

of the first only is necessary to admission to membership :

1. To be the nucleus of Universal Brotherhood.

2. To promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literatures, religions and sciences.

3. To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

This is nothing more than the modern spirit of altruism, and has in it nothing which could exclude Buddhist or Christian, Theist, Atheist or Mohammedan ; it is the unwritten law of the Society, not its avowed object, which repels.

The doctrine itself, professed by Pythagoras, Plato, Socrates, Buddha, or even by Leibnitz, is respectable for its antiquity and is one of the many forms assumed by the unceasing endeavor of humanity to find an explanation for that "old woe o' the world," the mystery of death. It arrays itself against the negations of materialism by taking up the old argument of design, by showing the differentiation of functions and kind, both in living organisms and the inorganic elements, and by emphasizing the strong set in the current of life towards truth, beauty and goodness. The phenomena of mind-reading, of hypnotism, of memory, dream-life and imagination, the appearance of extraordinary aptitude or genius in a strain where it was not to be expected in the natural order of things, the admission by the Materialists that matter must be credited with "a little feeling,"—all these are used with great adroitness to prove the existence of intuition, the province of the soul. Theosophy holds with Cousin that "spontaneous intuition is the true logic of nature ; and, while rejecting the miraculous in what are called the orthodox faiths, it denounces Materialism as the most stupendous example of Fetish-worship the world has ever seen."

So Theosophy stands—recognizing the mystery of the soul and denying the possibility of the miraculous. So

old as to have been forgotten or so mystical as to have escaped for centuries the eye of science, it professes to be the system which, since the earliest ages, has comprised all the requisites of human endurance. The soul, that essential part of man which perceives and permanently remembers, is its God, and is subject to two laws—the laws of Reincarnation and Karma.

Reincarnation is but another conception of the quest after holiness or perfection. The Christian may seek it in this life, the Theosophist can only expect it after more lives yet ; "through realms he shall traverse, not a few." One earthly life is not long or strenuous enough in which to learn the secrets of nature : there must be different rounds of existence and they must be in the flesh. For as the Hymn to the Planet God has it, "The body is the chamber of ordeal ; therein is the soul of man tried." Through various incarnations, too, the human soul recovers its recollections, the memory of its previous life ; so that the ghosts of past events that walk in the borderland of consciousness and reveal themselves to us in dreams and in the hypnotic trance, may be assigned their proper places and recognized as old acquaintances. This is an idea which has been entertained of late by others than Theosophists. Du Maurier has elaborated the notion of ante-natal consciousness in his novel *Peter Ibbetson*, and was of opinion that had he kept on with his experiments he might at last have reached that original incarnation of himself, his remote and hairy ancestor, who wore pointed ears and a tail, and, in all probability, had never learned the use of his thumbs. The periods which elapse between the several incarnations are periods of rest. Browning was expressing the faith of the Theosophist when he wrote in *Rabbi Ben Ezra* :

"And I shall thereupon,
Take rest, ere I be gone

Once more on my adventure brave and new."

Karma is nothing more than the law of a divine compensation acknowl-