

THEOSOPHY AND MARRIAGE.

MR. HARGROVE'S ADDRESS AT MR. AND
MRS. WRIGHT'S WEDDING, 3RD MAY,
1896.

We are to witness a ceremony to-day that will be significant from whatever standpoint we may regard it. Two of our comrades are to be joined together in a most solemn and sacred tie for the purpose of work and for the benefit of our common cause. They are to be married.

A whole host of preconceived ideas will be called up by those familiar words, but I must ask you to lay all such thoughts aside and to approach this fact with a free mind. The too frequent degradation of marriage at the present time will be familiar to all who live in the world and know its ways; and because of this degradation many Theosophists have expressed themselves as being opposed to such unholy marriages. This opposition was natural and right; and men and women who love the human race, no matter what their creed may be, must share this view with us. But Theosophists are the last people to take a one-sided view of life. It is their duty to keep constantly in mind 'the welfare of humanity as a whole, and for them to oppose marriage in all its forms would condemn them as ignorant of man's nature and the world's needs. They do not and never have opposed marriage, if entered into in the right spirit and carried out in harmony with nature's laws. Such marriages are lawful and are necessary, and on certain conditions tend to help on the evolution of both men and women. A man and a woman working together in this way may do much that would be impossible for them to accomplish singly. And it would be clearly contrary to the interests of future races if those who are able to enter into this bond as a sacred trust were to abstain from doing so because some others had degraded this bond into a thing of horror and of shame.

Marriage in olden days was a sacred tie, and the modern world has to be reminded of that fact. It is for Theosophists to lead in this, as in all other

branches of human progress, for they know that before the race can pass on to still higher phases of growth and development, marriage must first be restored to its ancient sanctity and rightful purpose. Whether you take the laws of Manu, the Christian Bible or any other sacred book as your standard, you will find that marriage in its purity was a religious ceremony, and was fully and philosophically carried out on that basis.

This leads me to the subject of the simple ceremony you will shortly witness. Ceremonies in these days are generally used as shows to draw the multitude and create sensation. But this ceremony will have quite another purpose. Let us free our minds once more, and face the fact that a ceremony if carried out scientifically has a power and a meaning, and that there was a time in history when the science of ceremony was fully understood and practiced.

It has been frequently said of late that we have entered upon a new cycle of activity, and that we have done so I for one know to be true. But it may not be known to all that this new cycle carries us back to periods of 2,500 and 5,000 years ago, the shorter cycle to 600 odd years B.C. to the time of ancient, and as yet uncorrupted Druidism, and the greater period of 5,000 years to the epoch of Egypt's spiritual grandeur—to the time when our present teacher and one other in our midst were leading workers for the Master.

In those days they understood the meaning of vibration; they dealt with essences instead of with appearances, and this afternoon's ceremony is in part a revival of an old rite that has been hallowed by ages of sacred usage, and was well known to H. P. Blavatsky.

Remember, then, that what you will witness is not a show; that the garments and emblems worn are not for display, but are used to hide the personal form and to start vibrations by means of colour and motion that will be far-reaching in their effect and beneficial to all concerned. Remember, too, that the sounds you will hear are not to provoke applause or to please the ear; they, too, are vibrations, and