

WINTER THOUGHTS.

I think, dear Northern hills, I love you best
When, as to-day, a mantle pure and fair
Hangs on your every slope and cliff and crest,
As though some wizard hand had laid it
there.

Oh, it is sweet these lengthening morns to see
The shadowy line of summits, one by one,
Flush to a sudden, tender radiancy
In the first glory of the risen sun.

And in that wondrous hush and glow all
thought
Seems common, the most reverent speech
profane:

'Tis e'en as though the Nature-worship taught
In other ages moved in us again.

—W. H. T. P. in Belfast Weekly News, 16
February, 1895.

THEOSOPHY.

The Theosophical Society was formed in 1875 by H. P. Blavatsky, who was sent to New York from India, where she had been initiated into the Occult or Secret Mysteries. She was sent by the Mahatmas or Great Souls, who are said to live in the region beyond the Himalaya Mountains. They are a body of men gathered there from all parts of the world for the purpose of preserving and substantiating in all its details the ancient wisdom of the Gods—Theosophy. This wisdom is said to have been given by the Gods, or what are called in Theosophy Planetary Spirits, Intelligences whose will keeps the planets in their proper orbits in space, just as our wills direct our bodies when we walk the street. H. P. Blavatsky had gone to India in her search for secret teaching concerning the laws of nature and man, and having been admitted into the Brotherhood she was chosen as a fit person to spread the light of Theosophy through the western world. It was considered by these Adepts that the west had risen to a point of civilization when it was necessary that some further spiritual light should be given to it, otherwise westerners were likely shortly to become so material in their views that they would destroy each other in their competition for wealth and the comfort of their bodies. People have actually become so material in their ideas that they have forgotten the laws of mind, the law of justice, the law of Reincarnation. They have largely come to the conclusion that the only way to get knowledge of Nature's laws was to start at the bottom and build a tower to heaven. But we are only going a short distance that way until stopped and thrown into confusion for want of a key to unlock certain

secret chambers of nature and from inability to harness the forces set in motion by us. Man's spiritual eyesight had become so blinded that they have considered themselves mere bodies of flesh that could think, plan and invent, and even religion had been little better in its teaching. So the Theosophical Society was begun in 1875 for the express purpose of letting men know that such a system of thought as Theosophy existed and to assist man by study and practice to assimilate its divine verities. The work has been going on for the last twenty years and has spread to nearly every country on the earth, for there are still certain savage tribes of men which are not yet sufficiently developed to assimilate its teachings. Theosophy states that the Ego, or thinker, in man must pass through all forms of experience and have brought civilization up to a certain height before these truths can be assimilated, and that is one reason why they are so carefully preserved in the Home of the Gods, as the land of India has been called. These Adepts tell us that there are certain cycles or seasons in which civilization or education develops very rapidly and others in which it is, so to speak, buried under the snow. I would compare these human seasons to the summer and winter of nature and take the farmer to represent those custodians of wisdom whom we call Mahatmas. At the proper time these great souls sow the seeds of wisdom in the ground of humanity and as it sprouts and grows we say civilization is at its height; the grain is now filling out and will soon be ripe. Then comes the time for the harvest, when those persons who have profited by this wisdom shall be gathered into the Brotherhood of Adepts, and the winter will come on when civilization, as we say will be swept away again. Just as the farmer cuts his grain and takes it into the granary, a certain portion of the best being kept for seed for the next summer and the rest used to build up the body of man and beast during the winter, so it has always been since our earth has been inhabited. A man to-day who does not remember his past life, or who has not studied ancient civilizations, would say, on looking at our civilization now, that the harvest is looking well as to intellectual learning, inventions and so on. Surely there could never have been such a grand display as this before? But the adept would tell him: "Yes, we have witnessed just such a crop as this