

THE IRISH THEOSOPHIST

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PRICE ONE PENNY

A WORD UPON THE OBJECTS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

1st:-- To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or color.

2nd:-- To promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literatures, religions, philosophies and sciences, and demonstrate the importance of that study.

3rd:-- To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the psychic powers latent in man.

Started a little under a quarter of a century ago, in an age grown cold with unbelief and deadened by inexplicable dogmas, the Theosophical Society has found adherents numerous enough to make it widely known, and enthusiastic enough to give it momentum and make it a living force. The proclamation of its triple objects—brotherhood, wisdom and power, acted like a trumpet call, and many came forth to join it, emerging from other conflicts; and out of silence and retirement came many who had grown hopeless but who had still the old feeling at heart.

For the first object no explanation is necessary; but a word or two of comment upon the second and third may help to show how they do not weaken, by turning into other channels, the intellectual energies and will, which might serve to carry out the first. In these old philosophies of the East we find the stimulus to brotherly action which might not be needed in an ideal state, but which is a help to the many, who, born into the world with a coldness of heart as their heritage, still wish to do their duty. Now our duty alters according to our conception of nature, and in the East there has been put forward, by men whom we believe to be the wise and great of the earth, a noble philosophy, a science of life itself, and this, not as a hypothesis, but as truth which is certain, truth which has been verified by eyes which see deeper than ours, and proclaimed by the voices of those who have become the truth they speak of; for as Krishna teaches Arjuna in the Dnyanishvari; "on this Path to whatever place one would go that place one's self becomes!" The last word of this wisdom is unity. Underneath all phenomena and surviving all changes, a great principle endures for ever. At the great white dawn of existence, from this principle stream spirit and primordial matter; as they flow away further from their divine source, they become broken up, the one life into countless lives, matter into countless forms, which enshrine these lives; spirit involves itself into matter and matter evolves, acted upon by this informing fire.

These lives wander on through many a cycle's ebb and flow, in separation and sorrow, with sometimes the joy of a momentary meeting. Only by the recognition of that unity, which spiritually is theirs, can they obtain freedom.

It is true in the experience of the race that devotion of any life to universal ends brings to that life a strange subtle richness and strength; by our mood we fasten ourselves into the Eternal; hence these historic utterances, declarations of

permanence and a spiritual state of consciousness, which have been the foundation of all great religious movements. Christ says, "I and my Father are one." "Before Abraham was I am." Paul says, "In him we live and move and have our being."

In the sacred books of India it is the claim of many sages that they have recognised "the ancient constant and eternal which perishes not though the body be slain," and there are not wanting to-day men who speak of a similar expansion of their consciousness, out of the gross and material, into more tender, wise and beautiful states of thought and being. Tennyson, in a famous letter published some time ago, mentioned that he had at different times experienced such a mood; the idea of death was laughable; it was not thought, but a state; "the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest." It would be easy to go on multiplying instances.

Now is a nature where unity underlies all differences, where soul is bound to soul more than star to star; where if one falters or falls the order of all the rest is changed; the duty of any man who perceives this unity is clear, the call for brotherly action is imperative, selfishness cannot any longer wear the mask of wisdom, for isolation is folly and shuts us out from the eternal verities.

The third object of the Society defined as "the study of the psychic powers latent in man" is pursued only by a portion of the members; those who wish to understand more clearly the working of certain laws of nature and who wish to give themselves up more completely to that life in which they live and move and have their being; and the outward expression of the occult life is also brotherhood.

G. W. Russell, F. T. S.

OCCULTISM AND MODERN SCIENCE

The *Dublin Figaro* of Oct. 22nd notices a recent defence of Theosophy by Mrs. Besant and somewhat inconsistently remarks—"the letter bears undoubtedly the stamp of an able and deep-thinking woman, but the deductions which she makes on behalf of Theosophy are asinine in their absurdity." The 'defence' spoken of is a remarkable letter to the *London Daily Chronicle* of Oct. 14th the paper which about this time last year opened its columns so freely to a discussion of Theosophy, its pros and cons.

Mrs. Besant very lucidly, as is her wont, sets forth some of the claims of occult science; identifies its commonplaces of centuries ago with some of the latest scientific conceptions of matter, and shows that several of the most advanced chemists and physicists are travelling along the lines laid down through the ages by those who are variously termed mahatmas, adepts, masters, by the reverent, and knaves, fools, and imposters by the profane. Taking two great branches of modern science—Chemistry and Physics—she hails into court, as witnesses to the truth of occult theories concerning them, professors Crookes and Oliver Lodge. Professor Crookes F. R. S. is one of the greatest chemists of the day; of world-wide reputation; whether we regard him from the standpoint of speculative or applied chemistry. But more than this he seems to be one of those scientists who, recognising that Truth and Science should be synonymous terms, and that, as at present understood, they are not, would rather be loyal to the former than sacrifice it to sustaining against evidence the preconceived theories of the latter.

In the oldest systems of cosmology that we know of—those of the ancient east

tern religions and philosophies—the elements which build up the whole manifested nature are shewn as arising from one primordial element, which we may speak of as occupying an intermediate position between absolute spirit on the one hand and grossest matter on the other. In this element lay latent, awaiting the breath of life, the germs of the objective universe. The Vedantins called this basic substance, *Mula-prakriti*: Pythagoras, The One: Paracelsus The Yliaster or *Mysterium Magnum*: Roger Bacon, Hyle and in the nineteenth century we find Professor Crookes rechristening it *Protyle*.

According to the Vedantins the Breath of Life, which stimulated the Potential into becoming the Actual was *Fohat*. Now *Fohat* is individualized electricity but yet does not correspond exactly to the modern idea of that force. They regarded it rather, as the conscious directing Soul, of which electricity is the lower principle. This endowment with intelligence, of what our modern scientists regard as unconscious force, seems to be the greatest difference separating the most advanced theories of to-day from the teaching of the ancients.

Mr. Crookes, in his address to the chemical section of the British Association at Birmingham in 1886 "alleged that it was scarcely possible for the elements to display such mutual relations, unless they constituted a definite whole, in which each has its proper part to play, and from which none can be extracted without leaving a recognisable deficiency. For these elements are in definite groups, each group marked by certain characteristics common to all its members; and further, its members differ from each other along certain well marked lines, the differences themselves suggesting the existence of a relation."

For these and other reasons, Mr. Crookes thought that the elements were not, primordially distinct, but were formed from some basic substance, and this substance he named *Protyle*, following both in idea and name the persecuted occultist Roger Bacon, who said six hundred years ago—as Mr. Crookes points out—that "the elements were made out of Hyle, and every element is convertible into the nature of another element." Thus the 'atom' was displaced from its proud position, and became a mere secondary product, built up from primeval matter, and if constructible then destructible; a compound, not a unity.

Now it has been a favourite theory of many of the wisest men in all ages that the elements were convertible, one into another; hence the enthusiastic pursuit of the Philosophers Stone and the Universal Solvent by the mediæval alchemists.

Briefly and broadly stated the process was this:—dissolve the material to be changed, down to the condition of undifferentiated root-substance and then re-evolve it into gold or diamonds or what you would. The first and most difficult step was the formation of the *Alcahest* or Universal Solvent, but once that was obtained the subsequent steps we may suppose, were comparatively easy. On this subject,—the formation of the many substances from the one—Mr. Crookes says: "we are sometimes asked why, if the elements have been evolved, we never see one of them transformed, or in process of transformation into another. The question is as futile as the cavil that in the organic world we never see a horse metamorphosed into a cow. Before copper—e.g.—can be transmuted into gold it would have to be carried back to a simpler and more primitive state of matter, and then, so to speak, shunted on to the track that leads to gold." So after all, as Mrs. Besant says—"these dreamers were not such fools, and those who produced gold were not necessarily frauds and charlatans, but may have been chemists who

knew more of the hidden forces in nature than even our best chemists of to-day, and who could perform where our chemists only see the possibility of performance."

Now to turn to physics. The "Secret Doctrine" teaches us that macrocosm and microcosm evolve step by step together; that as each force or principle develops in the great, the corresponding force or principle develops in the small. It also divides or classifies the forces into seven in the macrocosm and into seven principles in man. Man has developed on earth through a number of root races — the total number of which will be seven — and each of these root races throws off seven sub-races. The characteristics of each of these is determined by the nature of the sub-racial force to which it corresponds. The present leading race of the world, is the fifth sub-race of the fifth root race; the fifth principle of the cosmos corresponds to the ether of science; and the ether is the force that we are just beginning to grapple with and understand. Now Professor Lodge thinks that electricity "is a mode of manifestation of the ether;" it is in fact a step nearer "Fohat," which, as I said was regarded by the eastern philosophers as the conscious soul, of which electricity was a lower principle. Waves varying from almost infinite smallness to infinite length, can be generated in this ether, and what is more wonderful, a receiver can be constructed, which can be attuned to vibrations of any extent, and which will answer to those vibrations.

We see in this discovery the vindication of the occult teaching on the possibilities of thought transference and communications from a distance. Given to one person a means of producing vibrations of any magnitude from ten millionths of a millimetre up to thousands of feet, and to another a means of receiving those vibrations—then having fixed on the rate of vibration to be used and a code of signals to interpret them these two people could keep up communication through thousands of miles of intervening space or matter,—for everything is permeable by the ether—and with absolute secrecy, for, where the limits are so enormous it will be seen that the chances of any other instrument being attuned to the same rate of vibration, and thus able to catch and disclose what is flying through space, are too slight to be thought of. Now this wonder is to be worked by clumsy physical apparatus and why not then by the far subtler means of will. We Theosophists assert that it can be. Professor Lodge also says:—"if there is a gap in our knowledge between the conscious idea of motion and the liberation of muscular energy needed to accomplish it, how do we know that a body may not be moved without ordinary material contact by a mere act of will?" and Mrs. Besant explains that it can, and the reason why:—"every molecule is wrapped in an ethereal envelope, and each of the parts that make up a molecule is wrapped in a subtler ethereal envelope," and that "it is in these etheric and inter-etheric spaces that the strongest forces of the universe lie hidden. The subtler ether set vibrating by the will puts the grosser ether, or astral matter, into vibration, and so communicates the impulse to the yet dense molecules of the solid body."

This is enough, and we only say to those who are not quite able to accept these theories without actual experimental evidence of their own senses—do not deny; only suspend your judgement; wait and see!

Righ

WORK

I dont care much what you do,
 So you work, not play at it;
 One thing the world needs to-day,
 Is mind-ful dexterity,
 Power, will and intelligence.
 There is work eno,' full room to grow,
 For each man and woman.
 Full room for the play-grounds of children.
 Room for the ignorant, for the fools and sick.
 Less room for the tailors block, little room for the hypocrite ;
 For the men who snivel and cringe and cant.
 For the indolent, he who dreams all day
 And sleeps the long night away, there is room ?
 Yes! there is room as you say, for those who let life slip away
 And drone on without thought. In the cabbage beds
 They will find it best, there they can sleep or rest,
 Nor with labour be oppressed till death meet them.
 And then, what comes after ? next something will eat them.
 The world, our world as we see it
 Is, and we in it, Life, Substance, Intelligence.
 Would man forward press he must work more, not less,
 Gain more of power, live deeper; for to progress,
 Is to make world-stuff, self-conscious, of life the dress.
 Is to be, think, live, in the point that is present,
 Sweep the streets, plough, sow, reap, paint
 Pictured ideals, clothe truth in words,
 Make of music love harmony,
 In some great machine be the tiniest rivet,
 Be but the sheath of a too keen blade,
 The springs which ward off hard jolting,
 The cushions to rest a weary head,
 The hand on the reins, which with light firm hold
 Restrains spirited horses from bolting;
 Whatever your work is, we need it all.
 If man and the world can grow better,
 It shall be through the work of the whole.
 Heart, head or hand work, for his own each is fitter,
 Fill the wide world with thought and love and life.
 Fill the high world with Truth and right endurance,
 A patience which thinks no effort lost,
 The force in every thing, a live intelligence,
 True wisdom knows that the great whole,
 When perfected, is veiled in perfect atoms.
 The all, life, thought, our laboured reason, thirst of life,
 Faint sketch, and vigorous effort, if filled with Truth.
 Will reach again, by conduct, dream, human emotion,
 Calm reason, conscious thought, deep life, into the All
 Which is. The clue, one-pointed concentration.

G. A. H. Johnston F.T.S.

FATHER CLARKE AND THEOSOPHY.

When the Roman Catholic Church, in the person of a prominent ecclesiastic, with voice and pen declares war against Theosophy, we recognise an important sign of the times, which other christian sects, and the many unclassified wise men of our generation, should lay to heart. Writing in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* some years ago, the distinguished orientalist, Emile Burnouf, gave it as his opinion that the three dominant religious influences of the day were Buddhism, Roman Catholicism and Theosophy. And in the case of the two latter influences at least, subsequent events have certainly gone to confirm this estimate. Fresh internal dissensions, fresh concessions and makeshifts with unbelief, have continued to weaken Protestantism, to the great advantage of her rival—pliant and insinuating but strong in unity and unbroken tradition from the past. Theosophy on the other hand, has advanced through ridicule and obloquy to a well recognised standing, both as a moral and intellectual system. Significant therefore, and prophetic of much that may befall, is the alarm sounded by the Jesuit father: Theosophy! A sheer and dark atheism! Opening the door to vice! A conspiracy of the Devil against the Church!

For any reasonable attempt to substantiate such charges, we search in vain either sermons or written discourse. Even in the imperfect sketch of theosophic teachings presented—fairly enough we must admit—it is easy for the sympathetic reader to divine, that the whole of our philosophy, ethics and science, centres round a recognition of the divinity that underlies all natural law, all life, all history. If, sensible of the infinities amid which we dwell—infinities that stretch from beneath, to far beyond our utmost ken: from atom to universe; from infusoria to angelic hosts—we shrink from attributing Personality to the Divine Principle by whose Breath all is sustained,—are we to be accused of atheism, or “banishing Almighty God from this world of his?”

And when we proclaim that the law: “as ye sow, so shall ye also reap,” is as certain and as innate a fact in Nature as gravity or electricity—is it fair to tax us with reducing ethics to a mechanical consideration, depriving virtue of her sanction, and “opening the door to vice?” In any case, the question to be decided is really: “Does the law exist?”—in which case Theosophy is surely not responsible. Again, if we hold that the fires of deity slumber in the soul of man, as the strength and stature of the oak-tree are instinct in the acorn—shall this be denounced as blasphemy, as conducive to spiritual pride, by the followers of him who said: “the kingdom of heaven is within you.” “Know ye not that ye are gods?”

Accusations like these, coming from a man of education, and pandering as they do to the prejudices of the ignorant, will only re-act upon their author's reputation as a philosopher and a christian. But what shall we say of the sincerity of the writer who has the baseness to tell his readers, that the “lofty morality” and the “spirit of asceticism” professed by Theosophists “*have for their object to throw into the shade the Christian Morality and the asceticism of the Saints.*” And will Christians, who daily repeat the prayer of their Master: “thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth,” accept as their champion one who cynically reminds them that “this dream of a Universal Brotherhood is a commonplace of *unpractical theorists* of all ages.”

Antagonists like Father Clarke will do Theosophy—little as they intend it—more good than harm. Many will be attracted through his discourses to the study of a system which brings a profounder, a more universal meaning from the dead-letter of old and difficult creeds; and which certainly deepens, even if it broadens,

faith. And as for the cry of "devilry," it is not only a little "behind the times" for our free age; but those who examine for themselves the teaching thus charitably branded, will perhaps but recall to mind the similar outcry of another priesthood: "he hath a devil; and he casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the prince of the devils."

H. M. Magee F. T. S.

REVIEWS AND NOTES.

The space at our disposal necessarily limits our work of reviewing. All we can do is quote a sentence here and there, in the hope that any reader sufficiently interested may be induced to get the magazine.

Lucifer (Oct.)— In the 'Watch Tower' Notes we find that the Protestant Missionary Society has a poor return to show for the energy and money expended—39,124 natives converted in ten years! "Life and Death," a conversation between a great eastern Teacher, H. P. B., Colonel Olcott, and an Indian: The following sentence is italicised: "In order to live a conscious life in the world on the other side of the grave, the man must have acquired belief in that world, in this terrestrial life." On the Sacredness of Principle and Unnatural food, "S" remarks: "Listen to all theories *but chiefly observe carefully yourself.*" Dr. Wilder concludes his article on "The Ganglionic Nervous System." "Medical learning" he writes, "in order to be really scientific, must recognise as a fundamental truth the influence of mental and moral states over the physical functions." "Schools of Occultism" is of interest. Let Theosophists "remain actuated by the highest spiritual good to humanity," and work in harmony with the Great Masters. Mrs. Besant's article on "Death and After" is continued.

Path (Oct.) "A conversation on Mahatmas," between an enquirer and an F. T. S., is typical of a great deal one usually hears on the subject, although F. T. S. probably deals more effectively with "Enquirer" than is always the case.

"Replanting diseases for future use," by W. Q. Judge, deals with Christian Scientists and "mind cure" treatment of disease. "To imagine we can escape from any cause connected with us, is to suppose that law and order desert the manifested universe. We must work everything out to the last item." We observe the November issue is to be "peculiar" in its make-up.

Theosophist (Oct.)—"Old Diary Leaves" VII. by H. S. Olcott, continues to be of much interest. He says truly of H. P. B. "She dwelt on spiritual heights whither only the Eagles of mankind soar. Most of her adversaries have only seen the mud on her shoes." "Does a Subject, a Soul, dwell in us" by Hellenbach and "Wisdom of the Upanishads—Rama Prasad, will be read with profit by many.

All three magazines contain official intimation of our president Colonel Olcott's return to active work, he having been complete'y restored to health by his rest. We send him greeting and hope he may long continue to fill his position as he has hitherto done.

Theosophy is well represented in France by *Le Lotus Bleu*. The contents of the current number are on a high intellectual level. In answer to a question about the origin of evil, we have six replies by Theosophists, which are as full and exhaustive as verbal answers can be. We venture to suggest that more prominence should

be given to the Ethical side of our movement. Emile Burnouf, the orientalist, contributes an excellent paper, in which he argues for the existence in man, of an *astral*, sentient principle, within the physical body.

"Theosophy and the Society of Jesus," is a small pamphlet by Mrs. Besant, which ought to be widely circulated. It exposes the tactics of the Jesuits, and gives an explanation of some of the startling "conversions" of people in high places in English Society. Copies may be had from Secretary 3 Upper Ely Place Dublin.

We acknowledge with grateful thanks, receipt of many letters of congratulation and good wishes. At same time, we hope to make the *Irish Theosophist* so attractive, that all English and Scotch branches and centres will be induced to send us a year's subscription.

The month has been a busy one amongst us. Bro. Kingsland's visit is reported elsewhere. The Ethical Society had Dr. Coit on a visit, and had two very successful meetings, which we hope will not be without good results. The Fabian Society has now been fairly started and, we believe, has every prospect of going on satisfactorily. There is a deal of work to be done in every direction, and we heartily welcome every effort to break down the slavish thrall of *dead* tradition. "In the inert the dooms declare."

Mention cannot be made of the Dublin Fabian Society, without connecting with it the names of Mr. and Mrs. Duncan. To Mrs. Duncan especially, it owes its existence, and it must be a source of satisfaction to all concerned, to see such a practical issue, as the result of her efforts. We wish it every success: "Sound to the blast the trumpet of reform."

OUR WORK.

We have the pleasure to announce, that Mrs. Besant will lecture in the Antient Concert Rooms, Dublin; on the 21st. inst.:—her subject being "Problems of Death and the After Life." Admission 1/-; (Reserved seat) tickets, 2/- each, may be had at Theosophical Headquarters, 3 Upper Ely Place. We hope to give a verbatim report of this lecture in our next issue. On 22nd. inst.:—Mrs. Besant lectures in Limerick on "Karma and Reincarnation" and on the 23rd., at Assembly Rooms, Cork; on "Meaning and Object of Reincarnation."

W. Kingsland, president Chiswick Lodge T.S., and author of "The Mystic Quest" &c., had a most successful weeks work in Ireland. Besides the meetings reported in our last issue, he lectured at the Dublin Ethical Society's Rooms on 9th. Oct. on "Theosophy and Ethics," and on the 11th. at the meeting of the North Dublin Centre T. S. on the "Secret Doctrine." On the following night a *conversazione* was held at the Headquarters, 3 Upper Ely Place, at which Mr. Kingsland explained, with the use of diagrams, the seven principles in nature and man. It was a successful meeting, and we hope these social reunions will be more frequent. On the 19th. Oct. a most interesting paper was read by G. W. Russell on "The Higher Mind," and on the 2nd. inst. a Branch paper on "Occultism and Modern Science." At both meetings an interesting discussion took place and there was abundant evidence that the interest in Theosophy is spreading.

Our energetic Secretary N. D. C. read a paper on Theosophy at the Sheridan Literary Society on the 10th. Inst. The paper was well received and the discussion which followed was noted as being one of the liveliest the society has ever had. Reading papers on Theosophy at meetings of other societies is a good move, and an example which ought to be followed more.

Notice:—All communications should be addressed to the Editor at 3 Upr. Ely Place, Dublin. Articles for insertion should reach us by 1st. of the month. Subscriptions 1s 6d per annum.