

THE VAHAN.



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, cuttings of general interest from papers, etc., for insertion in the VAHAN to W. R. OLD, Gen. Secretary, British T. S., 19, Avenue Road, Regent s Park, London. N W.

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No. 6.

THE HAIR.

PROFESSOR ALEXANDER WILDER'S remarks on "Should Men wear Long Hair?" quoted in *The Vahan* for January 1st, interested me and doubtless interested many others very much. In the Note appended to it in *The Theosophist* it is stated that, "The Aryan Rishis, the Yogis, the Saddhus of every kind wore, and still wear, their hair long. The Initiates of Thibet do the same." Now *why* do the Rishis and Initiates wear long hair? Has long hair anything to do with Occultism? I do not think the fact that it decidedly *has* is generally known. To the Initiate his hair is precisely what a *Leyden Jar* is to the electrician, *i.e.*, he stores in his hair his *vital magnetism* as the electrician stores in his Leyden Jar his electricity. It is then ready for use whenever he wishes to use it. To draw off electricity from the Leyden Jar the operator brings into contact two balls of brass, one of which is in connection with the interior of the Jar. But to draw off the magnetic fluid from the hair, supposing of course that there is a quantity of it *in* the hair to be drawn off, the magnetiser passes his hands over his head and *strokes* his locks of hair. The fluid then is taken into the palms of the hands and thence impressed upon any object desired. Not much of the fluid is drawn off at each stroke, but the process may be repeated as often as he likes or as long as there is any magnetism left.

Of Sampson, it is said in the Bible that, his strength *lay in his*

hair. This sounds ridiculous even to the general Christian, but the Occultist catches the meaning at once and knows that it is an allusion to this capacity of the the hair to retain a sort of concentration of occult force.

There is an intimate connection between the *hair* and the *aura* or magnetovital atmosphere surrounding the head of every man, and symbolised in the "halos," pictured as encircling the heads of saints, &c. Speaking generally, as is the fineness of the texture of the hair, so is the fineness, the quality, of the aura. This is in agreement with that physiognomical rule which teaches that fine hair, *i.e.*, fine in quality, bespeaks a sensitive cultured organization, &c. The *colour*, too, must have a certain relation to the aura, but we know too little about that to say precisely what. In *Isis Unveiled*, H.P.B. comments on the curious fact that *red* hair is associated in nearly every country with a quarrelsome, passionate disposition, and is almost universally regarded with dislike.

LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC.

The text of the Editorial in the January number of *Lucifer* is taken from the Book of Ecclesiastes, 1. c. 9 v. : "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be ; and that which is done is that which shall be done ; and *there is no new thing under the sun.*" Let the Theosophical reader take his Bible, and turn to the first eleven verses of the first chapter ; he will find there a statement of the law of cycles, which forms the basis of the whole Esoteric Philosophy wherever it is to be met with. Compare, for instance, these verses with the sublime teachings of Buddha, as given in Book VIII. of *The Light of Asia*. Buddha commences his discourse by setting forth this same cyclic law, this chain of necessity by which all is conditioned on this plane of life. The same similies even are used. Compare verse 7 :— "All the rivers run into the sea ; yet the sea is not full ; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again"—with the following :—

" This is enough
That life and death and joy and woe abide ;
And cause and sequence, and the course of time,
And Being's ceaseless tide,
Which, ever changing, runs, linked like a river
By ripples following ripples, fast or slow—
The same yet not the same—from far-off fountain
To where its waters flow

Into the seas. These, steaming to the Sun,
 Give the lost wavelets back in cloudy fleece
 To trickle down the hills, and glide again ;
 Having no pause or peace."

The recognition of this endless, profitless cycle of *illusion*, in which we are ensnared, is the first step towards liberation. It is the first of the "Four Noble Truths" of Buddha :—

"The first truth is of *Sorrow*. Be not mocked !
 Life, which ye prize, is long-drawn agony :
 Only its pains abide ; its pleasures are
 As birds which light and fly."

And so also the *Preacher* :—"Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity.

So much for the philosophic aspect ; but the editor of *Lucifer* wishes to disclose another view of the matter, which bears on our modern *discoveries*—so called—in science and Oriental philosophy. "To the proud pretensions of this age, Occultism—the real Eastern Occultism, or the so-called Esoteric Doctrine—answers through its ablest students : indeed all your crusted knowledge is but the reflex action of the bygone past. At best you are but the modern popularisers of very ancient ideas." It is often asked, why, if this be so, and the teachings of Theosophy with regard to Lemurian and Atlantean civilizations be correct, the knowledge should have been lost, and only available in the present day in dim and uncertain legends. The answer is a reference to the law of cycles. The same law that applies to the individual, applies to the whole of humanity. The individual forgets at each reincarnation the "former things," and has to re-acquire that which he has learnt over and over again in previous lives, though each time the process is a shorter and easier one ; until at length the knowledge becomes *intuition* ; or, in lower forms of life, *instinct*. So the *Preacher* says :—"There is no remembrance of former things ; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after." The same law, then, applies to humanity collectively, in its re-incarnations in succeeding races and sub-races. And so now our modern discoveries are but that which "hath been already of old time, which was before us."

The second and concluding part of the paper on "Theosophy and Ecclesiasticism," by Mr. William Kingsland, deals with the important question as to the relation of Theosophy to the religion of Jesus on the one hand, and to the Ecclesiastical establishment, or so-called Christian Church, on the other. The position taken up is that the sublime ideal which Jesus represented is identical with pure Theosophy ; while on the other hand, "it is an insult to that great Teacher, before whom we all bow in reverent affection, to call our Ecclesiastical System the *Christian Church*."

Its doctrines and dogmas, and ceremonials, and priesthood, are not what Christ taught, but a mere réchauffé of so-called *heathen* philosophies and symbolism, with all that was philosophical obliterated and defaced." Further on, the question as to the influence of Theosophical teachings upon the Church, and upon the religious ideals of the Western World in general, is dealt with; and an appeal is made to Theosophists to show the identity of their teachings with Esoteric Christianity, rather than with Esoteric Buddhism.

There are several other articles of great interest in this number.

The *Theosophist* for January opens with a paper on "The New Religious Cycle in India," by Colonel Olcott. It deals with the influence of the Theosophical Society on the religions of the East, and bears a relation in this respect to the paper on "Theosophy and Ecclesiasticism," noticed above.

Although some eminent writers have spoken plainly and decisively as to the influence and work of our Society in reviving the interest of the Hindus in their ancient Scriptures, there would appear to be a general conspiracy of prejudice in attempting to ignore or discredit the work that has been done. On the one side we have the *Indian Witness* (a Missionary organ), saying:—"Theosophy has ignominiously failed in the East, just as Spiritualism has in the West." To this, the *Indian Mirror*—the editor of which was an active member of the religious revival known as the *Brahmo Samaj*—replies:—"Theosophy has done more good for India within a dozen years than the efforts of the whole body of Missionaries for nearly a century."

A deeply-interesting paper on "Kama-Locha, Devachan, and Nirvana," by Dr. J. A. Anderson, is brought to a conclusion. The subject is presented in a way which cannot fail to convey some clear ideas on this difficult subject to those who are endeavouring to arrive at a consistent notion concerning the *post-mortem* states of consciousness.

Theosophists will welcome the new edition of the *Key to Theosophy* which has just been issued, with the addition of a Glossary.

The second number of the *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*, in elucidation of the stanzas of the first volume of the *Secret Doctrine*, has also made its appearance. It carries us as far as Stanza IV, Sloka 6, and forms a most valuable additional commentary on the profound philosophy of the Archaic Wisdom Religion.

ENQUIRIES.

QUERY.—In connection with the doctrine of Karma, is it right to suppose that diseases may follow us from one incarnation to another ?

*ANS.—*We should say decidedly, *yes*. The Tanhic elementals referred to in No. 4 Vahan, when speaking of "the relation of the Tanhas to the Devachanic Entity," are the germs of all that enters into the new personality in the shape of selfish propensities, animal instincts, appetites of the lower nature, &c., which breed confusion in the body of man when the life principle (prâna) is hindered thereby in its free circulation throughout the organism. Any unequal appropriation of prâna, results in congestion, inflammation, and similar disorders of special functions, and corresponding atrophy in others. Every organ is the centre of some special desire of the animal soul (Kâmâ-rûpa) and is expressed by separate functional power, and every brain centre is the seat of a particular faculty of the mind (Manas). Thus the Tanhas of the past birth become the Kâmâ-rûpa of the next personality and are specialized in the organism as to many functions of greater or less power. Thus, "fresh issues on the universe that sum which is the lattermost of lives." Why the lattermost? Because it contains in itself the fruit of all those which preceded it, as does the acorn the germs of all that makes up the parent oak.

QUERY.—Count Mattei claims to have incorporated in his vegetable medicines something analogous to the Secret Force of Keeley.—We should like to know if such a process would be occultly possible; and if so, would this account for the success of Paracelsus' prescriptions, and for the various drugs and unguents used in some forms of ceremonial magic ?

*ANS.—*We do not see that any force need be incorporated in Mattei's medicines beyond that introduced in the form of herbs, providing the latter are properly chosen and prepared. Many herbs, known to Pharmacy in some few cases only by name, are known to possess peculiar occult properties, which, under the hand of the skilled adept, are extracted, and preserved in such a vehicle as is most suitable and convenient. These properties, when absorbed into the human system have power to effect wonderful cures, and to produce certain psychic conditions favourable to occult development. But so far as the introduction of a foreign and occult property into the vegetable preparations is concerned, this is of course possible, as instanced in the principles and practice of Antony Mesmer, &c.

QUERY.—*A Brahmin writes in "Lucifer" this month :—" The blood of the cow pollutes the earth to such a degree, that the country where such blood is spilt is bound to lose its pure spiritual atmosphere and engender one suitable for gross, materialistic, sensual, and selfish desires." Is there an occult reason why the blood of the cow pollutes more than that of another animal.*

ANS.—There is ; and if we say that physically speaking, "the blood is the life," we thence infer two things, viz : That the blood is the vehicle of certain elemental forces which are responsible for the building up of an organism ; and that the blood of the cow has affinity for a certain class of such elemental forces. Hence if the living blood is shed, the place whereon it falls, and the whole atmospheric ambient, becomes the theatre of countless "lives," whose nature is helpful only to that which is gross and earthly in the human being. This is one reason why the Theosophist should endeavour to overcome the appetite for flesh meat.

QUERY.—*When the Ego passes into the state of consciousness called Devachan, is it conscious of the death of its earthly body or is it like one long vivid dream, an extension of consciousness from one state of life into the other by an imperceptible process ?*

ANS.—This is fully stated in the Key to Theosophy, p. 146, where it is stated that "the bliss of the Devachanee consists in its complete conviction that it has never left the earth," &c., so that it will be evident that the latter view presented in the question, is that which is supported by theosophic teachings.

THE PLANET VENUS.

We learn that Signor Schiaparelli, the Italian astronomer, who has made many wonderful discoveries among the planets, has just furnished a new surprise, greater even than his recent discovery that Mercury performs only one rotation in the course of a revolution around the sun. He now asserts that Venus, the brightest of all the planets that we see, the twin sister of the earth, which is at present glowing with increasing splendour, also turns but once on its axis in the course of a revolution around the sun. In other words, there is no alteration of day and night on Venus, as on earth. The planet enjoys perpetual day on one side of its globe, while the other side is plunged into unending darkness.

This is but another point in favour of the secret doctrine, and illustrates yet another aspect of the allegory of Venus as Lucifer Vesper, the morning and evening star (*vide* Secret Doctrine, Vol. II. *Venus*). It is the symbol of the Hermaphrodite 3rd Root

Race, and later in the evolutionary scale, of the giant 4th Root Race of Atlantis.

Swedenborg says in his *Earths of the Universe* : " There are two kinds of men in the planet Venus, the first, mild and humane; the second, savage and brutal." Of the latter, he says : " they are giants, and men of this earth reach only to their navels ; they are immersed solely in brutal and earthly things, and the care of their cattle, &c." These types are occultly related to the Zodiacal signs Libra and Taurus, the former being the symbol of the hermaphrodite of the 3rd Race, the latter that of the Giant and bestial 4th Race.

ACTIVITIES.

THEOSOPHY.—At a meeting held in Bradford on 5th inst, it was decided to form a local branch of the Theosophical Society, and suitable rooms have been taken at Osborne Chambers, New Kirkgate. The objects of the Society are : First—To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, or colour ; second—To promote the study of Aryan, and other Eastern literatures, religions and sciences. A third object—pursued by a portion of the members of the Society—is to investigate unexplained laws of nature, and the psychical powers of man. The officers of the Society are:—President, Mr. O. Firth ; Vice-President, Mr. W. Williams ; Treasurer, Mr. T. W. Wilson ; Secretary, Mr. Midgley ; Committee, Messrs. T. H. Pattinson, F. D. Harrison, J. Clayton, and Dr. Edwards. This branch of the Central Society is intended to meet the requirements of the steadily increasing number of members in the district, and to give information and assistance to students of the subject, and others who are interested in it. A library of valuable theosophical and occult books has been formed, with the object of aiding and distributing information.

Brother J. T. Campbell manages to do good work for the Society, by attending lectures as frequently as possible, taking part in the discussions, and making good the occasion by distributing leaflets. In one case alone, he disposed of 1,200 Theosophical leaflets. This is excellent work, and we should be glad to see it imitated. Leaflets may be obtained at 7, Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C.

Newcastle-on-Tyne Lodge.—On January 23rd, the President of this Lodge delivered a Lecture on Theosophy, to the members of the Rendel Street Primitive Methodist Mutual Improvement Society. After briefly outlining the theosophical teaching of evolution, the lecturer explained the septenary constitution of

man, the separation of the principles after death, and traced the upper triad through its devachanic state to a subsequent birth into earth life. The operation of Karma, as affecting re-incarnation, was then dealt with, and the constitution and objects of the Theosophical Society were clearly set forth. The lecture was listened to with the utmost attention, the doctrine of re-incarnation and Karma being received most favourably. The Chairman remarked that the members of the Society would have to examine very carefully those views which were new to them. Owing to the length of the lecture, little time was left for a few questions, which were, with one exception, remarkably fair and free from any tone of hostility.

Members' Reception at 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park.—The reception of February 3rd was well attended by members from all parts of London, and they were all gratified by having the privilege of H.P.B.'s presence among them. Many strangers were invited by members, and those who came for the first time were much interested. Mr Blackmore sang in his usual cultivated style; his rendering of Tosti's "Good-bye," being particularly effective. Also to be noticed, was the "Serenata," of Braga, which, though lacking the violin accompaniment, was given with exquisite taste. The members are indebted to Mr. Blackmore, for his kindness in singing at their receptions. A Swedish lady also sang very sweetly, and Mr. Montague Cooper played very brilliantly, and effectively. The members all recognise how valuable these evenings are, in drawing them together and making them understand their common interest in the work of the Society. Members are asked to let the Secretary know when they bring friends, and also to introduce them to some one member resident at Headquarters, that they may again be introduced to other members. This will help to make them known to the officers of the Lodge and to the members.

A series of extracts from rare manuscripts on Alchemy and Rosicrucian Symbology, are now appearing in *Lucifer*, and should prove interesting and useful to students of the occult sciences. The extracts will chiefly bear upon the spiritual side of this little understood science of Alchemy.

We wish particularly to call the attention of members of the Theosophical Society, to the Psychical Research Society's Report on the Colomb forgeries and exposure, which has been revived by a Mr. Podmore, of the above Society, in the December number of *Time*. A reply, by Annie Besant, to this attack, will appear in the March number of the same journal, which is published by Messrs. Swan, Sonnenschein & Co., Paternoster Square, London, E.C. Price 1/-