

Our Scientific Magi.

BY T. B. WAKEMAN.

Who were the Magi in history? and what are they now with us? The Article on our first page of last week's Torch begins to tell. How can we get the whole story at once?

The BIRD'S-EYE VIEW is the thing. Without it we never know where we are nor what we are. When a poor fellow gets lost in the woods or desert he climbs the highest peak or even tree he can, to discover which way the rivers and mountains trend, and where are the points of the compass, the constellations and the Polar Star. In a word he "ORIENTS" himself by the Bird's-eye view. He who fails to do that is always like a lost traveler beating about in a thicket to no purpose, or wandering around and around in a circle, as lost people always strangely do. So it is in the great ever-growing world of human history, philosophy and especially of comparative sociology and religion. People as to them have no true perspective—no Bird's-eye view of their evolution. Where we "are at," they know not. They are running about and prattling childishly a lot of old stories they have inherited, like a lot of lost children in the Rocky Mountains. They have no idea where they are, how they got there, what they are really saying, and least of all, how or where they are to get out of their confusion, or what they are to do.

How can one study Geography without a map of the world—of the two hemispheres—of the Physical and Mental World, to begin with? Thoughts of this kind enable us to realize the importance of historical expositions like that on the Article on our first page of last week on "Ancient and Modern Magic." The ancient Magi were the Priesthood of the Sun and Star Worships (Astrolatry) of the Chaldeans and Persians and Hindoos of the East. Our modern Magi and their followers and credents are survivals of, and reversion to, a similar state of mind. Our modern phases of practical Spiritism, such as Astrology, Theosophy, Faith or Mind Cure, Christian Science, Medium-Healing, Telepathy, etc., are phases of the old "Asiatic Mildew," which used to flourish under the name and doings of the Magi before Christianity came and sought to take their place. In order to do this the Magi, "wise men of the East," were represented as coming and worshipping the infant Savior-Christ in a most cunning Astrological and Oriental manner in Matthew ii. 1-23, and ever since the Christians have given them a due share of persecution. But now that Science with its telescope and microscope has utterly broken up Christianity—its Heaven, Hell,

Cosmology, Biology, Sociology, Ethics and practical life and hopes—the effects upon the masses of the people are very diverse and interesting, and among them we have the revival of the Magi—old AND new. We have three grand divisions of people, which we have to consider in relation to these Magi, as well as every other question; to wit:

1. The Scientific Humanitarians, who are the leading few of our race. They use their Liberty, which results from the breaking up of the old, to become real "Liberals," that is those who are wholly emancipated from the old spook or spirit religions and all of their SEQUELAE, including every phase of old Magism and re-growth of "Asiatic Mildews." Their next work is constructive—no less than to change the emphasis of life from Egoism to Altruism, to realize the hopes of man in a new and true form, and to find a new mainspring for his life in his race and its lot and fate in the knowable world. A new education and mode of life, inculcating Liberty, Science and Humanity, is the essential condition of the New Life and Hope from the historical point of view, and is to be their work.

2. The next class of people, as various as the hues of Autumn, which they picture in color, variety and fate, are the Reactionists. They shrink back to the over-old of Spiritism—back of Christianity, or try to galvanize some of its sects into some kind of spasmodic or comatose vitality. These Autumn swarms, hoping against hope, and refusing or unable to see the coming frost of fact and reason, make for the evolutionary Scientist and Sociologist his saddest outlook. Their hearts are so good but their heads so weak or unscientific, that instead of helping the progress of the race forward, as they would like and mean to do, they have their eyes turned backward and filled with the old visions, as their ears are with the old and childish fables of the past ages. If they could only get their faces turned to the dawn what a help they would be! What do they expect to find of the new in those old ghostly catacombs of the soul? They try to but cannot defeat evolution by dwarfing themselves into children of the past.

3. There are, underlying these two classes, a large mass of miscellaneous people who may be described as human animals, who exist and float, but who have never discovered that anything new has happened. They live not in the world of thought or progress. They are the dead strata of Social Geology, with no function but to be, and be travelled over by others, passing forward or backward. They can receive only Dante's sentence: "Look upon them: and pass them by."

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