

## ADEPTS.

In scanning the field of theosophical inquiry, and forming an opinion as regards the merits or demerits of each startling proposition that theosophy sets forth, no question has occupied the attention of the world at large to such an extent, as the announcement by the founder of the Society, Madame Blavatsky, that in this world were a lodge of brothers, high above our plane of existence, in fact, perfected beings, under whose direction the Society was formed, and under whose guidance it is constantly kept. And, like many another truth stated for the first time, it has been subjected to the sneers and ridicule of this most material world simply because it was new to them. A strictly theosophical adage says: "Believe nothing on hearsay or authority, but rigidly investigate every fact before either accepting or rejecting it." And while we do not blame those to whom higher truths do not appeal for refusing to believe in that which they cannot understand, we do deplore the spirit of the world of to-day in decrying or ridiculing those laws or facts of nature which they have never investigated with an unprejudiced mind. For the existence of the Adepts is no childish fancy or whimsical notion of a few deluded, misguided people, but a scientific as well as a philosophic fact.

An Adept is but the natural consequence of the law of evolution, for by what authority can man claim that progress is possible to a certain point of perfection, to there stop forever? Through the operation of the law of evolution there is advancement, constant and eternal; which, in physical evolution is visible on every hand. Would it not be absurd to assert improvement to be impossible in plant or animal, simply because we have no absolute knowledge of higher or more perfect types? There is no end to progress, and the very fact that one man has advanced higher than another, either physically, mentally or spiritually, is evidence that we must not set an arbitrary limit to this process.

Again, if re-incarnation be true, Adepts must be; because in each succeeding birth, man is the sum total of the experiences of his past lives, and to them who strive for perfection by living in harmony

with nature's changeless laws, are given wisdom and power. Evolution postulates the improvement of an individual, by the operation of law on other individuals; reincarnation postulates the improvement of an individual, by the operation of law upon that individual alone; but in either case the existence of the Adepts is a natural conclusion. Adepts constitute a brotherhood, or secret association, which ramifies all over the world, but the principal seat of which, for the present, is said to be Thibet. This great fraternity is at once the least and the most exclusive organization in the world, and fresh recruits from any race or country are welcome. The door is always opened to the right one who knocks, but the path which has to be travelled before the door is reached, is one which none but very determined ones can hope to pass. The character of training through which the neophyte must pass before he attains the dignity of a proficient in occultism is such that in never less than seven years, as a probationer, is he ever admitted to the very first of these ordeals, whatever they may be, which bar the way to the first degrees of occultism, and there is no security for him that the seven years may not be extended indefinitely. The trials through which the neophyte has to pass are no fantastic mockeries, nor mimics of awful peril; nor are they artificial barriers set up by the masters of occultism to try the nerves of their pupils. It is inherent in the nature of the science that has to be explored, that its revelations shall stagger the reason and try the most resolute courage. It is in his own interest that the candidate's character and fixity of purpose, and perhaps his physical and mental attributes, are tested and watched with infinite care and patience in the first instance, before he is allowed to take the final plunge into the sea of strange experiences, through which he must swim with the strength of his own right arm or perish. The ultimate development of the Adept requires, among other things, a life of absolute physical purity, and the candidate must, from the beginning, give practical evidence of his willingness to adopt this. He must be perfectly chaste, perfectly abstemious, and indifferent to physical luxury of every kind. This does not involve any fantastic discipline, nor withdrawal from the world. There would