

# The Lamp

VOL. II.

TORONTO, SEPTEMBER 15, 1895.

No. 2.

The Theosophical Society, as such, is not responsible for anything contained herein.

## THE HIGHER PLAGIARISM.

Some of the more recondite aspects of science teach many strange things regarding the power of sound, and in this light the evolution of language becomes a fascinating study in consideration of the modifying effects of sound, vocal or not, upon human evolution. The development of a great nation is usually co-ordinate with the growth of a great language, and there may be food for thought in this direction for those who are concerned with the problems of colonial literatures. In the case of a dependency like Canada there can be no hope of a national literature that is not to a large degree, but in the highest manner, plagiaristic. There must be a freedom and independence of thought, which, untrammelled by the fear of poaching on ancient preserves, will produce that which seems good to it, that which appears true, that which looks beautiful. This is vastly different from the vulgar purloining of existing material, which dies of its own stupidity, lacking the recuperative and sustaining power which originally alone imparts. There must, and always has been, from age to age, the reproduction of old thoughts in new form, and it is particularly true of the literary world that there is nothing new under the sun. All thought being in existence on mental planes, it is the part of the literary workman to give it expression on the objective plane as he may best be able. As I argued some time ago in an article in the *Toronto Sunday World*, it is of less importance to the world who gives expression to the best thought, than that the best thought should receive adequate expression; and while one superior critic in the *Week* ridiculed my opinions I was glad to see that he adopted them to some extent after a few weeks' reflection. It is

merely the personality of the poet who is interested in attracting attention for itself, from motives of vanity, avarice, or what not. The real Self, who sits at the centre, knowing all things, cares as little for literary recognition, as for the fashion of men's clothes. The same critic in the *Week*, who lacks humour, as instanced in his inability to distinguish between ironic grandiloquence and bathos, also failed to see the point of a Ballade especially written to emphasize this point, and which I reproduce elsewhere. And that Self ancestral, incarnating from age to age, in the process of self-realization which we call Evolution, knows all men as kin, and sees itself reflected in the image of every man that wears the fleshly robe. The squid, enabled to prolong an invertebrate existence by the discoloration of its own medium, creeps up to a higher order of manifestation; as thick-skinned rhinoceros or humble ass it fulfils its higher station in the economy of Nature; but even when the Monad enters the human sphere, not all the ancient traits are left behind, and lowlier qualities cling about the human entity.

So the poet, who is a perceiver,—as broadly distinguished from the prosaer, who is a conceiver,—according to his powers of expression voices that which he sees, either in external life, or in the subtler psychic life which is more real to him than to his fellows. It is evident that as men reach equality of perfection in the art of expression, and accuracy of perception of the realities around them, there must be much of duplication and apparent imitation. In the delicacy of the response to Nature's moods, and the appreciation of Nature's beauties we may then find the origin of much of the plagiarism that vexes certain seekers after