ON THE OUTER RIM;
STUDIES IN
WIDER EVOLUTION

BY
GEO. E. WRIGHT

CHICAGO
ALFRED C. CLARK, PUBLISHER
1897
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By ALFRED C. CLARK

The Lakeside Press
R. R. Donnelley & Sons Co. Chicago
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Spirits

Matter

A Cycle of Eternity
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INTRODUCTORY.

The story of evolution, as being now brought out by different scientific investigators day after day, shows the romance that is contained in truth, even more than in fiction. The development of man from the lower animals, so clearly proven by Darwin a quarter of a century ago, was by the orthodox church people first ridiculed and denied, then ignored, and finally in our own time is acknowledged. The preacher who now attacks evolution is the recipient of the same degree of ridicule which once was bestowed upon its advocates, and proves himself an ignoramus.

Yet Darwin was only a pioneer in this field. His system embraced only a fraction of what is now covered by the wider evolution. Driven by inexorable logic, the students of to-day are inquiring, not only into the origin and history of life, tracing it backward and downward even to the crystal, hitherto regarded as inorganic matter, but are patiently working out the problems of the birth and growth of mind. And here are uncovered the truths that are so fraught with romantic interest, that rival the wildest imaginings of fiction, and
that compel the thoughtful to change many of their standpoints. In the investigation of nature they learn that much of the empirical teaching of school and pulpit is erroneous; that human races entirely distinct from ours may have inhabited this globe in long past ages; that prehistoric man may have been something more than a savage; and that civilizations may have existed on lands now submerged beneath the ocean. What is left of materialistic science now hobbles upon crutches; the most advanced scientific writers are going beyond the evidence of the physical senses, long since proven to be inadequate and deceptive, and are accepting the arguments based upon analogy and reason. And very many good people who have been afraid to peep into nature's book, lest they read something that might interfere with some of their preconceived ideas and conclusions, are now daring to think about the creation of man as being somehow different from the account given in the Jewish Bible. It is true that the majority of people are still careless and ignorant, but every day an increasing number are beginning to study and think for themselves, and to these the author dedicates the suggestions herein contained regarding the wider evolution.
DAWN.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUL.

Between the dark and dusk there is land;
None knoweth its beginning or its end.
Seaward is bleak, and inward doth extend
A reach of barren sand.

Faint voices of a long-forgotten lore
Whisper that in the infinite depths of Time
A golden age, illumining that clime,
- Reigned over sea and shore.

Somewhere amidst that continent unknown,
Fields smiled without the magic touch of spring,
And flowers bloomed, and birds did ever sing,
And ever the sun shone.

Lulled by a thousand cycles of repose,
The realm of soul, in tranquil innocence,
By cloud and storm was overtaken, whence
Illusion's mist arose.
Though captive yet in that dim land, 't is said,
A prey to destiny and evil things,
Wrought by its own imaginings,
The dream-soul is not dead.

Throughout the dusk of many an age by-gone,
The sea, in rhythmic surges evermore,
Hath chanted on that unfrequented shore
Low preludes of the dawn.

Sometimes the wind doth seaward drive, and then
Faint echoes seem to tremble on its wing,
As if of voices vaguely murmuring
In distant haunts of men,

Where, in cloud-palaces and marts of trade,
And in imaginary marble halls
Of government, and art, and pleasure, crawls
The ceaseless masquerade.

Perchance some restless spirits, wandering long
In quest of knowledge over flood and field,
Have here and there caught glimpses unrevealed
Unto the careless throng;

Or learned a stanza from the open book,
Wherein the hieroglyphs of life are set
In characters that all may read, and yet,
How many overlook!

Truth, shining down the corridors afar
Of human thought, with an immortal power,
Smiles from the soul of every blade and flower,—
Gleams from the distant star.

As do the mirrors of the eye reveal
Inverted pictures, so throughout the range
Of life-experience must all exchange
The seeming for the real.

Yet, through the mist and through the shadows dim
Of untold ages, hovering o'er the deep,
A faint illumination seems to creep
Above the ocean's rim.

Soon shall the herald of the coming age
Fly with the dawn across the barren sand,
And waking up the dreamy inner-land,
Complete its pilgrimage.

Then will the earth a heavenlier atmosphere
Assume, and clear the vision of the soul
Become, and as away the shadows roll,
Illusions disappear.
The cause of life and wrong is ignorance:
But there shall rule upon the earth once more
The tender light that gladdens sea and shore.
Awakening from its trance

The spiritual soul that in the dream-soul lies,
Developing the higher sentiment,
Until desire and selfishness are spent.
And man is wholly wise.
WIDER EVOLUTION.

NO SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST.—FROM MAN TO
MINERAL.—VIBRATION OF ATOMS.

"A polyp stranded on the shores of Time,
Vain longing for the illimitable Deep."

One of our humbler poets upon a time took the world
to task, with fiery zeal and not unmelodious verse,
wherein he pictured man in the above scientific, if not
altogether complimentary, terms. Yet, polyps though
we be,—or may actually have been in the remote past,—
it is not inappropriate for us to rejoice that our polypial lot
has been cast in the closing years of the memorable
nineteenth century. We are thus witnesses of some
remarkable changes and developments in the realm of
thought, beside which the invention of the telegraph is
insignificant. Yet, how few really appreciate the impor-
tance of that evolution!

Several billions of us polyps, not exactly stranded on
the shores of Time,—let us forgive the poet’s license,—
are living a very active, if ephemeral, life on earth,
crowding and jostling one another in eager haste to
taste something which we vainly imagine to be delec-
table, chasing fugitive pleasures which, if secured, turn to ashes at our touch, toadying or bullying, undermining each other, or openly quarreling and killing, in order to gain some selfish advantage. Thus we logically carry out a complicated, though definite, extension of the principle which Charles Darwin, referring to the lower animals, characterized as the struggle for existence.

Although this must be accepted as one of the factors of the law of evolution, there is some room for doubt as to the reality of another important principle which has been called the survival of the fittest. This assertion will, I am aware, be set aside at once as rank scientific heresy. But taking even the lower animals, is it true that either the strongest, or the fiercest, or the handsomest—the preponderance of qualities going to make up what is generally characterized as fittest—are the ones that survive? In a large herd of cattle there will be found all shades of health, strength, and beauty, yet the weaker and uglier are as apt to be prolific and to survive accident as the stronger. And among wild animals it is the fiercest and the strongest that are ever ready for battle, while the weaker, recognizing their inferiority, secure safety in flight.

But if there is a law, it must prevail throughout the whole range of evolution. Who pretends that among mankind the “fittest” survive? Are there not millions of physically weak and imperfect human beings for every
thousand of healthy ones? Nay, more, may it not be said that men and women of perfect organization are so rare as to be exceptional? Of all the persons in your circle of acquaintance, is there one who has not some weak point? This one, perhaps, has poor eyesight, that one weak lungs, a third is subject to throat difficulty, a fourth to heart trouble, another to rheumatism, and so on through the whole gamut of human ills. And yet reproduction is general, and the fittest remain in a decided minority. The statistics of our civilization show a constantly increasing proportion of the poor, the physically and mentally imperfect, the criminal classes. Then, how can there be a survival of the fittest?

And yet evolution implies advance, and how can progress be made if the unfit survive? It is only in the light of a wider evolution that such an apparent contradiction may be explained. Darwin took up the animal kingdom and established the order of succession, showing how from lower forms the higher ones evolved, and that man must of necessity have sprung from the brutes. In order to fortify his argument, he pointed out how many of our mental traits are exhibited by the lower animals. Here very properly his work terminated. It was only an entering wedge, an initial attempt at opening the eyes of the Western world which had been so long blinded by religious error. But if evolution is a law, can it have limitations? Must it not be traced backward and downward from the higher animal, man,
through the lower animal, into the vegetable world, and still further down into the mineral? And must we not resolve this mineral into its separate molecules? And, finally, may we not locate the origin of evolution in the one atom of matter from which all subsequent forms have been developed to even the highest and most complicated?

So far, science makes no positive denial.

This hypothesis is not new. It has been put forward by certain obscure schools of philosophy from time immemorial, and modern science, while not admitting its truth, is content to assume an agnostic position on the subject. But the wider evolution may not stand upon conventionality, nor fear the scowl of the bigot. The end of the century may see the adoption by many minds of a real cosmogony, a true theory of evolution, magnificent in its simplicity.

It may be admitted that man is a threefold being, having a material form (body), a psychic consciousness (soul), which is just beginning to be thoroughly recognized, though as yet far from understood, and a divine nature (spirit), or that which belongs to the infinite, and in our present condition quite undeveloped. Now, Darwin in his "Descent of Man" could not limit himself to physical evolution. He was compelled to take into account certain observed facts regarding the mental traits of men and the lower animals. These facts, however, were used solely to fortify his argument for devel-
opment on the physical plane. But law is inexorable, and if the mind of man appears, no matter how faintly, in the brute, then mind must evolve, and there can be no limit to its growth in either direction. No one can put his finger on any given point in the history of evolution, and say, "Here began that something which is not matter."

Of course it seems absurd to think of mind in connection with the vegetable. Even the lowest animals may not have a real mind, but something akin to it which we call instinct, and which has a tendency to become more rational as they advance into higher forms. To think of a vegetable having even instinct seems absurd until we recall the sensitive plant and some of those aqueous productions which may be either animal or vegetable so far as science can ascertain. Besides, when you come to protoplasm, science admits that the same plasmic substance may develop either an animal or a plant, and no one can possibly foretell which. At any rate the plant would have, to a certain extent, sensation, to say nothing about an abundant amount of vitality. The life-principle may perhaps contain properties which in the process of evolution will appear as sensation.

We now come to what many will regard as the wildest fable of all. But law is universal. When in the course of our investigation we come to the mineral kingdom, the temptation to draw a line at this point becomes
almost irresistible. But stern logic drives us on. The stone looks so utterly lifeless and shapeless; besides, did not science long since make a sharp distinction between organic and inorganic matter? Yet, being in unbiased quest of truth, we must inquire whether or not this dull piece of earth has any property besides that of matter. We observe at once that it does possess the quality of cohesion. Well, what is that mysterious force which binds the molecules together? It cannot be anything like gravitation. Is it anything in the nature of vitality? Can it be allied even distantly to the life-principle? Singularly enough, science fails utterly to explain the nature of cohesion, leaving us to guess it out for ourselves. But there is another property of the mineral which science has distinctly recognized, though only in recent years, and somewhat reluctantly at that. In a general way the public has been informed of a certain property belonging to or associated with all matter, namely, vibration. Thus is vindicated the old axiom that there can be no matter without motion. It has remained for the closing years of the century to proclaim the scientific truth of the mysterious law of vibration—that disturbance of the ether which, according to its rate, produces sound, color, light, heat, and electricity. Likewise, every atom of matter in the stone is in a constant state of vibration. And the latest theory of vibration is that all the forms in the universe are produced by varying rates of vibration among the material atoms of which they are composed.
The atoms are eternally clashing, no matter how closely joined in appearance, in a piece of hammered steel, just the same as in a clod of earth.

Here, then, we find both threads of our investigation meeting at a common point of origin, the atom. And the atom has not only a material form, but a something besides, a vibratory motion. What is the vibration? It is not matter. Is it spirit? No. Is it something which, under the eternal law of evolution, may develop, along with its material nature, out of force motion, out of motion life, out of life sensation, out of sensation instinct, out of instinct mind? This is the question which the wider evolution is now asking.

Beyond mind there are yet other and higher stages. Mind may be described as a lower phase or plane of soul, whose highest state is intuitive knowledge or wisdom. Evolution can only end in pure spirit.

Taking this broad view of what may be called soul-evolution, it will be seen that Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest is not necessary, or at least is not a correct expression of the process. A better theory, according to the wider evolution, would be described as accumulation of experience. The lowest forms, being endowed with spirit, even though latent, or existing in the most primitive state, have the capacity for improvement by means of experience, and throughout countless millions of years have acquired the complicated mental and physical mechanisms now seen in the human race.
And throughout the millions of ages yet to come the process will go on, until mankind, freed from the burdens of the flesh and the bonds of ignorance, will have become spiritualized and perfect. But long ere then may we realize the beautiful occult allegory of that which “sleeps in the stone, dreams in the plant, and awakes in man!”
GROWTH OF HUMAN KIND.

PREHISTORIC MAN.—GEOLOGISTS WITHOUT DATES.—
SUBMERGED CONTINENTS.—EVIDENCE OF SKULLS.

“For now we see through a glass darkly,
But then face to face.”

In his epoch-marking book entitled “A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology,” Dr. Andrew D. White has graphically depicted the struggle of the human soul in its endeavor to realize the infinite. Historically considered, this great work practically covers the ground, beginning with the earliest known records, extending back several thousand years. From a scientific standpoint—that is, as science is generally understood—it may be accepted as complete and chronologically correct. It shows with startling, if not pathetic, clearness the childish and absurd views of nature which have been held and enforced by so-called orthodox church authorities up to and including the present highly civilized nineteenth century. A more humiliating disclosure of the errors into which mankind has been driven by faith in the supernatural could never be made.

Neither Dr. White nor any other recognized authority
has attempted to go back of known historical records to speculate upon the mental or psychic growth of prehistoric man. Many idle books have been written to prove the existence of the human race before Adam, but as all these are based upon the Chaldæan myths expounded in the Book of Genesis, they are of little value. Even a man of such scientific attainments as Professor Winchell of Michigan University destroyed the usefulness of his work on "Preadamites" by drawing his arguments from the same source. And many another well-meaning theologian has struggled hopelessly with the old conundrum, "Where did Cain get his wife?" ignoring the scientific necessity of first proving the existence of Cain. Adam, Cain, and all the other characters in Jewish history, down to the days of the Bedouin Abraham, may safely be considered as allegorical. Hence it will be seen at once that there is a wide distinction between the terms "preadamic" and "prehistoric."

Historical records with anything like a definite chronology do not begin earlier than about 5000 B.C. In 3800 B.C. there ruled over the Accadians in Chaldæa, King Sargon I, who founded a great library, showing that there existed at that time an advanced civilization, populous cities, an organized religion, and a knowledge of art and literature. Claims of vast antiquity are made in behalf of other nations, especially Egypt and India, but definite historical records are lacking. The religious system of India, by teaching the illusory nature
of all things and the relative unimportance of the merely personal, discouraged the putting upon record of the achievements of princes, which chronicles, in fact, constitute about all up to recent times of what we call history. Egyptian chronology is based entirely upon the lists of dynasties made by a priest named Manetho. But while we may not possess historical records dating back more than six or seven thousand years ago, we have plenty of geological evidence to show the existence of mankind nearly a million years longer.

Many scientific essays have been written to prove that man, as a thinker, carved for himself stone weapons of defense in the tertiary geological period. These same geologists, however, are nowadays extremely chary about their chronology, declining to even estimate the number of years ago when the tertiary epoch occurred. Some did try a little figuring at first, taking as a basis such ascertained facts as the present rate of deposition of delta-mud and of the formation of stalactites in caves, and thus easily arriving at a result showing the existence of man at least half a million years ago. But certain rude skeptics came along and claimed that the rate of deposition had varied from time to time, thus depriving the geologists of a much-needed multiple. So, now, the latter are very cunning, declining to be caught in any more traps; and when asked about the tertiary period, gently wink one eye, and say, "Oh, it was a long time ago."
There never was but one man who ever propounded a reasonable estimate, in years, of the geological epochs. James Croll, a Scotchman, gave to the scientific world the now well-known “Croll’s Theory.” Taking as a basis Leverrier’s formulæ for computing the eccentricity of the earth’s orbit, he showed that at certain tremendous intervals the earth would recede from the sun in winter-time through a long series of years—sufficiently long enough to produce great and lasting changes in the temperature of the earth. One of these great cold periods must have occurred, according to these calculations, about two hundred thousand years ago, another eight hundred and fifty thousand years ago, and still another two million five hundred thousand years ago. The first mentioned would correspond with the quaternary epoch, the next with the tertiary, and the last with the secondary. Such intrepid scientists as are not afraid of the church’s anathema have lent a tacit assent to Croll’s astronomical theory, but none of them—poor souls!—have ever dared to question Leverrier’s table, and find out whether or not the basis of the whole calculation is correct. Assuming, however, that Croll’s lamented memory is safe from future scientific execration, we see that the tertiary epoch ought to have happened nearly a million years ago, and prehistoric man is therefore no “spring chicken.”

Through how many a long and weary cycle, laden with a heritage of ignorance and savagery, now strug-
gling for existence against the tempestuous furies of the elements, amid almost perpetual cold, and again battling for supremacy with his aforetime brutal mates, has man traveled and developed by imperceptible degrees, so much of knowledge as comes from experience! It is a dreary picture that is presented to the eye of the mind, and yet it must be inexorably true. Darwin's deductions cannot be resisted or explained away. Our progenitors were hairy, beast-like, and particularly unpleasant creatures, differing only from the anthropoid apes in knowing. They knew, first of all, how to manufacture weapons, and their principal occupation for a long time seems to have been fighting. In fact, the habit became so fixed that it has never since been eradicated; we see whole nations engaged in it at the present day. It is born with each birth. There is nothing so blissful in the career of the small boy as to be the spectator of a street fracas, and the newspapers will cheerfully bear witness that a prize-fight excites more general and intense public interest than any other event.

But during these million or more years it is not likely that evolution proceeded at a certain steady pace. Wherever individuals formed themselves into communities, there ensued a more rapid growth, due to a sharpening of wits by contact, and to the fact that all were enabled to take advantage of each other's experience. After communities came cities and nations. Do we know
where or when? Such definite knowledge is impossible, owing to the transitory nature of all finite things. All matter on earth—in the universe—must be in constant motion and subject to constant change. While we sleep and wake, the great law never stops. Mountain crumbles imperceptibly, yet surely; valley receives new sediment; river runs away; and new springs arise. A human lifetime perceives it not; a century counts but little; yet in the course of ages all is changed. The mountain now is valley; and where the river ran, high peaks rear skyward. Where once great nations lived, and cities flourished, with all their arts and knowledge and civilized improvements and discoveries, now rolls the deep blue wave of ocean. Yet some survive to renew their struggle with the wilderness, to forget the lore of their ancestors, to descend perhaps far down the scale, though never quite so low, perhaps, as the lowest previous stage. Elsewhere, everywhere, the same process goes on. Nations, like individuals, are born, and grow from youth to the full strength of manhood, and then decay and die. Evolution thus appears to move in cycles, and history repeats itself.

One of the most difficult problems with which anthropology has to wrestle is the fact that all the evidence of skulls points to the existence of higher types in the more distant past. Even so free a writer as Samuel Laing (Human Origins, p. 373) is perplexed to find that some five hundred thousand years prior to the men of
Spy and Neanderthal, the human race had existed in higher physical perfection and nearer to the existing type of modern man. He, in common with other scientists, cannot reconcile this apparent inconsistency. They think the tertiary man of half a million years ago was the first man, and should have evolved upward to the quaternary man of Neanderthal. Again, the trouble lies in their narrow chronology. Begin the human race far back of any present estimate—I will not say how far—and imagine how the cyclic law has borne him on and on, through growth of mind to higher planes of civilized existence, only to be carried downward on the cycle's curve, crushed out by cataclysm, and driven out by gradual displacement of the earth's surface, buried under mountains and the sea, frozen beneath the snows of successive glacial epochs, yet always a few surviving; and thus may be understood why the tertiary man could be a higher type than the later one. And we, again, upon the rising curve of another cycle, surpass in knowledge the ignorant quaternary man of Neanderthal.
A CYCLE OF ETERNITY.

DAY, YEAR, AGE.—PROCESS OF EVOLUTION.—HINDU AND CHALDÆAN CHRONOLOGY.—SYMBOL OF THE SERPENT.

Throughout all the ages of the past, the evolutionary process seems to have been exceedingly gradual. Nor has it by any means been steadily moving forward. There have been eras within the historical period when certain nations and races have lost ground, and even perished off from the face of the earth. Such familiar instances have compelled students generally to believe that the evolutionary movement is cyclic in its nature, and this hypothesis has never yet been overthrown. On the contrary, it is supported by countless analogies, the evidence of which is daily becoming more and more conclusive.

The most familiar illustration of the cycle as a measurer of time is found in the length of the day. Astronomy tells us that not only does the earth turn upon its own axis daily, but also describes an elliptical orbit around the sun once a year. Here, then, are two cycles already, to start with. But the sun himself is in
rapid motion; hence the earth never travels twice over exactly the same path. There is progress, as in Figure 3 of the frontispiece diagram. This succession of ellipses gradually forms a larger one. The sun himself, moving perhaps around another sun, carries us with him, and thus we have a series of smaller cycles going to make up a greater, as in Figure 4. Supposing, however, that the greater sun describes a cycle around a still greater central sun; in that case the movement would not be unlike that shown in the large frontispiece diagram, thus furnishing us with an analogy for the better understanding of time and space and the process of evolution.

The greatest obstacle to a right conception of evolution is the Hebrew chronological system, which we have inherited along with the Hebrew Bible. Scientific writers have, of course, long since abandoned the orthodox date of 4004 B.C. as marking the creation of the first man, but such is the ineradicable influence of early teaching that they continually strive to shorten the term of human existence on the globe, and pretend to treat with scorn the long periods of Hindu and Chaldæan chronology. A brief reference to these, however, may not be out of place. The Chaldæan priest Berosus, in his chronology, enumerates the following:
Antediluvian period: 432,000 years.
Reigns of Evechuos and Chomasbelos: 5,100 "
First Chaldaeans dynasty: 34,080 "
Latin dynasties: 1,758 "

472,938 "

Hindu chronology is based upon the revelations of the Manu Smriti, or Laws of Manu, wherein it is stated:

"68.—But hear now the brief descriptions of the duration of a night and a day of Brahma, and of the several ages of the world according to their order.

"69.—They declare that the Krita age consists of four thousand years of the gods; the twilight preceding it consists of as many hundreds, and the twilight following it of the same number.

"70.—In the other three ages, with their twilights preceding and following, the thousands and hundreds are diminished by one in each.

"71.—These twelve thousand years which thus have just been mentioned as the total of four human ages are called one age of the gods.

"72.—But know that the sum of one thousand ages of the gods makes one day of Brahma, and that his night has the same length.

"73.—Those only who know that the holy day of Brahma indeed ends after the completion of one thousand ages of the gods, and that his night lasts as long, are really men acquainted with the length of days and nights."

"79.—The before-mentioned age of the gods, or twelve thousand of their years, being multiplied by seventy-one, constitutes what is here named the period of a Manu, or a Mavantara."
“80.—The Manvantaras, the creations and destructions of the world, are numberless; sporting, as it were, Brahma repeats this again and again.” (Laws of Manu, Book I, 68.)

In the Vishnu Purana we find the same scheme of cosmogony. After stating the duration of the yugas, or ages, this ancient book adds:

“The interval called a Manvantara is equal to seventy-one times the number of years contained in the four yugas, with some additional years; this is the duration of Manu, which is equal to 852,000 divine years, or to 306,720,000 years of mortals, independent of the additional period. Fourteen times this number constitutes a day of Brahma. At the end of this day a dissolution of the Universe occurs.” (Vishnu Purana, Book I, Chap. III.)

The Hindu theory of the yugas is of immense antiquity. Back even of Manu and the Puranas the same idea may be traced, as frequent references to the Kalpa (Day of Brahma) are found in the Upanishads and Mahabharata. In fact, the latter devotes an entire chapter to an explanation of this subject. (Mahabharata, XII, 232.)

Let us now see how the figures are obtained upon which the calculations of the yugas are based. Following the directions as given in Manu, we have the table given herewith:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yuga</th>
<th>Divine Years</th>
<th>Sandhya (twilight)</th>
<th>Sandhyamsa (dusk)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Krita Yuga</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treta Yuga</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwapara Yuga</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kali Yuga</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total divine years: 12,000

According to Brahmanical computation, a year of men is equal to a day of the gods; hence to convert the preceding figures into mortal years we multiply by 360. (Owing to a slower movement of the earth around the sun, the year at present lasts a little more than 365 days, but we are now dealing with almost inconceivable antiquity.) Thus:

\[
\begin{align*}
4,800 \times 360 &= 1,728,000 \text{ years of the Krita age} \\
3,600 \times 360 &= 1,296,000 \text{ " " " Treta "} \\
2,400 \times 360 &= 864,000 \text{ " " " Dwapara age} \\
1,200 \times 360 &= 432,000 \text{ " " " Kali age} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Total 4,320,000 years.
The sum of the four ages constitutes a Mahayuga or di­vine age, and seventy-one of those ages constitutes a Manvantara, and there are fourteen of these Manvantaras in a day of Brahma.

While these figures seem appalling to persons who have been educated on a Biblical chronology, they be­come less and less impossible to the unprejudiced stu­dent in the light of recent scientific discoveries. By a day of Brahma is meant an entire period of evolution, in­cluding not only our world, but the whole solar system. It is interesting to note in this connection that the Chaldæan priest Berosus employs in his chronological table the identical figures which the Hindus use to ex­press the length of the Kali Yuga, thus indicating that he must have had some knowledge of the Hindu system. Perhaps in his day, which was in the third century B.C., the masses were, like those in our own time, not accus­tomened to big figures, and so he dared mention only the minor Yuga in his public history. It was dangerous then, as it has been in all ages, and as it is now, to dis­close too much esoteric knowledge.

While the periods of Hindu chronology need not be accepted absolutely, there is contained in them ample food for reflection, and in their tremendous widening of the horizon of time one may be able to gather a better idea of the methods of nature in carrying out the law of evolution.

It will be observed that the larger diagram is similar
to the smaller ones, and, like them, has its periphery carried out beyond the circle into space, thus indicating continuity, and the probability of preceding and succeeding periods of evolution. In itself, however, it represents a cycle of eternity. That this idea was known among the ancients is proven by their symbol of a serpent with its tail in its mouth. This represented to them eternity. Had they thought, as moderns do, that one eternity comprises all of time, they would have chosen simply a complete circle. The break caused by the serpent's head and tail shows that they lifted their comprehension up to the immense conception of many eternities.
ORIGIN OF RELIGIONS.

THE RIVERS OF LIFE.—FINITENESS OF THE MIND.—
CONCEPTION OF THE DEITY.—RELIGION AND
CLIMATE.

The rivers of Life take their rise in far-off, shadowy realms. They have no definite point of beginning. That one primeval source from which the many races of humanity, with their countless forms of speech and their innumerable religious faiths, have descended—where in the seemingly endless vistas of the past can it be found? The day, the year, the century, or even the millennium when the religious instinct first developed in mankind, can never be definitely fixed, any more than can be located the geographical spot where human life began. All the efforts of pseudo-scientific and religious enthusiasts to determine the birthplace of the human race are absurdly futile, because they fail to take into consideration the enormous lapse of time since the human race came into being, and the consequent tremendous changes of land and water surface upon the face of the globe. Most of these investigators fall into the palpable error of assuming that the continents and rivers
and mountains and oceans of the world have always existed exactly, or almost exactly, as they are at present. Hence they write lengthy and seemingly learned dissertations to show that mankind originated in Central Asia, or that the so-called Garden of Eden was located in the valley of the Euphrates. If these well-meaning writers could only open their eyes to the true operations of nature and natural forces, they would perceive that the world is subject to a gradual yet a thorough and resistless law of change—evolutionary change—that never for a moment does the earth stand still or retain the same aspect. Looked at in this light, we can see how puerile are the efforts of modern scientists to locate the origins of humanity in any of our now known countries. If we were to look anywhere for the birthplace of mankind, it must be upon some now unknown submerged continent that formed a part of our land-surface thousands or millions of years ago.

If it is difficult for the mind to comprehend the sweeping metamorphoses of physical geography, how much more difficult, nay, even impossible, is it for the brain to unravel the intricacies of time? The tremendous distances of the fixed stars can never be grasped by the finite mind. The tape-line of logarithms may reach out and measure the latitudes and longitudes of certain stars, and may estimate that a certain number of millions or billions of miles exist between them, but these figures fall meaningless upon our ears. It is
claimed by mathematicians, and doubtless with a great deal of reason, that few persons can actually understand or rightly estimate the value of a number greater than one million; that all beyond and more than that the ordinary mind only acquiesces in, but does not enter into or understand. And so, just as the enormous distances in space, though carefully and accurately calculated, can never be really grasped by the finite mind, so the distance in time of the beginnings of human life on this planet may be astronomically estimated, but can never be fully comprehended. This defect is one of the most certain proofs of the finiteness of the mental faculty. Although brain force differs in different individuals as widely as the poles, and each separate mind has a greater or less capacity, varying with each, and expressing every degree and shade of intelligence from the grunt of the savage to the rhapsody of the poet; still, each mind has its absolute limitations. There is a certain definite point beyond which it cannot perceive or find expression.

This finiteness of the mind is illustrated, not only in its inability to enter into time or space, but also in its inadequacy to rise to the loftiest spiritual concepts. The idea of the Deity is a familiar instance. No one can conceive of a First Cause of the universe in any way except as one possessing attributes of form, reason, will. The human imagination is so chained that it cannot figure forth anything that it has not seen, except as
comparing it to something that has already come within the scope of its experience. Hence, as man himself is the highest development of animal life, he is compelled to picture God as of the same order; in other words, all such efforts of the mind must result in an anthropomorphic conception. This is especially true in Christian nations where materialistic ideas are rampant, and where anthropomorphism is openly taught and encouraged; yet even in Oriental lands, among the profound metaphysical thinkers of India, the same rule prevails. There is no system of religious philosophy at once so grand and so logical as the Vedanta. It commands the respect of even the materialistic philosophers of Europe. But the Vedanta, as its first word, admits the inability of the finite mind to comprehend Brahman, the Infinite Cause; Brahman, the sexless, without attributes; Brahman, the incomprehensible. Hence the mind, under the influence of Avidya, Ignorance, can only postulate Brahma, the male, the head of the Hindu Trinity, the active, creative force. Yet even this conception is too abstruse for ordinary minds; and so Iswara, Lord, is set up for worship, having attributes, dwelling in heaven, and taking active interest in the affairs of mankind.

It is necessary for us to fully realize these limitations of the mind in order to gain a fair estimate of the actual growth of the religious idea since the beginnings of the human race. Individuals here and there may by a long and painful process of self-development lift themselves
so far above the rest as to emancipate their minds from the fetters of materiality, and thus see clearly what others can only in their highest wisdom see through a glass darkly; but they are the exceptions. Evolution does not imply constant mental, moral, and spiritual elevation. It is a round of experience, subdivided into innumerable smaller cycles. Just as a person is born on earth, passes through infancy, youth, manhood, old age, decay, and death, so great ethnic races have their rise and fall, as witness in these days the triumph of the Caucasian, the dying throes of the Red, the decadence of the Yellow race. We, too, the great White race, shall some day perish off from the face of the earth. Yet the law of evolution inexorably prevails through all these transformations of land and sea, of mountain and river, of nation and race. There must have been a beginning; there will be an end. The whole human race, the collective humanity upon this globe, as well as upon the other planets, came some time into existence, and shall sometime pass out of existence. The planetary system itself was born, and must surely die; yet between its birth and death there lies eternity.

Having thus endeavored, however feebly, to widen the boundaries of our thought, to extend the horizon of our mental vision, though fully conscious of the limitations of the mind, let us consider some of the conditions under which the religious idea would naturally spring up and take root in the early stages of human development.
I.—Entire ignorance implies entire innocence. It is absolutely certain that just as mankind must have had a definite beginning, so it must have passed through a stage of complete ignorance regarding the operations of nature, and a corresponding degree of innocence. The only true measure of crime is motive, not result; and although civilization has set up an artificial standard of laws to which all, though differently constituted and situated, have to yield implicit obedience, yet the higher law recognizes and discriminates. Many wrongs would doubtless be inflicted ignorantly in a crude state of society, the authors of which must be held innocent of evil intent, just as in the lower animal kingdom there is continual war and massacre without a corresponding degree of criminal responsibility. These animals are protected from the effects of their cruelty by their own ignorance. Yet as man grows in years and experience, he learns the lesson of life by degrees, and so gradually assumes responsibility for his acts. His first impression would probably be apprehensive lest he be punished for his deeds. And here we may find the first faint glimmerings of the religious idea.

II.—Religion in the beginning must be supernatural. The usual scientific view is that men were originally even more abominably degraded than the lowest of the Hottentots of to-day. This is probably true, as they knew no better. These men were still ignorant of the simplest laws of nature. They had not yet learned that the
thunder and lightning, the sun and the moon, the blue sky and the black clouds, the fathomless ocean and the snow-capped mountains, were all only so many expressions of natural law. To them everything was supernatural. Hence, they pictured the sun-god, and personified all these other phenomena, under fanciful names. In their ignorance they worshiped these natural forms, invoked their aid, and prayed to be protected from their vengeance. Here, then, we reach the second stage in religious development.

III.—Worship became complex and distorted. Men, indeed, of all ages make their own gods. It is the imagination that images. The average mentality of a nation is shown by the quality of its religion; yet even this is not a fixed factor, but is constantly changing, though sometimes, it seems, almost imperceptibly. When the first-race men came to understand some of the simpler phenomena of nature, or at least learn to divest them of their supernatural appearance, it is probable that they became dissatisfied with them as objects of worship. Having little reasoning power, and seeking something nearer, more tangible, grosser, yet still something to be invested with a religious character, they drifted into ancestral worship, serpent worship, tree-worship, sex worship, and other quasi-religious forms and vagaries. The Taoism of China, which is strictly a religion of nature, long antedated the artificial code of Confucius, just as the worship of the Rig Veda divini-
ties in India preceded the artificial adoration of Vishnu and Siva. Thus the increase of knowledge brought complexity into the religious affairs of mankind, but there also ensued a general lowering of ideals. A growing comprehension of the relations of life only served to stimulate the lower nature in the soul of man without a corresponding increase in the desire to do good. The gods under such circumstances could not help but deteriorate, as was shown painfully in the later Kali worship of India, and the dog, cat, ibis, hawk, and other animal worship of Egypt.

One feature in the philosophy of religion may be appropriately touched upon in this connection. There is a popular fallacy to the effect that the religions of the world have molded the character of the people, have guided the course of nations, and have thus figured as chief factors in producing civilization, wherever and whenever developed. This idea has been industriously propagated by the priesthood, and even to-day it is common to hear pulpit orators claim all the blessings of European and American civilization as directly due to the influence of religion. Yet a very little reflection and investigation must show that our civilization, such as it is, has been attained in spite of the church,—not by its aid. Even now, though grudgingly forced to admit the gradual achievements of science, the orthodox church, Catholic and Protestant alike, frowns upon individual investigation, places revelation above reason,
and so in every way possible endeavors to clog the wheels of progress. In the light of these facts it is idle and presumptuous to claim that our civilization is due to our religion. The truth is that evolution is affected by a variety of influences, one of the most important being climatic or geographical. Some of these causes lie hidden deep in the national characteristics. Religion is only one out of many factors. Its influence is only partial. Thus we find in ancient India a noble religious ideal, which, however, did not prevent the people from falling into weakness, and gross idolatry and ignorance, and slavery to hereditary forms. Much of this deterioration has been due, doubtless, to an enervating climate, and much to an unfortunate political history. In this growth and decay of nations, therefore, let us assign religion to its proper place as only one of a number of evolutionary causes. Let us remember, again, that men make their own gods; it is not the gods who make men, and interfere with the affairs of mankind. It is the civilization, or state of public intelligence, which determines the religion of a people, and not the religion which makes the civilization.

There is nowadays a re-awakened interest in archaeology. Scientific explorers have delved among the ruins of Babylon and have uncovered countless tablets of clay, on which are ineffaceably stamped religious invocations, historical fragments, and even commercial records, dating back three or four thousand years before Christ.
And in Egypt the monumental inscriptions have been traced back to fully as distant an age. Yet we find at that seemingly remote epoch a high degree of civilization, populous cities, vast wealth, a great advance in science, and a religion based upon astronomical allegory. Such a state of society could not exist in the childhood of the human race. Mankind must have already passed through the stages of infancy and youth, and so far as the Chaldæan and Egyptian nations were concerned, had doubtless passed its prime and was already traveling the downward path of old age and decrepitude. There was an element of complexity in the religious beliefs of these nations which could only have been gradually developed. Back, far back, of zodiacal and planetary divinities grew up the worship of tangible objects of nature. The hymns of the Rig Veda voice the earlier innocent yearnings of humanity for a higher and nobler life. But their inspiration was soon overshadowed by more material images. In the great cycle of evolution man was already far on the descending scale. He forsook the worship of the sky, the cloud, the rain, the wind, the fire, for something grosser, easier to comprehend, and appealing to the lower animal principles. Thus arose the tree and serpent worship of the early races.

And now the question may be asked: What is the meaning of this universal law of development? It does not proceed by chance, nor can its operations be guided
by the hand of an anthropomorphic deity. It is a law which acts as impartially and inexorably as the law of cause and effect. We know not its ramifications, nor can we predict its immediate results. This much we do know, that the cycles of experience must be passed through. All the phenomena of matter are subject to continual transformation. Only the monad remains—the same yet not the same. Experience leaves a certain added knowledge, the accumulations of instinct and heredity, the balance carried over from the last life's page to the new life's page. The soul does not mount up by certain and regular steps to perfection. It is an interminable, weary, winding, devious road, up hill and down, across desert and prairie, past wilderness and civilization, over mountain and plain, through light and darkness. The soul that is latent in the stone awakes in man, and, growing slowly through the dim ages, must rise from the finite to a comprehension of the universal principle that exists in every animate and inanimate thing,—that which not only makes the law, but is the law itself,—that which the mind has in all ages striven to understand and explain, and has as yet invariably failed to put into intelligible speech,—the Brahman of the Hindus, the Tao of the Chinese, the unknown God of the Greeks. These names are but feeble expressions of the religious ideal. And the rivers of life in their meanderings down through the dim centuries give us here and there faint glimpses of the yearnings of the human soul towards the Infinite.
They show us the weaknesses of human nature, the struggles and the aspirations, the failures and the triumphs, the hoisting of the banners of light, and the dragging of those bright ideals in the dust of many a dark age. Straining our gaze into the depths of the past, we can perchance mark how these streams descended like glittering threads from the furthest regions of Time and Space, gradually and irregularly gliding through the mountain chasms and across the level plains, sometime merging in one another, and anon flowing far asunder, yet never ending, but always going on. The happy fields of summer tempt them in vain to stay; the frowning wildnesses but make them haste. Under changing sky, through storm and shine, they glide. And now we can hear the murmur of the waters rippling over the shallows and between the pebbly beaches, and the sound has a deeply mystical meaning. It is the voice of the Universal Spirit, manifest in the operations of nature, and it cannot be interpreted in words. All that the human soul can do is to listen in reverent silence and endeavor, so far as lies in its power, to intuitively understand what the weak organ of the brain fails utterly to translate into human thought and human expression.
THE MAGIC OF NATURE.

HISTORICAL ASPECT OF OCCULTISM.—ETYMOLOGY OF MAGIC.—THE DARK AGES IN EUROPE.—VOLTAIRE'S MATERIALISM.—SCIENCE AND OCCULTISM.

"To him who in the love of nature holds Communion with her visible forms she speaks A varied language."

The attitude of the literary and religious world is not so distinctly hostile towards occultism as it was twenty years ago. Magazine writers now condescend to discuss seriously the phenomena which they were formerly wont to dismiss as unworthy of consideration. Nor is it any longer necessarily a cause for social ostracism if a person undertakes to investigate the laws of nature. By these indications can we mark the point where the pendulum of public sentiment pauses in its swing between the two extremes of supernaturalism and materialism, drawn in one direction by the religious instinct, and anon in the other direction by scientific doubt and skepticism. Just how, in the gradual development of human thought and action, magic may have figured
from time to time and from age to age, now looming up into astounding importance, and again fading into almost nothing, is an interesting and instructive study. The historical aspect of this subject has been thoroughly treated by Ennemoser, Thomas Wright, P. Christian, Eliphaz Levi, R. A. Vaughan, William Howitt, and others of less note, and it may truthfully be said that no library for general reading nowadays is complete without the works of at least one of these authors. Yet at the same time it should also be stated that all histories of magic are somewhat misleading, in that they devote themselves to what may be termed the external forms and accompaniments of occultism, including the myths and marvelous tales of all nations and the superstitions and impostures of all ages. Thus, by giving prominence to narrative, and by failing to distinguish between that which is true and that which is false, do they consciously or unconsciously misrepresent what they ought to elucidate, and so prevent the reading public from having an adequate idea as to its real scope and meaning.

It was the fashion some hundreds of years ago to denounce the study of nature as a trick of Satan to capture the souls of the unwary. The early Christian church was especially violent in this respect. Being founded on supernaturalism, the church could not deny the occult. She took, therefore, the only course possible for her in the matter, by drawing a distinction between phenomena produced within the church and
phenomena wrought outside. To one class she applied the name of miracle; to the other, that of diabolism. There was no particular reason why one should be good and the other bad, but reason was not much of a requisite for anybody in those days. In fact, the world had grown tired of intellectualism, as taught by the Greek philosophers, and was only too glad to have a change. Christianity was founded entirely upon faith. Men were told that all that was necessary for them to obtain salvation was to cast their burdens upon the Lord. They were only to believe in Him in order to reach heaven. This simple formula did away at once with the necessity for intellectual culture. Human knowledge, human investigation, were, therefore, futile. Magic, when pursued outside of the church, was severely denounced, because its tendency was in the line of independent research. The first exponents of Christianity were illiterate Jews. They adopted the novel theory of exalting ignorance, at first by implication, then growing bolder with success. Spiritual growth, they claimed, was not dependent upon the intellect, and, in fact, the inner nature could develop better without being loaded down by mere book-knowledge. This theory was eagerly seized upon by the church when it became an organized religious body, and was turned into a powerful weapon of offense and defense. That which was originally nothing worse than a half truth became the corner-stone for a gigantic system of error. Salvation was freely
promised him who accepted without question the dogmas of the priests; he who hesitated, or argued, or even interrogated, was lost. Knowledge was underrated; faith was extolled. Now, it is a well-known fact that wherever learning is spread abroad, there the public voice becomes more vigorous and human action more independent. Fully realizing this axiom, the early Christian church adopted the shrewd policy of discouraging all kinds of education in order that the authority of the church might never be questioned. In this conspiracy against humanity she was for a long term of years successful. Men's minds were placed in bondage, and universal ignorance prevailed in Europe. Never before was the church so powerful or the priests so overbearing. It may truly be said that Romanism retarded the progress of the world a thousand years. Yet, though kept back and hindered, mankind eventually yielded to the higher law of development. The gloom of ignorance could not settle down permanently upon Christendom, owing to the grand law of evolution, one of the eternal verities of occultism, which wrought dimly and imperceptibly, but steadily and surely, and was stronger than all the hierarchies of men. A gradual change took place, is yet taking place, and will always take place in the minds of the people, just so fast as the development of this world and of this solar system justifies it.

That the feeble spark of occultism was not entirely quenched during the Dark Ages was not the fault of the
priesthood. The latter jealously guarded every avenue by which learning might reach the people, and so perverted the public intellect that hardly anybody had correct views even upon the commonest things. Men were so steeped in illusions that they were unable to distinguish between imposture and wisdom. Hence, they were a prey to all kinds of fraudulent devices. Cunning rogues, playing upon the superstitious fears and beliefs of the masses, gained an easy livelihood by claiming occult powers. It is useless to add that they sought the protection and sanction of the church by pretending to be exceedingly orthodox and devout. Supernaturalism under these circumstances spread rapidly, like a noxious weed. It wore the garb of occultism, but it was a base imitation. All kinds of extravagances were indulged in under the cloak of pious magic. Belief in supernatural powers became so widespread finally as to produce a sort of general insanity. This era of distorted public sentiment finally culminated in the witchcraft trials of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In these the Protestant church took a leading part. She had adopted the dogma that all magic was diabolic, while the Catholic church still laid claim to miraculous deeds when done by authority of the priests. Both organizations, however, did not hesitate to charge all the impostures, the crimes, and the alleged sorceries upon occultism. So soon, therefore, as the witchcraft epidemic broke out, all occult things were declared to be the works of the devil,
and Christians were exhorted to avoid them as the most grievous sins. Men of brilliant intellect were persuaded that the devil was actually a fantastic personage with horns, hoofs, and a tail. There can always be found men of brilliant intellect who are the veriest apes in religious matters. We are apt to make the mistake of supposing that excellence in a particular line of thought or action implies capacity in all other directions, when as a matter of fact the contrary is oftener the case. And very logically is it so, when we come to consider it, because he who bends his mind so persistently in one channel as to achieve marked distinction therein, cannot, as a rule, have either the time or inclination for careful study in other paths. Hence, the views of a distinguished statesman on the problems of life and death are not entitled to any more weight than are the opinions of thousands of educated men in a more obscure station. There is no reason, therefore, why the religious conclusions of Sir Isaac Newton, William E. Gladstone, Daniel Webster, and Abraham Lincoln should be considered of special importance.

There is still a good deal of misunderstanding as to the meaning of the word “occultism.” Primarily, of course, it signifies that which is hidden; but it refers more particularly to those operations of nature which are unexplained, though perhaps not unexplainable. The growth of a tree, of a blade of grass, the birth and death of animals, the workings of the human mind, are occult.
They are occult, because they are not understood. The laws under which they act are unknown. So, too, all that pertains to the great hereafter, the passage of the soul through the gate of death into another plane of consciousness, is occult.

Then, there is that greatly slandered word, magic. For ages it has been synonymous in men's minds with wickedness, craft, diabolism, and everything evil. The church is again responsible for this false view of what in reality is one of the noblest sciences. The very word magic bears within itself proofs of its high origin. The Latin "magus," Greek "magos," a magician, gives us all those other words that are so indicative of authority, wisdom, superiority. Thus we have magnitude, magnificent, magniloquent, to express greatness in position, in action, and in speech. With the termination slightly changed, the same word becomes majesty, implying dominion; and again we have "magistrate," anything that is magisterial, which again has been simplified into "master," and finally by the process of word-evolution has become plain "mister." But the Latin is only a transmitter of words. We can easily follow up the historical development of this root until we reach the Zend, where we find it doing duty as a name for the whole priestly caste. The "magi" were renowned all over the world for their wisdom and skill in occultism, and no doubt our word "magic" is mostly indebted to that source for its present existence and meaning. Yet
we need not pause even here, for back of the Zend "mag" looms up the Sanskrit "maha," signifying "great."

Why, then, it may naturally be asked, has magic fallen from its high estate, which it held in ancient times? Why is it apparently deserted by the good and great among moderns? why supposed to be given over to charlatans and low impostors? In answer I may say that, owing to the weakness of human nature, mankind generally rejects truth, and is too often seeking to perpetuate error. Thus we are carried from one extreme of opinion to another, from the follies of supernaturalism to the inadequate restrictions of materialism. When Voltaire set the fashion of sneering at everything miraculous and religious, he dealt a mortal blow to the church. It was indeed time to call a halt on supernatural religion. He succeeded in divorcing religion and science. But the reaction carried men to the other alternative. Modern science became strictly materialistic. Voltaire’s influence has been felt ever since in the cultivated world, and occultism has been made the subject of gibes unnumbered, but seldom of serious investigation. How strange that mankind should thus fly from one extreme to the other, from implicit faith in a revealed religion to absolute denial of any spiritual or psychological force, each position being equally unsatisfactory! But has it not always been so, at least within the historic period? When has the *vox populi* ever been on the side of truth, thus justifying its claim to be the voice of God?
It must be evident to even the superficial thinker that our abnormally rapid advance in the mechanical arts has not as yet been accompanied by equal progress in other directions. We are still immersed in errors in nearly all the fields of human thought. Attempting to measure the spiritual by the physical, we fall into the most egregious blunders. The scientific writers of the present day who make the greatest pretensions, and who are regarded as the highest authorities in this department of literature, are wasting their ink in attempting to weigh the human soul. They depict man as a certain quantity of bone, flesh, and muscle, and his powers of mind as a mere development of his physical consciousness. They admit nothing, except what can be perceived through the five senses. Their metaphysics is thus a misnomer; it is really nothing but physics applied to the operations of the mind. It doubtless secures great exactness, but its scope is necessarily limited. The writers of the materialistic school are like men in a back yard surrounded by a high fence, and devoting themselves to a careful, industrious, and accurate account of the premises, under the mistaken notion that they are describing the universe. As far as they go, it is all right; but their horizon is limited by the fence. Of the world beyond they take no notice; in fact, they deny that there is any world outside of their little yard.

If one sincerely desires to attain truth; if one, not blinded by religious or race prejudice, follows persist-
ently the pursuit of metaphysics, he must eventually come into the broad domain of Hindu thought. All the teaching of the Western schools fades into insignificance when compared therewith. Not that the thought is better expressed; it is not. The Vedantic writers are mystical, cloudy, uselessly verbose, monotonous, given to frequent repetitions, and without the slightest attempt at verbal decoration. In fact, to the Western mind they are decidedly unattractive and often incomprehensible. Their literary style is as unfamiliar to us as are the Hindu characteristics in actual life. Yet, after all is said, the fact remains that Indian philosophy soars unspeakably higher than any other, and the reason is that it is based upon the naked truth. It describes the real, while we in our ignorance are constantly following the apparent. It unerringly points out the illusions of life; we stupidly imagine them to be realities.

In these remarks I aim only to clear away the ground for a right understanding of the province of occultism. In the study of nature's forces there is room for man to expend the highest forms of mental energy, and if in his pursuit of knowledge in this direction he can explain even one little law or one phenomenon, then is all his time and labor well spent. The assertion is often made that all these occult laws are inexplicable, and therefore, any investigation of them is useless; yet once in a while somebody does discover, accidentally or otherwise, the rules under which certain operations of nature take
place, thus showing that such knowledge may be acquired. And what grander field of inquiry is presented to us in the whole range of our mind's vision?

Yet how little attention is paid to natural form by the majority of people! A man or a woman might stand for a long time before a landscape-painting lost in admiration, but those same persons would hardly notice the actual scenery depicted by the artist if passing through that part of the country, unless, indeed, their attention was particularly called to its beauty. Yet there is no painting that can equal the original. The grandest works of art are at best but poor imitations of nature. It is a pleasure to record that this truth is being gradually found out by an increasing number of thoughtful people, or at least it may be said that a dim perception of it is entering into the general intelligence. There is every year a somewhat greater demand for the natural; even art, in order to be popular, sooner or later must come to be less artificial. The conventional is no longer altogether fashionable. In other words, some of our once-cherished illusions are being dispelled, and we are beginning to try, at any rate, to see things as they are, rather than as they seem. It is the province of occultism to assist in this transformation in the world of thought by constantly directing men's minds from the superficial to the vital, by unmasking the follies of the day or of the age, and by showing the difference between what is temporal and what is eternal.
Does this sound like lofty talk without any real basis? Some may think so at first, and question the right of any person to place magic on so high a pedestal. Those objectors have still a limited idea of the scope of occultism. They believe the whole system is imaginary or fraudulent, and dismiss it from their minds as unworthy of further consideration. Yet it is easy to show that any such conception of occultism is erroneous. All forms of divination, although usually classed among the occult sciences, have really no place there, being merely different ways of appealing to chance, and are no more occult than is the shaking of a dice-box. By the Greeks and Romans they were more or less practiced, especially among the lower classes, but no hierophant ever appealed to these trivial games. In regard to the theory of apparitions, it may be said that true occultism does not waste any time in attempting to evoke spirits; on the contrary, it is by occultism alone that these phenomena are classified and duly explained as taking place under definite natural law.

There is only one science of occultism, and that is the study of nature, either upon the psychic plane or upon the plane of matter. And taken in the latter sense, it is indeed scientific. It teaches us how to arrange and classify the different manifestations in the natural world. By its aid, and by its aid only, can we arrive at any knowledge of the laws governing the universe. All education, such as is derived from text-books, is necessarily
empirical. It consists in the statement of facts as they appear to exist, but the reasons underlying those facts are left out. And why? Simply because the reasons are unknown. Modern science bluntly admits that it knows nothing of natural causes; it can only state that under certain conditions certain phenomena take place.

Now, it should be understood at the outset that occultism does not claim to explain at once the original causes of action. What it does, however, is to encourage speculation in the world of thought. It erects a pure standard of truth by which to gauge the processes of nature. It seeks to destroy the illusions which so surround and confuse us, thus making our minds more capable of beholding things in their real aspect. It assumes at the beginning that all events and all conditions are natural. With one stroke it demolishes all the miracles of the Koran, the Puranas, and the Bible. Yet it re-establishes some of them by pointing out how, under certain conditions, they might have been produced in accordance with natural law. It says that no doubt many of the miraculous deeds recorded were merely exaggerated tales; but it also adds that many others were possible. Regarding this, Mr. William Howitt, in his translation of the History of Magic, says:

"As most, if not all, unusual phenomena belong to the realm of magic, and are found, not only among Christians, but also among the heathen, they must follow
a general law, and such uncommon natural phenomena can be no miracles. Even to the agency of a strange objective spirit-world is attributed much which certainly belongs to the subjective fancy of man. Religious visions and ecstasies are related to those of magnetism, and in their principles differ perhaps only in the rarest instances. From physical, pathological conditions, from the exaggerated ascetic and ecstasy-reaching exercises, from subjective, illusory chimeras, many saints have obviously not been free, and the separation of the natural-sensuous and the supernatural-divine leads us into a field where doubts and contentions about miracles begin, where it can no longer be decided how much is natural phenomena and how much the agency of divine grace, if one permits supernatural influence to outbid the natural powers. For man possesses a completely incomprehensible, positive, innate (generally latent) vital power, which, in proportion to its power of extension, pervades the immeasurable. Nature rests on such an inborn basis and order that so her most entangled and abnormal effects proceed rather from her own regularity than are the consequence of supernatural spiritual powers.”

Science is always conservative, while occultism, on the other hand, is forever reaching forward. It is the pioneer of the world’s intelligence. It boldly grapples with the most profound secrets, and, if it does not reveal them entirely, it never fails to throw some light upon what would otherwise be forever hidden or misappreh-
hended. Science denies, as a rule, the existence of phenomenal powers of the mind, and treats, or has treated until recently, clairvoyance, thought-transference, and apparitions as fairy-tales, to be read for amusement only. In fact, psychology from a scientific standpoint is the science of the soul with the soul left out. Some stir, it is true, has been made in the world of modern science by the hypnotic experiments that have been conducted in the Paris hospitals; but over a century has elapsed since Mesmer rediscovered the ancient occult principle of animal magnetism, and even now, after a century of experience, scientific men are straining every nerve to prove that the influence of mind upon mind and of mind upon matter is purely subjective; in other words, that the results are delusions of the person thus influenced or influencing, instead of being tangible and objective in their character.

It is the peculiar province of occultism to explain these laws of mind and these properties of the human soul. Or, rather, these phenomena lie peculiarly within the domain of occultism, and are thus essentially interesting to the student of magic. The scientist may sniff at them with suspicion, but the occultist approaches them with pleasure and enthusiasm. The latter realizes what a vast field for inquiry lies before him, what opportunity for discovery. He is aware that out of the great number of nature's laws only a few have thus far been ascertained. No one, of course, can tell or even form a just estimate
as to the relative number of known and unknown laws under which nature's operations take place. Simply to illustrate the matter, and not by any means pretending to set a limit of nature's courses, one might say that the relative number of known laws to those unknown is as one to a million, which is, of course, only another way of saying that the known number is small and the unknown large. But it emphasizes the fact that the field of material science, as explored thus far, is exceedingly limited in comparison with that of psychological science or occultism. And this is frankly acknowledged by more than one scientist. Professor Friedrich Jodl, of the University of Prague, says in a recent letter:

"I am convinced that many things which are unknown to-day and appear as unknowable will be known and knowable in a thousand years. But I doubt whether the total mass of the unknowable has been noticeably diminished. For the unknowable is infinite, and the infinite if divided by any finite number, can never produce a finite number. Every solved problem contains new and greater problems."

Where, then, are we to look for the future additions to the store of human knowledge? Is it to science, employing the word in its ordinary sense, which jealously guards the attainments of the past and which constantly sneers at and denies all new ideas? Yes, but not until long after those ideas have been explored by occultism.
The boldness of the student of magic is like that of Columbus, who sailed away from the familiar world into the vast unknown. Nor is every such investigator rewarded with success in his researches. Many fail through misdirected effort. In some cases the physical structure of the brain is unequal to the wear and tear to which it is subjected. Frequently the occultist succumbs to the temptations of the flesh, or he grows ambitious and seeks to employ his knowledge for personal ends. Then his usefulness is destroyed, and his talisman is lost. Then is his little bark tossed upon the sea of trouble. Like the Genoese navigator, he is surrounded by all sorts of difficulties and dangers; but unlike that hardy mariner, he generally is unable to overcome them. The skies lower, the storm-wind comes rushing on, the elements combine against him. He struggles, but uselessly, in the grasp of Fate. His mind cannot cope with the natural forces which he has himself awaked into fury. Wrecked by the tempest, he is carried on to his destruction.

This is the dark side of the picture. The other is more agreeable. He who follows truth for its own sake and is not led from his course by those illusions of life which he too plainly sees, will come to a fuller knowledge and will live a nobler life. He may penetrate far into the mysteries of nature and uncover laws that have been regarded as arcane. Then he, perhaps in after ages, may be quoted as one of the leaders of science, and his discoveries will be incorporated into the body of accepted
natural facts. He may be ignored or persecuted in life, but after death, sooner or later, he will be glorified. "So runs the world away." The occultism of to-day becomes the science of to-morrow.
ILLUSION.

IGNORANCE THE CAUSE.—CULTURE AND CONVENTIONALITY.—PRETENTIOUS AGENCIES.—SOME COMMON ILLUSIONS.—THE ROPE AND THE SNAKE.

It is only the unreflecting who believe that life is what it appears to be, that material conditions upon this earth are permanent, and that all phenomena can be judged by the evidence of the physical senses. A child, watching the clouds as they fly over the moon, immediately conceives that the moon herself is speeding through the clouds; and many an older person, seated in a motionless railroad car, and seeing another train passing, imagines that his own car is moving, and that the other one is at rest. These are among the simplest forms of illusion—that veil with which Isis, great Mother Nature, is enthralled, and which, according to the Hermetic treatises, no mortal hath ever lifted. Yet here and there some little corner has been raised in times past; for instance, people no longer retain the false impression of sunrise and sunset produced by the revolution of the earth upon its axis. Ignorance being the cause of illu-
sion, when ignorance of any one phenomenon is removed, the illusion vanishes, and the true condition appears.

How apt we are to judge a person's character or ability by the position in life which he occupies, forgetting that worldly rank and place are too frequently dependent upon the accident of birth or circumstance! This man is a great emperor, that woman a great queen, according to popular notion. In reality he is a poor stick of a man, she a weak manner of woman. The fairy castle of the millionaire seems to be dedicated to all that is good and beautiful, but alas! it too often holds an ignorant, base, and unscrupulous tenant.

The majority of the unreflecting go through life with the most superficial knowledge, neither looking nor caring to look beneath the surface. To investigate causes, to analyze effects, to determine the exact relations of one object with another, requires much study, and they do not care for study. The man of to-day who fancies himself cultured is frequently one whose reading, after leaving college, is confined to newspapers and story-books, with an occasional dip into one of the popular magazines. He discusses the latest novel and the latest picture and the latest play at the theater, and belongs to a literary society, composed of strictly fashionable people, who are addressed on some conventional theme by a literary bore with several capital letters affixed to his name. Even this plane of culture is prob-
ably above the average. Few modern men of business read much of anything except the daily papers. Women, encouraged and inspired by their new-found liberty, are doing better work and making greater progress in the quest of reality.

Now and then some persons possessed of an unnatural degree of inquisitiveness, yet dreading the unconventional, make violent attempts to lift the veil of Isis, to peer through the obscurities of illusion, to find out something about the mysteries of life and what is going on in the vast laboratory of nature. These are generally so blinded by preconceived notions and religious superstitions that their efforts are in vain. Then they revile with exceeding bitterness anybody whom they suspect to be more successful.

It is sad, indeed, that human nature remains so indifferent in matters of highest welfare. It is sad that there should be so much of superficiality and so little of honest endeavor. But the saddest of all is that those agencies which should do the most towards the enlightenment of humanity, whose opportunities are the greatest, and whose pretensions are the loudest—those are the very ones continually engaged in throwing dust in the eyes of the people, and in perpetuating the illusions by which we are surrounded. And among those agencies must be included at least three-fourths of the poetry and nine-tenths of the fiction that has been produced during the historic period.
One of the most common illusions—passing over those of wealth and fame, which are self-evident—is that of believing one's self to have deliberately adopted certain religious or sectarian doctrines. As a matter of fact, religion is mostly a question of geography; sect a question of kindred. It is a curious reflection, yet true, that if any or all of us had happened to have been born in some distant quarter of the globe, or if our circumstances of life had been different, our religious belief would probably have been far from that which we hold at present. For instance, had this American been a native of Constantinople, he would doubtless have been to-day a most devout Mohammedan; if born in Calcutta, a Hindu; if in Ceylon, a Buddhist. Let us inquire in the same manner as to how one's sectarian affiliations are acquired. Speaking of the majority of mankind—making all due allowance for the comparatively few, though honorable, exceptions—is it not true that each individual adopts that particular form of belief which his parent or brother or sister or wife, or her husband, has professed beforehand? There is thus no question of comparison. People cannot, as a rule, be said to have investigated thoughtfully either church or dogma, much less to have made a comparative study of the various great religions of the world. Their church relations are therefore determined to a great extent by chance, instead of deliberate choice.

It is not, perhaps, to be wondered at that such is
the case. Each of the world’s religions—from Hindu to Christian—originally intended as an agency for the upholding of morality, has become so split into antagonistic sects, and has become in the process of ages so incrusted with arbitrary forms and ceremonies, that people have virtually given up the conundrum, and have accepted whatever theory of the future life happens to be the most convenient. It is the dogmatic phase of every religion that weighs it down, and narrows the vision, and confines the believer in a net, from which it is impossible for him to escape so long as he passively submits, and continues foolishly to mistake man-made dogma for divine revelation.

All false estimates of life and its surroundings are due to one cause only—ignorance. A man may read many books, may converse in many languages, may discuss many sciences, and yet remain deplorably ignorant. Book-knowledge, in so far as it deals with the fundamental laws of nature, can only be meager. And many persons enjoy a wide reputation and a liberal income merely from their skill in repeating, like a parrot, the ideas of others which they have found in books.

Metaphysically considered, the world and all material objects are phenomenal and unreal, although it suits our convenience to regard them as real. This idea is best promulgated and carried to its logical conclusion in the Vedanta philosophy, one of whose most impor-
tant doctrines is that of Maya, illusion. According to Sankaracharya, the greatest commentator on the Vedas, the phenomenal world possesses a reality sufficient for all practical purposes, but there is a veil which prevents us from seeing that reality. (This veil is not the only meeting point of Hindu and Egyptian philosophy.) The most familiar illustration is that of the rope and the snake. A wayfarer beholds a rope lying in his path, and immediately believes it to be a snake. But when he investigates, he discovers that it is nothing but a rope. The idea is thus stated in the "Vicharsagar," a famous Vedantic work: "Illusion can only be removed by knowledge. We regard the world as something real, and labor for the acquisition of property with the false hope that it will procure felicity. It is an illusion to think so. As in the instance of a snake created in a rope — an illusion of sight — the mistake is removed when the rope is fully known."

It is only with the advent of mature years, and the consequent shattering of earlier ideals, that people come to understand in some slight degree the illusory nature of life-surroundings. Few, even after the age of forty, are able to overcome entirely the prejudices acquired in youth, even though recognizing in self-consciousness their futility. The habit of thinking and speaking along a certain line, formed in youth and continued up to middle age, has become so strong as to be a part of the mental nature, and cannot, except with extreme effort,
be overcome. This leads to a kind of duplicity that is Jesuitical, to say the least, and furnishes another illustration of illusion. How few indeed are those who have ever accomplished anything in one short life outside of their own narrow sphere of mental development, who have added one iota to the volume of the world’s knowledge, or who have succeeded in doing any service, however humble, to humanity! Plenty of miscreants in high places! Plenty of noisy demagogues and unprincipled politicians masquerading in the guise of statesmen! Plenty of robbers and assassins sitting upon the thrones of kings and monopolizing the prostituted pages of history! Plenty of tools to carry out their nefarious schemes against the public welfare! Plenty of priests claiming divine sanction for their frantic efforts to stifle human thought and obstruct human progress! Compared with these, how few the men and women who have sacrificed themselves for humanity, who have had the courage to oppose public opinion when blinded by prejudice and bigotry!

The simple aphorism, "Know thyself," has been repeated over and over again for several thousand years, until it has become an everyday household phrase. All readers, recognizing it as an old and somewhat tiresome friend, smile at the concentrated wisdom of the Delphic oracle, and lightly pass it by. Yet sooner or later in that eternal evolution of the soul must come an introspective reckoning, when all the illusions and the un-
realities of life, now seemingly so real and important, will fade into insignificance. That which is material must in the end vanish like a cloud, and that which we now term ideal will become the only reality.
REAL OCCULTISM.

UNDERLYING FORCES OF NATURE.—IS MANKIND PERFECT?

ESOTERIC AND EXOTERIC KNOWLEDGE.—MICRO-

COSM AND MACROCOSM.—MAN SHOULD KNOW HIMSELF.

"The highest aim of knowledge is the soul."—Kathopani-

shad.

The underlying forces of nature, being all occult, are generally regarded by modern scientists and philosophers as unknowable. Herbert Spencer, the greatest philosophical writer of the century, has deliberately classed them as such, and the cultured world has largely accepted his dictum. It is, therefore, manifestly absurd for any one to set forth an independent or contrary opinion. But perhaps a few reverent suggestions upon the subject may not be out of place—at any rate, not baneful.

Evolution, if a law,—and quite a number of thinking people admit that it is,—must be universal. Given first a cloud of ether, or an aggregation of etheric atoms in so-called space, and there sooner or later evolves a well-defined nebula. As this materializes, the molecules get
joined closer together, and after a few billions of years there is a new astronomical object in the sky which bears a suspicious resemblance to a sun or a planet, or something of that sort. But by some chemical hocus-pocus the earthy matter of the new globe produces out of itself, or evolves, vegetable life, which in the course of time develops animal life. It hardly seems probable that the ichthyosaurus walked over from some neighboring planet on a friendly rope. He must have been an outgrowth of some preceding indigenous form. But without going into further detail,—as we have already caught up with the point where Charles Darwin began,—it is only necessary to point out the inexorable logic of this reasoning. There is no escape except by denying evolution itself.

But where shall we stop the revolution of this mighty wheel of the law? Is mankind perfect? Is there no room for improvement in the human race? Do we know everything? Herbert Spencer not only says that we do not know it all, but claims that there are many things which are unknowable. But evolution, if a law—universal law—cannot break off unfinished. Its logical end, so far as human beings are concerned, can only be in intellectual and spiritual perfection. And when that far-distant goal is reached, the unknown, as well as Spencer’s unknowable, must become known.

But at the present stage or point of evolution, we have two distinct quantities, the known and the unknown. The known may be considered as contained within the
boundaries of what we call science; the unknown may be classed as occultism. Men of scientific attainments and almost infinite patience are constantly studying and working to extend the limits of the known by encroaching upon the region of the occult or unknown. Every great invention is garnered from the occult realm. Every new discovery in the plane of thought is snatched or glimpsed out of the hidden land. Genius is the faculty of overstepping the line, and fetching back to us those grand conceptions and jewels of intellect which astonish and delight the soul, and lead us ever onward, unwilling though we be to acknowledge it, in the eternal evolutionary procession.

How sadly, then, has occultism been misunderstood! Is it a mere dalliance with multitudinous forms of divination, some partly real and many the mere imaginings of unbalanced intellects? Such would, indeed, seem to be the general opinion. Because there are hosts of impostors, pretending to know all about the unknown, the world declares that everything occult is an imposture. Truly, as Renan says, "the ability to discriminate closely does not exist among men," referring, of course, to men of the present day.

But in ancient times (miscalled) there was a better understanding of the real occultism. Its higher aspects were devoutly studied by the Osirian priests of Egypt, the magi of Chaldæa, the gymnosophists of India. They were the guardians of the cult and the occult, holy men
who consecrated their lives to humanity, leading as far as lay in their power—under the wheel of the law—the masses of the people towards a higher plane of thought. Generally speaking, they did not express their ideas openly—for the ignorant would have torn them to pieces—and so, religion became esoteric and exoteric. The Egyptians of the early dynasties, worshiping the hawk, the cat, and the ibis, would have slain any initiate who proclaimed these gods as only emblematical of the powers of nature, just as in the later dark ages of Europe the alchemists were compelled to write in allegories, and to discourse about the transmutation of gold and the elixir of life in order to cover their real occupation, which was the study of the occult psychic realm.

The distinction between the microcosm and the macrocosm did not originate in Greece, notwithstanding the philological suggestion. It is in the earliest Sanskrit and was a part of the Hermetic teachings of Egypt. The modern poet, Pope, repeated an ancient idea when he wrote “The proper study of mankind is man.” The average man of to-day, in taking account of himself, can only see or comprehend two principles, body and mind. Though, in deference to church authorities, he tacitly admits a third principle, spirit, he really considers it as something theoretical or even chimerical,—at least something whose existence cannot be proven scientifically. As to soul, he cannot see anything to distinguish it from spirit, and constantly confounds the two. Yet the reve-
lations of the last twenty years ought to prove to him conclusively the separate existence of soul. Mind is not all of soul, but only a phase or department of soul. Another, and fully as important a feature, is the psychic nature, or, as it is commonly termed, the psychic realm. It is out of this that have emanated all the strange and seemingly inexplicable phenomena of hypnotic trance, clairvoyance, thought-transference, mediumship, Christian science, and mental healing. As the human race is during these ages just beginning to evolve above the mind-plane into the (so-called) psychic, all these phenomena are little understood and remain in the domain of the occult. And that is why the study of the microcosm is so necessary. Man should know himself, as all the sages of the past have cried out. These psychic powers which show themselves here and there fitfully and intermittently in individuals are least comprehended by the individuals themselves. They get now and then glimpses into the unknown, like faint flashes of light in a dark room, not strong enough nor long enough to be of any practical advantage, but just enough to authenticate the phenomena. Hence, the persons affected suffer all sorts of delusions respecting these manifestations. Some, like the Roman Catholic saints, attribute their visions to divine favor, while mediums think that dead people are talking through them. In reality these experiences are mostly subjective.

Above everything, in the investigation of the occult,
the first and most important law is that there is not, and has not ever been, any such thing as a supernatural manifestation. If evolution teaches us any lesson, it is that everything in nature is operated under natural law. Supernaturalism is the child of ignorance and superstition. The savage in the wilderness believes the thunder to be the voice of a god. In our new science at the close of an occult cycle, when the eyes of men are being opened to the errors of the past, and when the minds of women are reaching eagerly forward towards a loftier development, is proclaimed the reign of law, the inexorable law of cause and effect, the law of gradual and often almost imperceptible advance, sometimes seeming to pause altogether, and yet again, as at present, urging onward with extraordinary impetus—the universal law of evolution.
RELIGION OF THE FUTURE.

OUR UTILITARIAN CIVILIZATION.—TENDENCY OF RELIGIOUS GROWTH.—THE HIGHER CRITICISM.—BUDDHISM AND HINDUISM.—UNIVERSAL, NOT SECTIONAL BROTHERHOOD.

With what a glow of pride we contemplate the civilization of to-day, at once utilitarian and intellectual! Older races may have flourished, whose painting and sculpture have never been equaled, whose philosophy is still our wonder, whose architecture, compared with ours, is as that of a giant to a pigmy; but no voice from the past can claim our steam and electrical machinery. The cycle of materialism, for a thousand years or more dominating the earth, has reached its highest expression in the Occident. As a consequence, although lacking in true psychic and spiritual development, we are making a material and intellectual advance that is phenomenal. Especially in the closing years of the century is it observable; so that, almost keeping pace with the whirring wheels of the factory, is the rapid transformation in the realm of thought. The late discoveries of chemistry, biology, and electricity have set new trains of thinking
in motion, and opened up many perspectives in nature that hitherto have been unseen and unknown.

A candid investigation of religious problems has until quite recently been prevented by bigoted authorities of the church, and is even now generally denounced by them. Yet the law of evolution, which takes no account of individuals, has not failed to manifest itself here also. The tendency of religious growth is decidedly in the direction of increasing liberality and diminishing dogmatism; and in the overturning of conventional forms, the old idols have been often rudely hurled from their pedestals and carted back to the mind-foundry, there to be remodeled and recast according to modern standards and necessities.

By far the most important instrument in this transformation has been science, which, not content with enlarging the boundaries of knowledge on the material plane, has invaded the moss-grown sanctuaries of religious myth and dogma. When George Smith uncovered those tell-tale clay tablets, and proved that a great part of the Book of Genesis had been borrowed from the earlier Chaldæan records, it became necessary for the church to take some action towards reconciling these and other subsequently discovered facts with the hitherto recognized belief. Hence originated among certain of the more liberal-minded clergy the idea of taking up the Old Testament and reviewing it piecemeal in an exceedingly reverent spirit, picking flaws here and there in some
immaterial passage, or pointing out some slight error of translation or construction, their real object being to let the orthodox down as easily as possible, and to be prepared to make further concessions which may in time be demanded by the revelations of science. This method is now generally known as the higher criticism.

But unless all the signs of the times fail, the religion of the future will need no props to induce belief. And the reason is that it will be based upon the natural, instead of the supernatural. It is plain to be seen that science has for many years been a factor in modifying the orthodox views of Europe and America, and this cause is continuing to produce a relatively necessary effect. Thus is Christianity no longer an authoritative body of fixed and unchangeable dogmas, but, especially in the last few years, has come within the wheel of the law, and is somewhat rapidly evolving into a higher state, where reason will no longer be subservient to faith, and common sense need not be altogether ignored.

But some foolish persons may ask: Will not the religion of the future be one of the other great religions of the world? It is said that many people in this country are studying Buddhism and Hinduism, with the intention of embracing one or the other of these wonderfully spiritual and entrancingly metaphysical ideals. Educated East Indians are nowadays teaching their doctrines to large and enthusiastic audiences, and these dusky and turbaned pundits imagine, no
doubt, that they can proselyte all America in a few years. How little they realize that, noble as are the esoteric ideals of the Brahmin, the Western mind revolts at the actual state of the Hindu religious system! The superstition and idolatry of the masses in Asia are too well known. Curiosity on the part of some, genuine desire for information on the part of others, may lead hundreds, or perhaps thousands, to study the philosophies which long ages of metaphysical development have produced, but few will abandon their hereditary faith, no matter how low it has fallen in general practice, for a foreign religion whose practical workings are even more debased.

There is a cyclic law which enters into every detail of evolution. As each day emerges out of the dark, and grows brighter and warmer only to fade out and vanish into night, so each human being is born, waxes strong, and then dies; and so also nations come and go, and religions follow the same inexorable rule. Buddhism, Brahmanism, Mohammedanism, Confucianism, and Christianity, all came into existence at different periods, in accordance with certain exigencies. Each has had its place in the general process of world-evolution, and has played its part in the uplifting of character and the development of the human soul. Whether each or all of them have passed their period of strength and usefulness, and are now decadent, or, like one of Shakespeare's seven ages, in "the lean and slippered pantaloon," may
be a matter for rancorous dispute on the part of churchmen the world over. Certainly each of the great systems has within itself high ideals, and if the people fail to comprehend them, or to follow them in daily life, the fault is not in the religion itself, but in the weakness of human nature. Each stands for some important principle. Buddhism is the embodiment of renunciation, Hinduism of the highest spiritual philosophy, Christianity of intellectuality, Confucianism of morality, Mohammedanism (in its Sufi form) of devotion. That there is much of truth in the core of all these world-faiths no one can deny who has made an unprejudiced study of their doctrines. That all have been perverted by unwise or selfish interpretation seems to be equally certain.

Yet, as science presses ever onward, and the human race attains a clearer knowledge of the operations of natural law, and a clearer vision to discern the illusions and errors of life, there will gradually be laid the foundations of a firmer faith. Men will realize that dogmas are but vain imaginings of finite minds. Preachers who in their pulpits proclaim the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and in the same breath condemn their neighbor in the next block, or on the other side of the globe, to eternal suffering, will be listened to no more.

The religion of the future can never be any existing religion as now practiced. It will be tolerant—so tolerant that not only will it recognize the good in other
systems, decadent though they may be, but will not hesi­
tate to incorporate in itself the most valuable of the truths therein rediscovered. It will not hold doctrines contrary to common sense. It will seek to develop the psychic and spiritual principles by inculcating a knowl­edge of the inner self. It will no longer uphold the twin illusions of wealth and fame, but will extoll rather the unassuming and the unselfish, and will both teach and practice the doctrine of universal, not sectional, brotherhood.

Mankind passes onward towards the goal. It is no longer the ego, the solitary pilgrim, walking in the wil­derness, seeking self-illumination. The sense of separateness disappears. We can see only a great multitude, “all sorts and conditions of men,” and they are journey­ing in the same direction. True, there is very little method or harmony in their movements. Some go with heads erect, eager eyes fixed upon futurity, joyous coun­tenances, and rapid pace, while others toil along with downcast look and gloomy features. Some pass their fellows easily without apparent effort, while others only by constant labor plod along. Many, very many, loiter as if they were on a pleasure excursion, taking no thought of the morrow, trying to believe that they are really en­joying the present, and, like children playing with toys, they amuse themselves with every passing fancy. Some­times they seem not only to lose their ground, but to actually move backward. This, however, is only an
illusion, just as the planets seem at times to take on a retrograde motion. To-day they may, to all intents and purposes, be idle and frivolous, and lacking in all that constitutes true manhood and womanhood, but another morning may find them hard at work and filled with zeal and enthusiasm. Here and there may be seen groups of men and women apparently in sympathy. They march along with some degree of order, yet even those are not really well disciplined, and they do not always keep step, but the effort at unity in action is plainly evident. And as the vast multitude moves gradually onward, some that are weaker than others fall behind continually, no matter how they struggle to keep up with their neighbors. Some that would go faster are hindered by a few who persist in getting in front of them, and will neither move nor permit those in the rear to press forward. These obstructors are too often people who pretend to be teachers, and declaim loudly of their ability to point out the only right way to the masses. The procession as a whole, however, gradually advances, despite all interference and obstacles.

Up towards the front are the real leaders of humanity,—not the kings and princes, not the statesmen and warriors, not the legislators and historians; a few of the poets—those who have listened to the great voice of nature—some of the novelists and dramatists, many of the educators of youth, most of the great philosophers of the past, and the reformers of mankind. But,
strangest of all, there are to be seen people whose names are not upon the roll of earthly fame. They are the humble workers, whose voices have never been heard above the shouts of the populace, whose efforts have never been recognized in contemporary print or history. They live and die in obscurity. But the influence of their lives is not lost. They have done what they could under adverse circumstances, and their example has inspired others to labor unselfishly for their fellows. Our aim should be to catch some portion of that noble inspiration, to follow high ideals, to worship truth wherever found, regardless of creed, or pulpit, or personality, and thus become worthy in our turn to carry the banner of enlightenment and intellectual and spiritual liberty in the very front of that procession,— the procession of humanity.