

[From the New York Herald.]

Isis Unveiled.

"Isis Unveiled," a work purporting to treat on Oriental literature, magic and religion, has just been published by J. W. Bouton, of this city. The typographical execution—everything coming within the province of the printer and publisher—is complete. The work itself, occupying a field so new to many readers, will be judged according to the interest taken by them in the topics which it discusses. Scientists will hurry to discard it with some scornful remark, in the hope that their admirers will accept their judgment without further investigation. But "Isis" cannot be dismissed thus unceremoniously. There are too many investigators who do not receive opinions thus submissively. These will welcome the new publication as a most valuable contribution to philosophical literature. Even those who hesitate to accept the bold conclusions of the author will yet gladly receive the book as affording a vast amount of information in regard to topics about which there exists a vivid curiosity but little accurate conception. So thoroughly have the storehouses of ancient and mediæval learning been ransacked, that few subjects of much interest appear to have been left unnoticed. The genesis of the human race, the emigration of peoples, the submerged continents, the relationship between the myths and worship of the peoples of the Old and New World, Buddhistic, Braminic, philosophical and theological ideas, as they once were believed, and their influence upon modern thought and dogma, have all received the fullest attention. This was necessary in order to render the work, which it professes to be, "a master key to the mysteries of ancient and modern science and theology." In accordance with this purpose Mme. Blavatsky has divided her treatise into two parts, one devoted to science and one to religion. She handles with little ceremony the claims and assumptions of modern *savants*, however imposing their pretensions, when they are adverse to her views. She believes that ancient philosophers, Oriental not less than Grecians and Egyptians, have been conversant with much of the science that is now regarded as modern discovery; also that pundits, lamas, and other sages in the heart of Asia and India are still in possession of knowledge transcending that of occidental scientists of latter centuries as much as the erudition of the professor exceeds the attainments of the pupils of his class.

In taking such ground she is far from being pretentious. There is no doubt of her abundant assurance; but she speaks from the card. She has been a traveler in the principal countries of the East; spending her childhood in Armenia, the Caucasus, Persia and Turkestan, and many years of adult life among the Hindoos, Singales, Thibetans and Egyptians. All the time she was eagerly acquiring knowledge. She had no scruple to learn from lamas or fakirs, and wherever it was practicable she entered the secret lodges and associations of the East, passing through the ordeals of initiation. Of course she has not ventured to reveal what had been disclosed in the crypt; but when it has become already known she makes abundant quotations, which contain the gist of the matter. Numerous translated extracts from the Kabaha, the Hermetic tablets, the Vedas and sacred books of the Persians and Buddhists, as well as of the Grecian and Ionian philosophy and of sages of the mediæval period, are thus interspersed through the work—often, however, to be criticised and corrected. She has made the Chaldean of the pre-Abrahamic period live again; and, what is hard for us to believe, insists that he was of the Aryan or Indo-European race and the disciple of Bramin sages of Upper India. But the oldest faith—we can hardly call it a worship—she declares to have been the religion of wisdom. In this she confirms the assertions of the Alexandrian Eclectics and their modern followers. The great world religion, now known as Buddhism, is, accordingly, in her view, the most ancient and, with all its adulterations, the truest of any. She professes to know its arcane doctrines, and regards them as not only antedating the Vedic, Bramin and Mazdean theologies, but as comprising the sublimer revelation of the mysteries and the principal philosophical dogmas of the West. Others have not learned this, because they did not possess the key. The religious and scientific wealth of the oldest peoples of the earth has been so jealously guarded from inquisitorial foreigners by mysteries of jargon that the many have denied the existence of anything worth seeing, and the few have been so discouraged by the obstacles in the road that, for the most part, they have abandoned the undertaking. But men do not for so many centuries perform the rites and accept the ordinances of a religion that is merely a farce.

"Isis" everywhere asserts the antiquity of the older peoples and doctrines. Many efforts have been made to show the laws of Manu and the Aryan conquest of Hindostan to be almost within the confines of modern history. The Mahabharata and Ramayana have been declared post-Christian. But further knowledge of Hindoo methods of recording time is disproving that evolution as well as emanation and even the positive and molecular philosophies were taught beside the Himalayas. Telegraphs, and even telephones, seem to have been older than history. "Seventy thousand years of experience" in an indefinite number of cycles are cited in demonstration. But the book is not all dry logic or tedious philosopheme. The author is too true to the laws of her sex not to be sprightly or vivacious, and even capable of stinging invective. She outdoes the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments" in marvelous story; and, while denying supernatural miracles, she does not hesitate to relate occurrences that surpass the capacity of faith usually possessed by mankind. Like Paracelsus and Paracelsus, she peoples the mid air with spiritual existences, elemental and elementary, good, bad, and indifferent. They can be evoked by music and peculiar vapors, and then made to reveal secrets or run on errands. Magic and necromancy are no fictions. There have been, there now are men who can "conjure down the moon." It is no impossibility to manufacture gold, as Raymond Lully did for Edward III. Roger Bacon disclosed spiritual scenes to human view. These are common matters in Oriental countries, and the madam describes several which she herself witnessed. However skeptical we may be in many respects she is confident and sincere. From God the Universal Mind to Nirvana, the final bliss, there is no marvel that she does not believe. Vampires, the dead or cataleptic absorbing vitality from the living, the virtue of fresh-spilt blood to attract spirits, the possibility of re-incarnation and of losing the soul-life as described by Bulwer-Lytton, the power of inflicting mortal injury by cutting out the bowels and then healing the hurt by the mysterious Akâsa, the prolonging of life for centuries, are a few of the topics introduced and illustrated as actual facts. One who reads the book carefully through ought to know everything of the marvelous and mystical, except, perhaps, the passwords.

"Isis" will supplement the Anacalypsis. Whoever loves to read Godfrey Higgins will be delighted with Mme. Blavatsky. There is a great resemblance between their works. Both have tried hard to tell everything apocryphal and apocalyptic. It is easy to forecast the reception of this book. With its striking peculiarities, its audacity, its versatility and the prodigious variety of subjects which it notices and handles, it is one of the remarkable productions of the century.

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