orpheus not with Dionysus but with *Apollo*, although the name of Orpheus is written large upon the mystery-worship of Dionysus. Says Eratosthenes:

Orpheus did not honor Dionysus but considered the Sun to be the greatest of the gods, whom also he called Apollo; and arising during the night, he ascended before dawn the mountain called Pangaion that he might first catch sight of the Sun, therefore Dionysus was enraged and sent the Bassaridae against him, as the poet Aeschylus says²⁹ and they tore him to pieces and scattered his limbs abroad, but the Muses collected them and buried them in the place called Leibethra.³⁰

These statements are highly important although apparently Eratosthenes failed to understand the inner relationship between Apollo

25. Diodorus Siculus, iii, 65. 26. *Rhesus*, vv. 972-3 (Way). 27. Aristophanes, *Frogs*, v. 1032 (Murray). 28. Strabo, vii, frgs. 17, 18, 19. 29. Aeschylus, in his lost play, entitled the *Bassaridae*. 30. Eratosthenes, *Catasterismi*, xxiv.

and Dionysus. Apollo is the Day-sun, and Dionysus the Spiritual Night-sun. The sacred dress worn during the Mysteries is significant of this symbolism, consisting as it does of the crimson robe over which was hung from the right shoulder the sacred fawn-skin, whose spots represent the heavens at night, the moon and the stars, while the third element of the Mystic Dress, the golden belt, symbolizes the rays of the Spiritual Sun. This is proved by the following quotations, which might easily be multiplied. Proclus, the ancient Platonist, says in his Hymn to the Sun: "They celebrate thee (the Sun) as the illustrious parent of Dionysus." And in an Orphic verse occurs the statement that "he is called Dionysus because he *whirls in circular motion* through the *immeasurably extended heavens*," while Macrobius quotes still another verse as follows: "*The Sun whom men call Dionysus.*" Lastly, in the Eumolpic verses we read: "Dionysus with face of flame, glistens like a star with his rays," and in Aristophanes' *Frogs* the chorus of Mystae sing:

Come, arise, from sleep awaking, come the fiery torches shaking,
 O Iacchus! O Iacchus!³¹
Morning Star that shinest *nightly*.
 Lo, the mead is blazing brightly.³²

In explanation of this night worship of the Sun, the following words of H. P. Blavatsky in *Isis Unveiled* are very interesting:

Hence we may understand why the sublimer scenes of the Mysteries were always in the night. The life of the interior spirit is the death of the external nature; and the night of the physical world denotes the day of the spiritual. Dionysus, the night-sun, is therefore worshiped rather than Helios, orb of day.³³

It is thus evident that Orpheus was a prophet of the Religion of Light, a worshiper of the Spiritual Sun in its twofold aspect of Apollo-Dionysus, and reformed the popular orgies held in honor of Dionysus by introducing the Mystery-worship into the earlier rites, and as a result was himself slain by the votaries of the old, popular, degenerated worship, as is established out of the mouth of many witnesses. Later his tomb became a hero-shrine. Thus, it is said by the scholiast to Euripides' *Alcestis*, who quotes the early philosopher Heraclitus as his authority, that "*Orpheus set in order the religion of Dionysus* in Thrace on Mount Haemus, where, it is said, are certain writings of

31. The Mystery-Title of Dionysus in the Eleusinian Mysteries. 32. Aristophanes, *Frogs*, vv. 340-344 (Rogers). 33. H. P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled* I, Before the Veil, p. xiv.

his on Tablets.”³⁴ Therefore, it is probably certain that the Orphic religion of ancient Greece sprang from the blood of a real teacher and reformer, one of the great benefactors of humanity.

Eurydice, the Mystic Bride, is the divine light within. The Muses who gather up the scattered fragments of the Bard's body are the repentant Maenads,³⁵ his former murderers; that is, the worshipers of the older unreformed Dionysiac worship, who subsequent to the Passion were converted to the new teachings. They knew not what they did, when in their state of frenzy. This conversion of Maenad to Muse is exactly parallel to the reform of the wild and unrestrained Bacchic worship into orderly and ascetic Orphism, the transformation of brutality into noble restraint and righteousness under the refining spirit of music and law.

The marvelous myth of the Magical Bard has misled some of the best classical scholars into a denial that Orpheus was a historical figure, a denial which apparently has the support of Aristotle. Such scholars declare that Orpheus was originally an Underworld God, the counterpart of Dionysus.³⁶ This hypothesis, however, fails to account for several features of the myth, and it ignores the almost unanimous testimony of antiquity in regard to the historical existence of Orpheus, and does not explain the very significant fact that Orpheus is filled with the spirit of orderliness and grave earnestness, typical of Apollo, but diametrically opposed to the *popular conception* of Dionysus. Historically, then, Orpheus was a mighty religious teacher, mythically a wonder-working musician.³⁷ Orpheus, the man, reformed the common worship of Dionysus by teaching the eternal truths of the inner light, the divinity of humanity, and the immortality of the soul. He was a worshiper of the Spiritual Sun, whose only prayer was that voiced in the beautiful paraphrase of the Gâyatri:

O Thou who givest sustenance to the Universe,
 Thou from Whom all proceed, to Whom all must return,
 Unveil to us the face of the true Spiritual Sun, now hidden by a disk of golden
 light:
 That we may see the Truth and do our whole duty
 As we journey toward thy Sacred Seat.

Hence his mythical association with both Apollo and Dionysus.

The declaration of Diodorus Siculus that “the whole mythology

34. Scholiast to Euripides, *Alcestis*, v. 968. 35. *Vide* the suggestive words of Miss J. E. Harrison in her excellent *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, 2d. Ed. pp. 463-4.
 36. E. Maass, *Orpheus*, pp. 127-72. 37. Miss J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena*, 2d. Ed. pp. 454-73.

of Hades" was brought from Egypt into Greece, and that the Mysteries of Osiris are the same as those of Dionysus, and those of Isis the same as those of Demeter,³⁸ when linked with the similar statements of Plutarch in his *Isis and Osiris*, throws light upon the tradition that Orpheus was initiated by the hierophants in Egypt. In fact there can be no doubt but that the Mystery-god Zagreus is substantially the same as the Egyptian Osiris.

The following words of the ancient Platonist Proclus in his Commentaries on the *Republic* of Plato furnish a suggestive and important key:

Orpheus because of his perfect knowledge is said to have been killed in various ways: for the reason, I believe, that the men of his age understood the Orphic Harmony (that is, the mystical teachings of Orpheus) only *partially*: inasmuch as they were unable to receive a universal and perfect knowledge of it. But the Lesbians best understood his melody, and therefore, perhaps, the head of Orpheus separated from his body is said to have been transported to Lesbos. Fables of this kind, *consequently, are related of Orpheus as well as Dionysus, and because he was the leader in the rites of Dionysus, he is said to have suffered the same fate as his god.*³⁹

This does not imply, I think, that Proclus intended to deny the Passion of Orpheus, as a historical fact, but that he meant to explain the origin of the myth of the Magical Bard, which has arisen from the teachings given by the historical Orpheus in regard to the Mystery-god within. The traditions have clothed the religious reformer with many characteristics taken from the Greek story of the Mystic Savior. However, among the later teachers of Orphism there was not a St. Paul to conceive of the idea of identifying the prophet with his prophecy by making the religious teacher himself the incarnation of the God-man savior. Therefore although a mythical Bard Orpheus has been created by reflection from the teachings of the historical Orpheus, the religious reformer, yet the teacher has remained more or less distinct from his teaching; that is, he has never been thoroughly identified with Zagreus, the Mystery-god, whom he preached, although the myth of Orpheus is in itself an adaptation from the Mystery-story.

Orpheus is thrice-crowned victor by his divine music (that is, his mystic teaching): on earth over men, beasts, trees, and rocks; in heaven by obtaining permission from Zeus to descend to Hades alive; and victor in the Lower World by his success in persuading Persephone

38. Diodorus Siculus, i, 96. 39. Proclus to Plato's *Republic*, p. 398.

and Hades to let Eurydice return to earth, if only for a time. His lyre of seven strings with its divine harmony of the human heart made perfect by suffering, embraces all within its universal compass, and though we have forgotten its complete harmony we can still hear fragments of the lost notes; and the impulse transmitted to historical Europe by its ancestor of sacred poetry and of music, its primeval revealer of the eternal truths, may still be felt by those willing to stop and listen.

What wondrous sound is that, mournful and faint,
 But more melodious than the murmuring wind
 Which through the columns of the Temple glides?
 It is the wandering voice of Orpheus' lyre,
 Borne by the winds, who sigh that their rude king
 Hurries them fast from these air-feeding notes;
 The waning sound scattering it like dew
 Upon the startled sense.⁴⁰

The figure of Orpheus, the son of Oïagros, prophet both of Apollo and of Dionysus, will, in the true History of Religion, which remains still to be written, be placed in honored company with Gautama the Buddha and Jesus the Christ.

WHERE IS IRISH SPOKEN? by a Connaught-man



DISCUSSION on the above question was raised by a paragraph in THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH for December, in which the translation of Donnelly's *Atlantis* into Irish was suggested. After a lively skirmish among brandishers of second-hand information the question was referred to an advanced student of Irish who spends months every year in the heart of Gaeldom. Here is the substance of his pronouncement:

As regards Donnelly's book it would be more relevant to inquire where Irish is read than where it is spoken; for the two areas, so far from coinciding, would only very slightly overlap.

Everyone knows that the places where the natives would understand Irish and could speak it if they liked, are in the northwest, west, and southwest, besides Waterford, O'Meath, etc., etc. — about one third of Ireland. But everyone does not realize that the ability to speak Irish is, literally, in inverse ratio to the ability to read it. There

40. Shelley, *Orpheus*.

are three main grades of Gaeldom but all the intermediate grades exist:

A. Where it is the genuine home language of young and old, some of the parents reading English.

B. The parents and grandparents speak Irish together, but speak execrable English to the children. Parents can all read English.

C. Only the grandparents speak Irish, the parents may know it, but all are profoundly ashamed of it.

None of the above can read a word of Irish as a rule, but in A and B occasional survivals of the old scholarship are found; e. g. in the Blaskets, an excellent type of class A, one old man reads the seventeenth century poets and writes well. Most of his letters are partly in verse. A few others can read a little. The island shaped like Cuba has about thirty cottages all together across the blunt end, and two hundred inhabitants. They mostly emigrate to Chicago. I doubt that one single inhabitant of Ireland can *read* Irish as easily as English.

But you are wondering what about the children, and when the possible readers of *Atlantis* will come in. Let us consider the latter point first.

The readers of Irish are mostly in the cities and large towns where the admirable Gaelic League has organized them into Branches. They attend Irish colleges in Dublin and in Belfast, and in summer go to one of the dozen holiday courses in some Irish-speaking district. These are the enthusiasts. They may be in their teens or in the sixties, and are of every social rank; almost all have learned Irish as adults. The most advanced section of these students would read *Atlantis* in Irish provided it were translated by one of the three or four living writers of Irish prose literature; they would study it for the sake of the language. Those interested in the ideas of the book would of course simply read it in English.

Then the Christian Brothers and the teaching nuns constitute another large body of readers of Irish, nearly all the Irish in Secondary schools being in their hands. Very few of their pupils continue to study Irish after leaving school.

Then there are the Primary school teachers (humorously styled "national"), of whom a few enthusiasts here and there are doing excellent work for Irish under incredible difficulties. Few inspectors are enthusiasts.

Broadly speaking, the school-managers (the local clergy) are

strongly opposed to Irish, more especially when they themselves spoke it as children. The country parents under their influence consider Irish vulgar and degrading; and this is often the view of teachers brought up in the Gaeldom and who have the sounds of Irish in their English pronunciation. The teachers who are keenest about the language are too often imperfectly grounded in it. So in either case the children suffer.

Lay control of education, which so many intelligent parents are demanding, would do away with all these and many other disabilities.

THE COSMIC ELEMENTS AND THEIR EVOLUTION:

by H. Travers

For clearer understanding on the part of the general reader, it must be stated that Occult Science recognizes *Seven* Cosmical Elements — four entirely physical, and the fifth (Ether) semi-material, as it will become visible in the air towards the end of our Fourth Round, to reign supreme over the others during the whole of the Fifth. The remaining two are as yet absolutely beyond the range of human perception. — *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 12



THE recent discoveries in physics remind one of the above statement; “semi-material” seems to describe well the kind of substances those discoveries concern. An interesting point brought out by the quotation is that the several elements are undergoing a development or evolution. Four of them have already reached the stage which we call “material”; the fifth is semi-material, and later on it will have become visible. Presumably it will still later become manifest in other ways besides visibility. The two remaining elements are beyond the reach of human perception; but, as we are told further on, they in turn will become known.

This idea of the evolution of elements contradicts the assumption that they are invariable; an assumption which may be sufficiently accurate for scientific purposes where the question of ages is not considered. Of late one has seen suggestions that the elements may undergo development, especially in connexion with theories of cosmic evolution and nebulae; so this idea from H. P. Blavatsky will not seem so revolutionary now as it did when she wrote. Of course the idea is consistent with our observations of Nature in other respects. The human, animal, and vegetable kingdoms undergo development; in

general it may be said that gradual transformation is the universal law.

What is said about the fifth element becoming visible in the air may or may not have a connexion with the following. The epoch which H. P. Blavatsky means by "towards the end of the Fourth Round" cannot be publicly stated, as she is intentionally veiled when dealing with figures; but, as each Round is divided into seven Races, and we are now in the fifth of these Races, we may be said to be *approaching* the end of the Fourth Round even now.

A recent note in *The Scientific American* is entitled "Self-luminous Night-Haze," and describes the observations of Professor E. E. Barnard of the Yerkes Observatory, as published by him in the *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*. After noting that several observers had already described the presence of luminous hazes, not attributable to diffused star-light, yet sometimes bright enough to show the time by a watch, the writer details Professor Barnard's particular observations.

This consists of strips and patches of luminous haze, which have been observed at Yerkes Observatory several times during the past year. It is not confined to any particular region of the sky nor to any hour of the night. It always has a slow drifting motion among the stars, comparable to that of ordinary hazy streaky clouds that are often seen in the daytime. The streaks are usually straight and diffused, and as much as fifty degrees or more in length, and three degrees to four degrees or more in width. In some cases they are as bright, or nearly so, as the average portions of the Milky Way. . . . They are apparently about as transparent as ordinary haze.

Such phenomena have been described as of "an auroral nature," an explanation which perhaps sheds a faint phosphorescence over our darkness. Light tends to become more dissociated in our ideas from its more familiar accompaniment heat. Non-calorific forms of light claim investigation. The idea of light as a primordial element, instead of as a function or product of other elements, gains ground; which view is more in accordance with the ancient teachings, which represent light as a creative agent.

To attempt an explanation of what the writer of *The Secret Doctrine* means by the word "element," as here used, would be difficult without the light shed by a study of her writings on the subject. But a few points may be indicated. The teachings postulate a primordial Substance differentiated into other forms of substance, on a septenary scale of subdivision. The seven elements spoken of are a septenate of such differentiations. It will readily be understood that the first

four elements are those designated in symbolic language as Earth, Water, Air, and Fire, corresponding to a certain extent with the solid, liquid, gaseous, and luminous states. These elements, however, do not coincide exactly with any list familiar to the conceptions of our modern science.

The following may serve to suggest the idea.

Metaphysically and esoterically there is but One ELEMENT in nature, and at the root of it is the Deity; and the so-called *seven* elements, of which five have already manifested and asserted their existence, are the garment, *the veil, of that deity*. . . . Four elements only are generally spoken of in later antiquity, five admitted only in philosophy. For the body of ether is not fully manifested yet, and its noumenon is still "the Omnipotent Father—Aether, the synthesis of the rest."—*The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 460

Another important point is that each element is regarded as having two aspects — noumenon and phenomenon.

Cosmolatry was never, even in its worst aspect, the fetishism which adores or worships the passive external form and matter of any object, but looked ever to the *noumenon* therein. Fire, Air, Water, Earth, were but the visible garb, the symbols of the informing, invisible Souls or Spirits — the Cosmic gods to whom worship was offered by the ignorant and simple, respectful recognition by the wiser. In their turn the *phenomenal* subdivisions of the noumenal Elements were inhabited by the Elementals, so called, the "Nature Spirits" of lower grades.

—*Ibid.*, p. 461

The above gives a faint idea of the complexity of the subject. When we understand that beyond the material aspect of the elements come these lower nature-spirits, and beyond the latter again the Cosmic gods; and that even these Cosmic gods had different meanings in the minds of different grades of people — then it will be evident how inadequate must be the various theories about nature-worship, pantheism, animism, fetishism, etc. It is evident too that the study of external nature is inseparably bound up with that of internal nature. We must not only study the objective but also the subjective — the Knower and his various faculties. These elements are manifest in ourselves, not only physically but mentally, etc. This gives a clue to the language of the alchemists when they spoke figuratively; the fiery nature is opposed to the watery nature, we rise above the earth by cultivating the air; the silver has to be kept bright, the mercury freed from lead; and so forth. They were referring to purificatory processes to be undergone by the aspirant to knowledge.

The idea that new elements are developing, both within us and with-

out, helps one to understand why it is that the race seems to be encountering novel conditions in nature, in physiology, in psychology. The emergence of these new conditions renders the situation a critical one, for they threaten grave dangers unless successfully met. This was one of the reasons for H. P. Blavatsky's work, as appears from her own statements about the matter. People are beginning to see that a higher standard both of knowledge and of moral conduct is becoming necessary to enable us to cope with the new problems raised by scientific invention, by the knitting together of the world, by the vast means at the disposal of ambitious schemers, by the prevalence of psychic inquiry, etc. And Theosophy alone will be found equal to the requirement; by which, of course is meant Theosophy itself, as taught by H. P. Blavatsky and maintained by the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society — not any of the fads which unfortunately are being propagated under that name.

In the four Elements, with their synthesizing fifth, we find a meaning for many familiar fourfold symbols, such as the various forms of Cross; Masonic temples, with the four cardinal points and center; four cardinal colors; etc. By regarding the fifth principle as being in essence a triad, we get the septenate; and thus the quaternary, the quinary, and the septenary are connected.

H. P. Blavatsky points out that ancient philosophers, when they spoke of elements and atoms, did not mean hard particles of brute matter, but atomic souls or atoms of life; an idea to which science is certainly recurring. Analyse matter as we may, we can reduce it no further than to movement and energy — something, we know not what, endowed with activity and purpose. But this is only tantamount to stating the evident truth that every object of perception, every conception of matter, must be relative to mind — the faculty which perceives it; and that sooner or later our investigations must quit the realm of objective nature and become investigations of our own faculties.

In conclusion, if anybody should consider the hints given in *The Secret Doctrine* about elements, etc., too abstruse, let him be reminded that our physicists and mathematicians are at present debating whether our three fundamental postulates — space, time, mass — are not themselves compounded of, or functions of, some hitherto undiscovered *One* fundamental cosmic unit. What is this but a tracing of the pedigree of elements back to their truly undifferentiated source?

IDENTIFICATION WITH THE NOBLER FORCES OF LIFE: by Per Fernholm



WE all know how our conceptions undergo a change as we grow and the mind becomes capable of comprehending a wider sphere of life. A child looks up to his father and mother as his highest court of appeal when there is doubt of what is right or wrong, and when there is need of guidance. Slowly it dawns upon him that the family outlook has to be subordinated to something greater, say to that of the tribe, whose notions of right conduct have usually a local color. When the child finally leaves the family circle to take up his own position, he finds himself a citizen of the state or nation, and many an idiosyncrasy may have to be given up in the light of the higher duties that now make themselves felt. At this point most people stop, if they even have come so far.

A little reflection on this fact shows us that each circle is a living reality with a life of its own, a kind of entity, so to say, and that there are interrelations in a thousand ways between them all. Each sphere, small as well as great, has therefore a growth of its own that can not be set aside by the individual belonging to it. At the same time these limitations form the materials put into our hands for our work in this life. And it is possible to rise above and master them, just as we have to master all other tools and materials we wish to use for some purpose; it is possible to acquire a higher consciousness which must be our real self — the consciousness of a far grander entity, the higher element which ensouls humanity as a whole; and to let that govern our actions in the lesser spheres of life in which we have been placed. Such an effort will affect all who belong to the same spheres as we; it will open a way for them out of many a close chamber to places where the sun shines and refreshing breezes are blowing.

The present age is truly a turning-point in Man's history, such as has never before been encountered. And the nearest task before individuals and nations seems to be that mentioned above: to rise into the greater consciousness of humanity as one living reality; to sense, as it were, the source from which all the different races and nations have sprung. This accomplished, even to a slight degree, the thousand secret bonds uniting all will lie revealed to all who have eyes to see; they will feel themselves members of God's great family, and find new courage and strength to follow the impulse to make this earth the

heaven it should be, instead of the hell it now is in most instances. That this can be done, that this is really the meaning of all that has been said of heaven, will suddenly flash upon their minds; and once seen it will become an axiomatic truth. It can be done just as well as the home and state can be purified and beautified by the application of higher rules of conduct, and by letting in the true sunshine of life. The great work is, in fact, already begun, and the present universal unrest is only one of the signs thereof, for it shows that the present order of things is rapidly breaking up to give place to the new, higher order.

Mostly it is left to individuals, to make the great effort of rising in the strength of the inner soul-life; to break a path through the barriers; and to silence the whispers of the lower nature. And so at great epochs we find individuals, men and women, standing out as those around whom gather the new waves of higher effort. The greatest of the pioneers remain unknown and, as a rule, unheard of, because ordinary humanity would be unable to endure the strong light which ceaselessly radiates from them. But some of their conscious or unconscious co-workers are the pivotal historical characters we know of. These fulfilled their part in the effort and stand now, as it were, on a high rock with an outlook in both directions. Often they have not gone very far, lest they lose sight of those behind; and because of their compassion may not have seen much of the land of promise. How often have they not been crucified even then!

But there are other epochs of recurring cycles when a whole nation, a race, even all humankind, is borne upon the top of an immense tidal wave and when it is possible to pass right on into a new condition altogether. And we are told that at present we are carried to the very portals of a higher existence by such a mighty cyclic wave. Never have there been such opportunities of undoing past mistakes and finding a way out of the misery and pain which we ourselves have brought into life on this earth by those mistakes. Never has there been such a need of real men and women who dare to face themselves and the conditions around them, resolved to do their utmost in a noble endeavor.

Great as this step is — the realization of humanity as *one* family, one body with many members, which opens up so many latent possibilities — it is, however, not the final one. Humanity is part of this earth, and our earth is a living entity and a member in the Sun's family

of planets. The members of this planetary family are on different stages of evolution like everything else; some old and wise, some youthful and just starting out to realize their proper duty, some slumbering. It would seem as if our earth were in the second of these categories, for how could it be a conscious member of the Solar family before its self-conscious element, humanity, had risen to consciousness of the fact? There was knowledge of such a kind in ancient times, for it was part of the Mysteries, and the relations between Man and the guiding Intelligences of those great entities were shown in the Mysteries of Antiquity to those who had been purified and initiated. The time has come for the return of such knowledge, and its custodians will be those whose minds are so imbued with brotherhood as a fact in Nature that it has become a living power in their lives; not as a secondary element, but as the very foremost. And then beneficent influences which have been shut out for ages will begin to flow in again like life-giving blood from a spiritual heart, imparting blessing to all that lives and breathes.

The guiding star is always there if we but look for it. The secret is never to let it out of sight, for if we try to steer our course from what we see behind and hear whispered around, our minds will certainly reel and our ship find itself stranded on some subtle reef. The star is unattainable, but it leads us toward the safe harbor. Every man can seek and find that guiding star within himself; it has always been there. Only he who has not looked for it remains unaware of its presence.

It is but natural that the lower forces of life should arise as never before at such a crucial time. And that is what we find in every field of human activity. While the essential quality of the greater Life pulsating throughout the universe from its spiritual Heart is to radiate, illumine, warm, and give abundantly, that of the lower life is to use the beneficent forces for selfish purposes, without regard to their source. Thus diverted, such forces resemble beasts seeking their prey, and this frequently in ways so subtle as to elude observation. This is the only great sin in human life, the abuse of beneficent power; and when, as now, Man's nature begins to respond to higher and nobler impulses vibrating in the inner chambers of soul and heart, such abuse assumes new forms and is more difficult to guard against.

Those in the shadows, those immured in prisons and hospitals, are by no means the only ones who have misused the nobler forces of life.

In many cases they are but the victims of greater criminals who consciously and freely walk around among weaker fellowmen in their pursuit of prey. Such prey they find even among those who in one or more respects have felt the urge of the time and cast loose from old moorings to steer out on the new course, too unmindful of all the leaks in their own nature, and who thus easily become wrecked. In ordinary life we are wise enough to put as the first requisite of a vessel to be used for liquids or gases that it shall be tight; we should not think of pouring water into a leaking cup. Yet that is just what we daily do or urge to be done in our own life; we wish to be filled by the quickening heart-forces of real life before we know how to use them wisely; and when we succeed in some slight degree, their stimulating effect takes some unexpected expression in a selfish or unworthy deed. We may not consciously use them thus, but if our nature is not in full control, it may give way under the pressure, and the precious force leak out to feed and strengthen a human beast.

There is but one way of protecting the sanctuary of Life in ourselves, and that is by rising in the strength of our Spiritual Will with a firm and indomitable resolution to take our nature in conscious control, and ally ourselves with the nobler forces of Life. The brotherly attitude, the readiness to give, is in itself a shield that protects us from subtle attacks, and prevents us from being taken by surprise in moments of unwatchfulness, or of passive mood. Even the one farthest down in the shadows, yea he more than anyone else, may do this, and at once find a firm foothold that will never, never waver. He, just he, can become the best teacher and helper of other weak fellowmen who are constantly thrown into despair and darkness, for he has sounded the depths of human life, knows the real dangers, and has obtained an experience that is worth the cost if he takes it rightly, however terrible it may have been. Jesus came to the outcast; and the glory of the dawn of the new era humanity has entered upon, is that many a note of hope will resound from the very depths. Sleep reigns too often along the easier paths of life, and there is a most deplorable lack of understanding of the real situation, of the battle that is raging between the antagonistic forces of Light and Darkness.

MAN'S ABODE BEFORE THE GLACIAL PERIOD: Recent Corroborations of Theosophy: by C. J. Ryan



THE following notes are suggested by two apparently unrelated articles which appeared lately in leading and responsible publications. It seems proper that attention should be drawn to them, both because of the interest of the facts therein referred to, and on account of the support they give to some of the leading teachings of Theosophy concerning the historical development of mankind.

The first article is from the South American edition of the *London Times*, and its subject is the Beliefs and Customs of the Chibcha Indians of the great plain of Colombia, South America, "whose descendants, a decadent, if not degraded, tribe, still inhabit the country round about the Sábana of Bogotá, and retain, though in a modified form, many of their old beliefs, now engrafted upon a semi-barbarous Christianity," as the writer says.

The ancient traditions of the Chibchas provide us with one more source of evidence to be added to the many collected by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* which show the prevalence in more than pre-historic times of a widely-distributed and selfsame wisdom, and a true understanding of the evolution of man. It is a principle in Theosophy that the great events of human history prior to those of which we have clear documentary or monumental evidence, and which extend only a few thousand years B. C., have been recorded in ways not accessible to the ordinary historian but only to those who are qualified to handle them wisely. H. P. Blavatsky was entrusted with a considerable portion of the outline of the history of civilization before the Stone Age, and part of her great work, *The Secret Doctrine*, is devoted to the demonstration that the traditional records of antiquity which we find more or less superstitiously relied upon in the various world-religions are fragments of the truth, and that they fit into their proper places in the comprehensive scheme of the teachings. India, Egypt, Persia, Syria, China, Scandinavia, Ireland, and Wales, the Americas, even some of the Pacific Islands, and many other regions, yield ancient traditions, which, when read in the light of *The Secret Doctrine*, agree perfectly in their broad outlines.

The learned academic world has been slow to appreciate the light thrown by Theosophy upon the early development of mankind. This is probably because Theosophy makes the *soul's* development, not the *body's*, the fundamental element in evolution; but every step forward

made by archaeology, biology, and psychology, is forcing science and philosophy nearer to the Theosophical position. The study of contemporary literature proves that a large number of advanced thinkers are already putting forward many of the leading teachings of Theosophy though they do not always admit the source of their inspiration. It may be they are not aware of it, in all cases. The progress of inquiry into the conditions of the planes of being that lie just behind the veil of matter, which a few venturesome scientists are diffidently entering upon, will inevitably bring facts to light concerning man's mysterious nature only to be understood through the study of Theosophy. Man's complex principles are not to be explained by the simple hypothesis of the evolution of the physical body.

Now let us trace a few points in the traditions of the Chibcha Indians which show plainly that they possessed a knowledge of the "Secret Doctrine" of the Initiates, and that they expressed it in forms similar to those of other and even remote peoples. According to the Chibchas the earliest mankind originated from one pair who appeared in a mysterious manner from the waters of a lagoon. Everything at first was very primitive, but before long a Messenger appeared who traveled through the country preaching wisdom and teaching good customs. From him the Chibchas obtained their knowledge of Reincarnation, of the Immortality of the Soul, and of the doctrine of Karma — the law of Compassion — which provides that justice shall ultimately be done and that what is sown shall be reaped, even after many days, or lives. Charity to all was a cardinal feature in his truly Theosophic teachings. He is said to have led a pure and holy life, thereby exemplifying the aphorism of H. P. Blavatsky, "Theosophist is who Theosophy does."

The appearance of Bochica, this great Messenger, is dated by the Indians at about the beginning of the Christian Era, and there very probably was such a Teacher then; but, from the general trend of the legends and particularly from events said to have happened after his passing away to the heavenworld, the student of Theosophy can plainly see that the traditions cover a larger meaning than appears on the surface. They have obviously come down from a period far antedating the time of Jesus — a period when the lost continent of Atlantis had only recently perished under the waves. The latter portion of the legends describes the Fall of virtuous and happy mankind from the Golden Age into desperate sin, and its sufferings from a Flood sent

from heaven to punish the evil-doers. We are introduced to the company of the Gods, and the story runs on closely parallel lines with the Hebrew account of Jehovah's anger against the antediluvians and his reconciliation and covenant. This part of the Chibcha legend, if not adapted from the teachings of Christian missionaries, is a variant of the universal traditions which have preserved the echoes of the terrible events that took place when the ungodly of the Fourth Root-Race of men, the majority of the Atlanteans, were destroyed to make room for the new Fifth Race, the so-called Aryan, on the new lands which rose from the sea upon the submergence of the older continents.

After the departure of Bochica to heaven, the Tempting of mankind to sin by Huitaca, the beautiful Sorceress, and the Flood (which was produced by the minor God Chibcha-chum causing some rivers to overflow), Bochica took pity on the people and reduced the water by opening a channel in the mountains through which it escaped by a cascade. As a sign of mercy and forgiveness Bochica appeared to the people seated on a *rainbow*. (Compare *Genesis ix*, 13.) Chibcha-chum, it seems, had carried the punishment too far, so he was penalized by having to carry the earth on his shoulders, a curious incident that shows a close kinship to the Greek story of the giant Atlas. H. P. Blavatsky tells us the meaning of this world-carrying feat. It is not by a mere coincidence that this legend should be found in both hemispheres.

In *The Secret Doctrine* H. P. Blavatsky writes:

The myth of Atlas is an allegory easily understood. Atlas is the old continents of Lemuria and Atlantis, combined and personified in one symbol. The poets attribute to Atlas, as to Proteus, a superior wisdom and a universal knowledge, and especially *a thorough acquaintance with the depths of the ocean*: because both continents bore races instructed by *divine* masters, and because both were transferred to the bottom of the seas, where they now slumber until their next reappearance above the waters. Atlas is the son of an ocean nymph, and his daughter is Calypso — “the watery deep”: Atlantis has been submerged beneath the waters of the ocean, and its progeny is now sleeping its eternal sleep on the ocean floors. The *Odyssey* makes of him the guardian and the “sustainer” of the huge pillars that separate the heavens from the earth. He is their “supporter.” . . . Atlas is said to have been compelled to leave the surface of the earth, and join his brother Iapetos in the depths of Tartaros. Sir Theodore Martin is right in interpreting this allegory as meaning, Atlas “standing on the solid floor of the inferior hemisphere of the universe and thus carrying at the same time the *disc* of the earth and the celestial vault — the solid envelope of the superior hemisphere. . . .” For Atlas is Atlantis which supports the new continents and their horizons on its “shoulders.”— Vol. II, p. 762

The other article mentioned above brings new evidence in favor of great changes in the configuration of land and sea during the period of man's existence on earth. It is by Mr. Comyns Beaumont and appeared in the British scientific monthly *Knowledge*. It deals with the new race recently discovered in the Arctic regions north of British Columbia, Canada, which, as the writer says, "provides an invaluable link in the chain of evidence which the advanced school of ethnology is forging." What he calls the "advanced school" is the school which has adopted many of the principal teachings of Theosophy concerning mankind upon submerged continents and islands. Why the members of this school do not generally acknowledge their indebtedness to H. P. Blavatsky for boldly bringing forward these important teachings in a comprehensible form at a time when they were exceedingly unpopular, and when their promulgation aroused the severest and most brutal criticism of the courageous woman who was not afraid to brave the sneers of the press and the academies, is for them to explain. It is impossible to believe that the "new ethnologists" have not heard of the teachings of H. P. Blavatsky upon their own subject or that they have evolved their theories quite independently of her pioneering work. Be this as it may, the interesting fact remains that the Theosophical records are now being vindicated by the researches of the "new Ethnology."

In 1908 Herr Viljmar Stefansson went to the regions north of Hudson's Bay to study the country and the people, and reports have lately been received from him of his success in making new discoveries. The most striking of these is, in his own words:

For some months we lived among a people who had never seen either a white man or an Indian, though they had often heard them spoken of. We have discovered Eskimo (in the matter of speech and habits) who in bodily form and type of countenance are Scandinavian. This discovery is significant. . . . What is the reason that part of the inhabitants of Victoria Land exhibit so well-marked a difference from the rest of the population? How are we to explain their absolutely European type? . . . On the south coast of Victoria Land we struck upon the European types which we had heard spoken of at Cape Bexly. Two of the men had as much beard as I have, in color red.

Mr. Beaumont suggests that these newly discovered people are a remnant cut off the Scythian family of races, who were a people of fair complexion, of strong physical build, and possessing red or flaxen hair. The Scandinavians were, he says, Scythians, and their origin was in the North. Owing to a change in the direction of the Earth's

axis many races were driven from the polar lands owing to the increasing cold. Mr. Beaumont accepts it as a fact that the Earth changes its axial direction at times in consequence of a change of equilibrium caused by the submergence of certain lands and the upheaval of others; and that there was such a change about the Glacial period. But however caused, Theosophy teaches that several changes in the Earth's axis have occurred, producing, as Mr. Beaumont rightly believes, vast alterations of climate in certain parts of the Earth, such as the present polar regions. He says:

Without question there was a period, not geologically far removed from our time, when the Polar regions rejoiced in a soft and beautiful climate. It used to be said that this was before man lived. Now, on the contrary, the weight of evidence indicates that man not only lived then, but that the north, as said by the Goth Jornandes, was the forge of mankind. When the north enjoyed a beneficent climate, prior to events of the utmost magnitude which changed the entire climate of the world and altered the face of the earth, we cannot surely escape from the conviction that all the evidence is in favor of its being the original home of a great portion of the human race. We know that the earth has constantly shifted its axis . . . owing to the change in its center of gravity. [?] . . . The Glacial Age drove the Hyperboreans south. . . . Millions of people perished, and hence the universal Flood Story. But, as though it were by chance, here and there communities were isolated and spared. Some of these in turn sought more friendly climes, but others remained; and thus we have a rational and natural explanation of Herr Stefansson's Scandinavian tribe in the Arctic regions of the northwest.

Further, Mr. Beaumont brings testimony from the central parts of the American continent to prove a connexion between the early inhabitants of the New World and the Scandinavians. He says, in part:

Who were the famous Chichimecs of American legendry? The Chichimecs entered Mexico from the north; they came from "Amaquemecan," a "land of vast extent"; their titular deity was Votan, or Odon, whom the erudite Humboldt was astonished to find corresponded in every particular with the Wodan, or Odin of Scythian nations; this Votan (also called Odin or Oton) was a white man, with a long beard, attired in white garments bearing the insignia of the Cross in red. The ancient and mythical capital of this people preserved in records like the *Popol Vuh*, was a city called Tula, Tulan, or Tulla. [Thule is a name for ancient Scandinavia.] The *Popol Vuh* tells us that Tula was bitterly cold; for instance, Part iii, chapter v, verse 5, says: "But then began a great rain that extinguished the fire of the tribes and much snow fell on the head of all the tribes and their fire was extinguished then because of the snow; there was no more of this fire which had been made." . . . Another deity of the Chichimecs was Toras, whose name and character closely resemble the Scandinavian Thor [Tor].

Scandinavian legends speak of the coming of the Glacial period,

and of the migration of the people because of the terrible cold. These provide strong testimony in favor of the existence of the pre-Glacial intelligent mankind. Until lately science had no absolutely satisfactory reason to admit the existence of really human beings before the Glacial period, but the quite recent discovery of flint implements of a unique form in the Red Crag in southeast England has definitely proved that tool-makers lived long before the Glacial period. This was antecedent to the breaking down of the land which once existed where the North Sea now rolls its turbulent waters between Britain and Norway.

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT

BY JOHN G. SAXE

It was six men of Indostan,
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant,
(Though all of them were blind)
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The First approached the Elephant
And, happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me! But the Elephant
Is very like a wall!"

The Second, feeling of the tusk,
Cried: "Ho! what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!"

The Third approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a snake!"

The Fourth reached out his eager hand,
And felt about the knee.
"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain," quoth he.
"'Tis clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree!"

The Fifth, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most.
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan."

The Sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope
Than seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right
And all were in the wrong! — *Selected*

THE AGE OF MAN: by Archaeologist



IN a press despatch from London, relative to the discovery of a human skeleton beneath an undisturbed layer of boulders and clay in East Anglia, an eminent scientific authority is quoted as follows: with regard to the previously known skeletons:

Some people were hasty enough to discern in them with their monkey-like qualities evidence of the missing link. It is now clear they were survivors of a stock which had deteriorated, and not progenitors of our race. If we have to accept the theory of evolution (and it is still only a theory) it is a puzzling fact that man has changed so little in 100,000 years.

And Professor Keith, anthropologist of the museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, says of this latest skeleton:

There is every evidence that this man lived long before the glacial period. During this period England was covered with a great thickness of ice. Finally this melted and a layer of debris was deposited. It was underneath a deposit of this sort that the skeleton was found, hence he must have lived before the ice age and before the rivers formed.

The finding of this skeleton strengthens the belief that the evolution of man was an infinitely longer process than we originally thought. At one time believers in the evolution theory thought that man's development to his present state might have taken something like 10,000 years. Later they put the period at something around 20,000 years. The difference, if any, between this man's bodily framework and modern man's are so minute as to prove that the evolution must have taken hundreds of thousands of years.

These admissions, made on such notable authority, confirm the statements and predictions made nearly a quarter of a century ago by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine*, as may be seen by reference to that work. Particularly noteworthy is the remark about the man being a product of *degeneration* from a higher type, for this means that calculations as to the length of time required for the evolution of man are entirely frustrated. Scientific views as to the history of man are on altogether too timorous a scale — probably owing to mediæval and ecclesiastical influences, not yet quite outgrown. What science needs is a larger and more adequate scale by which to measure. We cannot quote extensively from *The Secret Doctrine*, but the following may be selected as worthy of special attention in this connexion:

1. There are seven ROUNDS in every manvantara: this one is the Fourth, and we are in the Fifth Root-Race, at present.
2. Each Root-Race has seven sub-races.

3. Each sub-race has, in its turn, seven ramifications, which may be called Branch or "Family" races.

4. The little tribes, shoots, and offshoots of the last-named are countless. . . .

The human Race has been compared to a tree, and this serves admirably as an illustration.

The main stem of a tree may be compared to the ROOT-RACE.

Its larger limbs to the various SUB-RACES; seven in number.

On each of these limbs are seven BRANCHES, or FAMILY-RACES.

After this the cactus-plant is a better illustration, for its fleshy "leaves" are covered with sharp spines, each of which may be compared to a nation or tribe of human beings.

Now our Fifth Root-Race has already been in existence — as a race *sui generis* and quite free from its parent stem — about 1,000,000 years; therefore it must be inferred that each of the four preceding Sub-Races has lived approximately 210,000 years; thus each Family-Race has an average existence of about 30,000 years.—Vol. II, p. 434-5

These figures and divisions may seem strange, but we quote them with confidence, for the teachings of H. P. Blavatsky have so often proved reliable, and the trend of scientific discovery and theory has always been in the direction of confirming them. Moreover men of science themselves are by no means so timorous when dealing with the stupendous distances in astronomy and with the ages required for sedimentation and the production of the animal and vegetable creation. There seems no reason, other than the inherited prejudices of a non-scientific age, why we should be so penurious in our dealings with human chronology.

Science readily admits that the continental distribution of land and water has varied much and often during the geological ages — whether by gradual or by cataclysmic movements (or by a combination of both) does not matter for the immediate purpose. It is not making a great demand on belief to aver that in former geological ages, as in this, there were human races on earth. Such a view is at least as reasonable — many will think more reasonable — as the view that those past continents were tenanted by animals and plants alone. Of course this latter view follows the demands of the present style of evolution theory; but we have just seen how unreliable the details of that theory are; it is altogether too cramped in its allowance of time. There remains the palaeontological evidence, but this is admittedly incomplete as yet. The number of fossils preserved is very small in comparison with the number of animals that lived; and if human fossils bore the same proportion to the number of living human beings, they would

WHY DO THEOSOPHISTS OPPOSE CAPITAL PUNISHMENT? by Gertrude W. van Pelt, M. D.



THEOSOPHISTS oppose capital punishment because it is at variance with the laws of moral nature, because it is injurious not only to those who suffer it, not only to all other criminals, but to the race at large. Its results are evil and not good, and it is to the interest of the whole of humanity that it should be abolished. This position is taken not in the interest of sentiment, or from vague feelings of a moral injustice; but the conviction is the outcome of a rational philosophy of life, and knowledge of the constitution of man.

As the world is beginning to understand, Theosophy is comprehensive, all-embracing. In its philosophical aspect, it meets life from every standpoint, showing unity in infinite diversity. It is not the product of the human brain, but existed before the human brain was evolved. It is the expression of the wisdom of the ages, as old as time, the basis of every religion and philosophy which has ever been formulated. One who is fully illuminated by it is able to look at any subject from the center, from the surface, from any point between, or from any side light, and see it in its true relations.

In examining capital punishment from any standpoint whatsoever with the assistance of Theosophy, it is revealed as contrary to the law of nature. It has no place in a social system which is a real social system — that is, one which is based on the facts of nature, and is not simply incoherent, thrown together at haphazard, and chaotic.

To a Theosophist the institution of capital punishment is not only cruel, barbarous, and an outrage to all the finer sentiments of humanity, but it is senseless. It has no real meaning. It is not the outcome of intelligence, and can never accomplish anything that it is intended to accomplish. Perhaps there is no other one thing which so stamps in history the place of modern civilization as our treatment of public offenders. It is an index of our lack of the sense of responsibility; of our indifference to the fate of our neighbors; of our selfishness, of our unwillingness to examine unpleasant truths, and it will in future ages, undoubtedly be recognized as an evidence of ignorance and stupidity.

Our motives — that is our surface motives, the ones we are, *on the surface*, conscious of — are, punishment for the offender, the furnishing of examples for possible future offenders, and the protection of society. That none of these points is gained is abundantly proved.

Crime is not diminishing under the present treatment of it, and one asks, why should it? What is there in much of our present methods which could possibly regenerate, or transmute the evil into good? What is there to inspire, to uplift, to help one who has almost lost himself in the mire of sin, to find his way again? On the contrary, one who has looked into the system, might very pertinently ask whether it has not been constructed for the unique purpose of *creating* criminals? And this is in spite of the noble efforts of many; in spite of the enormous work, and untiring labor.

The *system* still remains, a terrible expression of our social life. It seems to ignore the most obvious facts of existence. Man is surely not his body, but is essentially a thinker. He is made of thought, and as a thinker is temporarily inhabiting a body. The criminal, being a man, is essentially a thinker, and his thoughts so far as he is a criminal have an evil potency which is far-reaching. Man is dual in nature, having the potentialities of a demon or a god. The desperate criminal is a man, and is dual in nature — and is under the sway of the lower tendencies. Man is eternal, and every man or woman is a member of the human family. The criminal is a man or woman, and is a member of the human family, an integral part of it, inseparably bound to its fortunes; influencing it just as much as one of the cells of the physical body affects *its* condition. A cancer spot in the one instance, is just as vital as in the other. For the human family really is one. Whether certain members are for the time being in or out of physical bodies, is but an incident, so to speak. This is something constantly shifting. Under the cyclic law, affecting all life, they come and go, but neither the coming nor the going touches in the least their solidarity. The destinies of all are bound together. Together they must finally rise or fall. And although in such various stages of development, no one can beyond a definite point transcend his race. Each is held down or lifted up by the others. And it is by the character of the thought-life that this influence is exerted. "As man thinketh, so is he." And being what he is, he creates about himself an atmosphere which is either an inspiration to noble endeavor, or, it may be, one which is the opposite.

Many a one, just starting on the evil road, has grown to be a confirmed and old traveler in this environment. And when one finally, under the various influences of life, arrives at the point of committing a capital offense, what is it that we do? In the first place, we quite

ignore that nature has placed this being in his body for a purpose. We assume that nature is wrong in this instance, and decide to remove from him his outer shell. And so, with the "enemy of society" in the full vigor of his violent passions, in the iron grip of his impulses, cursing with every breath the mankind which he believes is hounding him, we put the last touch to his hatred of his fellows by taking his life. We *think* we have disposed of him, that he is gone, that we have one less malefactor to deal with. But, according to the Theosophical philosophy we have but set him at liberty — perhaps actually to prey upon society. Freed from the limitations of his body, he is now (if a really corrupt soul) a more subtle and real menace to mankind than ever. Ourselves we have placed at an absolute disadvantage. For he is now beyond our reach to control, yet free to contaminate our thought-atmosphere; to roam at large, a social vampire; to inject into the minds of those who are receptive, suggestions to crime, and to become a constant source of pollution. I speak here, of course, of the rare cases of thoroughly depraved natures.

Is it just, in view of the general ignorance of man's nature, to suppose that because we have demolished the outer covering of a man, we have disposed of his influence upon society? Such an idea is born of the idle thought of a materialistic age. Theosophy, in revealing the nature of man, shows very clearly that this cannot be the case. There is a natural life-cycle in every instance, at the end of which the soul normally retires to rest — which it is impossible to cut short by *violent* death. One removed in this way is merely in a different relation to the outer life from one who has passed out naturally and normally. So from the Theosophical standpoint, capital punishment does not decrease, but may positively increase crime; and it does not protect society.

Of course, what we should desire to kill is not the body of an offender, but the evil passions which are using that body as a vehicle. We are helpless to deal with the situation until the man again incarnates, as Theosophy teaches he must inevitably do, and we must then discover that the issue we evaded, has become, at least, no easier to meet. The criminal will come back to earth-life again and again. We must recognize that we cannot drive him out of the human family, but that we are bound to help him to transmute his evil into good. It is also because of the lack of the sense of responsibility, which this penalty implies, that Theosophy opposes it. What would one think

of a father, who, having a vicious son, called a family council and decided to be rid of him by killing. The father would promptly be handed over to the law. But the law itself should stand in the relation of father to the members of the community it is supposed to govern. And a Higher Law will certainly judge it if it fails in its duty and responsibility.

As just said, it seems reasonable that a man removed violently from his body, shall continue to live in the earth-atmosphere, until the time elapses, during which, under cyclic law, he was born to remain in that relation. Nature's purposes are not easily thwarted, though they may be interfered with. The mighty force of the universe, by which each and every event, as part of the majestic plan, is brought about, cannot be overcome by the ignorance of man. But supposing for a moment that he *could* stem the mighty tide of eternal momentum, supposing that he *could* drive a human soul out of the human family by the simple method of destroying the most external of its coverings, where then does he think to send it? On what possible theory can justification for the act be found? If an old-type Christian acquiesces in this law, he must imagine that he has condemned a fellow-man to eternal hell. And is he going to rest comfortably after, with this on his conscience? Materialists are growing fewer, so probably there are not many left who will not recognize that this violent ushering of a man out of his body has not ended things for him. He must continue to live *somewhere*. Even the true scientist with broad-minded searching of thought, consents to leave the matter open, for he, according to his own processes of reasoning, with his understanding of the law of momentum, cannot but believe that the terrible forces of hatred, and anger and bitterness, must go on to their legitimate end, until overcome or dissipated by other forces. For no one, it would seem, who uses his mind to any purpose, could deny that there are real and very powerful forces pent up in the make-up of every active human being.

But the average man, perhaps, would neither in imagination put the dead man in hell, nor have him exterminated. Where then have we put him? What have we done with him? We have got him out of sight, to be sure. The problem of his existence has not been solved, or even met, and we are endeavoring to throw elsewhere the burden of dealing with this evil. What terrible selfishness!

The habit of letting thought stop at the grave has become so con-

firmed; the ignorance as to man's compound nature has become so dense; the whole subject of the meaning of life has become so enshrouded in mystery — that we drop the main issues of life, as if they did not concern us. As in the days of old, we still strain at gnats while we swallow camels. When will it be learned that to evade responsibilities is impossible? They may be dodged. They may be postponed, possibly for many lives, but it is illogical, as well as contrary to all higher teachings, to think that they may be escaped. The very fact that one is placed in a relation of any sort to a subject, shows that to the extent of that relationship it belongs to him; that he is linked to it by the law of cause and effect. And under this law the cycle of history must bring it forth again and again, probably each time with added complications, until that which was begun, be finished.

All are responsible for our present conditions. We have created and shaped them out of the thoughts and feelings and acts of innumerable past lives. Together we have woven the pattern of our social fabric, and together we must reconstruct it until it becomes a reflection of the divine plan. To invade our blackest spot — the region of crime — and purify it, is the task before us, and there are hosts of earnest souls scattered all over our globe, who are eager to do this, many working, and perhaps many more holding back, feeling themselves not properly armed to undertake a task so herculean. The public conscience too, is awakening. And with the possession of Theosophy our weapons are at hand. The time is surely ripe to move forward, and achieve that which we have never before touched.

And we must begin by ceasing to place some of our problems beyond our reach; we must begin by abolishing punishment by death.