

## FRAGMENTS OF OCCULT TRUTH.

No. IV.

## THE EVOLUTION OF MAN.

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An essay on so vast a topic as this can only be a very fragmentary "Fragment"; but an incomplete sketch may be found useful as a framework for speculation. It is one thing to ponder on the origin and destination of man without knowing more of the subject than can be gathered from the open page of Nature before us at any given moment: it is quite another to exercise the imaginative and reasoning faculties in filling up details, after the general design has been made intelligible. All ordinary theories concerning creation and the soul belong to speculations of the former order, and very poor, crude and inaccurate, do they seem, when referred to the broad outline of the facts as known to initiates of occult science.

Greatly more intelligent, within its domain, than religious metaphysics, ordinary science has made out a great deal concerning the evolution of Man's body. And even though its conclusions may be incomplete, they are not altogether wrong. It only errs seriously when it tries to deal with problems outside its proper domain, and fancies that the evolution of animal forms, and their gradual improvement may constitute the whole process which leads to the evolution of humanity; in other words that the intelligence with which humanity is now endowed is merely one of the phenomena of organic chemistry. However, in training modern thought to understand the principle of evolution, physical science has paved the way for explanations which occult science is at last conceding to the world. It has supplied a clue to the true method of investigating the results so unscientifically attributed by vulgar cosmogony to creation. It is difficult to say how far the habit of literally believing the statements of the Bible has really established in the Western mind the idea that God, in the beginning, performed some charm "with woven paces and with waving hands" and that the Earth sprang instantly into existence, furnished with trees and livestock, and ready in the course of the week for the habitation of a no less instantaneously created man. But even when orthodox theologians concede that the days of creation may be long periods of time, they certainly do not, as a rule, get rid of the notion that this Earth and all its inhabitants are the fruit of an act of creation worked out more or less deliberately, *within the limits of the world now before us*, either through laws especially designed to produce the results now perceived, or by a more workmanlike process with lumps of clay, spare ribs, or any other handy materials which a tangible and visible Creator might find lying about his premises.

Certainly physical science, again breaking in upon theological conceptions, disturbs orthodox speculation by pointing out that the earth was at one time a viscid globe of inorganic fiery matter, that further back still it was a ring of incandescent vapour thrown off from the sun, that further back still it was part merely of a vast fiery nebula like that which to this day may be observed in the constellation of Orion, and which the fine instruments of modern physical research have shown with approximate certainty to be actually in that state which reason had previously suggested that our own system must have been in once. But physical science does not go further than to suggest that theology must somehow reconcile its conceptions with these rudimentary facts. It fails to accomplish the reconciliation itself, and offers, for its own part, a theory so unsatisfactory in one direction—that of spiritual mysteries,—that only a small number of thinking men find themselves able to put up with it to the entire exclusion of theological hypotheses, unsatisfactory though these may be in the direction of physical mysteries.

Now occult science can and does bridge the gulf between science and religion. This is not the place to descant at length upon its methods of research. On that head a great deal has been published lately, and the reader may be referred to other writings in reference to opportunities that ordinary people have had for realising the fact that extraordinary persons, by the cultivation of faculties dormant in all, (and the existence of which all may prove for themselves if they are prepared to take the necessary trouble) have obtained the means of exploring regions of the universe inaccessible to the physical senses. By degrees such persons have acquired that enormous mass of knowledge concerning the operations of Nature over vast areas of space and time, which enable them to make positive statements concerning the character of the processes we are about to describe.

The first great fact which occult science presents to our notice in reference to the origin of man on this globe will be seen at a glance to help the imagination over some embarrassments of the familiar scientific idea of evolution. The evolution of man is not a process carried out on this planet alone. It is a result to which many worlds in different conditions of material and spiritual development have contributed. If this statement were merely put forward as a conjecture, it would surely recommend itself forcibly to rational minds. For there is a manifest irrationality in the common-place notion that man's existence is divided into a material beginning, lasting sixty or seventy years, and a spiritual remainder lasting for ever. The irrationality amounts to absurdity when it is alleged that the acts of the sixty or seventy years,—the blundering helpless acts of ignorant human life—are permitted by the perfect justice of an All-wise Providence to define the conditions of that later life of infinite duration. Nor is it less extravagant to imagine that apart from the question of justice, the life beyond the grave should be exempt from the law of change, progress and improvement, which every analogy of Nature points to as probably running through all the varied existences of the universe. But once abandon the idea of a uniform, unvarying, unprogressive life beyond the grave,—once admit the conception of change and progress in that life—and we admit the idea of a variety hardly compatible with any other hypothesis than that of progress through successive worlds. As we have said before, this is not hypothesis at all for occult science, but a fact, ascertained and verified beyond the reach (for occultists) of doubt or contradiction.

The life and evolutionary processes of this Planet in fact,—all which constitutes it something more than a dead lump of chaotic matter,—are linked with the life and evolutionary processes of several other planets. But let it not be supposed that there is no finality as regards the scheme of this planetary union to which we belong. The human imagination once set free is apt sometimes to bound too far. Once let this notion, that the earth is merely one link in a mighty chain of worlds, be fully accepted as probable, or true, and it may suggest the whole stary heavens are the heritage of the human family. That is so far from being the fact that it is almost infinitely far therefrom. One globe does not afford Nature scope for the processes by which mankind has been evoked from chaos, but these processes do not require more than a limited and definite number of globes. Separated as these are, in regard to the gross mechanical matter of which they consist, they are closely and intimately bound together by subtle currents and forces, whose existence reason need not be much troubled to concede since the existence of *some* connection,—of force as etherial media,—uniting all visible celestial bodies, is proved by the mere fact that they *are* visible. It is along these subtle currents that the life-elements pass from world to world.

The fact, however, will at once be liable to distortion to suit preconceived habits of mind. Some readers may imagine our meaning to be that after death the surviving soul will be drawn into the currents of that world with which its affinities connect it. The real process

is more methodical. The system of worlds is a circuit round which *all* individual spiritual entities have, alike, to pass; and that passage constitutes the Evolution of Man. For it must be realised, that the evolution of man is a process still going on, and by no means yet complete. Darwinian writings have taught the modern world to regard the ape as an ancestor, but the simple conceit of Western speculation has rarely permitted European evolutionists to look in the other direction and recognise the probability, that to our remote descendants we may be, as that unwelcome progenitor to us. And the two facts just declared hinge together. The higher evolution will be accomplished by our progress through the successive worlds of the system; and in higher forms we shall return to this earth again, and again, and again. But the avenues of thought through which we look forward to this prospect, are of almost inconceivable length.

It will readily be supposed that the chain of worlds to which this earth belongs are not all prepared for a material existence exactly, or even approximately resembling our own. There would be no meaning in an organised chain of worlds which were all alike, and might as well all have been amalgamated into one. In reality the worlds with which we are connected are very unlike each other, not merely in outward conditions, but in that supreme characteristic, the proportion in which,—spirit and matter,—are mingled in their constitution. Our own world presents us with conditions in which spirit and matter are, on the whole, evenly balanced in equilibrium. Let it not be supposed on that account that it is very highly elevated in the scale of perfection. On the contrary, it occupies a very low place in that scale. The worlds that are higher in the scale are those in which spirit largely predominates. There is another world attached to the chain rather than forming a part of it in which matter asserts itself even more decisively than on earth, but this may be spoken of later.

That the superior worlds which Man may come to inhabit in his onward progress should gradually become more and more spiritual in their constitution,—life there being more and more successfully divorced from gross material needs,—will seem reasonable enough at the first glance. But the first glance in imagination at those which might conversely be called the inferior, but may with less inaccuracy be spoken as the preceding worlds, would perhaps suggest that they ought to be conversely less spiritual,—more material, than this earth. The fact is quite the other way,—and must be so, it will be seen on reflection, in a chain of worlds which is an endless chain, *i.e.* round and round which the evolutionary process travels. If that process had merely one journey to travel along a path which never returned into itself, one could think of it, at any rate, as working from almost absolute matter, up to almost absolute spirit, but nature works always in complete curves, and travels always in paths which return into themselves. The earliest, as also the latest, developed worlds—for the chain itself has grown by degrees,—the furthest back as also the furthest forward are the most immaterial, the most ethereal of the whole series and that this is in all ways in accordance with the fitness of things will appear from the reflection that the furthest forward of the worlds is not a region of finality, but the stepping stone to the furthest back—as the month of December leads us back again to January. But it is not a climax of development from which the individual monad falls, as by a catastrophe, into the state from which he slowly began to ascend millions of years previously. From that which for reasons which will soon appear must be considered the highest world on the ascending arc of the circle to that which must be regarded as the first on the descending arc,—in one sense the lowest, *i.e.* in the order of development,—there is no descent at all, but still ascent and progress. For the spiritual monad or entity which has worked its way all round the cycle of evolution, at any one of the many stages of development into which

the various existences around us may be grouped, begins its next cycle at the next higher stage, and is thus still accomplishing progress as it passes from world Z back again to world A. Many times does it circle, in this way right round the system, but its passage round must not be thought of merely as a circular revolution in an orbit. In the scale of spiritual perfection it is constantly ascending. Thus if we compare the system of worlds to a system of towers standing on a plain,—towers each of many stories and symbolising the scale of perfection,—the spiritual monad performs a spiral progress round and round the series, passing through each tower, every time it comes round to it, at a higher level than before.

It is for want of realising this idea that speculation concerned with physical evolution is so constantly finding itself stopped by dead walls. It is searching for its missing links in a world where it can never find them now, for they were but required for a temporary purpose, and have passed away. Man, says the Darwinian, was once an ape. Quite true, but the ape known to the Darwinian will never become a man, *i.e.* the *form* will not change from generation to generation till the tail disappears and the hands turn into feet, and so on. Ordinary science avows that though changes of form can be detected in progress within the limits of species, the changes from species to species can only be inferred, and to account for these, it is content to assume great intervals of time and the extinction of the intermediate forms. There has been no doubt an extinction of the intermediate or earlier forms of all species, (in the larger acceptation of the word), *i.e.*, of all kingdoms, mineral, vegetable, animal, man, &c., but ordinary science can merely guess that to have been the fact without realising the conditions which rendered it inevitable, and which forbid the renewed generation of the intermediate forms.

It is the spiral character of the progress accomplished by the life impulses which develop the various kingdoms of Nature, which accounts for the gaps now observed in the animated forms which people the earth. The thread of a screw which is a uniform inclined plane in reality looks like a succession of steps when examined only along one line parallel to its axis. The spiritual monads which are coming round the system on the animal level pass on to other worlds when they have performed their turn of animal incarnation here. By the time they come again, they are ready for human incarnation, and there is no necessity now for the upward development of animal forms into human forms,—these are already waiting for their spiritual tenants. But if we go back far enough we come to a period at which there were no human forms ready developed on the earth, but when spiritual monads travelling on the earliest or lowest human level, were beginning to come round. Their onward pressure in a world at that time containing none but animal forms provoked the improvement of the highest of these into the required form,—the much-talked-of missing link.

In one way of looking at the matter it may be contended that this explanation is identical with the inference of the Darwinian evolutionist in regard to the development and extinction of missing links. After all, it may be argued by a materialist, "we are not concerned to express an opinion as to the origin of the tendency in species to develop higher forms. We say that they do develop these higher forms by intermediate links, and that the intermediate links die out; and you say just the same thing." But there is a distinction between the two ideas for any one who can follow subtle distinctions. The natural process of evolution from the influence of local circumstances, and sexual selection must not be credited with producing intermediate forms, and this is why it is inevitable that the intermediate forms should be of a temporary nature and should die out. Otherwise we should find the world stocked with missing links of all kinds, animal life creeping by plainly apparent degrees up to manhood, human forms mingling in indistinguishable confusion with those of animals. The impulse to the new evolution of

higher forms is really given as we have shown by rushes of spiritual monads coming round the cycle in a state fit for the inhabitation of new forms. These superior life impulses burst the chrysalis of the older form on the planet they invade and throw off an efflorescence of something higher. The forms which have gone on merely repeating themselves for milleniums, start afresh, into growth; with relative rapidity they rise through the intermediate into the higher forms, and then as these in turn are multiplied with the vigour and rapidity of all new growths they supply tenements of flesh for the spiritual entities coming round on that stage or plane of existence, and for the intermediate forms there are no longer any tenants offering. Inevitably they become extinct.

Thus is evolution accomplished as regards its essential impulse by a *spiral progress* through the worlds. In the course of explaining this idea we have partly anticipated the declaration of another fact of first-rate importance as an aid to correct views of the world system to which we belong. That is that the tide of life,—the wave of existence,—the spiritual impulse call it by what name we please, passes on from planet to planet by rushes, or gushes; not by an even continuous flow. For the momentary purpose of illustrating the idea in hand the process may be compared to the filling of a series of holes or tubs sunk in the ground, such as may sometimes be seen at the mouths of feeble springs, and connected with each other by little surface channels. The stream from the spring as it flows is gathered up entirely in the beginning by the first hole, or tub A, and it is only when this is quite full that the continued in-pouring of water from the spring causes that which it already contains to overflow into tub B. This in turn fills and overflows along the channel which leads to tub C, and so on. Now, though, of course, a clumsy analogy of this kind will not carry us very far, it precisely illustrates the evolution of life on a chain of worlds like that we are attached to, and, indeed, the evolution of the worlds themselves. For the process which goes on does not involve the pre-existence of a chain of globes which nature proceeds to stock with life; but it is one in which the evolution of each globe is the result of previous evolutions, and the consequence of certain impulses thrown off from its predecessor in the superabundance of their development. Now it is necessary to deal with this characteristic of the process to be described, but directly we begin to deal with it we have to go back in imagination to a period in the development of our system very far antecedent to that which is specially our subject at present,—the evolution of man. And manifestly, as soon as we begin talking of the beginnings of worlds, we are dealing with phenomena which can have had very little to do with *life*, as we understand the matter, and, therefore, it may be supposed, nothing to do with life impulses. But let us go back by degrees. Behind the human harvest of the life impulse there lay the harvest of mere animal forms,—as every one realises. Behind that the harvest or growths of mere vegetable forms—for some of these undoubtedly preceded the appearance of the earliest animal life on the planet. Then before the vegetable organisations there were mineral organisations, for even a mineral is a product of Nature, an evolution from something behind it, as every imaginable manifestation of nature must be until in the vast series of manifestations, the mind travels back to the unmanifested beginning of all things. On pure metaphysics of that sort we are not now engaged. It is enough to show that we may as reasonably,—and that we must if we would talk about these matters at all—conceive of a life impulse giving birth to mineral forms, as if the same sort of impulse concerned to raise a race of apes into a race of rudimentary men. Indeed, occult science travels back even further in its exhaustive analysis of evolution, than the period at which minerals began to assume existence. In the process of developing worlds from fiery nebulæ Nature begins with something earlier than minerals—with the elemental forces that underlie the phenomena of

nature as visible now and perceptible to the senses of man. But that branch of the subject may be left alone for the present. Let us take up the process at the period when the first world of the series globe A, let us call it, is merely a congeries of mineral forms. Now it must be remembered that globe A has already been described as very much more ethereal, more predominated by spirit, as distinguished from matter, than the globe of which we at present are having personal experience, so that a large allowance must be made for that state of things when we ask the reader to think of it at starting as a mere congeries of mineral forms. Mineral forms may be mineral in the sense of not belonging to the higher forms of vegetable organism, and may yet be very immaterial as we think of matter very ethereal consisting of a very fine or subtle quality of matter, in which the other pole or characteristic of nature,—spirit,—largely predominates. The minerals we are trying to portray are, as it were, the ghosts of minerals, by no means the highly-finished and beautiful, hard crystals, which the mineralogical cabinets of this world supply. In these lower spirals of evolution with which we are now dealing as with the higher ones, there is progress from world to world, and that is the great point at which we have been aiming. There is progress downwards, so to speak, in finish and materiality and consistency; and then, again, progress upward in spirituality as coupled with the finish which matter, or materiality rendered possible in the first instance. It will be found that the process of evolution in its higher stages as regards man is carried on in exactly the same way. All through these studies, indeed, it will be found that one process of Nature typifies another, that the big is the repetition of the little on a larger scale.

It is manifest from what we have already said, and in order that the progress of organisms on globe A shall be accounted for, that the mineral kingdom will no more develop the vegetable kingdom on globe A until it receives an impulse from without, than the Earth was able to develop Man from the ape till it received an impulse from without. But it will be inconvenient at present to go back to a consideration of the impulses which operate on globe A in the beginning of the system's construction.

We have already,—in order to be able to advance more comfortably from a far later period than that to which we have now receded, gone back so far that further recession would change the whole character of this explanation. We must stop somewhere, and for the present it will be best to take the life impulses behind globe A, for granted. And having stopped there we may now treat the enormous period intervening between the mineral epoch on globe A and the man epoch, in a very cursory way, and so get back to the main problem before us. What has been already said facilitates a cursory treatment of the intervening evolution. The full development of the mineral epoch on globe A prepares the way for the vegetable development, and as soon as this begins, the mineral life impulse overflows into globe B. Then when the vegetable development on globe A is complete and the animal development begins, the vegetable life impulse overflows to globe B, and the mineral impulse passes on to globe C. Then, finally, comes the human life impulse on globe A.

Now it is necessary at this point to guard against one misconception that might arise. As just roughly described, the process might convey the idea that by the time the human impulse began on globe A, the mineral impulse was then beginning on globe D, and that beyond lay chaos. This is very far from being the case for two reasons. Firstly, as already stated, there are processes of evolution which precede the mineral evolution, and thus a wave of evolution,—indeed several waves of evolution precede the mineral wave in its progress round the spheres. But over and above this, there is a fact to be stated which has such an influence on the course of events. When it is realised,

it will be seen that the life impulse has passed several times completely round the whole chain of worlds before the commencement of the human impulse on globe A. This fact is as follows:—Each kingdom of evolution, vegetable, animal, and so on, is divided into several spiral layers. The spiritual monads,—the individual atoms of that immense life impulse of which so much has been said,—do not fully complete their mineral existence on globe A, then complete it on globe B, and so on. They pass several times round the whole circle as minerals; and then again several times round as vegetables, and several times as animals. We purposely refrain for the present from going into figures, because it is more convenient to state the outline of the scheme in general terms first, but figures in reference to these processes of Nature have now been given to the world by the occult adepts (for the first time we believe in its history), and they shall be brought out in the course of these essays before we have done, but as we say the outline is enough for anyone to think of at first.

And now we have rudimentary man beginning his existence on globe A, in that world where all things are as the ghosts of the corresponding things in this world. He is beginning his long descent into matter. And the life impulse of each "round" overflows, and the races of man are established in different degrees of perfection on all the planets,—on each in turn. But the Rounds are more complicated in their design than this explanation would show if it stopped short here. The process for each spiritual monad is not merely a passage from planet to planet. Within the limits of each planet, each time it arrives there it has a complicated process of evolution to perform. It is many times incarnated in successive races of man, before it passes onward, and it even has many incarnations in each great race. It will be found when we get on further that this fact throws a flood of light upon the actual condition of mankind as we know it, accounting for those immense differences of intellect and morality, and even of welfare in its highest sense, which generally appear so painfully mysterious.

That which has a definite beginning generally has an end also. As we have shown that the evolutionary process under description began when certain impulses first commenced their operation, so it may be inferred that they are tending towards a final consummation, towards a goal and a conclusion. That is so, though the goal is still far off. Man, as we know him on this earth, is but half way through the evolutionary process to which he owes his present development. He will be as much greater,—before the destiny of our system is accomplished,—than he is now, as he is now greater than the missing link. And that improvement will even be accomplished on this Earth, while, in the other worlds, of the ascending series, there are still loftier peaks of perfection to be scaled. It is utterly beyond the range of faculties untutored in the discernment of occult mysteries to imagine the kind of life, which Man will thus ultimately lead before the zenith of the great cycle is attained. But there is enough to be done in filling up the details of the outline now presented to the reader without attempting to forecast those which have to do with existences towards which evolution is reaching across the enormous abysses of the future.

A VERY INTERESTING INSTRUMENT, CALLED A PHOTOGRAPHIC GUN, has been invented by a Frenchman—M. Marrez. It is nothing more nor less than a very large revolver, with a stock to put to the shoulder. The barrel is, telescope, that is to say, it contains the lenses of a camera. There are twelve apertures, which take the place of chambers. The photographer puts a sensitised plate behind these apertures, and, performing an operation analogous to cocking a gun, the weapon is ready for the field. On seeing a flying bird, he takes aim, and pulls the trigger. The chamber revolves once and in one second he obtains twelve little pictures of the bird in various positions. —*The Indian Mirror.*

## THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE PHILHARMONIC ACADEMY OF CALCUTTA.

(Communicated.)

A few months ago, a notice was published in the columns of the THEOSOPHIST, announcing the establishment of a Philharmonic Academy at Calcutta, under the presidency and management of Rajah Sourindra Mohan Tagore, Mus. Doc., C.I.E., &c., the well-known reviver and reformer of Hindu music. In order to understand precisely the necessity and objects of this institution, it would be necessary to review the progress that Hindu music has attained during the last twelve years under the fostering care and liberal patronage of the public-spirited Rajah. Hindu music, both as an art and a science, received the highest amount of development in the ancient days, and formed a powerful help to the *Rishis* and devotees in performing their rituals, and to the worldly people in seeking for the enjoyment of innocent amusements. Music was then, in fact, the hand-maid of religion. But, in course of time, it came to be made the concomitant of voluptuous pursuits, and what had been cultivated by the holy and pure for noble purposes, was eagerly sought for by the wicked and impure, and turned to an ignoble use. Latterly, it had become so degraded, that a respectable father would be shocked to hear his children cultivate this art. And the inevitable consequence was that it became associated with all that was vulgar and base. The cultivation of music received some impetus during the reign of the Moguls in India, and several renowned musicians are known to have flourished during that period. The Mahomedans, be it remembered, are prohibited by their religion to cultivate music, and consequently they had no music of their own. What they patronised was the music of the Aryan nations, and, as practical music, was all that they chiefly cared for—they considering the music to be an art meant to satisfy carnal cravings—the elaborate learned theory of music, as propounded and recorded by several distinguished sages of old, came to be lost sight of. The system of notation devised by the Aryan sages got out of use, and, in the absence of any definite system of musical notation, much of the intrinsic character and integrity of the *rāgs* and *rāginies* was lost in the course of the transit of the art from ear to ear to succeeding generations. The *rāgs* and *rāginies* were in hopeless confusion, each modern musician insisting upon the correctness of their features as learned or taught by him, and rejecting those taught by others as incorrect. With the spread of modern education in this country, a taste for the revival of Indian music grew in many a Hindu heart, but it was not till the movements initiated by Rajah Sourindra Mohan Tagore took a practical form that the revival might be said to have commenced.

Rajah Sourindra Mohan Tagore, who studied music under very able professors, found his favourite study in pretty much the same plight as has just been described, and it was his enlightened liberality of spirit and an enthusiastic love of Aryan lore that prompted him to undertake the enterprise, the result of which has been to him, as to all others interested in the revival of Aryan glory, a matter of such unqualified gratification. It was, on the 3rd August, 1871, that the Bengal Music School was established by the Rajah in the rooms of the Government Normal School, Calcutta, with the object of providing his countrymen with a course of musical instruction upon a systematic basis with the help of elementary books and with a system of notation devised by him—all prepared purposely for their use. This institution was visited from time to time by several Indian gentlemen, and European gentlemen and ladies interested in the art of music, and the encouraging remarks which they recorded in the visitors' book regarding the plan of tuition and the efficient management of the classes, prompted the Rajah to further exertions.