

THE MYSTERY OF THE SUN.

BY THOMAS LINDSAY.

However far back in the ages of the past we place the origin of man—whether we regard him as the product of an evolutionary process or as the result of a fiat of creation—there was one day when one human consciousness became for the first time impressed with the glory of the noonday sun. From that day until now it has been known that from the sun the life of the whole earth is derived. It would be natural for the untutored savage to worship the great ball of fire which daily traversed the sky, to personify it, and to give it a name which, once given, would be the key-word for all other appellations of the beneficent power ruling all things in the universe. Mystery, as we understand the word, there would be none ; there would be no attempt to fathom the nature of the deity. A deity there was ; that was simple and enough. But as man became more enlightened through—not evolution, but necessity—the sun must have been regarded as a ball of fire only, and then indeed those minds desirous of searching for the how and the why, would be impressed with the fact that a great body in the heavens did influence the whole earth, and would seek to know what it was and whence it came. This was the problem presented to the early observers in historic times and one far from being answered yet, after say sixty centuries of observation.

So far as we can judge from the sacred writings the Hebrew race had never any conception of the sun other than that it was the source of terrestrial life. We find no solar myths in their theology ; however branches from the main

line may have wandered into sun-worship, there was always the one central idea of the living God who created the sun and the moon and the stars—the Creator was apart from his works. This is deserving of more than passing mention ; it is a fact, standing out in bold relief upon the pages that outline the history of the human race ; it defies the higher or the lower or any other criticism to give an explanation other than what the Christian offers. Bound up with this fact is the other, that the Hebrew race had a story of the cosmos most singularly like the hypothesis advanced in modern times, when all the movements of the heavenly bodies were understood, when the telescope had revealed the hosts of nebulae in the stellar depths, and when chemistry and mechanics had by their grandest efforts shown how a universe might be evolved from chaos. To the writer of the book of Genesis what was there to suggest chaos at all ? Around him all was cosmos. He knew nothing of celestial chemistry or the nebulae ; how did he become imbued with the idea that there ever had been a time when the green pasture fields and fertile plains of the East were chaos ? Truly it was a marvellous guess if he guessed it !

The Mosaic record, however, does not convey the impression that the chosen people were in any way interested in regard to the constitution of the heavenly bodies. Understanding more than any other people how these things came to be, they were still as ignorant of the real nature of the sun and the moon as were any of their contemporaries, and they certainly