

Early accomplishments of the Theosophical Society



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Our declared objects and principles are not merely unobjectionable, but admirably calculated to do good to mankind. Yet, assorted conspirators and calumniators have kept a multitude of religiously-inclined persons from enjoying the happiness they would have had by understanding Theosophy as it really is, and making it the guiding rule of their conduct.

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Whatever else may be thought of Theosophy and its movement, time has at least proved that it is not the ephemeron the American and foreign press called it upon its first appearance. It seems to have come to occupy a permanent place in modern thought, thus vindicating the truth of Sir John Herschel's observation that "the grand, and, indeed, the only character of truth is its capability of enduring the test of universal experience, and coming unchanged out of every possible form of fair discussion."

Unfortunately, Theosophy has never yet had a "fair" chance; but that must come. It has been represented in a most grotesque light, travestied out of all resemblance. With few exceptions, even its friends have shown in their published writings an imperfect grasp of the subject. If it had been discussed upon its merits, apart from the personalities with which the movement has been associated, we cannot doubt that it would have had by this time a much wider vogue than it has. All the signs point that way. The most strenuous efforts of bigots, theological and scientific, and the employment of ridicule, sarcasm, misrepresentations, and denunciations by its opponents, have failed to check the growth of the Theosophical Society or its influence, or even to impede the expansion of the Theosophical idea throughout the world. Scarcely the most optimistic among the society's organizers dreamt of such success as has rewarded their labours. The little coterie of thoughtful men and women who met in an Irving Place parlour one summer evening in the year 1875 builded better than they (with their undeveloped foresight) knew, when they resolved to organize such an association.

Loyalty to our objects and principles

We are often asked, "What is the general object of the Theosophical Society? *Cui bono* all this outlay of labour, all that energy expended from its beginning to swim against the strong tide of public prejudice, sectarian hatred, and unpopularity? Of the three well-known objects of the Society,¹ not one but had, and has, its teachers and followers in the past as in the present. Your first object, namely, brotherhood of man, lies at the very basis of Christianity; your second is promoted by the Asiatic societies, the national museums, and all the Orientalists; your third may be allowed to remain in

¹ 1. Brotherhood of man;
2. Study of Oriental philosophies;
3. Investigation of the hidden forces in nature and man.

the hands of the men of science, who have already dissected Spiritualism and exploded mesmerism, and now, under the lead of the Society for Psychological Research, are disposing of the question of thought-transference, the phantasm of the living, and the Theosophical Society.”

We note the exception that the *cuckoo* S.P.R. hatched its first eggs in the nests of Theosophy and Spiritualism;¹ it evidently has the same relation to the scientific body as to its two foster-mothers, and can enjoy a superior intimacy only as a reward for its treachery to the latter and its sycophancy to materialistic science. In rejoinder to the first two assertions, the Theosophists would ask Christians and Orientalists what they were doing in their respective departments to realize practically our first two objects? Under correction, I must say that it has been all talk and theory. Has the Sermon on the Mount, all its moral beauty notwithstanding, caused so-called Christian nations to treat each other in the ideal Christian spirit, or to offer brotherhood to Asiatic and African nations and tribes, whom they have subdued by force of arms or wiles? And has the philosophical acumen of Professor Max Müller, who has been showing us for thirty years past that the same Āryan blood runs in the brown body of the Indian sepoy as under the blanched skin of the English lord and British grocer, prevented the dominant Anglo-Indian from giving the Queen-Empress’ Asiatic subjects cumulative proofs of his supreme disdain? The Theosophical Society has been called the Royal Asiatic Society *plus* philanthropy; and as the latter body lacks the instinct of brotherliness, and too often shows a disposition to sacrifice truth for theological predilection, its nearly a century of work has shed darkness instead of light upon the Āryan philosophies, religions, and sciences. As to our third object, it must be said of the work of the S.P.R., and the superior labour of the French hypnotists of Paris and Nancy, that these agencies, while accumulating a mass of important facts for future philosophers, have, with a very few honourable exceptions, tried their best to give a false interpretation to those phenomena that they could not dispose of on the theory of fraud. Their oblations have been all offered on the altar of the Moloch of materialism.

Since it is undeniable that this materialistic bias has been rapidly culminating under university influence during the past half-century, it is too evident that the creation of the Theosophical Society at the time when it arose was most timely, and a step toward the defence of *true* science and *true* religion against a Sciolism that was becoming more and more arrogant. The experiments of Charcot at the Salpêtrière have been so unsatisfactorily explained by the professors of his materialistic school that the appearance of the ancient esoteric philosophy in the arena of Western thought was a vital necessity. The conviction has already dawned upon the minds of some of the cleverest Western experimentalists that the “impassable chasm” and the “unknowable” of Messrs. Tyndall and Spencer can never be bridged or known by anything short of the Āryan esoteric doctrine. The cultured interest and popular curiosity that are shown in every country when a Theosophist or Theosophy comes to the

¹ The real originator and founder of the S.P.R. was “M.A. Oxon” (Mr. W. Stainton Moses), now the Editor of *Light*. It was he who, being then a member of the T.S., first proposed the formation of a society on the lines of the long-defunct *Dialectical Society* of London, for the investigation of abnormal phenomena. This gentleman must have regretted more than once his idea. The S.P.R., the progeny of Spiritualism and Theosophy, has proved itself a would-be parricide, though rather an unsuccessful one so far.

fore, and the universal popularity of Theosophical and mystical literature, which has enriched many publishers and writers, are indications of the despair and hope of Christendom — despair that science will ever read the puzzle of life; hope that the solution may be found in the secret doctrine.

Rekindling religious feeling and aspiration

The Theosophical Movement was a necessity of the age, and it has spread under its own inherent impulsion, and owes nothing, to adventitious methods. From the first it has had neither money, endowment, nor social or governmental patronage to count upon. It appealed to certain human instincts and aspirations, and held up a certain lofty ideal of perfectibility, with which the vested extraneous interests of society conflicted, and against which these were foredoomed to battle. Its strongest allies were the human yearnings for light upon the problem of life, and for a nobler conception of the origin, destiny, and potentialities of the human being. While materialism and its congener, secularism, were bent upon destroying not only theology and sectarian dogmatism, but even the religious conception of a diviner Self, Theosophy has aimed at uniting all broad religious people for research into the actual basis of religion and scientific proofs of the existence and permanence of the higher Self. Accepting thankfully the results of scientific study and exposure of theological error, and adopting the methods and maxims of science, its advocates try to save from the wreck of cults the precious admixture of truth to be found in each. Discarding the theory of miracles and supernaturalism, they endeavour to trace out the kinship of the whole family of world-faiths to each other, and their common reconciliation with science. The growing inclination of the public mind towards Theosophy seems to mark a reaction from the iconoclastic influence of Colonel Ingersoll's and Mr. Bradlaugh's school. Undoubtedly there are thousands of so-called Freethinkers who sincerely believe in personal annihilation at the death of the body; but it would seem from the fact of the recent conversion of Mrs. Annie Besant from secularism to Theosophy, and the discussions to which it has given rise, that there are also many persons enrolled as followers of the two great leaders above mentioned who are so from ignorance of the views included in the term Theosophy. We officers and fellows of the Theosophical Society are, therefore, encouraged to hope that, with the wider dissemination of the facts, we shall see very large accessions to our cause from the secularist rank. Surely this must be considered a gain by the friends of spirituality as opposed to materialism — those, at any rate, who think that morals, peace, and prosperity will be promoted by the universal belief in a life after death (whether eternal or broken up by a series of reincarnations on the same earth), and in man's possession of a higher, undying SELF, latent spiritual powers, and consciousness.

It is the worse for the public, particularly for the religious feelings of the public, that the organs of sectarian bigotry should have succeeded so well by perversion of fact, frenzied calumny, and downright falsehood, in making our cause and the Society appear in such a fake light during the past fourteen years. Nor are the clerical organs alone in this undignified and useless work; for the weeklies of the Spiritualists in the United States are just as bitter and as untruthful in their ceaseless denunciation of Theosophy. The virulence and vituperations of the intellectual apostles of the "spirit-guides" and "controls" from the "Summerland" have grown proportionately to the

growth of the Theosophical Society. The effects of the last convention held by the American Theosophists at Chicago, on April 29th and 30th of the present year,¹ furnish a brilliant example of this blind and ferocious hatred. Such was the decided and unprecedented success of the last gathering that even the leading papers of Chicago and other cities had to admit the fact, finding almost for the first time naught but words of sympathy for the Theosophists. Alone the organs of disembodied “angels” poured as unsuccessfully as ever their vials of wrath, mockery, and brutal slander, upon us. But we heed them not. Why should we? The utmost malignity and basest treachery have not been able either to controvert our ideas, belittle our objects, disprove the reasonableness of our methods, or fasten upon us a selfish or dishonest motive. And as our declared principles are not merely unobjectionable, but admirably calculated to do good to mankind, these conspirators and calumniators have simply kept a multitude of religiously-inclined persons from enjoying the happiness they would have had by understanding Theosophy as it really is, and making it the guiding rule of their conduct.

If justice be the law of nature, and injustice a transitory evil, direful must, indeed, be the retribution these misguided people have invoked upon their own heads. The suffering we have been made to endure has but served as discipline, and taught us to turn the more loyally toward the esoteric doctrine for comfort and encouragement.

My present theme being the recent progress of our Movement, the situation may best be illustrated by reference to statistics. To avoid prolixity, we may begin with the year 1884, when the raid upon us was made by the London Society for Psychological Research. From the official report of that year it appears that on the 31st of December, 1884, there were in existence, in all parts of the world, 104 chartered branches of the Theosophical Society. In the year 1885, as an answer to our calumniators, seventeen new charters were issued; in 1886, fifteen; in 1887, twenty-two; in 1888, twenty-one; and up to the 1st of September, 1889, seventeen. To the 31st of December, 1888, six charters had been rescinded, leaving 173 still valid; and if the new ones of 1888 be added, there would be a gross total of 190 chartered branches, from which would have to be deducted any cancellations reported during the last twelve-month. But we have heard of none. On the contrary, up to June, 1890, we find on our books upward of 200 branches. In England, a country where Theosophy has to work uphill more than in any other place, three years ago there was but one solitary branch — the “London Lodge” of the Theosophical Society, with about 150 members in it. Since the arrival of the present writer in England, and the establishment of the “Blavatsky Lodge,” in June, 1887 (which has now upward of 300 members and associates), twelve branches of the Theosophical Society have been established in various centres of Great Britain, and the number of members is daily increasing. The growth of our society in this conservative country has been more marvellous in comparison than even in the United States of America. The growth since the raid of 1884 has, therefore, been at the rate of about nineteen new charters per annum, and the final computation of 1889 will show as great an increment. Dividing 104 — the sum total up

¹ There are at the present day *thirty-eight* chartered branches of the Theosophical Society in the United States, and the activity on the Pacific Coast in this direction is very remarkable.

[See “Open Letters to the American Convention” in our Blavatsky Speaks Series. — ED. PHIL.]

to the close of 1884 — by 10, the number of years since the society's foundation, we get an average annual growth of 10.4 branches; whence it appears that, so far from being crushed out of existence, as the organizers of the raid had fondly hoped might be the result, the Theosophical Society has very largely increased its average rate of expansion, geographically and numerically. It is useless to remind the American reader of the unrelenting, systematic persecution to which the writer of these lines — and through her, Theosophy — is, and has been for years, subjected in the American press, by enemies as persevering as they are base. And if no conspiracy, no attack, could ever seriously shake the society or impede its movement, nothing ever will. We only thankfully repeat, slightly paraphrasing it, the Christian adage now so applicable to our movement, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of Theosophy." Its society has done too much good work, the good grain is much too evident even in the piles of admitted chaff, not to have built a secure foundation for the temple of truth in the immediate, as in the distant, future.

For, see, the literature of Theosophy is growing rapidly. We have seven principal centres of publication — Madras, Bombay, Ceylon (Colombo), Stockholm, London, Paris, and New York. The Stockholm branch, founded hardly a year ago, has far over one hundred members, and our literature in Sweden is spreading rapidly. Little Ceylon had twenty-one branches three months ago, and may have more now. Madras is the general headquarters of the society, the official residence of the President and executive staff, and the office of *The Theosophist* is there. At Bombay we have a "Theosophical Publication Fund," created and managed by Mr. Tookaram Tatya, a Hindu Theosophist, which brings out important works in Sanskrit and English; an enterprise spoken of with great praise by Professor Max Müller in a letter published both in *The Theosophist* and *Lucifer*. In London there is a "Theosophical Publishing Society," which brings out the magazine *Lucifer* (edited by Mrs. Annie Besant and myself) and a series of pamphlets called the "T.P.S.," issued fortnightly, and many new theosophical works. Following the good example set to us by the Āryan Theosophical Society of New York — the headquarters of the theosophical movement in America — a committee was formed in London last May for the wide distribution through the post of leaflets on theosophical doctrines, each member taking charge of a definite district. During the first month of the establishment of the "tract-mailing scheme" at New York, the Āryan Theosophical Society has distributed over 150,000 papers on Theosophy and its doctrines. In Paris another monthly was started a year ago, the *Revue Théosophique*, edited by myself, and managed by the Countess d'Adhémar; and now another theosophical magazine has appeared — *Le Lotus Bleu* — since March, also edited by myself, and managed by Arthur Arnould, a well-known journalist in Paris, and the President of the Theosophical Society of Paris, "l'Hermès." In New York we have *The Path*, whose editor, Mr. W.Q. Judge, published also a number of books and pamphlets. The existence of these centres shows undeniably that our movement is constantly on the increase, and that all interested and malicious reports to the contrary are without foundation.

But it is our Adyar Library, founded by the loving labour of our President, Colonel H.S. Olcott, which is the crown and glory of the Theosophical Society. Though only three years old, it has already acquired a large collection of Oriental works of the greatest value — 3,046 volumes — besides over 2,000 works in European languages,

and a number of rare palm leaf manuscripts. In the words of our learned librarian, Pundit N. Bhāshyāchārya:¹

. . . In the department of Buddhistic Literature it is richer than any Library in India, and probably equal to most in Western countries. From Mrs. Dias-Ilangakoon, F.T.S. of Matara, Ceylon, it has received the noble present of a complete set of the Pāli version of the *Tripitakas*, engraved on palm leaves and comprising 60 volumes with nearly 5,000 pages. Twelve stylus-writers were employed during two years in copying the volumes from the unique collection at Merissa . . . The collection cost Mrs. Ilangakoon nearly Rs. 3,500. The Jodo sect of Japanese Buddhists presented Col. Olcott with a complete set of the Chinese versions of the *Tripitakas* in 418 volumes, on silk paper. Other Japanese and Chinese religious works, explanatory of the tenets of all the Japanese sects, were presented to him to the number of 1,057 volumes. And these are supplemented by 22 scroll paintings on silk and paper, illustrative of the same subject . . . [among which] are two on silk that are said to be over 800 years old, and one a MS. said to be 350 years old, that is written in fine gold ink upon a scroll of some very smooth black paper, thirty three feet in length, and mounted on a roller tipped with gold and crystal. There is also a large picture upon which, painted in vivid colours and drawn in the most careful detail, are 137 scenes in the life of the Founder of the Jodo sect. There is also an ancient biography of the Adept-Founder of the Yamabushi, or fraternity of phenomena workers, and a scroll portrait of himself attended by some fire elementals whom he seems to have subjugated to his trained will. Dr. Bigelow, of Tokyo [late of Boston], kindly gave a photograph of a bronze group representing Kobo-dai-shi, the Adept-Founder of Shin-gon sect, attended by two little elementals who are serving him as messengers and domestics.²

All of which shows that the theosophical scapegoat, H.P. Blavatsky, has *invented* neither Adept-fraternities nor “elementals,” their existence having been known in Japan, China, and India for long centuries.

Such are a few of the unique treasures in books and antiquities of the Adyar Library of the T.S., “got together under the greatest difficulties of total lack of pecuniary endowment and public patronage,” and which “has received from no Government as yet so much as a single book or one rupee.” And that noble library will survive the founders and all present members of the Theosophical Society, and go on speaking of the work done when many other things are forgotten.

Having cast a hasty glance at the general aspect of the society as it stands at the present moment, I may be permitted to state very briefly the three broad principles upon which it is building up, and then recapitulate the results actually achieved under each heading.

¹ Unfortunately just dead.

² *Vide* the learned and interesting article of Pundit N. Bhāshyāchārya, Director of the Oriental Section of the Adyar Library, in *The Theosophist*, Vol. X, No. 119, August 1889, pp. 685-88.

The three officially-declared objects of our society

- 1 To form the nucleus of a universal brotherhood of humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour.
- 2 To promote the study of Āryan and other Eastern literatures, religions, philosophies, and sciences.
- 3 A third object, pursued by a portion of the fellows of the society, is to investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the psychic powers of man.

Two general objects, one restricted object, of attention.

① Everyone entering the society is supposed to sympathize with the theory of essential brotherhood; a kinship which exists on the plane of the higher self, not on that of the racial, social, and mental dissimilarities and antipathies. These elements of discord pertain to the physical man and are the result of unequal development under the law of evolution. We believe the human body to be but the shell, cover, or veil of the real entity; and those who accept the esoteric philosophy and the theory of “Karma” (the universal law of ethical causation) believe that the entity, as it travels around certain major and minor cycles of existence with the whole mass of human beings, takes on a different body at birth, and shells it off at death, under the operation of this Karmic law. Yet though it may thus clothe and reclothe itself a thousand times in a series of reincarnations, the entity is unchanged and unchangeable, being of a divine nature, superior to all environments on the earthly plane. It is the physical body only which has racial type, colour, sex, hatreds, ambitions, and loves. So then, when we postulate the idea of universal brotherhood, we wish it understood that it is held in no Utopian sense, though we do not dream of realizing it at once on the ordinary plane of social or national relations. Most assuredly, if this view of the kinship of all mankind could gain universal acceptance, the improved sense of moral responsibility it would engender would cause most social evils and international asperities to disappear; for a true altruism, instead of the present egoism, would be the rule the world over. So we have written down as the first of our declared objects this altruistic asseveration, and have been working practically to bring about a beginning of the better law.

② The second of our declared objects speaks so plainly for itself that I need not dwell upon it, save in the most casual way. The founders of the Theosophical Society thought they had the best reason to believe that there existed, locked up in the ancient literatures of India, Ceylon, Tibet, China, Japan, and other Eastern countries, a very large body of truth which would be most important and valuable to the present generation, if it could be got at. The best agents to employ in this work were the Oriental scholars who knew the ancient languages, especially those — if any could be found — who had learned the concealed meaning of the names, figures, and expressions with which Asiatic writing teem, and which are the despair of our Western Orientalists. These savants are priests of various religions and pandits, or professors, in a number of philosophical Eastern schools of thought. They had never before worked together in the interest of the whole family of mankind, so antagonistic are their personal views and so mutually contradictory their several religions and philosophical

books. No scheme of cooperation between them could be carried out save upon the line defined in our first declared object — that is to say, upon the theory of the universal relationship of all mankind on the plane of the higher self, and the policy of not meddling with what concerns only the mutual relations of the lower self, the physical man. It shall be shown presently how this part of our scheme has worked.

③ Observe the third declaration, that only a portion of our fellows occupy themselves with the study of the occult properties of matter and the physical powers of man. The society as a whole, then, is not concerned in this branch of research. And naturally; for out of every ten thousand people one may meet, the chances are that but a very small minority have the time, taste, or ability to take up such delicate and baffling studies. Those who do are born mystics, and, of course, natural Theosophists; a Theosophist being one who seeks after divine wisdom — *i.e.*, the comprehension of the ultimate causes of force, correlation, and psychic development, the method of solving all life's riddles. Persons of this temperament cannot be bigots; they chafe under the sectarian yoke, and their hearts warm with sympathy for all who suffer, who groan under the social burdens resulting from ignorance, for all of any race, creed, or colour, who aspire after knowledge. These men are true Theosophists, the brothers of humanity, and, in their complete development, the spiritual exemplars, guides, teachers, benefactors, of our race. We thought it a good thing to proclaim this line of research and self-discovery as the third of our three objects. For those who are interested in it, and all inquirers whom they reach and encourage, have the mystical philosophical books of the present and former times been written. To the general public these books are caviar.

Accomplishments in India and the far East

Taking the three divisions of our objects in order, let us see what has actually been accomplished during the fourteen years of the Theosophical Society's existence. The compilation shall be made from official documents and be capable of verification at any time. First, as regards object number one, let it be noticed that we have done things on the broadest possible scale, dealing with nations in the mass as well as with individuals or small groups. Colonel Olcott and I removed from New York to Bombay at the beginning of the year 1879, at which time we had just established relations between Western students of Oriental mysticism, and a few educated Hindus and Sinhalese. In the East we found division between sects, castes, and races; the ancient religions neglected, and by the educated classes unappreciated; the pride of race, reverence for ancestors, and patriotic spirit almost extinguished. Now the traveller will be struck with the brotherliness which has begun to prevail; the resuscitation of interest in ancestral character, achievements, and literature; and a fervour of patriotism which has culminated in the formation of the Indian National Congress — a political body with which our society has no connection, though it was originated by our fellows, Indian and Anglo-Indian. Soon after our arrival at Bombay our society began to grow, branches rapidly sprang up, and it became necessary to hold annual conventions of delegates representing the new widely-expanded society Responsive to the President's call, thirty odd branches sent as their representatives Hindu, Parsī, Buddhist, Mohammedan, Hebrew, and Christian fellows to the first convention at Bombay. The spectacle was unique in Indian history, and provoked wide journalistic

comment. At the public meeting in Framji Cowasji Institute the platform was successively occupied by speakers of the above-named religions, who vied with each other in fervent declaration of mutual tolerance and good will, to the accompaniment of tumultuous applause from the audience. Thus the clear note of universal brotherhood was struck and the evangel of religious tolerance declared in a part of the world where previously there had been only sectarian hatred and selfish class egotism. This was in 1882. Annually since then the convention has met as a parliamentary body to transact the society's business, and not the least sectarian or race discord has occurred. The whole of India became leavened with the benign influence emanating from these meetings, through the agency of the delegates in their respective states and nations; and when the political agitation began, the National Congress that was called was modelled upon our lines, and officered and managed mainly by our own fellows who had served as delegates in our conventions.

Besides helping to weave this golden web of brotherhood throughout India, our society has extended its filaments from that centre to Ceylon, Burma, Siam, and Japan, bringing these people into fraternal relations with the Hindus, though of a different religion, and creating channels for international intercourse upon religious and educational subjects. In those countries, also, we have sown the same seed of good will, and in Ceylon we are already reaping the harvest. In that evergreen, paradisiacal isle of the sea we have revived and begun to purify Buddhism, established high schools, taken some fifty minor schools under our supervision, circulated literature in all parts of the island, induced the Government to proclaim Buddha's birthday a public holiday, founded two journals, created a printing office, and brought the Sinhalese Buddhists into direct relations with their Japanese coreligionists.

Accomplishments in Europe

This is what we have done in India and the far East. As to Europe, as we began to work in earnest here only three years ago, the effects began to be hardly perceived as yet. Still in London, in the very centre of the most luxurious materialism, we have founded in the East End the first Working-Women's Club, wholly free from theological creeds and conditions. Hitherto all such efforts have been sectarian, and have imposed special religious beliefs; ours is based on *brotherhood* alone, and recognizes no difference in creed as a barrier. When the club opens, a few weeks hence, the members will find themselves in a bright and pleasant home, with books, papers and music at hand, and a band of their better-educated sisters will take in rotation, night after night, the duty of helping and guiding — not controlling — the evening recreation. Only those who know the dreary lives of our poor East-End girls, with temptation lurking in every form of amusement within their reach, will understand the brotherly nature of the service thus rendered to them. We (the cultured classes) make outcasts of these less fortunate members of our family, set them in a special part of the town, amid squalid surroundings and coarsening influences; and we then complain that their roughness shocks our refinement, their brutality jars on our delicacy! Here, then, against class division, as in India against caste division, the Theosophical Society proclaims the Brotherhood of Man.

Revival of Oriental literature

As regards the revival of Oriental literature, the whole press of India, Ceylon, and Japan unqualifiedly gives us the credit of having done more in that direction than any other agency of modern times. We have not only helped to revive in India the ancient *Tols*, or pandit-schools of Sanskrit literature and philosophy, and to reawaken reverence for the class of real Yogis, or saintly devotees, but we have created a demand for reprints and translations of ancient Sanskrit classics, which is being met by the frequent issues of works of this class at Calcutta, Bombay, Benares, Lucknow, Lahore, Madras, and other Indian literary centres.

Among the most important are the *Vedas*, *Bhagavad-Gita* the writings of Śamkara, Patañjali, and other renowned Āryan philosophers and mystics. The Asiatic people have publicly testified most unqualifiedly their gratitude and respect to us for what we have done on the lines of the second of our declared objects. Nor should it be overlooked that the prevalent interest in Theosophy and mystical Oriental philosophy in general, which the most casual observer is forced to see throughout Europe and America, is directly or indirectly the result of our society's activity. With thirty-eight branches in the United States, and others in various European countries, among whose members are men and women of high culture, including many writers for the press, it is easy enough to comprehend the justness of the above claim. Of course it is not for me to say how much, if anything, the books I have myself written, and the magazines I have edited and am editing in English and French, have helped to cause this new bent of the Western mind. Suffice it that it exists. For Theosophists it is the presage of the dawn of a new religious day for the world, the harbinger of a new marriage between science and religion, and of peace between the good people of the most incongruous sects — as the world thinks them.

Investigation of hidden forces in nature and man

Now as to the third object on our list. Properly speaking, the term “psychical research” should include the whole of the great movement known as modern Spiritualism. But the subject is too vast to be dealt with in the closing paragraphs of an article. Suffice it to say that many investigators have been led to discriminate much more closely between the various classes of phenomena, while much has been done to weaken the sentimental, but unphilosophical, superstition which made the “Spirits” of the departed the suffering spectators of the follies and crimes of the living. For details as to the conclusions we have arrived at on this subject, the reader must be referred to *The Key to Theosophy*, wherein the question is dealt with at length. At least we may claim to have placed before the thinking public a logical, coherent, and philosophical scheme of man's origin, destiny, and evolution — a scheme pre-eminent above all for its rigorous adherence to justice. And, that we may broaden our criterion of truth, our research extends to an inquiry into the nature of the less known forces, cosmic and psychical. Upon such themes many of our books have been written, and many of our reprints of ancient works, with or without commentaries, have been selected with reference to the light they throw upon these *quaestiones vexatae*.¹

¹ [vexing questions]

In one word, our whole aim and desire are to help, in at least some degree, toward arriving at correct scientific views upon the nature of man, which carry with them the means of reconstructing for the present generation the deductive metaphysical or transcendental philosophy which alone is the firm, unshakable foundation of every religious philosophy. Theosophy, the universal solvent, is fulfilling its mission; the opalescent tints of the dawn of modern psychology are blending together, and will all be merged into the perfect daylight of truth, when the sun-orb of Eastern esotericism has mounted to its noon-stage. For many a long year the “great orphan,” Humanity, has been crying aloud in the darkness for guidance and for light. Amid the increasing splendours of a progress purely material, of a science that nourished the intellect, but left the spirit to starve, Humanity, dimly feeling its origin and presaging its destiny, has stretched out towards the East empty hands that only a *spiritual* philosophy can fill. Aching from the divisions, the jealousies, the hatreds, that rend its very life, it has cried for some sure foundation on which to build the solidarity it senses, some metaphysical basis from which its loftiest social ideals may rise secure. Only the Masters of the Eastern wisdom can set that foundation, can satisfy at once the intellect and the spirit, can guide Humanity safely through the night to “the dawn of a larger day.”

Such is the goal which Theosophy has set itself to attain; such is the history of the modern movement; such is the work which Theosophy has already accomplished in this nineteenth century.

