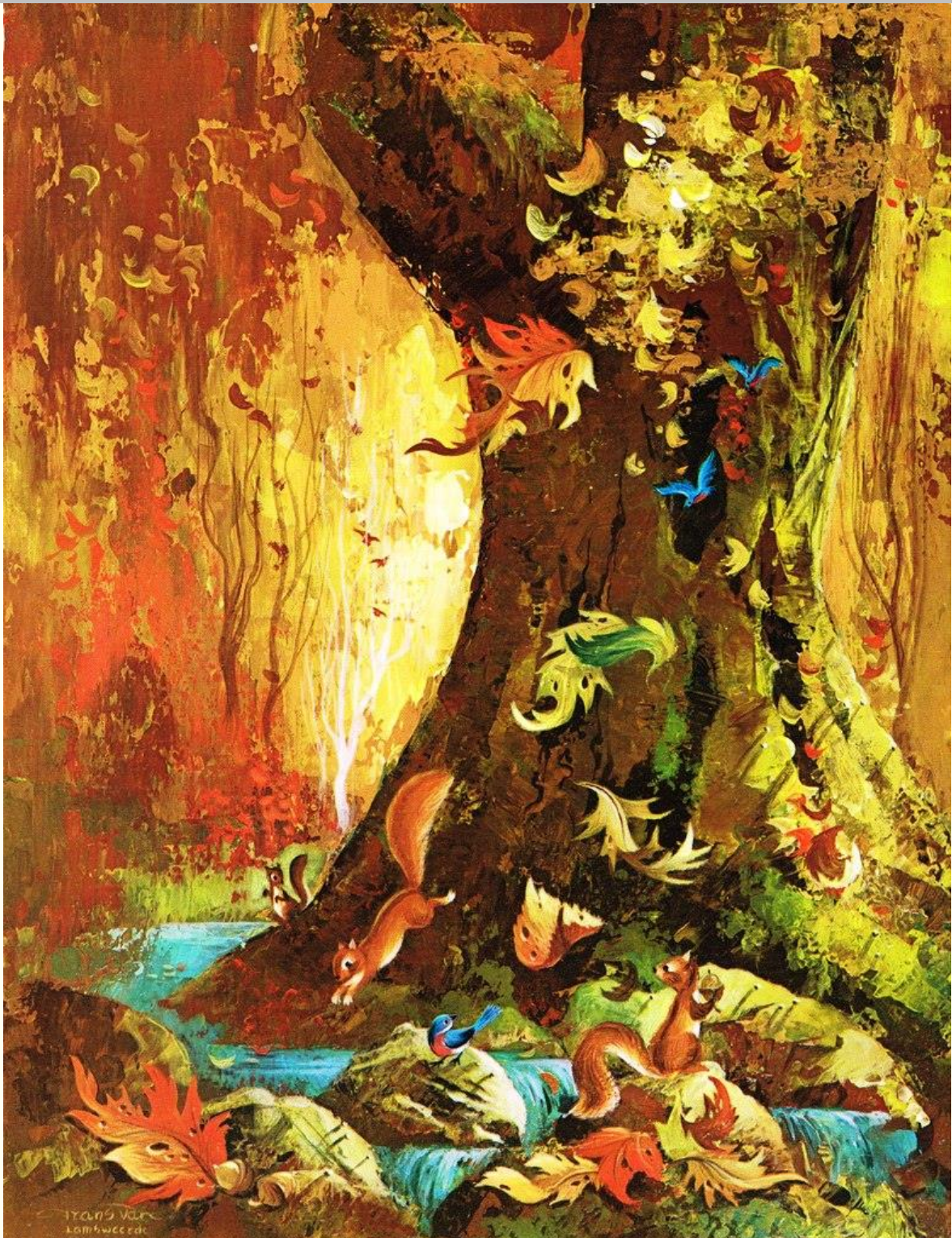


*Psychometry is the natural
but latent faculty in us.*



Madame Blavatsky on the natural but latent faculty in us, by which the inner self cognizes the dynamic world of causes.

Not only are the images of the past in the picture galleries of Akasha, but also the sounds of past voices, even the perfumes of archaic flowers, withered ages ago, and the aromas of fruits that hung on trees when man was but a mumbling savage, and polar ice, a mile thick, covered what are now the fairest countries under the sun.

Even upon the walls of our most private apartments, where we think the eye of intrusion is altogether shut out and our retirement can never be profaned, there exist the vestiges of all our acts, silhouettes of whatever we have done.

First published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. IV (10), July 1883, pp. 239-40. Republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, ("THE SOUL OF THINGS") IV pp. 554-57.¹

Ten years ago, Professor William Denton,² an Anglo-American geologist and a man of marked intellectual capacity, issued in collaboration with his equally gifted wife, a work in three volumes, bearing the title which heads the present article.³ It is a record of extensive researches into the origin of things visible, or the world noumenal. No laboratory instruments or processes were employed in this research; there was neither furnace, nor crucible, nor flask, nor chemical, nor lens availed of, and yet this book contains facts with respect to the hidden half of nature which equal, if they do not outvie, in interest and suggestive importance any discovery in the science of objective phenomena reported to any learned association. The researches of the Dentons have done especially much good to students of Āryan science, for they link in with, and give the key to the previously puzzling mysticism of the *Atharva Veda* and subsequent works on occult science. The agency employed was Psychometry, and Psychometry (soul-measuring) is a Greek word to express the faculty — natural, but

¹ Title page illustration by Frans Van Lamsweerde.

² [William Denton, 1823–1883, born in Darlington, England. Professor of Geology in Boston, famous for his research in Psychometry that begun for the purpose of controlling Joseph Rhodes Buchanan's experiments. His sister, Anna Denton Cridge, developed the gift of giving descriptions of character, surroundings, and personal appearance, to the colour of the hair and eyes, of the writers of letters she held in her hand. William Denton married to Elizabeth Melissa Foote, 1826–1916.]

³ [William Denton & Elizabeth Melissa Foote-Denton, *The Soul of Things, or Psychometric Researches and Discoveries*. Boston: Walker, Wise & Co., 1863. A revised edition, with an introduction by a clergyman of the Church of England, was published in London under the title *Nature's Secrets, or Psychometric Researches* by Houlston & Wright, also in 1863. Two more volumes by the first author only, were added and all three volumes were published in Boston by W. Denton, 1873–1874. An eighth and revised edition of *The Soul of Things*, was published in Wellesley, Mass. by Denton Publishing Co., in 1888. — ED. PHIL.]

ordinarily latent in us — by which the inner self cognizes the things of the spiritual (or, if you please, dynamic) world of causes. This faculty was strong in Mrs. Denton, her son, and members of Professor Denton’s own family, and the two [555] former especially developed their psychometrical powers to a marvellous degree. If any object — a letter, bit of clothing, fragment of stone or other material from a building, or of a geological specimen, etc., — was given them to clasp in their hands or hold against the middle of their foreheads — an inch above the line of the eyebrows — they would at once come into sympathy with the *Ākāśa*, or soul, of the person or thing with whom or which the object had been in relation, and describe the same. Step by step, these researches proved the truth of the old Āryan dogma that the *Ākāśa* (Ether) is the cradle and grave of objective nature; and that it holds imperishably the records of everything that ever existed, every phenomenon that ever occurred in the outer world. The hypothesis of physical science was thus endorsed and enlarged, and a bridge of one span flung across the “unfathomable chasm” seen by the great Tyndall to lie between the visible and invisible worlds. Professor Denton was not the modern discoverer of Psychometry; that honour is due to Professor J.R. Buchanan, M.D., an American anthropologist of eminence and a fellow of our Society.¹ It is one of the great merits of this science that its researches may be carried on without risk to the “patient,” and without throwing him or her into the state of mesmeric unconsciousness. At first, says Professor Denton in his book,

. . . the sensitive, or psychometer, is generally a merely passive spectator, like one who sits and observes a panorama; but in time he becomes able to influence the visions — to pass them along rapidly, or retain them longer for a close examination. Then the psychometer, at times, dwells in that past whose history seems to be contained in the specimen . . . [At last he] becomes released even from the specimen. At will he leaves the room, passes out into the air, looks down upon the city, sees the earth beneath him like a map, or, sailing still higher beholds the round world rolling into darkness or sunlight beneath him. He drops upon island or continent, watches the wild tribes of Africa, explores the desert interior of Australia, or solves the problem of the earth’s mysterious poles. He can do more than this: he becomes master of the ages. At his command the past of island and continent come up like ghosts from the infinite night; and he sees what they were and how they were, what forms tenanted them, and marks their first human visitants; seeing the growth of a continent, and its fruitage in humanity, within the boundary of a little [556] hour . . . the universe scarcely holds a secret that [the freed spirit] cannot behold with open eye.²

¹ [Note to Students: Consult Joseph Rodes Buchanan’s magnum opus, *Therapeutic Sarcognomy. The application of Sarcognomy, the science of the soul, brain and body, to the therapeutic philosophy and treatment of bodily and mental diseases by means of electricity, nervaura, medicine and hæmospasia, with a review of authors on animal magnetism and massage and presentation of new instruments for electro-therapeutics*. Boston: J.G. Cupples Co., 1891. — ED. PHIL.]

² William Denton, *The Soul of Things; or, Psychometric Researches and Discoveries*. Vol. II, pp. 28-29. [William Denton & Elizabeth Melissa Foote-Denton, *The Soul of Things, or Psychometric Researches and Discoveries*. Boston: Walker, Wise & Co., 1863. A revised edition, with an introduction by a clergyman of the Church of England, was published in London under the title *Nature’s Secrets, or Psychometric Researches* by Houlston & Wright, also in 1863. Two more volumes by the first author only, were added and all three volumes were published in Boston by W. Denton, 1873–1874. An eighth and revised edition of *The Soul of Things*, was published in Wellesley, Mass. by Denton Publishing Co., in 1888. — ED. PHIL.]

Professor Denton estimates that the psychometric faculty is possessed by at least one white female in ten, and one man in twenty. Doubtless the percentage would be even I greater among Asiatics.

The Psychometer, as we have remarked, does not have to be mesmerized for the exercise of the power. His eyes should be closed, the better to help concentration of thought upon the psychic observations. Says Professor Denton:

Otherwise he appears to be in a perfectly normal condition during the time, and can readily notice what takes place in the room; frequently laying down the specimen, joining in the conversation, or drawing objects seen and then going on with the examination. When the specimen is in powder, it is merely necessary to stroke the forehead with as much as will cling to a damp finger; and where heavenly bodies are examined the rays are allowed to shine upon the forehead. [p. 33]

Thus it will be seen that with a copy of Professor Denton's book in hand, a committee of a Branch Society has the means of easily pursuing research of the most interesting and profitable kind into a domain where not merely the secrets of Āryan history, but of the history of our planet and all its mutations are recorded imperishably. Says Professor J.W. Draper, one of the ablest scientists and most brilliant writers who have adorned our present age:

A shadow never falls upon a wall without leaving thereupon a permanent trace, a trace which might he made visible by resorting to proper processes. . . . Upon the walls of our most private apartments, where we think the eye of intrusion is altogether shut out and our retirement can never be profaned, there exist the vestiges of all our acts, silhouettes of whatever we have done.¹

It is a crushing thought to whoever has committed secret crime, that the picture of his deed and the very echoes of his words may be seen and heard countless years after he has gone the way of all flesh, and left a reputation for [557] "respectability" to his children. To members of our Society the idea should come home with peculiar weight, since they live, act, speak, and even think under the observation of these MASTERS from whom no secrets of nature can be hidden if they choose to explore her arcana. There have been several cases among us of self-reformation due mainly to the conviction of this fact, and if the resources of Psychometry were but suspected generally there would be many more. For it is proved that not only are the images of the Past in "the fadeless picture galleries of the Ākāśa," but also the sounds of past voices, even the perfumes of archaic flowers, withered ages ago, and the aromas of fruits that hung on trees when man was but a mumbling savage, and polar ice, a mile thick, covered what are now the fairest countries under the sun. We have been the means of putting more than seventy copies of *The Soul of Things* into circulation in India and hope to put seven hundred more. And we also hope to be soon able to introduce to the acquaintance of our Indian friends the author himself, who has just

¹ John William Draper, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*. New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1875, pp. 132-33

CONSTITUTION OF MAN SERIES
ON A NATURAL BUT LATENT FACULTY IN US

completed a highly successful lecturing season in Australia, and will take India on his way home to America.¹



¹ Among his lectures was one on Psychometry, a condensed report of which we find in the *Liberal* (Sydney) of February 10th, and which we copy, as follows: . . . [See *The Theosophist*, Vol. IV (10), July 1883, p. 240.]

Suggested reading for students.



On the soul of the spiritual man lit by its own light.

Insights to our divine ancestry and human nature may be gleaned from the following titles in the same series:

- A CONGENITAL PREPONDERANCE OF FIRE ELEMENTALS
- ANCIENT BELIEFS IN THE IMMORTALITY OF SOUL
- ANCIENT OPINIONS UPON PSYCHIC BODIES
- APOLLONIUS COMFORTS A BEREAVED FATHER
- ASTRAL BODIES OR DOPPELGÄNGERS
- ATMAN IS A RAY FROM A SPARK OF UNCREATED RAY
- BLAVATSKY ON AETHROBACY AND FAKIRS
- BLAVATSKY ON OCCULT DEVELOPMENT
- BLAVATSKY ON THE DUAL ASPECT OF WISDOM
- BLAVATSKY ON THREE ESSAYS BY É. LÉVI
- BLOOD IS THE FIRST INCARNATION OF UNIVERSAL FLUID
- CHINESE BELIEFS ABOUT THE HUMAN SOUL
- CICERO'S DREAM OF SCIPIO AND MACROBIUS' COMMENT
- CLASSIFICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES IN MAN
- COMMON-MISCONCEPTIONS-OF-THEOSOPHICAL-DOCTRINES
- CONCERNING THE DOCTRINES OF THE THEOSOPHISTS
- CONSTITUTION OF MAN - DRAWING
- CONSTITUTION OF MAN - ESOTERIC
- CONSTITUTION OF MAN - OVERVIEW
- COSMOS AND DEITY IN MAN - DRAWING
- DAS' SCIENCE OF THE EMOTIONS (1908)
- DEATH AND IMMORTALITY
- DEATH AND POST-MORTEM STATES
- DEATH HAS NO TERRORS

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- DREAMLESS SLEEP
- ELIPHAS LEVI ON DEATH AND SATAN
- EMOTIONS' TRIUNE NATURE
- EVOLUTIONARY TRANSMIGRATION OF MATERIAL PARTICLES IN NATURE
- FACING SEVEN VIRGINS IN THE HALL OF JUDGMENT
- FROM THE STRONGHOLD OF YOUR SOUL, CHASE ALL YOUR FOES AWAY
- HAIR IS THE RETAINER OF PRANA
- IN DEEP SLEEP WE DREAM NO MORE AND CONFABULATE WITH THE STARS
- IS SUICIDE A CRIME
- JUDGE ON THE INNER CONSTITUTION OF MAN
- JUDGE ON THE OCCULT NATURE OF MAN
- LÉVI ON DEATH BEING THE BIRTH-PANG OF LIFE
- LIFE IS AN INDESTRUCTIBLE UNIVERSAL FORCE
- LOW BUFFOONERY AND MOCKING LAUGHS
- LYMPH IS A MASQUE FOR NYMPH
- NEED OF A SPIRITUAL VOCABULARY
- NO NEED FOR EXPENSIVE FUNERALS
- NOUS AUGOEIDES OF THE NEOPLATONISTS
- NOUS MOVES MAN
- OEDIPUS AND SPHINX UNRIDDED
- OSIRIS AND TYPHON, HIGHER TRIAD AND LOWER TETRAD
- PLATO ON THE APPLE OF THE EYE
- PLATO'S TWO HORSES
- PLUTARCH COMFORTS APOLLONIUS
- PLUTARCH COMPARING PASSIONS AND DISEASES – TR. WHITE
- PLUTARCH ON BOASTED WISDOM, FORTITUDE, MAGNANIMITY, AND TEMPERANCE
- PLUTARCH ON EXERCISES PROPER FOR A SCHOLAR
- PLUTARCH ON PLATO'S PROCREATION OF THE SOUL
- POST-MORTEM WANDERINGS OF THE WICKED SOUL
- PREMATURE AND PHENOMENAL GROWTHS
- PSYCHOLOGY LACKS ENTIRELY KNOWLEDGE OF THE SOUL
- REAL DREAMS ARE ACTIONS OF THE TRUE SELF

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- SEPTENARY IS THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN
- SIXTH SENSE IS REASON OVER INSTINCT
- SPECULATIONS ABOUT REINCARNATION AND MATERIALIZED SPIRITS
- SPIRIT AND PERISPIRIT
- SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHS ARE OBJECTIVE COPIES FROM SUBJECTIVE IMAGES
- SUBBA ROW ON KAMA-LOKA
- SUBBA ROW ON THE SEVENFOLD PRINCIPLE IN MAN
- SUBBA ROW ON THOUGHT TRANSFERENCE
- SYNESIUS CONCERNING DREAMS
- THE AQUILINE NOSE IS ROYAL AND NOBLE
- THE DEVOTIONAL LOVE AND NOBLE ASPIRATIONS OF LOWER MANAS
- THE ESOTERIC PHYSIOLOGY OF MAN
- THE HEART IS THE ORGAN OF SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS
- THE IMAGE-MAKING POWER
- THE KARMIC EFFECTS OF INVASION, CIVILIZATION, AND VULGAR SPECULATION
- THE LIFE PRINCIPLE
- THE MOON REGULATES THE PRANA OF NATURE AND MAN
- THE OCCULT INFLUENCE OF MAN'S ACTIVE WILL
- THE PERISPIRIT OF ALLAN KARDEC
- THE PROPHECY OF GENERAL YERMOLOV
- THE SUTRATMAN OF THE UPANISHADS
- THE TWO VOICES OF LORD TENNYSON
- THE VOICE OF THE WILL IS THE ATOMIC POINT
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - MAN, THE JEWEL OF THE UNIVERSE
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - SEPTENARY ANTHROPOS
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - THE CYCLE OF LIFE
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - THE PATH OF ACTION
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - THE PATH OF RENUNCIATION
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - THE SUTRATMAN OF THE UPANISHADS
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- TIBETAN TEACHINGS ON AFTER-DEATH STATES
- TROUBLES FROM UNDISSOLVED EX-DOUBLES

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- WHEN THE GREEN IS OVERCOME WITH AZURE
- WHEN THE SERPENT SLOUGHS OFF HIS SKIN
- WHY SECLUDING WOMEN DURING THEIR MENSTRUAL PERIOD
- WOE FOR THE LIVING DEAD

