



A VEHICLE FOR THE INTERCHANGE OF  
**THEOSOPHICAL NEWS AND OPINIONS.**

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**MEMBERS** and others are invited to send opinions and questions on Theosophical subjects, notes on current Theosophical literature, reports of activities, euttings of general interest from papers, &c., for insertion in **THE VAMAN** to W. R. OLD, Gen. Sec. British Sec. T. S., 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London, N.W.

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### **History and Theosophy.**

History, in its natural acceptation, is a term that applies to our record and knowledge of the past; but modern historians love to wrest the meaning of the word to suit their own position and reputation. Ancient India, they tell us for instance, can hardly be said to possess any "history." History in this narrow sense is far outreached, both in India and elsewhere, by monumental evidence. In a truer sense of the word, surely the pyramids are history, and not only Herodotus; surely the Hindû zodiac is history, and is itself a witness to ancient science. The historical speculations of ecclesiastical learning have been unfortunate. The completion of the world's architecture in 4,004 B.C. was a theory which made it difficult to fit things in, and so the subject is not now a very favourite one. Geology, it is true, has looked into the mouth of the earth and declared the Great Animal to be many times older than the churches had reported. But the records both of science and of the churches dwindle into insignificance when compared with the vast span of time over which Theosophy bids us look back. What is 6,000 years, what is 30,000 years, when Theosophy speaks to us of the progenitors of our race existing 18,000,000 of years ago, and explains to us that we are in actual relations with an epoch at so enormous a distance. For we, being what we are, have developed out of what those our ancestors were then, and the effects of the past have been the causes of the future. Thus we ourselves have an interest in the events of 18,000,000 years ago.

So little does modern learning know of the past of Man or of the world he lives in, that the entire period of time compassed by such knowledge may be likened to that portion of a girl's outstretched arm that is covered by a slender bangle; it is but a narrow strip marked across the far-reaching web of time. As soon as one understands the difference of position between Theosophy and the school of Orientalists and scientists whose teachings it is supplanting, it will no longer be surprising that the latter authorities have formed so many erroneous suppositions. The conventional historian tells us that the only ancient civilization which calls for notice is that of Greece and Rome. India was always barbarous and idolatrous in one way or another, though something like philosophy came into existence during the Sūtra period, owing to the progress of education forsooth. Theosophy takes a different view, and it does so because it possesses further information. Let the modern Examiner in History come before us and play the rôle of the candidate, for a change, by answering a question or two himself. Pray you, Sir, if the Aryans invaded India as you describe, who were their predecessors in power, presuming that they have not been from eternity? Upon such questions, he would answer, history can say nothing. Yes, but Theosophy can. It recognizes that civilization has swept over this globe in wave after wave, and that "history repeats itself" on a larger scale than history itself is aware of. The profound Orientalist explains to us that the earliest form of the religion of the Aryans was a certain kind of ignorant and savage nature-worship. The unhappy Vedic Rishi knew no better than to mutter the Gâyatri as he gazed at the rising sun with primitive and savage wonder. Neither missionary nor what are called the "blessings of Christianity" were within his reach. True: the Wisdom of Jesus had not then been preached upon the earth, and therefore there was no chance of the travesty of that Wisdom, with which we are so familiar, being carried from England to distant lands. As to Vedic savagery, we can only say, "Savage is he who savage thinks."

But Theosophy maintains that the archaic wisdom, known as the Wisdom-Religion, the wisdom that lies at the root of all that is true in the theories of science or the creeds of religion, has persisted in the world through the ages. From time to time this wisdom makes an inroad upon the thought of the world, to save it from utter corruption and darkness and materialism. Such an invasion is now actually going forward in the form of the Theosophical movement. The great moral and social evils in presence of which we live have no remedy except one. Politicians and Sociologists have framed this and that scheme of redemption, but all are beside the mark. What shall you have achieved, my

good Reformer, when you have made the poor to be as the rich? Do not the rich need mending at least as much as the poor? But Nature insists upon symmetry in her products; she will not tolerate one-sided development. Either material and intellectual development must ally itself with spiritual development, or the whole structure must go to destruction. The light of Savitri, the dawn of spiritual wisdom, is the one medicine for the ailing world. It is our task to strip off the coatings which are the growth of separateness and self-interest, and which obstruct the passage of those rays. May our efforts prove of timely avail, and may the close of a cycle in a few more years find us in possession of a vantage ground from which we may enter upon future struggles.

E. W. A.

## LITERARY SCIENTIFIC.

The *Path* for April congratulates itself upon five years of work, and enters upon the sixth volume.

The article upon the "Loss of the Soul," by "Harij," noticed in No. 9 of the VĀHAN, is concluded. The writer says: "That which renders man's journey through matter, sense and time so long and painful is his vacillation, his indecision. His wavering will is that 'Satan' that 'goes to and fro,' seeking continually all for self, and yet unable to silence the divine 'voice' that dwells within, he continually 'sins' against this 'Holy Ghost,' and as continually 'repents.' Incarnation after incarnation he feeds on the dead-sea apples that turn at last to dust and ashes in his grasp. . . . Trying to drag through the Golden Gates of eternal life the dead carcase of his desires, he at last either despairs or *determines*; and his final determination sets his life-currents squarely towards the eternal sea of life or towards the Stygian pool. He at last comes consciously to 'the place where two ways meet,' and signs the compact with his soul. . . . The *love of evil for its own sake* marks the last station at which he alienated his divinity and sacrificed his humanity."

A short contribution to the question "Is Theosophy a Pessimistic Philosophy?" gives a very decided negative, taking pessimism to mean any of the following: "(a) Pessimism is the doctrine that this world is the worst possible; (b) Pessimism holds that the universe sprang from nothingness and is tending towards nothingness, which it may ultimately reach; this doctrine being associated with the feeling that existence is an evil; (c) Pessimism is a tendency to look on the dark side of life and exaggerate its evils."

"Invisible Wings" is a slight sketch turning upon the possibil-

ity that "conceptions can be projected upon consciousness as reality; will is an organizing power."

An article on "Karma" presents the subject in a manner which is helpful in some of the ideas expressed; but in others open to considerable exception. For instance, it is said: "We hear talk of 'interfering with Karma,' but this is absurd, impossible." Yet we are taught on good authority that the Masters cannot help humanity as they would, because they know that to interfere with Karma would only be to delay it, effecting a present good at the expense of future evil. Probably this is what the writer means, but the *possibility* of interference exists, and may be exercised in ignorance, if not deliberately.

"Bhakti—Devoted Faith" is a note on the use of Faith or Devotion as one of the methods for the attainment of liberation.

Among the notices of various books will be found a short paragraph on Sir Edwin Arnold's new work, *The Light of the World*. A much more extended criticism of this work will be found in the current number of *Lucifer*.

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The editorial of the April number of *Lucifer* is entitled "The Negators of Science," and promises to be the first of a number dealing with the negations of modern scientific *specialists* in connection with archaic Wisdom and the Secret Doctrine. And the author does not hesitate to show the *dishonesty* as well as the unreason of our modern specialists, as for instance in the *Pedigree of Man*, which Hæckel leaves uncorrected, although it has been proved by other naturalists that the creatures placed at the fourteenth and eighteenth stages of his genealogy are *myths*. They are still retained because, as Quatrefages explains, "the proof of their existence arises *from the necessity of an intermediate type*." Upon this the writer remarks: "We fail to see any difference between the pious frauds of a Eusebius 'for the greater glory of God,' and the impious deception of Hæckel 'for the greater glory of matter,' and—man's dishonour. Both are *forgeries*—and we have a right to denounce both." The next number will be devoted to showing how far Prof. Jowett is right, in his preface to the *Timæus*, in denying that Plato made use of any esoteric symbology.

"The *Purāṇas* (Philology *versus* Symbology)" is the title of a valuable article by Prof. M. N. Dvivedi, dealing with the strata of universal truth which underlie the symbology and mythology of Sanskrit literature. The author says: "It appears to me that there is something so intrinsically wrong with the methods followed by Comparative Philology and Comparative Mythology that results which, with the materials at our command, ought to

have followed long since, have still eluded our grasp. . . . That erudite labours extending over more than a century show such absurd conclusions is due to the inadequate method adopted, and to the prejudices and preconceptions which are allowed to sway learned opinions." He then proceeds to trace the cosmic interpretation of some of the more familiar Purānic myths.

"Scripture Blinds" is a useful article by Dr. C. Carter Blake, dealing with some of the obscurities of the text of the New Testament.

"Schools in Theosophy," by Alexander Fullerton, sets forth the elements which already exist, and which the writer considers must inevitably develop, for the formation of distinct classes of Theosophists into High Church, Broad Church, and Low Church. The article should certainly be carefully considered by all who are members of the Theosophical "Church."

*The Light of Asia*, by Sir Edwin Arnold, is a work which has become widely and deservedly appreciated, not merely for the beauty of its verse, but for its sympathetic treatment and able interpretation of noble truths. We fear that as much cannot be said for *The Light of the World*, the last addition of the author to his numerous poetical works. That the author should seek to belittle his former work, and in order to do so should stoop to a device which is utterly unwarranted either by history or myth, cannot fail to appear in the light of an unworthy concession. Whatever may be thought of the literary merits of the poem, which it is impossible to discuss in our limited space, we doubt whether the "light of the world" has been made to appear by comparison so brilliant as to warrant the more presumptive title. The trick of converting the *Buddhist* (!) Magi can only be rejoiced over by the lowest of proselyting sectarians. How much has had to be sacrificed to *truth* in order to do this will be seen at a glance by those who are familiar with the teachings of Buddha and the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Meanwhile we are threatened with a dramatization of *The Light of Asia* on the omnivorous stage of Drury Lane Theatre. It is to be "done to music" by a popular composer! Can it be that this is by consent of the author? We wonder whether this will be followed by a similar treatment of *The Light of the World*.

## THE ENQUIRER.

The following interesting information regarding the Cobra Stone has been received from a Hindū Theosophist, and is corroborated in an article on the Cobra which appeared in *Harper's Magazine*.

The Nâgas, or Cobras, do not all possess this stone, but those who do are said to bury it during the daytime, and at night they bring it forth, and taking it near to a place where they can hide themselves, they place it on the ground. The stone is luminous in the dark and attracts the fireflies, who mistake it in the distance for one of themselves. The unwary insects thus fall a prey to the watchful and voracious Cobra.

Out of this fact the myth of the "guarded treasure" has been woven, and from various circumstances connected with the Cobra the creature has been accepted as a symbol of certain intelligent forces in nature, more generally known to an earlier race of humanity on this earth, to whom the legendary name of the Nâgas is given in Hindû writings. In this way almost every living creature indigenous to Hindustan has been used as a symbol to express some special human and divine power, in addition to merely natural characteristics evident in men as in the creatures themselves.

## ACTIVITIES.

The activities of the British Section during the past six months have been unusually extensive and equally successful. The various Lodges have given evidence of increased vitality, and generally appear to be more completely organized and more fully sustained in their work than hitherto, as appears from their several Reports. The number of diplomas issued during the half-year is 105; of these 26 were granted to unattached members, and the remainder to members of Lodges. The President of the Section has granted two charters to fully qualified Lodges during the past half-year: one to the Chiswick Lodge, under the Presidency of Wm. Kingsland, which was inaugurated January 10th, 1891; and one to the Bradford Lodge, opened by its President, Oliver Firth, on the 4th of February, 1891. Two resignations have been made by members of the Section since last October.

The Glasgow Lodge is in a fair way to reconstitution, Bro. F. W. D'Evelyn having been for some time past especially active in this direction. It is hoped that the old charter will be again taken up at a near date. A working centre has been established at Halifax. A class for the study of Theosophy meets there weekly. There is a library in connection with this centre, which is open to the public at the usual T. P. S. rates. The Lending Libraries distributed among important centres in England, Wales and Ireland have, under the guidance of the Countess Wachtmeister, done exceedingly good work by placing the literature of the Society within the reach of many who are studying Theosophy and grad-

ually confirming themselves in that attitude of mind which qualifies for membership. The Report of the General Secretary gives us reason to congratulate ourselves upon the work of the past half-year, and although it is out of place to reproduce it here, members will be glad to know that it shows each new movement of the Executive to have produced the most satisfactory results, the importance of the Society's work growing month by month, both in the eyes of the public and in the estimation of its members.

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THE THEOSOPHICAL CONCERT.—Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, presented a very animated appearance on the evening of Saturday, April 26, when a large audience assembled to enjoy the excellent programme of music so kindly provided through the exertions of Mdlle. Otta Brony. The programme opened with a pianoforte duet consisting of some of Markowsky's *Spanish Dances*, played with great taste by Messrs. Lehmeyer and Stevens. A song by Mr. Blackmore, *I arise from Dreams of thee*, followed, which was well rendered, his second song *I'll sing thee Songs of Araby*, receiving an encore. A solo mandoline by Signor Guerra, and an aria from *Don Carlos* by Signor Celli, were both well received. Mdme. Sara Palma, who was in capital voice, sang *La Perle du Bresil*, for which she received an encore; her other song was *Suicidio*. Mr. Sackville Evans gave excellent renderings of *The Bedouin Love Song* and *La Belle Dame sans Merci*. Mr. Willie Woltmann's violin playing was one of the features of the evening. It was exquisite, and the performer received a well-merited encore. Mdlle. Brony gave first two songs, *Wiegenlied* and *Penzo*, the former being accompanied by the composer. Both songs were given in Mdlle. Brony's usual cultured style. Mdlle. Jeanne Douste gave her audience a real pleasure in her pianoforte solos; and she and her sister, Mdlle. Douste de Fortis, received enthusiastic encores. Mdme. Sinico's name speaks for itself, and her rendering of *Habanera* was excellent. *When Twilight Comes*, sung by Mdlle. Brony, with violin obligato by Mr. Woltmann, received an enthusiastic encore, which was kindly accorded. The programme closed with a duet by Mdme. Sinico and Mdlle. Brony.

The concert may be pronounced a complete success, and our best thanks are due to Mdlle. Brony, Mdme. Sara Palma, and all who so kindly assisted. The proceeds of the concert amounted to the satisfactory sum of £62.

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TO MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH SECTION T. S.—The British Section Reading Room, at No. 17, Avenue Road, next door to Headquarters, is now open to members. Over 100 volumes have been added to the library, and the appointment of the room has been

made as useful and comfortable as possible. Arrangements have been made to supply readers with tea from 3:30 to 5:30 in the afternoon. Donations of books for the library or money for their purchase will be gladly received by the General Secretary. The Reading Room will be open to members only from 2 till 10. p.m. The General Secretary will be in attendance for all purposes connected with the work of the Section, and to supply books to the readers. All communications should be addressed to Headquarters, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, N.W.

The new Headquarters of the Dublin Lodge are announced as being now open. The house at 3, Upper Ely Place, is large and commodious, the situation being at once central and quiet, in fact everything that is desirable as a centre of Theosophic work. Several of the most active and devoted members will make these quarters their residence and real home. On the 25th of March the new syllabus of the Lodge was started with a discussion on "Is Theosophy Subversive of Social Customs?"

### **A Proposed Class for the Study of "The Key to Theosophy."**

With the transference of the British Section Rooms from Duke Street to Headquarters, the Monday evenings had to be discontinued. There is, however, no intention to abandon them. It is now proposed to revive these meetings in the form of a class for the systematic study of *The Key to Theosophy*, which will be held in the Lecture Hall at Headquarters, 19, Avenue Road, N.W., at 8:30 p.m. Members and associates desiring to take part in this class are requested to kindly send in their names to the undersigned. If twenty names are obtained, the first meeting will be on Monday, May 11. If this number is not reached, members will receive due notification and the class will not be attempted. But if no notice to the contrary is sent out, members will understand that the class has been duly formed. Members and associates will have the privilege of bringing friends to this class, subject to a reasonable limit of time, and on the condition of their signing their names on the first occasion, entering their addresses and the name of their introducer, in a book which will be kept for the purpose.

G. R. S. MEAD,  
*General Secretary European Section.*