

Vril and Bovril

The ideal and the “real”



Contents and train of thoughts

Vril is the occult power behind the forces of matter and their common origin.

Vril is the soul of the universe.	4
Nothing on earth can be compared with it.	5
The vril of the “Coming Race” was once the common property of races now extinct.	5
Its Atlantean name was Mash-Mak. But its Aryan name is being withheld.	6
Why the true nature of this mighty force is and will remain a secret?	
Because it might be used to kill, to alter, to move, or otherwise change any object or condition.	7
When man understands the laws and centres of force in himself, he can make visible and material what was before invisible and ideal — at will.	7
That is why the real secrets of nature will not be revealed to the profane.	7
For the destructive power of vril is not altogether a fiction.	8
Its power can destroy in one moment whole armies.	8
A certain timepiece on the ethereal waves mentions the instantaneous destruction of 2,000,000 soldiers in the field.	9

Bovril is a beef extract, boasting of imaginary benefits.



Vril is the occult power behind the forces of matter and their common origin.¹

There has been an infinite confusion of names to express one and the same thing.

- The chaos of the ancients;
- The Zoroastrian sacred fire, or the *Ātas-Behrām* of the Parsī;
- The Hermes-fire;
- The Elmo's fire of the ancient Germans;
- The lightning of Cybelē;
- The burning torch of Apollo;
- The flame on the altar of Pan;
- The inextinguishable fire in the temple on the Acropolis, and in that of Vesta;
- The fire-flame of Pluto's helm;
- The brilliant sparks on the hats of the Dioscuri, on the Gorgon head, the helm of Pallas, and the staff of Mercury;
- The *πυρ ασβεστον* [inextinguishable fire];
- The Egyptian Ptah, or Rā;
- The Grecian *Zeus Kataibates* (the descending);²
- The Pentecostal fire-tongues;
- The burning bush of Moses;
- The pillar of fire of the *Exodus*, and the "burning lamp" of Abram;
- The eternal fire of the "bottomless pit";
- The Delphic oracular vapours;
- The Sidereal light of the Rosicrucians;
- The ĀKĀŚA of the Hindu adepts;
- The Astral light of Éliphas Lévi;
- The nerve-aura and the fluid of the magnetists;
- The *Od* of Reichenbach;
- The fire-globe, or meteor-*cat* of Babinet;

¹ Consult "What is Matter and what is Force?" in our Secret Doctrine's First Proposition Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² Pausanias, *Itinerary*, "Elis," lib. i, cap. xiv, 10

- The *Psychod* and ectenic force of Thury;
- The psychic force of Sergeant E.W. Cox and Mr. Crookes;
- The atmospheric magnetism of some naturalists;
- Galvanism;
- And finally, electricity,

— are but various names for many different manifestations, or effects of the same mysterious, all-pervading cause — the Greek *Archaëus*, or *Αρχαίος*.

Sir E. Bulwer-Lytton, in his *Coming Race*,¹ describes it as the VRIL,² used by the subterranean populations, and allowed his readers to take it for a fiction. “These people,” he says, “consider that in the vril they had arrived at the unity in natural energetic agencies”; and proceeds to show that Faraday intimated them “under the more cautious term of correlation,” thus:

I have long held an opinion, almost amounting to a conviction, in common, I believe, with many other lovers of natural knowledge, that the various forms under which the forces of matter are made manifest, HAVE ONE COMMON ORIGIN; or, in other words, are so directly related and naturally dependent, that they are convertible, as it were, into one another, and possess equivalents of power in their action.

Absurd and unscientific as may appear our comparison of a fictitious *vril* invented by the great novelist, and the primal force of the equally great experimentalist, with the Kabbalistic astral light, it is nevertheless the true definition of this force. Discoveries are constantly being made to corroborate the statement thus boldly put forth.³

Vril is the soul of the universe.⁴

Thus a force, whose secret powers were thoroughly familiar to the ancient theurgists, is denied by modern sceptics. The antediluvian children — who perhaps played with it, using it as the boys in Bulwer-Lytton’s *The Coming Race*, use the tremendous “*vril*” — called it the “Water of Phah”; their descendants named it the *Anima Mundi*, the soul of the universe; and still later the mediæval Hermetists termed it “sidereal light,” or the “Milk of the Celestial Virgin,” the “Magnes,” and many other names. But our modern learned men will neither accept nor recognize it under such appellations; for it pertains to *magic*, and magic is, in their conception, a disgraceful superstition.

Apollonius and Iamblichus held that it was not “in the knowledge of things *without*, but in the perfection of the soul *within*, that lies the empire of man, aspiring to be more than men.”⁵ Thus they had arrived at a perfect cognizance of their godlike

¹ [ch. vii]

² We apprehend that the noble author coined his curious names by contracting words in classical languages. *Gy* would come from *gyne*; *vril* from *virile*.

³ Cf. *Isis Unveiled*, I pp. 125-26

⁴ And the heart of the universe is Compassion/Sacrifice. Look up the first of our Major Works. — ED. PHIL.

⁵ Bulwer-Lytton, *Zanoni*, Bk. III, ch. xviii; [full text in our Buddhas and Initiates Series.]

souls, the powers of which they used with all the wisdom, outgrowth of esoteric study of the Hermetic lore, inherited by them from their forefathers. But our philosophers, tightly shutting themselves up in their shells of flesh, cannot or dare not carry their timid gaze beyond the *comprehensible*. For them there is no future life; there are no godlike dreams, they scorn them as unscientific; for them the men of old are but “ignorant ancestors,” as they express it; and whenever they meet during their physiological researches with an author who believes that this mysterious yearning after spiritual knowledge is inherent in every human being, and cannot have been given us utterly in vain, they regard him with contemptuous pity.¹

Nothing on earth can be compared with it.

The Sun is full of iron vapours — a fact that was demonstrated by the spectroscope, showing that the light of the corona consisted largely of a line in the green part of the spectrum, very nearly coinciding with an iron line. Yet Professors Young and Lockyer rejected that, under the witty pretext, if I remember, that if the corona were composed of minute particles like a dust cloud (and it is this that we call “magnetic matter”) these particles would (1) fall upon the sun’s body, (2) comets were known to pass through this vapour without any visible effect on them . . .

(1) The reason why the particles — since they call them so — *do not* fall upon the sun’s body is self-evident. There are forces co-existent with gravitation of which they know nothing, besides that other fact that there is no gravitation properly speaking, only attraction and repulsion.

(2) How could comets be affected by the said passage since their “passing through” is simply an optical illusion; they could not pass within the area of attraction without being immediately annihilated by that force of which no *vril* can give an adequate idea, since there can be nothing on earth that could be compared with it. Passing as the comets do through a “reflection” no wonder that the said *vapour* has “no visible effect on these light bodies.”²

The vril of the “Coming Race” was once the common property of races now extinct.

And, as the very existence of those gigantic ancestors of ours is now questioned — though in the *Himavats*, on the very territory belonging to you we have a cave full of the skeletons of these giants — and their huge frames when found are invariably regarded as isolated freaks of nature, so the *vril* or *Akas* — as we call it — is looked upon as an impossibility, a myth. And, without a thorough knowledge of *Akas*, its combinations and properties, how can Science hope to account for such phenomena? We doubt not [that] the men of your science are open to conviction; yet facts must be first demonstrated to them, they must first have become their own property, have proved amenable to their own modes of investigation, before you find them ready to admit them as *facts*.³

¹ *Isis Unveiled*, I p. 64

² *Mahatma Letter* 23b (93b) p. 160; 3rd Combined ed.

³ *Mahatma Letter* 1 (1) pp. 2-3; 3rd Combined ed.

Its Atlantean name was Mash-Mak. But its Aryan name is being withheld.

If the question is asked why Mr. Keely¹ was not allowed to pass a certain limit, the answer is easy; because that which he has unconsciously discovered, is the terrible sidereal Force, known to, and named by the Atlanteans MASH-MAK, and by the Āryan Rishis in their *Astra-Vidyā* by a name that we do not like to give. It is the vril of Bulwer Lytton's *Coming Race*, and of the coming races of our mankind. The name *vril* may be a fiction; the Force itself is a fact doubted as little in India as the existence itself of their Rishis, since it is mentioned in all the secret works.²

Why the true nature of this mighty force is and will remain a secret?

There were portions of the Secret science that for incalculable ages had to remain concealed from the profane gaze. But this was because to impart to the unprepared multitude secrets of such tremendous importance, was equivalent to giving a child a lighted candle in a powder magazine.

The answer to a question which has frequently arisen in the minds of students, when meeting with statements such as this, may be outlined here.

“We can understand,” they say, “the necessity for concealing from the herd such secrets as the Vril, or the rock-destroying force, discovered by J.W. Keely, of Philadelphia, but we cannot understand how any danger could arise from the revelation of such a purely philosophic doctrine, as, *e.g.*, the evolution of the planetary chains.”

The danger was this: Doctrines such as the planetary chain, or the seven races, at once give a clue to the seven-fold nature of man, for each principle is correlated to a plane, a planet, and a race; and the human principles are, on every plane, correlated to seven-fold occult forces — those of the higher planes being of tremendous power. So that any septenary division at once gives a clue to tremendous occult powers, the abuse of which would cause incalculable evil to humanity. A clue, which is, perhaps, no clue to the present generation — especially the Westerns — protected as they are by their very blindness and ignorant materialistic disbelief in the occult; but a clue which would, nevertheless, have been very real in the early centuries of the Christian era, to people fully convinced of the reality of occultism, and entering a cycle of degradation, which made them rife for abuse of occult powers and sorcery of the worst description.

The documents were concealed, it is true, but the knowledge itself and its actual existence had never been made a secret of by the Hierophants of the Temple, wherein MYSTERIES have ever been made a discipline and stimulus to virtue. This is very old news, and was repeatedly made known by the great adepts, from Pythagoras and

¹ [John Ernst Worrell Keely, 1837–98, American inventor who claimed to have discovered a new motive power which was originally described as “vaporic” or “etheric” force, and later as an unnamed force based on “vibratory sympathy,” by which he produced “interatomic ether” from water and air. H.P. Blavatsky (*Secret Doctrine*, I p. 557) says that Keely “speaks as an unconscious Occultist.”]

² *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 563

Plato down to the Neoplatonists. It was the new religion of the Nazarenes¹ that wrought a change for the worse — in the policy of centuries.²

Because it might be used to kill, to alter, to move, or otherwise change any object or condition.

When man understands the laws and centres of force in himself, he can make visible and material what was before invisible and ideal — at will.

Electricity is a most powerful force not fully known to modern science, yet used very much. The nervous, physical, and mental systems of man acting together are able to produce the same force exactly, and in a finer as well as subtler way and to as great a degree as the most powerful dynamo, so that the force might be used to kill, to alter, to move, or otherwise change any object or condition. This is the “vril” described by Bulwer Lytton in his *Coming Race*.

Nature exhibits to our eyes the power of drawing into one place with fixed limits any amount of material so as to produce the smallest natural object or the very largest. Out of the air she takes what is already there, and by compressing it into the limits of tree or animal form makes it visible to our material eyes. This is the power of condensing into what may be known as the ideal limits, that is, into the limits of the form which is ideal. Man has this same power, and can, when he knows the laws and the proper centres of force in himself, do precisely what Nature does. He can thus make visible and material what was before ideal and invisible by filling the ideal form with the matter condensed from the air. In his case the only difference from Nature is that he does quickly what she brings about slowly.³

That is why the real secrets of nature will not be revealed to the profane.

The “Little Exterminator” is an innocent-looking plain utensil having the shape of a modest jug. It contains neither dynamite nor powder, but secretes, nevertheless, a deadly gas, and has a hardly perceptible clock-work attached to its edge, the needle of which points to the time when that gas will effect its escape. In a shut-up room this new “vril” of lethal kind, will *smother to death, nearly instantaneously*, every living being within a distance of a hundred feet, the radius of the murderous jug. With these three “latest novelties” in the high season of Christian civilization, the catalogue of the dynamiters is closed; all the rest belongs to the old “fashion” of the past years. It consists of hats, *porte cigars*, bottles of ordinary kind, and even *ladies’ smelling bottles*, filled with dynamite, nitro-glycerine, *etc., etc.*, — weapons, some of which, following unconsciously Karmic law, killed many of the dynamiters in the last Chicago *revolution*. Add to this the forthcoming long-promised Keely’s vibratory force, capable of reducing in a few seconds a dead bullock to a heap of ashes, and then ask yourself if the *Inferno* of Dante as a locality can ever rival earth in the production of more hellish engines of destruction!

¹ [A class of Chaldaean Theurgists]

² *Secret Doctrine*, I p. xxxv

³ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (CONVERSATIONS ON OCCULTISM) IX pp. 400d-e; [commenting upon the centres or foci in us.]

Thus, if purely material implements are capable of blowing up, from a few corners, the greatest cities of the globe, provided the murderous weapons are guided by expert hands — what terrible dangers might not arise from magical *occult* secrets being revealed, and allowed to fall into the possession of ill-meaning persons! A thousand times more dangerous and lethal are these, because neither the criminal hand, nor the *immaterial*, invisible weapon used, can ever be detected.

The congenital *black* magicians — those who, to an innate propensity towards evil, unite highly-developed mediumistic natures — are but too numerous in our age. It is high time then that psychologists and believers, at least, should cease advocating the beauties of publicity and claiming knowledge of the secrets of nature for all. It is not in our age of “suggestion” and “explosives” that Occultism can open wide the doors of its laboratories except to those who *do* live the life.¹

For the destructive power of vril is not altogether a fiction.

Needless to remind our correspondent that what is said here, applies only to secrets the nature of which when revealed will not be turned into a weapon against humanity in general, or its units — men. Secrets of such class could not be given to anyone but a regular chela of many years’ standing and during his successive initiations; mankind as a whole has first to come of age, to reach its majority, which will happen but toward the beginning of its sixth race — before such mysteries can be safely revealed to it. The *vril* is not altogether a fiction, as some chelas and even “lay” chelas know.²

Its power can destroy in one moment whole armies.

In some respects the world is all the better for such ignorance. The secrets of nature generally cut both ways, and in the hands of the undeserving they are more than likely to become murderous. Who in our modern day knows anything of the real significance of, and the powers contained in, certain characters and signs — talismans — whether for beneficent or evil purposes? Fragments of the Runes and the writing of the Kischuph, found scattered in old mediaeval libraries; copies from the Ephesian and Milesian letters or characters; the thrice famous *Book of Thoth*, and the terrible treatises (still preserved) of Targes, the Chaldaean, and his disciple Tarchon, the Etruscan — who flourished long before the Trojan War — are so many names and appellations void of sense (though met with in classical literature) for the educated modern scholar. Who, in the nineteenth century, believes in the art, described in such treatises as those of Targes, of evoking and directing thunderbolts? Yet the same is described in the Brāhmanical literature, and Targes copied his “thunderbolts” from the *Astra*,³ those terrible engines of destruction known to the Mahābhāratan Āryans. A whole arsenal of dynamite bombs would pale before this art — if it ever becomes understood by the Westerners. It is from an old fragment that was translated to him, that the late Lord Bulwer-Lytton got his idea of Vril. It is a lucky thing, indeed, that, in the face of the virtues and philanthropy that grace our

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE BLESSINGS OF PUBLICITY) XIII pp. 217-18

² *ibid.*, (REPLY TO AN ENGLISH F.T.S.) V p. 143 *fn.*

³ This is a kind of magical bow and arrow calculated to destroy in one moment whole armies; it is mentioned in the *Rāmāyana*, the *Purānas* and elsewhere.

age of iniquitous wars, of anarchists and dynamiters, the secrets contained in the books discovered in Numa's tomb should have been burnt. But the science of Circē and Mēdea is not lost. One can discover it in the apparent gibberish of the Tāntrika *Sūtras*, the *Kuku-ma* of the Bhūtāni and the Sikkim Dugpas and “Red-caps” of Tibet, and even in the sorcery of the Nilgiri Mula-Kurumbas.¹ Very luckily few outside the high practitioners of the Left Path and of the Adepts of the Right — in whose hands the weird secrets of the real meaning are safe — understand the “black” evocations. Otherwise the Western as much as the Eastern Dugpas might make short work of their enemies. The name of the latter is legion, for the direct descendants of the antediluvian sorcerers hate all those who are not with them, arguing that, therefore, they are against them.²

A certain timepiece on the ethereal waves mentions the instantaneous destruction of 2,000,000 soldiers in the field.

Trembling with rapturous feelings, his heart overflowing with love and philanthropy, he rises to pour out a fiery speech that would become historic, when suddenly he finds his body gone, or, rather, it is replaced by another body. . . . Yes, it is no longer the tall, noble Form with which he is familiar, but the body of somebody else, of whom he as yet knows nothing. . . . Something dark comes between him and a great dazzling light, and he sees the shadow of the face of a gigantic timepiece on the ethereal waves. On its ominous dial he reads:

NEW ERA: 970,995 YEARS SINCE THE INSTANTANEOUS DESTRUCTION BY PNEUMODYNO-VRIL OF THE LAST 2,000,000 OF SOLDIERS IN THE FIELD, ON THE WESTERN PORTION OF THE GLOBE. 971,000 SOLAR YEARS SINCE THE SUBMERSION OF THE EUROPEAN CONTINENTS AND ISLES. SUCH ARE THE DECREE OF ORLOG AND THE ANSWER OF SKULD. . . .

He makes a strong effort and — is himself again. Prompted by the Soul-Ego to REMEMBER and ACT in conformity, he lifts his arms to Heaven and swears in the face of all nature to preserve peace to the end of his days — in his own country, at least.³

¹ [See “The Nilgiri Sannyasis” in our Living the Life Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE HEXAGON WITH THE CENTRAL POINT, OR THE SEVENTH KEY) XIV pp. 104-5

³ *ibid.*, (KARMIC VISIONS – XI) IX p. 338; [on the visions of real Ego, sitting as a spectator of the life of the hero. Excerpted from a remarkable and prophetic study of the workings of karmic law in European history from the fifth century onwards, written by H.P. Blavatsky twenty-six years before the First World War of 1914-18. Though not explicitly so stated, it is abundantly evident from the narrative that Blavatsky depicts the life and sufferings of Emperor Frederick III of Prussia, who was the same individual who earlier inhabited the body of Clovis, King of the Franks. See full text under the title “Blavatsky’s Karmic Visions” in our Secret Doctrine’s Second Proposition Series.]

Bovril is a beef extract, boasting of imaginary benefits.

Bovril is the trademark of a thick, salty meat extract, developed in the 1870s by John Lawson Johnston. It is sold in a distinctive, bulbous jar.

The first part of the product's name comes from the Greek *βους*, ox, bull (*bos*, in Latin). Johnston took the suffix *-vril* from Bulwer-Lytton's then popular novel, *The Coming Race* (1870), whose plot revolves around a superior race of people, the Vril-ya, who derive their powers from an electromagnetic substance named "Vril."¹

Sales of Bovril were first recorded in Britain in 1886, at the Colonial and Continental Exhibition at South Kensington. But when Samuel Herbert Benson, a former employee of Bovril Ltd, took over as the firm's advertising agent in the 1890s, business started to boom. His poster strategy, with designers working in close collaboration with copywriters, made Bovril a household name. Today, Bovril is made in Burton upon Trent, Staffordshire; it is owned and distributed by Unilever UK.

Bovril can be made into a drink by diluting with hot water, or less commonly, with milk. It can be used as a flavouring for soups, stews or porridge, or spread on bread, especially toast like Marmite.²



Here are some other Philaetheians' editions from the mighty pen of Lord Lytton, whose wit has spread farther than the English language with so many memorable phrases such as "the great unwashed," "the pursuit of the almighty dollar," "the pen is mightier than the sword," "dweller on the threshold," as well as the infamous opening line "It was a dark and stormy night."

- "A Strange Story by Bulwer-Lytton," in our Black versus White Magic Series.
- "Schiller's Ideal Life," in our Mystic Verse and Insights Series.
- "Zanoni by Bulwer-Lytton," in our Buddhas and Initiates Series.

¹ [Cf. Latin *vis*, force, power, might]

² Cf. Wikipedia