

# THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

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VOL. XXXII, NO. 2

FEBRUARY 1927

"FUNDAMENTAL truths . . . like the lights of heaven, are not only beautiful and entertaining in themselves, but give light and evidence to other things that without them could not be seen."—LOCKE, *Conduct of the Understanding*, §43

## THE SECRET DOCTRINE

H. T. EDGE, M. A.



THE SECRET DOCTRINE: this is a phrase most intimately connected with Theosophy, and represents as good a summary of Theosophy as one can hope for. To explain it will be tantamount to giving a very fair idea of what Theosophy is. Let us first turn to the early history of the Founder of the modern Theosophical Movement, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky.

Most of us, when passing from childhood to maturity, are painfully aware of the conflict between our ideals and the circumstances that hedge us in. We are conscious too of the contrast between the moral ideas we have been taught and the actual behavior of people: this universal conspiracy of hypocrisy, as it seems to us to be, jars our souls. But most of us adapt or resign ourselves, with more or less difficulty, and adjust ourselves in some way to our surroundings; and it is only once in a long while that some soul appears with force enough to break through these restrictive influences, and to assert its own individuality against all that would tend to stifle it.

H. P. Blavatsky, it appears, was one such personality; and her disgust with the state of affairs drove her forth to investigate at first hand for herself. The object of her quest was to find people, if such existed, who had real knowledge. If she actually found what others may have failed to find, it was because she had qualities which they had not: a definite purpose, courage and determination in a most unusual

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degree, and sympathy and freedom from preconceived opinions and prejudices.

It was thus that H. P. Blavatsky discovered the existence of the Secret Doctrine and became a pupil of some of its guardians. Let us quote some of her words on the subject, from her great book, entitled *The Secret Doctrine*:

“The Secret Doctrine was the universally diffused religion of the ancient and pre-historic world.”— Vol. I, p. xxxiv

“In the twentieth century of our era scholars will begin to recognise that the *Secret Doctrine* has neither been invented nor exaggerated, but, on the contrary, simply outlined; and, finally, that its teachings antedate the Vedas.”— I, p. xxxviii

Another name for the Secret Doctrine is the Esoteric Philosophy; on which we read the following:

“Esoteric philosophy reconciles all religions, strips every one of its outward, human garments, and shows the root of each to be identical with that of every other great religion. It proves the necessity of an absolute Divine Principle in nature. It denies Deity no more than it does the Sun. Esoteric philosophy has never rejected God in Nature, nor Deity as the absolute and abstract *Ens*. It only refuses to accept any of the gods of the so-called monotheistic religions, gods created by man in his own image and likeness.”— I, p. xx

The service rendered to us by this great pioneer can be only imperfectly appreciated even by her disciples, much less by the generality of the present day; but a future age, seeing history in perspective, will recognise it. For the age was steering fast towards the rapids of scepticism and despair. The brink towards which it was rushing was one of doubt whether there is any knowledge or certainty possible for man. Old-time faith had been undermined by the tide of scientific reasoning. All the new and wonderful knowledge thus gained satisfied us for a while, as a weak man may be kept quiet as long as he is occupied with absorbing a lot of new food. Yet even in the nineteenth century, there were yearnings for something more satisfying to the real wants of man; and in this century we already see people everywhere, even among men of science themselves, questioning the authority and the sufficiency of that species of knowledge which is usually termed the scientific method. So it is not too much to say that, had no new foundations of faith been laid, we should by this time be despairing about the possibility of any real knowledge at all.

But such a foundation was laid by the courage and faith of H. P. Blavatsky. It is a commonplace that mankind's progress has always been due to the efforts of its great men. We may believe in evolution; but we are beginning to doubt whether anything can evolve itself, like a steam-engine evolving its own steam. Evolution is what happens when

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somebody gets to work. There has been a great deal of evolution in the gardens and orchards where this is written, but that all came *after* people became busy on them. H. P. Blavatsky evidently was not satisfied to sit down and wait for knowledge to come of itself, or for humanity to evolve into knowledge. She must have realized that the quicker she got to work, the sooner that evolution would evolve; and that it was much better to do it herself than wait for someone else to do it.

So we regard H. P. Blavatsky as one of those great persons, with originality and initiative, who do things, and do not wait to be pushed, or merely copy others. She went out determined to find knowledge, if anywhere it existed, and to bring back to the world she had lived in a knowledge of the existence of that knowledge, together with as much of its content as possible.

Why are we conscious of our own ignorance? It can only be because we feel the possibility of a greater knowledge than that which we possess. If we were not thus dimly aware that a greater knowledge is possible, we should not be aware of our ignorance, or at any rate we should be satisfied with it. It is the contrast that is so painful — the contrast between what we actually know and what we feel it is possible to know. We have within us certain faculties that are not awake; faculties which we feel would enable us to understand life. But, for want of this wisdom, we try to explain life by logical systems, philosophies of various kinds, religions claiming to give 'revealed' knowledge; and what we receive from these sources does not square with what we actually find in life.

What H. P. Blavatsky has called the 'Secret Doctrine' is a master-key of knowledge. It is the common source from which all religions have been derived. Philologists have compared languages, and, by eliminating the differences, have found those elements which are common to all the languages, and thus have shown how they were all derived from one original parent-language. It is the same with religions: behind their differences lie certain features which are the same in all, and by which we can trace all religions back to their parent-source. This is the Secret Doctrine. It is called 'secret' because not known to the generality. Knowledge, if it is to be kept pure and intact, must be guarded from misuse and profanation. Again, it is not everybody who *wants* knowledge. We are apt to prefer our illusions and to resent any attempt to dispel them.

You may hear it said that people should not want to keep knowledge secret, they should share it. Well, here is just what H. P. Blavatsky tried to do — and see what happened! There were some who

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labored to prove that what she taught was not true, that she had no message, that she was an impostor. They had no use for knowledge; things were already settled to their liking, and they did not want them unsettled. There were some who wanted knowledge for the sake of whatever they might be able to get out of it for their own benefit or in order to grind some ax. Others again who preferred to put the whole thing away on a high shelf and label it 'symbolical.' Anyone with truth to tell has to tell it to people in spite of themselves. Some will stare stupidly, others will laugh; some will cry, others will be scared; some will try to annihilate you. H. P. Blavatsky had to teach people in spite of themselves.

So the Secret Doctrine is secret because so few are ready for it; but nobody wants to keep it from such as are willing to receive it and willing to accept the necessary conditions for learning it. We see, however, from the first quotations given, that there was a time when the doctrine was not secret but 'universally diffused.'

The tenets of the Secret Doctrine can be ascertained from a study of Theosophy; though H. P. Blavatsky distinctly and repeatedly warns us that there is much more in reserve. What has already been made known constitutes the body of teachings known as Theosophical. It may be said in general that, in the light of these teachings, the scope and dignity of human nature is immensely augmented. The doctrine of Reincarnation, which is simply an ancient and temporarily forgotten truth, shows essential man as an immortal Soul living through the ages in many successive earth-lives; thus solving many perplexing enigmas which vex all who have tried to reconcile the facts of life with what they have been taught or what they have been able to discover for themselves. The ancient doctrine of human evolution replaces the vague, varying, and unsatisfying speculations of scientific evolutionists. The teaching that man possesses in himself unlimited powers of knowing, only awaiting development, fills us with new and exhaustless faith in our destiny.

We have found it necessary to speak with more reserve than we should have liked, but the reason is obvious. No sooner are important truths made known than they become liable to perversion and exploitation. The teaching as to the perfectibility of man, and of the existence of men far in advance of the average of their kind, has been made the occasion for extravagant claims by individuals having some ax of their own to grind. The doctrine of Reincarnation can be travestied by people claiming to know their own past lives or to tell you about yours. The teaching as to spiritual powers in man has been exploited by the psychic quacks; and so it goes.

Yet there is one sure touchstone to distinguish the true from the

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false, the genuine from the imitation. It is that the purpose of Theosophy is not to subserve personal desires and ambitions, but to ameliorate the condition of mankind as a whole. He who keeps in his heart this noble ideal will open for himself the path to real Knowledge, and will avoid delusion. To him that asks shall be given; and he from whose heart rings a pure and genuine appeal will surely find what he is seeking.

## LAMENT OF THE LADIES OF THE SIANG RIVER

After Yuen I-Shan

KENNETH MORRIS

SWEET-SCENTED are the Kiu-e Mountains, where the white bright  
spring clouds fly

Over the blooms of roses and orchids that the south wind bloweth by .

Shaking down the gentle petals, the bloom dust, the bloom perfume

In the garden about the tomb.

While a thousand springtimes pass there shall be bloom there, there shall  
be bloom!

Dark, dark are the Kiu-e Mountains, that the autumn clouds drift over

When the mist creeps up the river like the ghost of a dead lover,

And the pallid moonlight filters down o'er naked woodland and wan stream,

And fitfully the pale stars gleam.

While a thousand autumns pass, sleep shall be there,— sleep and dream!

Mournful, mournful are the Kiu-e Mountains! all night long the gibbons cry,

And the wind wails o'er the desolate garden under the rainy moonless sky,

And tears drop from the bamboo branches, and tears drop from the  
sodden fern,

And the river and the mountains mourn:—

While a thousand autumns pass our Lord shall not return!

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## PROBLEMS IN 'COMPLEXES'

LYDIA ROSS, M. D.

**T**HE final answer to the question why we do not remember our past lives is the universal fact that we do remember them in essence. The detailed experiences by which character is evolved are as unimportant as the chips which lie around the sculptor's finished statue or the sawdust which has no place in the builder's creation. Even the new brain which is official recorder for each new body we operate in, doesn't waste time in going over the fading-out memory of a thousand and one things of timely importance in their day, but as out of place on our adult calendar as the date of our first milk-tooth or the time when we learned our A B C's. It is the use of teeth and the use of education which matters in the growth of the body and of the mind and character.

A one-life brain is not big enough to hold the whole record of the soul's destiny which, nevertheless, is recorded on the imperishable screen of time, as yet invisible to ordinary mortals. The ancients knew that the Immortal Pilgrim does remember everything, because each incarnating soul picks up the lines exactly where they were laid down in the last life.

Reimbodiment is so universal a law that even our ideas and beliefs take on new forms when we have put aside the old ones. Incidentally, note how, with the passing of the old theological idea of 'miserable sinners,' it has been reborn of scientific parentage and christened 'inferior complexes.' The similarity of the two shows that the essential quality of miserable half-truth has simply taken on a more up-to-date form. Old beliefs which think man is a creation with an easily-lost soul, and science which thinks he is simply the functional product of his body, fall equally short of the mystic truth of human duality which explains a creature 'half dust, half deity.'

It is interesting to note that although the church and science fight shy of the Ancient Wisdom taught by H. P. Blavatsky fifty years ago, yet these teachings have colored the conclusions of thinking minds everywhere. At a recent Congress on the Psychology of the Individual, in Berlin, Alfred Adler, Psychoanalyst of Vienna, spoke on 'Neurosis in Relation to Endowments.' Originally a pupil of Freud, Adler was unsatisfied with his theories and sought a wider field of causes than sexual symbolism only. His conclusion is that neurosis arises from the feeling of inferiority. His analysis leads up to various points from which Theo-

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sophy can argue more conclusively. The *Journal of the American Medical Association* for February 27, 1926, reports in the Berlin letter:

"For Adler the central influence in neurosis is the feeling of inferiority. The origin of that attitude goes back to the period between the third and the fifth year, in which the developing ego first forms its scheme of categories into which it fits, as they arise, the manifestations of human existence. The influence of this earliest substratum of life's experiences is so lasting that the individual is able to derive little benefit from the experiences of later life. As a rule, there is reflected in the content of the earliest recollections the tendency that later, when fully developed, led to the neurosis.

"The person who is a victim of the inferiority-complex thinks that he is incapable of coping with the difficulties of normal life. As a consequence he subconsciously decides to have recourse to a neurosis, sickness, invalidism, in order to avoid the task of a definite calling or occupation, social obligations, and the duty of raising a family. In the face of such tasks and duties he shirks all responsibility. On the other hand he asserts a certain active domination over his entourage, who think of him as being 'ill' and entitled to special consideration. While the goal of the normal person is to perform some useful task, to accomplish something worth while, the aim of the neurotic seems to be to assert his superiority over others; and, it may be added, superiority gained by illegitimate means, a surreptitiously acquired superiority.

"According to Adler, about 98% of the inhabitants of civilized countries today show some neurotic traits. Manifestations of the inferiority-complex alone, without the pathologic endeavor to assert one's superiority, never constitute true neurosis, Adler emphasizes. The recited interpretations of the nervous type of character gives rise to important considerations for the school and the home.

"The modern tendency in civilized countries to preserve and uplift the weak and the tender (the baby is today the master of the household; everybody else has to give way) is associated with certain dangers. The educator should make it clear to the child that it cannot escape responsibilities. His second task is to plant in the child's mind a faith in himself and in his destiny. Adler holds the view that in our educational system differences in endowments are allowed to play too big a part, and he condemns the practice of holding up the phenomenal performances of the few great individuals as the standard for all. He fears that it discourages more than it helps. In the precept 'it is more blessed to give than to receive' Adler sees the summit of psychotherapeutic wisdom, if it is interpreted in the proper intellectual, or spiritual, sense. The highest goal in the educator should be to develop the giving spirit in man. With this view of life, even those with limited endowments can give to human existence a high personal value."

That some 98% of civilizees show neurotic traits brings the matter close home to us. As said, it intimately concerns the school and the home — by the way, the two institutions of character-building. Now, in reality, the neurotic type is racial evidence of psychic gains in the level of human consciousness. That this evolutionary gain should work out as a detriment shows that neither western science nor occidental religion has given us knowledge of the inner nature or has furnished a working philosophy of life.

Our present ability to 'tune in' on a world of unseen programs is symbolic of our increasing sensitivity to all prevailing currents of mental and emotional waves that encircle the globe. The composite picture of events in the daily press shows an influence that must distract and dissatisfy every finer sense and subconscious nerve. No wonder that in response to the dominant note of materialism the delicate psychic sense

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is at odds with the environment. The inner self feels its enlarged and refined life-impulses which can function normally only in worthy expression. On the other hand, the lower nature is stimulated by the strenuous materialism of the age. Meantime, neither home nor school gives the unfolding child-nature any clue to its inner conflicts of aspiration and self-indulgence. The natural mystery of human duality is not understood.

Now the individual's inner senses are gained, in degree, at the expense of the physical. That is, the period of transition is a sort of psychic adolescence, which leaves one rather negative in foothold both on the old and the new, much as the developing boy is grounded neither in passing childhood nor in oncoming manhood. One is, as it were, in mental mid-air, between the ordinary level of existence whose material forces are being conserved on the next finer plane of feeling and action.

To sum up the situation: there is the racial gain-consciousness, with a more active field of inner conflict of the enlarged dual nature; there is the impressionable, negative state of transition; there is increased sensitiveness to the composite social atmosphere of thought and feeling, keyed to brilliant, self-seeking materialism; and, withal, there is general ignorance of man's sevenfold nature and of his triple evolution of body, mind, and soul. What else could this combination produce but the prevailing neuroses and psychoses?

The neurotic types of child and adult, though maladjusted to their environment, easily exhausted and often ailing, yet, when interested and aroused to action, show mental and physical alertness, resources and endurance, beyond the average. If, in their 'inner conflicts' between aspiration and desire, the lower nature wins, the individual is more cleverly selfish and materialistic than ordinary. Hence, note how many bright, incorrigible children, degenerate youths, and daring criminals are neurotic. They have instinct and power plus wherewith to play a better or worse part in life than others.

If, however, with the unfolding inner sense, the life is keyed to higher impulses, the whole nature gains in finer, more potent forces of body, mind and spirit. The rhythmic unity of physical, mental, and spiritual activity, free from conflict, trebles the power to think and act. These exceptional cases foretell that the dream of super-men will come true, but not until civilization has morally rounded out, in keeping with its mental and material gains. Even now, if the neurotic children were trained in moral self-discipline, they would grow up naturally into an improved racial type.

At the best, the many precocious children, infant prodigies, etc., are incarnating in an age ignorant of human duality and human destiny.

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And so, with parents somewhat awed by their child's strange talents, he is often spoiled enough to be at the mercy of his conflicting impulses which make for a picture of distraught nerves and chaotic emotions. As a result, few of these children fulfill the early promise of ability, or maturity may show how cultivated liberty and license can develop problems of so-called 'insanity of genius.'

Now in analysing the inferiority-complex we may go back through centuries of teaching that vicarious salvation was the only hope for human 'worms of the dust.' The truth that they were incarnating 'sons of God,' working out a human evolution, was obscured and then forgotten. Right down the ages, man's innate divinity has been ignored and his lower nature appealed to through fear of punishment and selfish desire for personal salvation. Since modern science has discredited some of these illogical half-truths, and there is more liberty of thought and action, the subtle lower nature camouflages its inferiority-sense with assumed superiority.

There is conflict between growing awareness of weaknesses to be controlled, and the animal brain which tries to conceal them with counterfeit authority and power. The lower nature consistently enough uses any 'illegitimate means' in order to gain its selfish ends. Why not, having no conscience to reckon with? It enjoys the bizarre sensations of day-dreams and tantrums and brain-storms and any exploit that gives it the center of the stage. Life is consciousness, and the animal self is very well alive to the attention given to its ailments and its whimsies and its maladjustments and the front-page publicity of its crimes.

Many a mother could tell Professor Adler that the infant instinctively asserts its will and begins to form habits long before the third year. These little pilgrims, fresh from invisible worlds of finer stuff, are super-sensitive to the ruder contact of earth-life. If the pre-natal and post-natal home-conditions were ideal, the babies would reflect this *quality* and progressively unfold their innate divinity in a normal balance of character. But the unideal start and education give to the lower tendencies the chance to form habits. And the undisciplined parents are helpless wisely to discipline the child who, mayhap, combines their failings.

Katherine Tingley's humanitarian work years ago showed her that the solution of the world's problems lay in schools of prevention. So she established her Râja-Yoga system of education which is now recognised as unique in its results of character-building. Professor Adler could find in it the practical working out of his suggestions for child-culture. This ideal training is possible because based on the ancients'

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wise philosophy of life, interpreted to meet modern conditions. Here the tots are given their little duties and taught to be responsible for doing them happily — which easily becomes a fixed habit. Instead of ‘differences in endowments’ playing too big a part, the system works to round out the whole nature, physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually. The living truth of the child’s innate divinity in the teacher’s mind, is the basis of invoking ‘faith in himself and in his destiny.’ The continued appeal to the higher nature in teaching self-control, calls forth the inner riches of the soul which ‘gives’ instinctively and wisely. It follows that the soul can so utilize even limited endowments that they ‘give to human existence a high personal value.’ Thus Theosophy offers the logical basis for educating the ‘child of destiny’ who through many lives will reap what he sows.

It is gratifying to note that in this respect Professor Adler has instinctively called for the method of what Katherine Tingley calls ‘self-directed evolution,’ even though homes and schools cannot provide it, as yet. With knowledge of man’s essential divinity, the victim of inferiority-complexes will overcome them by his spiritual will instead of having it benumbed by hypnotic experiments with his weaknesses.

### “PLUS ÇA CHANGE, PLUS C’EST LA MÊME CHOSE!”

R. MACHELL



HERE is in all human affairs an element of permanence that has found expression in a cynical witticism to the effect that the “more frequent the change the less will be the difference”; which if applied to the continual change in the personal constitution of the government, that marks the political history of more than one nation, would be amply justified by facts. But pessimism of this kind cannot be really justified by facts, however near to truth may be such shallow observation of the facts; for the question at once presents itself: What is it that changes, and what the element of permanence? Are they the same?

Obviously, no. Indeed, I think that in all cases pessimism is its own condemnation; and is invariably dissolved by deeper knowledge and more careful observation of the facts of life. It was said in old times that Truth was so ill-used by men that she took refuge at the bottom of a well. This allegory suggests among other things that if we would find Truth we must not expect to find it lying open on the surface of the earth.

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Now change is an essential element in the growth of all that lives and all that is made by man. That which is permanent lies deep below the surface, and, when discovered there, can only then be seen reflected in the dark waters of the well. And when so seen this image presents a true reflexion of the observer himself, whoever he may be. Although this image changes with each new observer, yet each in that mirror will inevitably find himself. That fact is permanent. It is the underlying principle that gives to the phenomenal world its semblance of reality, and forbids our scornful relegation of that world to the philosophic limbo of unreality or mere delusion.

The careless thinker is inclined to make no difference between delusion and illusion and so involves himself in much unnecessary contradiction. Every appearance obviously is illusive, but is not of necessity a mere delusion. Nor can we separate truth from its appearance; for on this earth of ours it is by the use of our senses alone that we get such knowledge of truth as may be revealed to us by appearances. As to the possibility of direct perception of truth, that is only to be achieved by the use of a faculty that is latent in every one, but is as yet developed in very few. This faculty is not that popularly known as clairvoyance which is most frequently no more than an extension of our ordinary visual perception; the difference is fully explained by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Key to Theosophy*.

But it is easy to understand that the observer who can see the astral form of anything is seeing objectively, even though his range of sight includes some states of matter not visible to the ordinary individual. Whereas the faculty of direct perception of spiritual realities transcends the vision of the most accomplished seer on the astral plane, being, as it is, a faculty of the inner spiritual man, a state of consciousness, rather than an astral power of extended vision.

Those who would know the truth must seek it in the depths of their own inner consciousness where, in due course, it will be mirrored in the secret chambers of the soul subjectively. It is this spiritual reality, behind the changing pictures that are mirrored on the screen of time, which give an element of permanence to human institutions and to recorded history. And it is in that element of permanence, beneath the stormy surface of our earthly life, wherein the soul can find security and sure foundation for its unreasoned optimism. For, indeed, the optimism of the human soul transcends man’s reasoning intelligence, enabling him to transmute the cynicism of the French wit, who, speaking of the endless changes in the government said, “Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose!” For it is true that Truth is permanent and undisturbed by any changes in the outer forms in which humanity delights.

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Too often, I fear, this taunt has been employed to dampen the ardor of would-be reformers, who had not faith in the essential divinity of the soul of man, which is the only rock of faith on which the true reformer can erect a permanent structure. Without Theosophy no true reform can find a foothold in the world today, where all is change, for better or for worse, and no reform endures.

But with the light that Theosophy throws upon the spiritual nature of the universe as well as of man, the student understands that in all mundane matters there must be reckoned the principle of permanence as well as eternal change. And in the study of Theosophy there will be found a true foundation for faith in the possibility of human perfectibility and a great generous optimism in regard to all projects of reform. So he can turn the cynicism of the quoted gibe into a piece of straight philosophy and say gladly: "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose!"

## SUCCESS IN LIFE

T. HENRY, M. A.



WHAT constitutes a full and successful life? The answer to this question is too often couched in materialistic terms, as though the end and aim of life, the criterion of all success and happiness, lay in wealth and comfort, in what is vulgarly dubbed prosperity. It may be that, when preaching or philosophizing, we take a more adequate and sensible view of the question; but the fact remains that, in nearly all writings and sayings on social, industrial, or political matters, the materialistic view is taken; as though the better view were good enough for sermons, but of no value in concerns that really matter.

Some of this is doubtless due to the stress of life under present-day conditions, which has actually reduced the interests of so many people to a question of bread and butter; and, in advocating the higher view of life, we may perhaps render ourselves open to the unfair imputation of setting forth the views of the well-to-do and neglecting the needs of those who are on the under-side of things. Such imputations are however unavoidable, and cannot relieve us from the duty of holding forth the less materialistic ideals; they are the truth, and experience bears out their truth.

It is often said that the Soul, the real man and the real liver of the life, has higher ideals and prospects in view for us than those which, in

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our shortsightedness and folly, we would choose for ourselves; or, if we profess another faith, that "Divine Wisdom has seen fit to mold our fortunes in accordance with his own will" rather than ours. Yet even the ordinary intelligence of man, limited though it be, would scorn seriously to lay down as worthy ideals some of the materialistic doctrines of life that prevail. When men are free to choose, we do not find that it is always the soft and comfortable that they select; rather they in many cases thrust themselves willingly upon hardships. They charge headlong into troubles; they take little heed of wealth; they behave as though adventure and experience constituted a more real claim to represent happiness than do comfort and affluence.

These considerations may serve to solve the question why so many men of genius and merit are hampered throughout life by adversity. There may be no need to worry our brains to devise explanations, when we can perhaps answer that the statement is simply not true. What we choose to call adversity is adversity only when measured by the aforesaid materialistic standard; to the actual liver of the life it is not adversity at all but opportunity, experience. It does not hamper him, it helps him. He encounters it in the pursuance of his destiny — in following out the path which his character has predetermined for him. There may be, among the constituents of his character, a weak desire for the easy path; but there is none the less a far stronger impulse, the one that really molds his life, the aspiration to give vent to the richer capacities of his soul; and for this it is needful that he should encounter all kinds of opportunity, whether of the kind called painful or not.

Thus viewed, the words fortunate and unfortunate acquire very different meanings; and, in the retrospect of a liberated Soul, summing up its past life, we might well find that a fortunate life would be regarded as one that was richest in experience, and an unfortunate life as one in which ease and so-called prosperity had denied the Soul all opportunity to learn anything or to express itself.

The Soul, the real man, can estimate circumstances only by their use in aiding its own purpose. And what is that purpose? Evidently to achieve true happiness, which means the liberation from importunate desires and from the ceaseless chase after pleasure and shunning of pain, and from slavery to that tyrant the personality. We are happiest when for a while we forget our personality. Man's destiny seems to be to pass from a state of innocence like that of a child and finally to a conquest of the personality. The personality would seem to be an illusion caused by the shutting up of our consciousness within a narrow room. It is a sort of inflammation or hypertrophy of the consciousness. There are

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many amiable well-balanced happy people whose personality has never been much developed and who fit in harmoniously with the general life. But there must be a higher state beyond — that of the person who, having developed a very strong sense of personality, has nevertheless found out how to live in an impersonal state; who has won through the complex to the simple again. It is a serious mistake to try to go back to a state which has been left behind. We should aspire to push on to what lies ahead.

The materialistic idea of success is often shown in our educational schemes. The curriculum is to be made 'practical,' so as to fit the pupil for 'getting on in life.' None the less, the human soul craves eagerly for culture and refinement, and for an enrichment of the inner life which is not to be measured in terms of worldly prosperity. If the miscalled practical method of education were to become too general, special colleges would have to be set up to teach things that are not 'practical,' so as to satisfy the demand for those things. Are we to measure success in terms of bulk and quantity, noise and glitter? By doing so we banish beauty and rhythm and harmony out of life, and have to create a special department for these things, and call it 'art,' thus making art a something apart from life, as Occidentals have made religion to be.

If some ideal for the future is needed, for us to look forward to, why not try to envisage a state of society in which material prosperity and wealth and conspicuousness were not the ideal; but in which the ideals were grace and harmony and the power to appreciate those more real joys which the contact of nature can inspire in a receptive temperament? What do we too often find instead? Prophecies of a future with more machines than ever, more cakes and ale, and a kind of mechanically perfect civilization which would drive any sensitive person to suicide. Mind, it is not contraction or retrogression that is being advocated; expansion and progress, rather, but expansion and progress along different lines. Expansion of the richer side of our nature, progress along the path of real development, that will conduct us into a world richer beyond belief than any we know of now. Nature is infinitely varied and capacious, bringing forth riches in proportion to our power to perceive and appreciate them. There is not much in nature for a cow or a pig; still less, probably, for the man who sees everything in terms of profit and material use.

An eventful life — does it necessarily mean a career of travel and acquaintance with many celebrated people and prominence in public affairs? There are other fields of adventure than these; and a life which would be quite obscure if judged by conventional standards can be profoundly full of adventure, if we judge by the experiences passed through.

## BUBBLES

RONALD MELVILLE

**I** LISTENED to a song and wondered whence it came; then questioned in myself: What is a song? Is it the soul of sound that breathes its utterance in song? I see it as a bubble floating on the surface of a lake, a shimmering dome reflecting all the lights in heaven. Whence does it come?

Out of the depths of consciousness it springs, where silence reigns, where speech is impotent, and thought itself in dreamless trance sleeps motionless beneath the waters of that lake when no wind stirs its tranquil bosom. And as a bubble springs spontaneously to birth within those lightless depths, rising to the surface by its own necessity, so self-impelled a song springs into being, rising as the bubbles rise to gleam for a moment till the sun shall take them to himself to blend their fleeting beauty with the great harmony of life.

Bubbles are made in many ways, so too are songs. Who has not in his childhood blown soap-bubbles whose gorgeous iridescence charmed the childish mind? So too we have jazz music and free verse, and modernism and futurism, and all the host of cultural isms that dazzle and bewilder the spectator for a moment, and are gone, like bubbles; all ephemerals; some of them beautiful, some merely curious. Not a one of them is permanent; and what of that? The permanence of man himself is but the endurance of a bubble, ere the sun dries it up and it is nothing but a memory.

But stay: what says Theosophy? Does it endorse such pessimism? Is there no permanence in man? There is no room for pessimism in Theosophy; but there is always room for the inevitable paradox in any statement of the truth. Thus man must die: and yet the human spirit is immortal. For man is born again and yet again before his life on earth is ended. His body dies; but he himself lives on: for he is not his body. Man the impermanent is but a bubble on the waters of life; and yet the sun that dries his life away is seen reflected for a moment in that impermanent imbodiment of a breath.

The bubble dies, the breath lives on; the sun endures and suffers not the kiss of death when countless bubbles perish; although he too must die immortal though he be. Where then is permanence, if all must die? If man is but a bubble, whence comes his craving for eternal life? For man still yearns for immortality, if not for himself then for his works. If not for his works then for his progeny: the greatest egoist will sacrifice himself for fame which is perhaps the most alluring substitute for im-

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mortality. But why should these creatures of a single life desire it since they themselves will not be here to share in it, that is, according to their own belief in the reality of death and in their general ignorance of the Theosophic doctrine of Reincarnation.

Can man desire that of which he knows nothing? Is not his deep desire for immortality a strong hint, at least, of something in himself that does not die, some permanent principle defying death and linking this brief life of his with all eternity? Truly, that is the teaching of the 'wisdom of the ages.' There is in man a spiritual element that does not die nor is it born as is the body; and this enduring element is the real Self of man, that has no need of fame nor any substitute for immortality, being beyond the reach of death and being in touch with the reality of life.

Fame indeed is a false thing: there is no permanence in it, no breath of life; it is no link with the eternal, but rather binds a man tighter to his evanescent perishable personality, to its thoughts and deeds, deluding the soul and hindering it in its pursuit of truth. And is there then no truth in the impermanent and evanescent? Surely where beauty is there truth abides: and is there then no beauty on the earth where all is transitory and perishable? The passing splendor of a sunset has in it all the elements of beauty and thrills the beholder by the very swiftness of its changes, in fact, by its impermanence. Flowers are not less beautiful because they cannot last. Why seek for permanence where all is fugitive?

The principle of beauty is eternal, but it may manifest itself on any plane, even the most impermanent, and man mistakes the form through which it manifests for beauty in itself, saying this thing is beautiful and that is not; but beauty belongs to the spiritual plane, while on this our plane of matter all that we have of beauty is reflected in mere bubbles, all impermanent. Why not? The principle of beauty manifests itself wherever there is harmony and fitness of things. Thus, it serves to bridge the gulf between the world of spirit and the world of matter, between reality and its reflexion in the shadow-world of earth.

Those who are blessed with vision of the beautiful know well that it may flash upon them in the most unexpected manner at any moment and in any circumstances even the most squalid and degraded. They know too how futile is the search for beauty where all the conditions that would appear most favorable to its revelation have been most studiously prepared. Like the wind that 'bloweth where it listeth,' so is the breath of beauty, and its container may be as transitory as any bubble floating on a puddle. For there may be harmony and fitness anywhere and yet no beauty. Let no man say, "There is no possibility of beauty here," not knowing whereof he speaks, nor whence it comes, nor in what bubble may abide the breath of spiritual life we call the Beautiful!

## SIGN-POSTS ALONG THE PATH

[Extracts from *The Path*, Vol. VII]

**E**VERY day in life we see people overtaken by circumstances either good or bad and coming in blocks all at once or scattered over long periods of time. Some are for a whole life in a miserable condition, and others for many years the very reverse; while still others are miserable or happy by snatches. I speak, of course, of the circumstances of life irrespective of the effect on the mind of the person, for it may often be that a man is not unhappy under adverse circumstances, and some are able to extract good from the very straight lines they are put within. Now all this is the Karma of those who are the experiencers, and therefore we ask ourselves if Karma may fall in a lump or may be strung out over a long space of years. And the question is also asked if the circumstances of this life are the sum-total result of the life which has immediately preceded it.

There is a little story told to a German mystic in this century by an old man, another mystic, when asked the meaning of the verse in the Bible which says that the sins of the fathers will be visited on the children to the third and fourth generation. He said:

“There was once an Eastern king who had one son, and this son committed a deed the penalty of which was that he should be killed by a great stone thrown upon him. But as it was seen that this would not repair the wrong nor give to the offender the chance to become a better man, the counselors of the king advised that the stone should be broken into small pieces, and those be thrown at the son, and at his children and grandchildren as they were able to bear it. It was so done, and all were in some sense sufferers yet none were destroyed.”

It was argued, of course, in this case that the children and grandchildren could not have been born in the family of the prince if they had not had some hand in the past, in other lives, in the formation of his character, and for that reason they should share to some extent in his punishment. In no other way than this can the Christian verses be understood if we are to attribute justice to the God of the Christians.

Each Ego is attracted to the body in which he will meet his just deserts, but also for another reason. That is, that not only is the body to give opportunity for his just reward or punishment, but also for that he in the past was connected with the family in which the body was born, and the stream of heredity to which it belongs is his too. It is

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therefore a question not alone of desert and similarity, but one of responsibility. Justice orders that the Ego shall suffer or enjoy irrespective of what family he comes to; similarity decrees that he shall come to the family in which there is some characteristic similar to one or many of his and thus having a drawing power; but responsibility, which is compounded of justice, directs that the Ego shall come to the race or the nation or the family to which its responsibility lies for the part taken by it in other lives in forming of the general character, or affecting that physical stream of heredity that has so much influence on those who are involved in it. Therefore it is just that even the grandchildren shall suffer if they in the past have had a hand in molding the family or even in bringing about a social order that is detrimental to those who fall into it through incarnation.

I use the word responsibility to indicate something composed of similarity and justice. It may be described by other words probably quite as well, and in the present state of the English language very likely will be. An Ego may have no direct responsibility for a family, national, or race condition, and yet be drawn into incarnation there. In such an event it is similarity of character which causes the place of rebirth, for the being coming to the abode of mortals is drawn like electricity along the path of least resistance and of greatest conductivity. But where the reincarnating Ego is directly responsible for family or race conditions, it will decide itself, upon exact principles of justice and in order to meet its obligations, to be reborn where it shall receive, as grandchild if you will, physically or otherwise the results of its former acts. This decision is made at the emergence from Devachan. It is thus entirely just, no matter whether the new physical brain is able or not to pick up the lost threads of memory.

So today, in our civilization, we are all under the penalty of our forefathers' sins, living in bodies which medical science has shown are sown with diseases of brain and flesh and blood coming in the turbid stream of heredity through the centuries. These disturbances were brought about by ourselves in other centuries, in ignorance, perhaps, of consequences so far-reaching, but that ignorance lessens only the higher moral responsibility and tends to confine the results to physical suffering. This can very well lead, as it often does, to efforts on the part of many reincarnating Egos in the direction of general reform.

It was through a belief in this that the ancients attempted to form and keep up in India a pure family stream such as the highest caste of Brahman. For they knew that if such a clean family line could be kept existing for many centuries, it would develop the power of repelling Egos

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on the way to rebirth if they were not in character up to the standard of that stream of life. Thus only teachers by nature, of high moral and spiritual elevation, would come upon the scene to act as regenerators and saviors for all other classes. But under the iron rule of cyclic law this degenerated in time, leaving now only an imitation of the real thing.

A variation of the Eastern story told above is that the advice of the King's counselors was that the broken stone should be cast at the prince. This was done, and the result was that he was not killed but suffered while the pieces were being thrown. It gives another Karmic law, that is, that a given amount of force of a Karmic character may be thrown at one or fall upon one at once, in bulk so to say, or may be divided up into smaller pieces, the sum of which represents the whole mass of Karmic force. And so we see it in life. Men suffer through many years an amount of adverse Karma which, if it were to fall at once, would crush them. Others for a long time have general good fortune that might unseat the reason if experienced in one day; and the latter happens also, for we know of those who have been destroyed by the sudden coming of what is called great good fortune.

This law is seen also in physics. A piece of glass may be broken at once by a single blow, or the same amount of force put into a number of taps continuously repeated will accomplish the same result and smash the glass. And with the emotions we observe the same law followed by the most ignorant, for we do not tell bad news at once to the person who is the sufferer, but get at it slowly by degrees; and often when disaster is suddenly heard of, the person who hears it is prostrated. In both cases the sorrow caused is the same, but the method of imparting the news differs. Indeed, in whatever direction we look, this law is observed to work. It is universal, and it ought to be applied to Karma as well as to anything else.

Whether the life we are now living is the net result of the one just preceding is answered by Patañjali in his 8th and 9th aphorisms, Book IV.

“From these works there results, in every incarnation, a manifestation of only those mental deposits which can come to fructification in the environment provided. Although the manifestation of mental deposits may be intercepted by unsuitable environments, differing as to class, place, and time, there is an immediate relation between them, because the memory and the train of self-reproductive thought are identical,” and also by other doctrines of the ancients.

When a body is taken up, only that sort of Karma which can operate through it will make itself felt. This is what Patanjali means. The

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'environment' is the body, with the mind, the plastic nature, and the emotions and desires. Hence one may have been great or the reverse in the preceding life, and now have only the environment which will serve for the exhaustion of some Karma left over from lives many incarnations distant. This unexhausted Karma is known as stored-up Karma. It may or may not come into operation now, and it can also be brought into view by violent effort of the mind leading to such changes as to alter the bodily apparatus and make it equivalent to a new body. But as the majority of men are lazy of mind and nature, they suffer themselves to run with the great family or national stream, and so through one life make no changes of this inner nature. Karma in their cases operates through what Patanjali calls 'mental deposits.' These are the net results stored from each life by *Manas* [the Mind Principle]. . . . Hence, and because under the sway of cyclic law, the reincarnation can only furnish an engine of a horse-power, so to say, which is very much lower than the potential energies stored in *Manas*, and thus there remain unexhausted 'mental deposits,' or unexhausted Karma. The Ego may therefore be expending a certain line of Karma, always bringing it to similar environments until that class of Karma shall be so exhausted or weakened as to permit another set of 'mental deposits' to preponderate, whereupon the next incarnation will be in a different environment which shall give opportunity for the new set of deposits to bring about new or different Karma.

The object that is indicated for life by all this is, so to live and think during each life as to generate no new Karma or cause for bondage, while one is working off the stock in hand, in order that on closing each life-account one shall have wiped off so much as that permits. The old 'mental deposits' will thus gradually move up into action and exhaustion from life to life, at last leaving the man in a condition where he can master all and step into true consciousness, prepared to renounce final reward in order that he may remain with humanity, making no new Karma himself and helping others along the steep road to perfection.

— EUSEBIO URBAN, *Thoughts on Karma*



RECENTLY a book on the subject of Mesmerism having been published in London, I read in it some astounding statements about the relation of the Higher Self to Mesmerism. The author says that it is the Higher Self that acts in the case of those mesmerized subjects who show clairvoyance, clairaudience, and the like, of a high order. That is to say, the views expressed amount to the doctrine that pure spirit, which the

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Higher Self is, can be acted on and affected by the gross physical power of mesmerism. This idea seems to be quite contrary to all that we have read in Theosophical literature on the philosophy of man and his complex nature. For if there is anything clearly stated in that, it is that the Higher Self cannot be affected in this manner. It is a part of the Supreme Spirit, and as such cannot be made to go and come at the beck of a mesmerizer.

It is a well-known fact that the more gross and physical the operator, the stronger is his influence, and the easier he finds it to plunge his subject into the trance state. Seldom do we find the very delicate, the nervous, or the highly spiritualized able to overcome the senses of another by these means. Not only does the whole of our philosophy sustain the contention that the Higher Self is not acted on, but we have also the eminent writer H. P. Blavatsky saying that the human spirit — and that is the Higher Self — cannot be influenced by any man.

Mesmeric force is purely material, although of a finer sort of materiality than gas. It is secreted by the physical body in conjunction with the astral man within, and has not a particle of spirituality about it further than that spirit is immanent in the whole universe. And when it is brought to bear on the willing or unwilling subject, the portion of the nature of the latter which is waked up, or rather separated from the rest, is the astral man.

Probably the reason why the author of the book referred to and others make the mistake of confounding this with the Higher Self is that the utterances of the one entranced seem so far to transcend the limits of ordinary waking consciousness. But this only makes the possible horizon of consciousness widen; it does not prove that we are hearing direct from the spirit. The vast powers of memory are well-known, and when we add to the worldly estimate of its powers the knowledge of the ancient esoteric schools, we can see that the uncovering of the subconscious memories will give us much that a spiritualist might attribute to a denizen of the 'summer land.'

Thus in the famous case of the ignorant servant of the pastor who was in the habit of walking up and down in her hearing and repeating aloud verses from the Latin and the Greek, we know that when she fell sick with fever her constant repetition of those Latin and Greek verses was an act of the under-memory which had caught and retained all, though she was, in her usual health, too ignorant to say one word in either of those languages. These illustrations can be multiplied a thousandfold from the records of clairvoyants of all sorts and conditions. When the barrier to the action of the subconscious memory is removed,

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whether by sickness, by training, by processes, or by natural change of the body, all the heretofore unperceived impressions come to the surface.

Clairvoyance and similar phenomena are explicable by the knowledge of the inner man, and, that being so, it is straining a point and degrading a great idea to say that the Higher Self is involved. For the inner astral man has the real organs which partially function through the one we know. The real eye and ear are there. So what happens in mesmeric trance is that the outer eye and ear are paralysed for the time, and the brain is made to report what is seen and heard by the inner senses.

These, it is well known, are not limited by time and space, and so give to the operator very wonderful things when viewed from the ordinary level of observation.

And at the same time it is well known to those who have experimented strictly on the lines laid down by the masters of occultism that the sight and hearing and ideation of the mesmerized subject are all deflected and altered by the opinions and thoughts of the operator. And this is especially the case with very sensitive subjects who have gone into the so-called *lucid* state. They are in a realm of which they know but little, and will give back to him who has put them into this state answers on such subjects as the inner constitution of man and nature which will be enlarged copies of what the operator himself has been thinking on the same subject, if he has thought definitely on them.

From the tenor of the parts of the book I mentioned, it seems clear that the ideas as to the Higher Self there expressed emanated from 'sensitives' who have in fact merely enlarged and confirmed the views expressed by the author of that work some years ago in "Transactions of the London Lodge" on the subject of the Higher Self, as may be seen from reading the latter.

A simple subject of the mesmeric influence, no matter how far in advance of other sensitives, is not by any means a *trained seer*, but in the opinion of the esoteric schools is untrained, for training in this means a complete knowledge on the part of the seer of all the forces at work and of all the planes to which his or her consciousness gains entry. Hence one who merely goes into that condition by the force of the mesmeric fluid is a wanderer wholly unfit to guide anyone. . . . And the assertion can be made with confidence that there are no seers publicly known so trained in the western world yet. Hence no operator can have the advantage of the services of such, but all the investigators are com-

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pelled to trust to the reports from the state of trance made by men or women — chiefly women — who never went through the long preliminary training and discipline, not only physically but mentally, that are absolute prerequisites to seeing correctly with the inner eyes. Of course I except from this the power to see facts and things that take place near and far. But that is only the use of inner sight and hearing; it is not the use of the inner understanding. But on this subject I should like to say a little more at some future time.

— WILLIAM BREHON, *Mesmerism and the Higher Self*

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GERTRUDE VAN PELT, M. D.

“Thus the seer, with vision clear,  
Sees forms appear and disappear  
In the perpetual round of strange  
Mysterious change.  
From birth to death, from death to birth,  
From earth to heaven, from heaven to earth,  
Till glimpses more sublime  
Of things unseen before,  
Unto his wondering eyes reveal  
The universe, as an immeasurable wheel  
Turning forever more  
In the rapid rushing river of time.”— LONGFELLOW

 O the pebble lying upon the beach, all those other pebbles beneath the mobile but impenetrable surface of the ocean, are dead. They are hidden in another world, whose secrets are locked in the gloom of dark waters. And to those others, peacefully resting on the moist bed of mother-earth, cradled by the gentle tides, their sisters, dwellers in the air, are also dead. The ceaseless motion of the winds and waves reverse these habitats, but only masters of those elements withstand the all-absorbing influence of the present moment. Thus with the pebbles, perhaps. But buried in the heart of man, is ever the knowledge of those on both sides of the shore.

Over the surface of earth, the leaves and flowers come and go. Winter's bare branches give no sign of the beauty they are withholding. Then comes the wonder of the springtime, revealing the invisible world, which feeds this, the outer rim of worlds. What message could be plainer? Our little brothers, the animals, appear and disappear, then come again. We, too, continue the habit formed so many eternities ago. Like birds

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of passage, we visit this scene and that, are hailed by our comrades, and then seen no more by those here. Whole races come and write history in letters of gold or letters of blood, and then vanish, leaving perhaps only a waste desert to tell of their greatness, or a few degenerates to hint of their failures.

Ages hence, we see a new and clean land, peopled thickly and alive with energies which call to mind an old departed race, and we say, "what was, comes again; there is nothing new under the sun." But not every one guesses that it is the race which is not new. Whole continents carry for millions and millions of years the teeming life of many races; witness their birth, intense life, their decay and death; then vanish as if they had never been. And new lands, which had been washed for ages by purifying waters, rise elsewhere to receive the souls awaiting them.

Co-ordination everywhere, as could only be if all were part of a vast organism, conscious in every part. And every unit being a part of it, can never cease to be this. Forms change and outside relations to these forms. Like the waves of the ocean which suck back and plunge forward; like the heart of every creature, which contracts and rests, the rhythm of life in great and small never fails. All are breathed out into activity; all are drawn in into silence. Yet all are there, forever and forever, and can no more escape being an eternal part of that which they are, than one can say, I will no more be subject to the law of gravity.

When it comes to ourselves, it is the silence that staggers us. This seems so deep and endless. Those who are withdrawn into it, seem so far away, so everlastingly separated from the eyes accustomed to rove intensely over the surface of life, and which have not yet learned to look within for the solving of its secret meaning. Yet even if we could look well *without*, we might find this mystery proclaimed so loud that it could be heard over and above all the din of lesser sounds, and written in letters so great that, like the large letters on a map, they are often lost in a maze of smaller words and in copious details.

The soul's brief life on earth and its seeming departure, so baffling to us who stand for the moment on the shore, but so revealed by the inevitable meaning of the facts of life, are none other than the ebb and flow, present not only in what we call the lower kingdoms, but everywhere. It is known as Reincarnation, and is the great pulse-beat of human life. It may come as a stranger to modern thought, but taken in, is quickly seen to be an old friend. It is the lost key to effective thought. Place it where you will, it clashes with nothing, but harmonizes and supplies a missing link. It is like the  $x$  in algebra. Find its value and it

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solves every problem. After using it as a background for all puzzles for a time, it becomes so overwhelmingly evident that there can be no more doubt of it than a keen mathematician feels when he finally reaches the answer to a problem. Try it, you who find life a painful enigma. Test it for six months, and see how gently it smoothes out the hard lines, how marvelously it joins together all the misfit pieces.

It is rather surprising that Europe and America should look so shyly at this old belief, and put it aside so lightly, for in this respect they separate themselves from all the rest of mankind, present and past. An absolute failure to reckon with it surely argues a provincial mind, when regarded from a world-point of view. For nearly two thirds of present humankind accept it unreservedly, and once the whole world believed it.

In ancient civilizations it was one of the corner-stones of thought. The old Egyptians, so wonderful in every way, whose marvelous development calls forth our admiration, we believe had no doubt of it. Ancient India, glorified by its high spiritual culture, its people endowed with subtil minds whose fine shadings our modern westerners could not even sense — they knew the truth of Reincarnation. The Persian Magi built their thought around this belief. In the old civilizations of Peru and Mexico it was universal; in ancient China and Japan, likewise. Everywhere we find it. Is it nothing that all these great old races were unanimous in their verdict in favor of it?

The schools which made what there was of nobility in ancient Greece and Rome taught it. Those glorious writers to whom the modern world turns for inspiration, such as Plato, Vergil, the disciples of Pythagoras, believed it. Where there was a clear channel it cropped out in Europe. The Druids taught it to the Celts, Gauls, and Britons. And all through the records of history, whenever a soul has risen above its fellows intuitively, the light of this truth has shone upon his mind. Kant, Schopenhauer, Giordano Bruno, Hegel, Fichte, Leibnitz, Lessing, Goethe, Herder, Boehme, Porphyry, Iamblichus, and all the Neo-Platonists; Henry More and the Cambridge Platonists; modern writers, such as Shelley, Wordsworth, Emerson, Browning, Walt Whitman, and many others, join the ranks more or less completely. If one had time to look them up, the names of those who have thus recorded themselves would perhaps fill pages. Even some confirmatory statements from the old church-fathers, such as Origen, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Synesius, have escaped the censorship of the church.

So I say it is surprising that in the face of such overwhelming

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evidence of the conviction of the highest and best human thought, there should be indifference as to the nature of this great truth. To belittle these grand ancients, only reveals ignorance; to judge of them by their degenerate descendants, or to confuse their teachings with the grotesque superstitions which have gathered round their old strongholds; just as rank and ugly weeds envelop ancient ruins; or breeds of poisonous creeping things take up their abode with them; to look no deeper than to this kind of fungus-growth, is to commit oneself to superficiality.

There is an evidence of the truth of Reincarnation, which might be said to be constantly staring us in the face. The simple fact that human egos are using successfully such complex bodies as they do, is overwhelming proof that they have done it very many times before. Such intuitive knowledge could only be the result of ages of experience. When a man speaks a language with ease and perfection, no one thinks of asking whether it is the first time he has attempted it. Common sense would forbid. Much is said about the evolution of form, but form, of course, is *evolved*. It is the evolver, the intelligence which expresses itself *through* the form, to whom the word evolution can be applied. One does not speak of the evolution of a vase, for instance, but of the artistic sense of the designer or people who produced it. In fact, a living form is nothing but a collection of lives of different grades, held together by another of a superior order.

That it takes ages in the lower kingdoms, merely to evolve a new organ, is well known by scientists. The intelligence engaged in this work, is obliged to carry each form it uses as far as it will go, leave it, and produce another. Should a different intelligence be behind each series of forms, so to speak, there could be no gain from experience, and, consequently, no growth. And could we imagine an entity imprisoned in a form for which it was not prepared, obviously it would not be able to use or control it. The consciousness guiding a fly, for example, could not enter the form of a dog and hold that greater form together. There is an abyss between the two. What we call death would supervene. When the human form is reached, there are many lower lives called into service, whose quality and force are vastly finer and greater, and this must ever increase as the ego itself gains in power — a process which must continue unceasingly up to the Great Center, which holds within its mighty grasp and co-ordinates the life of this Universe.

It is a difficult thing to hold and control a form, and could only be done by beginning with the simplest and by degrees working up to the complex, just as one grows through simple musical harmonies to comprehend and execute the great masterpieces. Even an adept, it is said,

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must spend much energy in gaining full control of each fresh body, and may have to spend years in this way before undertaking the work for which he entered that body. It is contrary to what we instinctively know that any gigantic task is possible without adequate preparation and training.

The brain-mind, the organ functioning on earth, does not, of course, understand or control; but the real Ego, the Higher Mind must, through its agent the lower mind, little by little educate, evolve, and master that intelligence whose duty it is to bring together the form, in other words, the animal man. All this touches intimately the mystery of the dual human nature, a subject too vast to be more than implied here. Just consider one's muscular system alone. In the words of one of the publications under the auspices of the Life-Extension Institute:

"Every human being has more than four hundred willing servants under his conscious control. . . . Fortunately we do not have to address these laborers by name. . . . We merely decide consciously to act. Instantly a series of swift, intricate, yet orderly, unconscious impulses flash along the network of nerves to the necessary muscle, or to a whole group of muscles, and the desired movement is carried out so promptly that you do not realize the method."

Is it conceivable that this could be done by an infant, for instance, unless through countless efforts in similar bodies, the knowledge had become intuitive?

We do not use the same astute intelligence in regard to ourselves that we bring to bear on all exterior problems. The race-mind seems to have been so psychologized with the belief that man, his make-up, his coming and going, are such hopeless, such impenetrable, mysteries that almost any nonsense has had a chance of being thrown into the mental grooves and allowed to lie there without protest — which has then borrowed a fictitious life from such rich soil, and thrown up many a bizarre growth, doomed fortunately to wilt, from lack of root. A rational explanation gains attention slowly, because for so long the matter has been thought quite beyond reason.

So overwhelmingly obvious does the necessity for unceasing repetition appear, that it seems odd that it is commonly overlooked. The fact of the loss of memory which is such an obstacle to perception for many, seems trifling in comparison. How *could* the brain-mind retain the memory, since the old experiences have never been registered in the new brain? The record is kept elsewhere — a superlatively merciful provision, which disentangles the new life from the old threads, while the results of the past are indelibly marked in power, character, and tendencies.

So death is a misnomer. It simply means that life has taken new

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directions. The real ego retires to its natural element, and all the different grades of life, which held together for a common purpose, do likewise. Each one gravitates to its kind independently. The partnership is dissolved, temporarily, at least. And the real actor in the drama, the ego, escapes from its prison to move into a fuller, freer life.

Compare the nightmare of the Dark Ages,— out of the shadow of which, with its reactions, we are but just emerging — with the beautiful sunlight which floods the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom, whose motto is, “There is *no* religion higher than Truth.”

We are indeed birds of passage; and as we come and go, if we live aright, listening ever to the voice of conscience, the journey grows more and more familiar, the veil, thinner and thinner, until it is finally dissolved. This is the great victory, the goal. Death is vanquished. Between the two worlds there is no veil. Consciousness passes naturally from one to the other, eternally illuminating the lower. It is Life everywhere and forever. The illusion of death vanishes as does a mist. And the mighty victor, he who has conquered and won himself — in the words of ancient wisdom — “standeth now like a white pillar to the west, upon whose face the rising Sun of thought eternal poureth forth its first most glorious waves. His mind, like a becalmed and boundless ocean, spreadeth out in shoreless space. He holdeth life and death in his strong hand.”

## THE POWER OF EXAMPLE

MARJORIE M. TYBERG

**I**N Lomaland one of the great benefits of the student-life is the example of those who are conquering or have conquered the very failings which so beset us and which we must overcome before we can stand shoulder to shoulder with our truest comrades. It is well to turn at times from introspection to the contemplation of those who have the qualities we lack, who have climbed far enough above us for us to be able to see them plainly. If we have honesty and courage in doing this, and if we love strength and purity, we can derive a positive inspiration from the presence and example of those who have partially attained.

Suppose that it is lack of vigilance with regard to speech which we must overcome. The presence and example of the comrade who

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thinks before she speaks instead of binding you to secrecy after the careless remark or thoughtless criticism, has a tonic effect. It may not silence the foolish speech of others, but it teaches by contrast; and among students who have an ideal, though they may lose sight of it frequently, this wisely silent comrade is a reminder of the better way.

The realization of the power of such an example as a benefit to ourselves at once stimulates us to offer this kind of forceful help to others. The expression of part of our ideal thus awakens a new sense of responsibility, and with the growth of the latter comes strength. This is especially so among a body of students associated in work for a great common purpose. It would seem that those who have learned to make Theosophy a living power in their lives are holding the others to the ideal which all avow. Little by little these others draw nearer as they wake up to the sense of their own power to become what they have long asserted that they long to be.

A fine impersonality is needed in order to profit by example. This has to be strived for first. Personal desires and feelings cloud our judgment concerning others; but when love of the right is fostered, is strenuously and conscientiously placed first, and a sharp lookout kept for the smallest beginnings of anger or envy, the full encouragement and help from those who have passed along the path before us is felt. They become a tower of strength to us.

It is a fact that sometimes those who have passed forward not long since are of most help to us. Their caution infects us, their evident self-recollection reminds us, and their determined efforts shame us, if we begin to grow lax. Their hands seem nearer ours, ready to grasp ours when we fear to fall. This strength, however, is felt in the silence, not in dribbling, weak acknowledgments of error, or spoken resolves.

In this way is the whole body of students linked together for mutual helpfulness. The strong inspire the weak, and learn the science of human nature by dealing with these faulty ones. For the weak there is always some one a little beyond who shows the effect upon his whole nature of the effort made to attain. To see daily one exercising self-control in situations where ours is wont to break down; unselfish where thought of self mars our work; willing where we cavil; trusting where we doubt; is a challenge to our higher natures. Not being permitted to forget the high ideal of a Theosophic life is one of the greatest privileges which can be enjoyed by a member of the student-life in Lomaland.

## THOUGHTS ON REINCARNATION

H. TRAVERS, M. A.

E must be careful to distinguish Reincarnation from the continuity of the human race, and to avoid using arguments which, though they are consistent with Reincarnation and may seem to prove it, really prove no more than that the human race continues — which nobody denies. If we leave a task unfinished, somebody may finish it; but who?

The essential point is whether there is anything in the individual which survives; or whether on the contrary he disappears and the work is carried on by others.

There is in each man what is sometimes called the 'thread-soul,' from the analogy of a string of beads, which, though separate from each other, are joined by the string. This it is which persists throughout the successive earth-lives. With each incarnation, it adds to itself something which it has gleaned from its latest experience of earth-life; and thus the growth of the Soul is accomplished.

It is necessary to distinguish between the Individuality and the personality; for, though these words may be used indiscriminately in common parlance, we must give them special meanings in speaking of Reincarnation. The Individuality is that which persists; the personalities are peculiar to the successive incarnations, and are not permanent as such. They are the growth which springs up after each birth on earth. Our personality changes greatly during a lifetime, but within it is the kernel of identity, and the faculty of memory binds it together. But dissolution brings about a major change and severs the links of memory. The separate beads on the string are disconnected; it is only the string which is continuous throughout.

The memory of past incarnations inheres in the thread-soul, and is not ordinarily transmitted to the mind which we use normally. This explains why we have no detailed or pictorial memory of past lives; but this does not mean that the memory is lost. Again, the 'memory' — or 'character' — does persist in another form — namely in the form of tendencies (or skandhas) which go to make up that special character, apart from what we may have derived from parentage.

It is always necessary, in treating of this subject, to discourage a natural tendency, which some persons have, to think that they can recollect their past incarnations, and perhaps to base claims to admiration

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thereon; as this is sure to be a delusion, and a person really possessing such knowledge would never speak of it or even let it be known that he had it. But it is quite proper to say that we may all expect sooner or later, if we follow the road of truth, to attain to a knowledge far greater than we possess now.

Philosophy leads to doubt, it is said; doubt whether the truth can ever be known. It leads to contradictions, antinomies, in which there seems to be equal support for opposite conclusions. But this arises from a misuse of the intellect — or, it would be better to say, of those faculties which usually are misdescribed as the intellect. This intellectual faculty has its definite limits, and cannot explore what lies beyond its reach. Any attempt to reach finality by such reasoning is tantamount to using the brain-mind to investigate its own foundations; and we are in the position of one trying to look into his own eyes.

Yet our behavior continually contradicts the findings of our mentality. Though we may have concluded that there is no immortality, and that death ends our career, our natural instincts impel us to act as though we were immortal. We still have our faculties; and, as long as we have them, we will use them. This is the sounder philosophy, and it is dictated by knowledge superior to reasoning. Anyone who should attempt to carry out logically the findings of a skeptical mentality would lose all motive for further living and could not conduct himself reasonably.

We can live in the faith that all in us which is perishable will be cleansed away, and all that is immortal will be preserved.

It is important, in reflecting on these matters, to try and eliminate from our minds those notions of space and time which belong as natural limits to the physical world and to the conceptions of our minds while living in that world. This becomes easier now that science is recognising the unreal nature of our space-and-time-conceptions. We are prone to conceive of immortality as being tacked on to the end of mortality, and of eternity as being an appendix to time. But we find that Paul, in his letters in the Bible, speaks of the 'eternal life' (or aeonian life, if we transliterate the Greek) as something to be sought and attained now while we are in the flesh. He must have regarded it as an initiation into a higher consciousness, wherein the veils of mind and sense would be removed, and knowledge of eternity would supervene. In this he was following the teachings of the Sacred Mysteries.

In view of this, I should not expect to be able to attain definite certainties as to Reincarnation by the use of my ordinary reasoning faculties; and I should feel sure that anything narrow enough to be com-

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prised within the limits of my ordinary reason could not possibly be the whole truth.

It has often been remarked that the progress of the human race has been due to the efforts of its great men. Were such efforts not available, the best we could expect for the human race is that it would continue stationary and not deteriorate, as the various races of animals and plants continue unaltered unless influenced by man's conscious efforts. Heredity alone could at best suffice to keep humanity at a dead level. For progress, there must be an entering power from outside; and this of course is the independent *character* of the immortal souls continually incarnating. A soul with a long career of evolution behind it soon breaks through hereditary influences and the constraint of entourage, asserting its independence and individuality.

There are many people who have never sounded any deeper in their nature than what they have inherited from ancestry or absorbed from surroundings; but, once they have heard of Reincarnation, they tap a new vein, and character which has hitherto been latent begins to assert itself. Thus the mere mention of Reincarnation and its associated Theosophical teachings can mean an initiation.

If you desire knowledge of immortality, live as though you were immortal. Faith is always needed to take the step immediately in advance; whence we can see farther ahead. But if we wait until we can have things explained, we shall never take that first necessary step.

## A HOUSE OF CARDS

LYDIA ROSS, M. D.



OSGOOD sat alone at his writing-desk, staring absently at the blank sheet of note-paper before him. The envelope, already addressed as if to gain time for deciding what to write to his nearest friend, lay like an open challenge for his message. Impatiently, his hand began to push the insistent envelope away, then slowly brought it back again. It was useless to delay: he *must* face this issue.

He usually wrote easily and well, and with a special gift for fitting phrases to persons and to occasions. In fact, his great business-success began with the artfully ingenuous advertisements he wrote, with a keen and cultivated sense of their power to catch and to hold the public eye.

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He knew his friend well enough, too. They had been schoolmates in the little home-town, and later, in the big city, had seen much of each other, keeping together through hard times and easy times and what were called high old times that were not wholly elevating.

Osgood had given his friend, Danny Day, many good tips out of his own rich experience in deals,—in fact, had helped him all along to make his fortune. Danny rather followed his lead, as a rule, though with a certain reserve and a firmness about some questionable deals that held its own, in spite of their intimacy. One time, out with a camping party of men, there was a poetic, artistic fellow along for whom Danny took a great liking. They had long walks and quiet talks, before the rest were up in the morning, or while the evening's noisy game of cards competed with the 'voices of the night,' as Hardwing, the big dealer, said, with a cheapening ring in his accusing laugh that any nature-lover would resent.

One day, on this trip, Danny came to Osgood with something new in his face, a kind of shy happiness that he wanted to share, if he could find words to make it real to another. Osgood remembered now — still staring at the blank sheet in his hand — the clear calm light in Danny's eyes, quite different from anything his confidential tips had ever called forth. He recalled, too, the imp of jealous envy that sprang up in his brain, reminding him that he had made a fine art of finding the profitable side of things, and always had posted Danny,—had shared good, solid values with him that no dreaming artist could conjure with all his fairy-tales and sentiment. He would see who held the balance of power now! And before Danny could find words to begin his story, he was subtly besieged with alluring plans for a favorite project, until the new look faded out of his face, and it ended in their taking the night train back to the city. Then for weeks everything was forgotten but the biggest deal of the season.

He liked to put Danny on to things that paid; and he liked it well enough to hear other men say that he played the game pretty well to make two fortunes at the same time. What they said was true, and he let them talk, and just waved it aside lightly, without boasting or denial, but inwardly pleased enough straightway to plan something that would startle even the seasoned plungers. However, he loosened his tongue a little more at home, and told his wife that he was making quite a man of Danny.

Isabel Osgood looked at him quietly. She had changed a good deal from the impulsive, romantic girl he had persuaded years ago that an elopement was a jolly lark. Now she asked him if his power might not prove a heavy responsibility some day. He laughed at her, man-

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fashion; and he chaffed her a little about being a Theosophist, and taking things so seriously, when she knew he usually made things 'go.' Then he told about the expensive car and the chauffeur he had ordered for the use of her and the children.

The children were Isabel's tender point. She spent her happiest hours with them, though she always was ready to go out with him, or to entertain the friends he invited to his home. He did not 'talk shop' with his wife, like some men he knew. He did not need her advice, and she would not understand his business, anyway. He did not understand her altogether,— could not see why she was not gayer and more ambitious to show the other women that he gave her a private income in keeping with his increasing wealth.

He shared generously with Isabel, and was good-natured around the house, and let her run it to suit herself. Yet there was a hungry sort of look in her eyes sometimes, even when she was smiling, and chatting pleasantly, and she knew she could have anything that money would buy. He did not see very much of the children, or know them very well, either; but he was proud of them. They were models in their manners, with him, as with everyone. His big ideas for the boy's future, Isabel neither opposed nor entered into. She merely said he was young yet, and he was getting some training for the business of life, she hoped, even now.

Danny had married only two years ago, though he long had been listed as a good catch. The two families were on good terms; but somehow Osgood never felt quite at ease with the unassuming girl who blended a rare charm and dignity into happy comradeship with Danny. Osgood could not make out what her standard of values was. Under her courteous, quiet attention to what he said,— he was a clever, fluent talker upon current topics — he always felt a vague sense of being appraised and of falling short of something. She had not been rich nor had she influential relatives, and was not at all the type he would have advised as the head of Danny's establishment; but for once he was not consulted.

Osgood admitted inwardly that his friend's wife had not invaded their old friendship; but she certainly met Danny on some common ground of understanding that no one else had ever found. Moreover, her influence seemed to make her husband more likable than before, so that Osgood felt drawn to him more than ever and with a new respect. And only today, writing from her mother's home, up-country, Danny had sent a few agonizing lines, saying that his wife had just died,— she and the little baby had gone together, and there was nothing left to live for.

Osgood wondered how that short letter could possibly take hold of him so strongly. It gripped him like the clinging of a drowning man,

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blindly clutching at the nearest thing afloat above the depths of despair. He *must* do something to help — but what? He had racked his brains to find something to say or do that would offer hope and make life seem worth while. In a few hours that letter had swept him and his lifetime's resources aside as wholly petty and powerless. He felt as if a veil had fallen away suddenly, and his soul was being searched for some living truth of friendship and manhood that was equal to this hour. Though he was master in the midst of a paradise of possessions, he had no word to say to his old friend, nothing to give, for he was spiritually dumb and naked and ashamed.

The very thought of his usual methods struck Osgood with their vulgar sacrilege of his relations to his fellows,—using them as human pawns in playing for his own gain and gratification. His mind vainly sought for one deed, one motive that was purely unselfish; but his whole career mocked him for a moral bankrupt,—beggared and without the means to meet natural liabilities. The heart beat in his breast with a strange, burdened sense of cowardly guilt and failure to face the deeper issues of life and to prove equal to them. The teeming world of affairs that he knew so well had receded into dim unreality. Strangely alone, he was called upon to voice the reality of the realm of the departed, with power enough to convince and to comfort his bereaved friend.

The man that he could and should have been, seemed to point out how pitiably miserable and unclean was his poverty of nature, cultivated at the expense of all that was large and fine and purely human. He saw now that the motives back of his best deeds were, at most, only a veiled egoism and ambition. Truth, which he had juggled with so lightly, seemed to take on a terrible beauty and light that shriveled the value and showed the deformity of shams and counterfeits and sordid impulses that drag everything down to their own level.

Osgood knew now that his influence had colored Daniel Day's whole life. In his pride at being the means of making the other's fortune, he had been blind to the fact that his friendship was no less powerful for misfortune. Even his financial training, which always provided for the final settlement of accounts, made it clear now that in dealing with the forces of a man's inner life there must come a day of reckoning. Things were what they were, and no amount of manoeuvring or brilliant by-play could undo what had been done, or unmake the actuality of deed and word.

The thought of his responsibility was staggering; — and he had been rash enough to laugh at Isabel for suggesting such an idea. Isabel — dear, patient heart-hungry Isabel, who must have known him for years

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as he now saw himself, face to face! She had paid a bitter price for leaving her childhood's home to follow him; but she had been loyal to her chosen path of duty, without a breath of reproach or repining. He took her devotion for granted, like fresh air or sunshine,— never thinking how awfully alone he left her in the finer sense of things, in which he had no share. How he must have hurt her, as he shattered the girlish ideals she imagined he stood for! It dawned on him for the first time that she must have suffered ten times the sense of helplessness that he was finding so hard to bear. *He could change his life;* but she could not do it for him, or even make him see the need of it, as she must have realized all these years. What did his most daring ventures amount to compared with the courageous part she played calmly, day after day,— whether she still loved him or her love was starved out?

In looking back over his endless dabbling in affairs of dollars and cents, and of sensation, he noted how easy and correct were his manners, how busy and keen his brain, and how skilled his ever-ready tongue was in the use of words. That was all he had put into the man's part he had to play. He had cut out or slurred over the deeper, richer, and nobler expressions of human experience, and his own interpretation of life was merely childish and vulgarly crude and unsatisfying. Men had come to him with choice bits of gossip, or when in need of financial help, but never confided to him their sorrow and despair. And he had not been fine-grained or big enough in nature to feel through others the suffering that passed him by so easily.

Osgood heard the hall-clock strike four; and the birds outside began their faint twitter of drowsy calls. He had spent the night sitting there, and had lost all sense of time. Unconsciously he had held the sheet of paper that was symbolic in its blankness,— there was nothing he had earned the right to say with conviction. Yesterday seemed like another incarnation. He felt that, in a sense, he had died; for the old blindness had passed away, and in a measure he had stood face to face with awful self-revealing truth in himself. Surely the sting of death must be the bitter regret at lost opportunities; but death itself must be a wise and loving friend that welcomes us to a larger awakening.

A new day was dawning, and Osgood inwardly vowed, humbly and sacredly, that come what might and whatever the cost, he would begin anew and try to live the life of a manly man. He would go to Isabel,— no words could tell what he felt, but he knew she would understand. Younger in years, she was more mature in heart, more completely human in what she had lived through, than he was.

He would beg her to help him, to go with him to dear, old sorrow-

## THE CAGED SONGSTER

ing Danny. They could make him feel that their love and sympathy were true and lasting, anyway. He felt a strangely tender yearning to comfort his friend,—to make the strong tie between them count for something helpful. Perhaps they could work together to build anew,—not a house of cards this time, but a place of sanctuary that was safe and sure. The need of an inner retreat seemed so vital now. He could not see how to begin; but Isabel would know, for she had found the way alone.

## THE CAGED SONGSTER

RALF LANESDALE



ANY a tender heart has spent its sympathy on a caged bird, yet never dreamed that all around walked prisoners as pitifully caged as any singing bird. Poets galore have likened the human soul to a caged bird, yet failed to sense the deeper tragedy of the imprisoned soul betrayed, ensnared, and sold into captivity by its own craving for experience, and its own passionate desire to be free; for of these elements is woven the web in which the unaccustomed feet of the incarnate soul are tangled, and itself made captive in the gilded cage of life. And the mysterious weaver of the web is just that elemental self which children of my day were taught to fear as his Satanic majesty the Devil, source of all evil, and the great enemy of man; not knowing that the only enemy of man is man himself, his lower elemental self, the only weaver of the web of destiny, that holds the imprisoned soul bound down to earth, caught in the snare of incarnation.

But, you will ask, if truly the soul is self-imprisoned, why does it not go free? To the which I must reply, Because it does not understand the mystery of self.

When a man finds himself caught in a web, even in a web of his own weaving, he will naturally struggle to go free; but his struggles, likely enough, will serve only to bind him tighter in the web. Then he will change his tactics and will try to understand the nature of the snare in which he is entangled; but he will not readily believe that the web is of his own weaving; nor is it altogether so; for the web is woven by his lower self, whereas it is the Spiritual Soul or Higher Self that is the victim of the snare, and these may seem to him as different entities unless he understands the mystery of his own duality, the mystical identity of the 'two in one': the lower elemental self, the weaver of the snare; and

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the higher, the Self Divine, the god in man, who is the captive struggling to be free. The web is Karma.

The soul of man is often pictured as a butterfly caught in a spider's web, and fighting for freedom: or as a captive maiden chained to a rock and guarded by a dragon. Helpless she waits for a deliverer. Innumerable allegories have been founded on this myth of the soul's captivity and final liberation. The very various conceptions of the subject revealed by these allegories serve to indicate the varying degree of spiritual illumination attained by the divers painters and poets who have embarked upon this perilous enterprise, too often rashly, and perhaps but very ill equipped for the adventure. Those who were truly spiritually illuminated created veritable myths, which in some cases passed into religious history as part of the sacred scriptures; while others failing to achieve religious honors retain the lower rank of allegorical romance, or losing even the traces of pure allegory, sank to the amorous depths of mere romance as retailed by the wandering troubadours.

A modern instance was the case of Parsifal, fashioned by Wagner from the Christ-myth blended with the romantic story of Sir Perceval and the Legend of the Holy Grail. But Parsifal has not been canonized, and has reached no higher than the operatic stage, in spite of its religious atmosphere, its truly allegorical character, and the apparent purpose of its creator. For although Wagner's hero Parsifal was purity personified, he scarcely 'filled the bill' as an ideal Christ, a savior of mankind.

According to the teaching of Theosophy, the ideal Christos is that spiritual principle from which the higher self of man descends, incurring crucifixion in the act of incarnation. In this case the body of the savior is the cross on which the spiritual Christ is crucified; the cross being a symbol of matter according to one line of interpretation. It is like the rock on which Prometheus, another savior of mankind, was chained by Zeus, the ruler of the earth and of the ether, *Pater omnipotens Zeus*. Omnipotent, yes, on his own plane, that of the earth's astral light; not king of the true spiritual Heaven, from which descend, according to tradition, the true redeemers of the human race.

There can be little doubt about the symbolism of the Prometheus myth, the creator of which seems to have aimed at revealing the divine origin of the human spirit which gives to man the spiritual creative fire that is destined eventually to redeem the human race, and raise him higher than the gods. For in the myth the Olympian hierarchy are shown as guarding the sacred fire for their own use and bitterly resenting the theft of the revolting Titan who stole the fire of the gods and gave it to humanity, from whom the gods would fain have kept it hidden to the

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end of time. So long already had they kept from men the secret of their divine heredity that at the last not even the poets held the key that could alone unlock the door that blocked the entrance to the treasure-house that held the sacred fire.

The bright Olympian gods, rejoicing in their own infinity of years, had scorn for the little lives of men, and proudly cried: "We are immortal: death has no message that can reach our ears." But they spoke ignorantly. They have not suffered crucifixion. Their life is unadulterated joy, such as is quite unknown to mortals, whose joy in general is but a mitigated sadness, and every pleasure brings a sorrow in its train, because the mind of man is a duality and is continually at war within itself. The consciousness of this duality crops out even in their proverbs; as for instance: "There's not a rose without its thorn." "There's ne'er a cloud but has a silver lining." Such is the price of knowledge.

Men speak of angels as typifying joy and blessedness; and yet 'tis said "The angels aspire to become men," in order to gain self-knowledge, which they desire more than their own state of uncontrasted blessedness. Even the caged songster sings as if testifying to his own enjoyment of captivity. Or is he, like a poet, singing in honor of the freedom he has lost, and singing of heaven the more gloriously for the fierce contrast of his dream of bliss with the dark misery in which his destiny has plunged him.

Man's misery is of his own making; for the ceaseless war between the higher and the lower mind consumes and desolates the heart. There must come peace. The caged bird must learn to sing in his captivity; and the incarnate soul cease to chafe at its imprisonment, so that it may learn the lesson of its presence here on earth, and win the power to rule the mind in all its moods, rising above the stormy level of the great duality, and controlling both the higher and the lower from that mysterious region where the supreme spirit sits throned in silence that is as the soul of song.



"THE consciousness of Divinity is the key to human life. For lack of this key Humanity has been drifting for ages. In finding it we unlock the door to the grandeur of life, of soul-life, and its golden opportunities; for only through the recognition of the Soul's Divinity can a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity be established and become a living power instead of a hopeless dream."— *Katherine Tingley*

# THEOSOPHICAL PRECEPTS AND THEIR APPLICATION TO DAILY LIFE

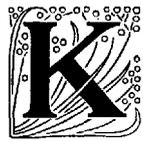
GRACE KNOCHE

“THY statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage. . . .

“This I had, because I kept thy precepts.”— *Psalms*, cxix, 54, 56

“To hold to the doctrine and not live the life of the doctrine is a travesty.”

— KATHERINE TINGLEY



KATHERINE TINGLEY once said, when asked the secret of her sublimely redemptive work, that it lay in her insistence upon the study of Theosophical precepts and their application to daily life. It is generally known that she enjoins this study upon the members of her Society, more especially upon those who, whether at the International Theosophical Headquarters, at Point Loma, California, under her direct tuition or elsewhere throughout the world, call themselves ‘students.’ It would seem worth while, therefore, to give some consideration to a subject which she herself has considered carefully and long, for she has stressed it publicly through the years and in many ways. But in so doing, the subject seems to divide itself naturally into two questions: (1) what are ‘Theosophical precepts’? and (2) what is meant by ‘daily life’?

To take up the second question first: the answer depends upon whose daily life, of course, for what is ‘life’ to one may be stagnation, death, demoralizing excitement or any of our myriad terms for experience, to another. Life is one thing to the man who works happily at bench or engine or forge, and quite another to the roustabout or indolent son of wealth; one thing to the disciplined soldier and another to the lazy improvident, waiting like Micawber ‘for something to turn up’; one thing to the traveler in his luxurious private car, and another to the lonely track-walker who, through hardship, cold, and storm, keeps to his duty so that the traveler may sleep secure while on his way.

Life is one thing to the scholar and another to the drone; one thing to the judge who knows the law and another to the indicted man before him, who faces a prison-term perhaps, because he did not know it. It is one thing to the mother who stands beside the little casket, and something so different to one who clasps her rosy first-born in her arms — blossoms both on that mystic tree whose roots are in another world, but one a living blossom, the other blighted and gone. So that in its

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ephemeral, fleeting, casual, or surface-aspects the term 'daily life' is vague; we cannot define it categorically: it may mean almost anything or nothing.

But there is another sort of life — and it belongs to the spiritual world. In that world we are truly One. There Brotherhood is a living fact, and there is a common ground upon which all the diverse types of human nature can meet and mingle, brothers and sisters as they are for ever of 'God's great family.' No two of them may have just the same outer needs, true, but be it remembered this is not an outer world. It is an inner world, wherein all have the same needs mystically and all must accept the same training if they are to act understandingly the rôle assigned to them, or do their life's real work in a workmanlike, proficient way.

In that life of essential things, all have essentially the same experiences, and all need the same qualities of mind and heart to fit them to meet conditions wisely. All must have — or find — forbearance, honesty of purpose, purity of motive, and a sense of devotion to duty, wherever that duty may lead. All must ripen into unselfishness, brotherliness, capacity for trust, love of co-operation, the will to carry through self-discipline to a finish, and what is perhaps the most important of all, common sense. All are equally hurt by a failure to qualify in these great necessities, and with those who think seriously of the matter the question is, How can I qualify? What will help me most? What shall I study first of all?

No one will deny that to follow the rules of a trade or the ethics of a profession is a necessity if we are to make a success of any outward work in our ordinary, outer life; and this is equally the case in respect to the inner, spiritual life. We have to follow rules and ethics there. If law, medicine, chemistry, engineering, or housewifery, have their science, their art, their nicety of knowledge, even more so has this finer existence that we might call, for the moment, 'the profession of soul-life.'

But this surety of mystical knowledge is not to be picked off a tree (except allegorically) nor given us out of hand by a favoring Deity. We have to earn it, and that means a high aim to start with and then perseverance, devotion and the untiring spiritual will. In both cases there are rules to be learned, principles to become acquainted with, and precepts to be followed. The Kingdom of Heaven is 'taken by violence,' not with soft airs. It is not to be had for the asking — unless one asks with the spiritual will and follows up the demand with unselfish determination, impersonal resourcefulness, skill, and the magic of unselfish potent act and deed.

"Yoga is skill *in the performance of actions*," says Krishna to

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Arjuna the Archer --- who is but man himself --- and the Teachers of Theosophy have a method in commending the study of the old dialog between these two, as it is given us in the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*. For great spiritual precepts are there, like ringing buoys, and they mark out un-faillingly the safe course between life's hidden reefs and shoals.

Theosophical precepts are immensely ancient, and yet they are, paradoxically, forever new. They are to be found all through Theosophical literature, particularly in the writings or reported sayings of the Leaders of the Theosophical Movement in this and in past ages: Krishna, Lao-Tse, Confucius, the Buddha, Pythagoras, Plato, Socrates, Plotinos, Porphyry, Hypatia, and others, down to H. P. Blavatsky, William Quan Judge, and Katherine Tingley. They are gathered in a very wonderful way in translations from two ancient scriptures known and loved by Theosophists the world over, the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* just mentioned, and *The Voice of the Silence*. The latter is a translation of fragments from an archaic mystical Eastern writing known as *The Book of the Golden Precepts* and entirely unknown to Western scholarship or religion until H. P. Blavatsky brought it out.

An industrious person could read these little works, and perhaps the actually recorded sayings of all the Teachers just mentioned, in a very few days or even hours. But a lifetime would not suffice for a full understanding of the precepts they contain, for to *know* these one must test them out in conduct, one must apply them to that indefinable quantity known as 'daily life.' It is as true today as when that 'unknown Gnostic' wrote *The Gospel of St. John*, that one cannot 'know the doctrine' unless one lives the life.

So that the first step in an understanding of these precepts is to put them to the test. It was to induce an outreaching, pleading, questioning world to take that step that H. P. Blavatsky laid down for the first object of the Theosophical Society "to form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood"; that William Quan Judge insisted on common sense, charity, and effort; and that Katherine Tingley in teaching herself all these, also founded the great educational institution at the International Theosophical Headquarters at Point Loma. And from the chance to take this step no one in the world is shut out.

Let us imagine ourself at the antipodes, quite alone (Theosophically, that is) and at a point of trial and pressure at which discouragement threatens to set in. Doubts assail us; we have lost faith in our fellow-men and confidence in the Self; courage is all but vanished; energy is gone; we would as lief play the coward as brace up and continue to fight. But if we pause and reflect, we will see that there *is* a light over the path

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and that if we would look up instead of down, within instead of without, we should see it. What do Theosophical precepts say?

“Self-conquest is your goal. Strive and love and serve and find peace.

“Do every act as an intent and loving service of the Divine Self of the world, putting your best into it in that way.”— KATHERINE TINGLEY

“Wherefore, O son of Kunti, arise with determination fixed for the battle. Make pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, the same to thee, and then prepare for battle, for thus and thus alone shalt thou in action still be free from sin. . . .

“Just to thy wish the door of heaven is found open before thee, through this glorious unsought fight which only fortune’s favored soldiers may attain.”— *Bhagavad-Gītā*

“If thou hast tried and failed, O dauntless fighter, yet lose not courage: fight on and to the charge return again, and yet again. . . .

“Remember, thou that fightest for man’s liberation, each failure is success, and each sincere attempt wins its reward in time. The holy germs that sprout and grow unseen in the disciple’s soul, their stalks wax strong at each new trial, they bend like reeds but never break, nor can they e’er be lost. But when the hour has struck they blossom forth. . . .”

— *The Voice of the Silence*

No one with a particle of mysticism in his make-up or with a bit of spiritual energy possible to his life, could help being given new faith in the Self, could help being fired and encouraged just to *keep on*, by reading such words as these, for they hold something of the Light that lies behind them.

Or let us imagine that we are wavering between the selfish and the unselfish course, saying “Oh, why be bothered? Let those who are in the mire of life, get out of it as they can! I did not crowd them into it and their Karma is none of my affair.” Theosophy says:

“But stay, Disciple. . . . Yet one word. Canst thou destroy divine COMPASSION? Compassion is no attribute. It is the LAW of LAWS — eternal Harmony, Alaya’s SELF; a shoreless universal essence, the light of everlasting Right, and fitness of all things, the law of love eternal.”

“Step out from sunlight into shade, to make more room for others. . . .

“Sow kindly acts and thou shalt reap their fruition. Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin.”— *The Voice of the Silence*

“Do not neglect benevolence. It is the little-minded who ask, ‘Does this person belong to our family?’”— *Taittirīya-Upanishad*

“Learn to overcome and learn to love.”— KATHERINE TINGLEY

We are puzzled over the queer mixture of good and evil tendencies that constitutes ourself. Are we one, or two, or fifty, or some complex uncountable congeries of independable qualities that cannot be analysed at all? For here we are — doing, as Paul confessed of himself in such contrition, the ‘things we would not do’ and not doing ‘the things we would.’ In the precepts hinged upon the great Theosophical teaching of duality, we have a master-key.

It is the same with questions of duty. Why should we do our

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duty at all? But Theosophy is “the quintessence of duty,” as H. P. Blavatsky has said, and Theosophical precepts throughout the ages are filled with injunctions to follow its path.

“A man’s own natural duty, even though stained with faults, ought not to be abandoned. For all human acts are involved in faults as the fire is wrapped in smoke. . . .

“It is better to do one’s own duty, even though devoid of excellence, than to perform another’s duty well. It is better to perish in the performance of one’s own duty; the duty of another is full of danger.”— *Bhagavad-Gitâ*

“Stay where you are and do your duty, looking within for light.”

— WILLIAM QUAN JUDGE

“Fear only to fail in your duty to others, and even then let your fear be for them, not for yourself.”— KATHERINE TINGLEY

And this from a modern philosopher-poet:

“Do out the duty! Through such souls alone  
God stooping shows sufficient of his light  
For us i’ the dark to rise by.”— BROWNING

Temptation speaks to us, hinged to some unsuspected, sleeping ambition, it may be, some hidden hunger for power which we have not yet discovered; or we stand undecided between the call of the body with its ally in the astute brain-mind, and the silent voice of the soul. But listen —

“Do not even *think* of what ought not to be done. It is difficult to walk in many paths at the same time.”— *From Eastern Wisdom*

“If thou wouldst cross the first Hall safely, let not thy mind mistake the fires of lust that burn therein for the Sunlight of life.”— *The Voice of the Silence*

“Nourish the Gods that the Gods may nourish you. . . .”— *Bhagavad-Gitâ*

We are prisoned by an inertia that we do not care to have an argument with: we are spiritually lazy. Everything touching matters of the spiritual life is ‘too much trouble.’ Why bother? ‘It will all come out in the wash’ you know — how many have said those fatal words? Yes, it will — if the stains are not so implanted that the garment has to be torn to pieces in the process of getting them out! That is something the sham philosopher never thinks about. If he did, perhaps he would not acquiesce so inertly in every little suggestion from the ensnaring illusions of life that he take the ‘easy way.’ What say Theosophical precepts?

“Shun ignorance, and likewise shun illusion. . . .

“Yea, ignorance is like unto a closed and airless vessel; the soul a bird shut up within. It warbles not, nor can it stir a feather; but the songster mute and torpid sits, and of exhaustion dies.”— *The Voice of the Silence*

“Seek this wisdom by doing service, by strong search, by questions and by humility. . . .”— *Bhagavad-Gitâ*

“Be of good cheer, O daring pilgrim ‘to the other shore.’ . . .

“Fight on and to the charge return again, and yet again. . . .

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“Beware of fear that spreadeth, like the black and soundless wings of midnight bat, between the moonlight of thy Soul and thy great goal that loometh in the distance far away.”

— *The Voice of the Silence*

Infinitely wonderful are the ideas suggested by these precepts as we meet them here and there — sometimes, though not always, in short axiomatic form, but often half concealed in argument or persuasion or in some mystical picture of awakenment or spiritual life. They open new doors before us through which we may see the real path, may glimpse a vision of the perfected soul, the glorious depths and possibilities of being — but also, contrariwise, the decaying effect of ignorance, inertia, and soul-death. Every clause is a stimulator; not a sentence but would stir a stone.

The very surprise of such sentiments, in the midst of a civilization that is frankly clamped to materialism, must set an aspiring mind on the pathway of reflexion. Once on that path, no telling what splendid light would dawn, no telling what tender depths of love might be stirred within our hearts, no telling what steel and fire and strength might inspire our lagging will. Even the materialist would find the experiment worth the making, while the intuitive, sympathetic, teachable person would enter into an inheritance of unmeasured joy and peace. He would step out and upward into soul-life.

For Theosophical precepts are rules of action for the soul. To follow them means to enter upon the path of character-building and soul-growth — an ideal not to be realized in a moment, but certain of fulfilment at some time if only we persevere. “Precept must be upon precept,” as the prophet in Israel declared and as Katherine Tingley repeats in his words, “line upon line, here a little and there a little” — and the thread of effort never let go.

This needs no argument for it is a fact of universal history, though virtually never mentioned in what passes for history in the world and there only to be read between the lines. But it can be verified, nevertheless, even from our present meager records of the past. Still more positively can it be verified by a contemplation of our own lives and the lives of those about us, if we will simply divest the mind of the rags of a false psychology and — *look*. ‘Daily life’ from this standpoint is a very understandable quantity and a definition may be easily framed. It is a spiritual warfare; it is an effort, an exertion, a test; it is a path ‘winding uphill all the way,’ with difficulties at each step to be surmounted. But that is just what the alert, strong, honest traveler wants. He would not be climbing mountains at all if he did not love continual challenge. There are hammocks everywhere.

As we know, we are confronted at any given hour or moment or day

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with this or that state of facts — facts of the inner life or the outer life or both — and we have to make some decision in regard to them, or play the part of a shirk. Now if the world is a world not of chaos but of order and of law, then there must be rules that will apply to every possible case of *desire vs. duty*, that can come up. Is it not the better part of wisdom, therefore, since these rules do exist, to dispense with qualms and questionings and quietly search them out?

If we do so, however, and are still in doubt; or if we do not understand them fully and feel that we must have them interpreted, construed, or explained, then let us go behind them to the great foundation *principles* of Theosophy which explain them. By these we can construe them; these are their great interpreters; and it is these wide, deep principles that we must study and memorize and learn and live until they become absolutely integral to the life, a very part of our motives and inner speech.

This has been insisted upon by the Teachers of Theosophy in every age; and nothing new is recommended as to method. It is merely the application of methods already used in the ordinary life of the world, to higher or finer needs. For example, if we wish to take out a patent, or build up a new industry, or secure the passage of some bill, what do we do first of all? We consult the law and find out what rules exist that are applicable to our special case. No reasonable person would take any other course, for ignorance of the statutes bearing on the subject, or of the fact that no statutes existed bearing upon it, were that the case, might defeat the whole plan. Then if we fail to find a law that applies, or if we find one but do not fully understand its application, we go behind the statute to the Constitution, and we study those stable principles upon which our statutory law itself must stand or fall.

The Teachers of Theosophy ask no more than that, *but they do ask that*. Back of the precepts of Theosophy lie its great principles, and these form a sublime Constitution, a repository of spiritual law. That Constitution is our court of last resort and it is worthy of study, of reverence and of trust.

We may carry the analogy still further, for what are these superb moral precepts, framed and presented in the form that has come down to us, but the results of *experience*? They are the resultant of trials made, of difficulties surmounted, of battles fought, of experience gained, of decisions rendered, *and of records kept*. And just as we find supporting the statutory law, the dignified and inspiring principles of our Constitution, so, supporting, explaining and illuminating the precepts of Theosophy is its Constitution, its eternal and glorious principles and laws. They are Divine in very truth, and worthy of that Spiritual Federation

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which a Universal Brotherhood must create: Karma, Reincarnation, God the Absolute, the Law of Cycles, the Duality of Human Nature, the essential Divinity of Man, Compassion as the 'Law of Laws,' and Love as the great unfolding power in life.

Yet, sublime as these principles are, precious as they become — so precious that, as Plato wrote to the young Dionysius, to one who has entered upon the path which they point out "any other manner of life is unendurable" — the precepts are equally lofty, equally unparalleled and precious, but in a way that is their own. Principles can be interpreted by the mind, to a degree at least — the history of jurisprudence bears this out, for while its great principles are rooted in the world's ancestral Theosophies, yet some very acceptable interpreters have lacked that quality of human sympathy which the *higher* law demands — but precepts must be interpreted by the heart. In one aspect they are higher than mind, for they shed a light upon it. They control and channel thought in its effluence and surge, its errant meandering, its tidal and dangerous strength, and lead it over the waiting, parched fields of the moral life, healing, nourishing life-giving waters.

Quite contrary to what sham Theosophy loves to pretend, there is nothing in Theosophical precepts that is uncanny. Katherine Tingley has proved in the Râja-Yoga Schools founded by her that the tiniest child can understand its elements — in some cases so well as to become a teacher of them to its parents. They are simple, as profound things always are. They have their source in the innate sense of equity and of law that resides in the soul of man, in eternal principles of justice and of love. It is a matter of extending one's mental boundary, that is all; of climbing to a broader view; of drawing a longer horizon-line round the landscape of our ideas. "Theosophy," said William Q. Judge, "is merely an extension of one's previous belief," and Katherine Tingley has said the same thing in other words many times.

The trouble is that we have been mentally lazy and spiritually asleep for so long that a part of our mind is actually atrophied from disuse. We would not expect to have good health with our body carefully laid away in cotton, and likewise we could not expect mental or spiritual health with the finer possibilities of our nature under-exercised, where not positively forgotten. No one ever wore out his mind by making it serve the soul. This earth is a 'mind-bearing planet' — so say Those who know — and here mind has its proper home. But only as a servant in the house will it step into its proper place, not as a master. That office belongs to the spiritual soul.

So that it is to help mankind back to real, all-round inner health

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that the Teachers of Theosophy bring out before the world, from age to age, these beautiful ancient precepts urging humanity to study and live by them. They well know what They are doing, for such study not only nourishes the heart life, but it lights a fire in the mind. They are as truly passing on the Sacred Torch as ever did the Elohim in Eden. And this is why the student who honestly strives to make Theosophical precepts a living power in his life is never stupid, humdrum, pointless, or inert, whatever else he may be. He always has something to give, always something fresh and helpful to impart. He is creative to a degree. There is never a dearth of ideas in him, and about these ideas there is often a glow and a vitality that leaps and fires you with something of its own flame. How could it be otherwise? He uses his mind as he goes along and keeps the mental clerestory uncurtained.

The true student of Theosophy, to the degree that he succeeds as a student, has welded these glorious precepts into his character so thoroughly that you feel something genuine and sincere in his very walk, in the clasp of his hand, his smile. He is an optimist from head to foot; nor could he be otherwise, for the mind is growing and putting on strength and the soul is being given a chance. The soul cannot grow in an atmosphere of wrong ideas, doubts, or mental misery any more than can a plant in a cellar. Like the plant it must have air and soil and sun, or, in other words, freedom; a broad basis of right ideas to rest upon and send its roots down into, and warm rays of love and devotion shining down upon it from above. Especially must it have right ideas. "Plato was right," wrote one of the Eastern Teachers of H. P. Blavatsky many years ago, "*Ideas rule the world.*" Right ideas mean justice, and the soul delights in justice and will have it in the end.

So that it is not a question of inventing rules of conduct or multiplying those which already exist. The precepts of Theosophy cover every case that can possibly come up. They have been tested through the ages and in every tribunal known to man, inner and outer, and have unflinching met the test. Such is the testimony of those who have applied them, in any event, and those who have *not* are without a basis for an opinion of whatever sort.

But it is essential to remember that Theosophical precepts, magic-working as they may be, can do nothing of themselves, any more than maxims of equity or rules of law, divorced from human interpretation and ripe reason, can convince juries or render decisions that will stand. A thousand volumes of them might be wheel-barrowed in at the trial of an issue, but they would be so much lumber without the familiar friend who loved them, lived with them, studied them, *knew* them, so that he could

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say, "This rule and no other applies to the state of facts before us" and could then, in knowledge, apply it. In the same way do the precepts of Theosophy need their familiar friend, who loves and knows them, who lives with them day after day and year after year, who makes it his business to *study* these rules of soul-life and work them into that part of his being that sings and soars and sheds its light above and beyond the mere mind of the brain. Then indeed will these statutes of soul-life be "as songs in the house of our pilgrimage."

In a lecture delivered before a graduating class of Divinity-Students, by Ralph Waldo Emerson, nearly a century ago, we find the following:

"I look for the hour when that supreme Beauty which ravished the souls of those Eastern men . . . and through their lips spoke oracles to all time, shall speak in the West also. The Hebrew and the Greek Scriptures contain immortal sentences that have been the bread of life to millions. But they have no epical integrity; are fragmentary; are not shown in their order to the intellect.

"I look for the new Teacher that shall follow so far those shining laws that he shall see them come full circle; shall see their rounding complete grace; shall see the world to be the mirror of the soul; shall see the identity of the law of gravitation with purity of heart; and shall show that the OUGHT, that Duty, is one thing with Science, with Beauty, and with Joy."

Who that knows Lomaland, with its devotion to duty and to the 'shining laws' that govern the Theosophical life, the insistence of its Foundress upon precept *and* practice, the identity there of right action with knowledge and joy, dare say that the days of prophecy are past?

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OBSERVER



DISCOVERIES of the remains of ancient man are becoming so numerous that the experts are trying to make theories which will comprehend them in some approach to unity. This is difficult, because there is really very little *conclusive* material, and the unfilled gaps are still enormous. And, again, the best authorities differ widely in their interpretations of accepted facts. A scaffolding, however, is being put up which it is hoped will prove useful for the erection of the future temple of knowledge. In astronomy we observe the same process, the formation of a tentative theory of the general structure of the universe of stars to which our sun belongs, and

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even of the 'island-universes' in the abysses of distant space beyond the Milky Way.

In archaeology, as in astronomy, there is a general trend towards the teachings about man and nature brought by H. P. Blavatsky from the records of her Eastern Teachers, and quite away from the narrow views that prevailed when she began her constructive work to counteract the growing materialism of the nineteenth century.

Until twenty years ago or so little was known about and less interest shown in the Egypt of the earliest periods, the Pre-Dynastic Age. Theosophical teachings, however, were insistent that for tens of thousands of years before Menes and the first kings of united Egypt, that mysterious land possessed the elements of a real civilization and that conclusive evidence would ultimately be found.

For the past two decades the evidence has been accumulating and the interest in Pre-Dynastic Egypt increasing, and now the leading Egyptologists are trying to connect up the earliest remains of prehistoric Egypt with the people of the Palaeolithic or Old-Stone Age in Europe, especially with the 'Solutreans,' and some are even suggesting that real human beings existed in the Nile Valley long before the most primitive European races, even the 'Heidelberg Man.' Professor J. H. Breasted, of the University of Chicago, is now seeking fresh evidence in favor of this theory. Very well made stone implements have been found in various parts of both Upper and Lower Egypt and it is claimed by some that the depth or thickness of the decomposed surface on some of these proves that they must be at least two million years old.

However this may be, Professor Petrie has definitely proved the existence of highly intelligent people who lived in Lower Egypt about eighteen thousand years ago. They made better pottery than that made in the same vicinity today, and they weaved linen of as good a quality as ours. He thinks their origin can be traced to the Caucasus Mountain region, and that much of the 'landscape background,' as it may be called, in the *Book of the Dead*, is derived from the topography of that district. We know that in the earliest historical period that sacred ritual was considered quite archaic and parts of it even incomprehensible.



Professor Millikan, the noted discoverer of the Millikan or Cosmic Rays, speaking in Los Angeles lately, questioned the real advance of intelligence in our time, illustrating his point by a reference to the artistic

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development of ancient Egypt, many thousand years ago which was at least equal to that of modern times.

In regard to the Egyptian knowledge of medicine which was evidently anything but superstitious charlatanry, Dr. Robert V. Dolbey, Professor of Surgery at the University of Cairo, in discussing the same subject recently at the University of California, is reported in the press as follows:

"Despite all its marvelous accomplishments modern science may have to retrace its steps into ancient Egypt if it is to fathom the mysteries of cancer. . . . In Egypt, cancer of the gastro-intestinal tract is practically unknown among the peasantry as long as the peasant is content to live in the same way as in Rameses' time. . . . That cancer is a product of modern civilization is proved by mummies that are being unearthed and data on papyri buried with them. These documents are startling in their revelations, proving that medical science was highly developed in that land long before that civilization was destroyed by invading armies. These records should make Egypt the center of medical research. He called attention to a papyrus found in the tomb of King Tutankhamen which diagnosed his death as due to pleurisy of the lung.

"Other records being unearthed show, he said, that while modern anaesthetics were unknown to the ancient Egyptians the surgeons achieved the same results thousands of years ago by making their patients inhale the fumes of brandy, oakum, and mandragora.

"Bones of soldiers who fought under Alexander the Great found during excavation for a modern apartment-house in Cairo show that the surgeons who attended them were highly skilled. Results achieved in repairing fractured bones were as good as modern surgeons could expect."



New discoveries have been made this season in Tutankhamen's tomb. The two inner chambers were found to contain wonderfully beautiful statues, sacred barques, and many royal robes. The most interesting find was that of a secret crypt under the sarcophagus itself. This has not yet been explored, but it is supposed to hide some specially precious treasures. Very probably it may be the mortuary chamber of the queen, Ankh-Nes-Amen, daughter of Khuenaten the heretic king, and wife of Tutankhamen. She survived her husband, and it has been suggested that the disordered condition of the tomb was the result of the later interment and not caused by robbers.

It has been known for some time that Tutankhamen's queen, after his premature death (from pneumonia it is said), asked the king of the Hittite Empire — then a great power — if he had a son who would care to marry her and become king of Egypt. The answer is not known, but Mr. H. W. Von der Osten of the University of Chicago has lately returned from a year of excavation among the hitherto unknown Hittite cities in Asia Minor with a large collection of inscriptions which are expected to throw light on the affair. Until quite recently the Hittite language was

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undeciphered, but remarkable progress has been made of late and a few scholars have succeeded in reading many of the inscriptions, some of which have shown that the Hittites were the allies of Troy and took part in the Trojan wars with Greece.



Further details have been reported by Dr. Reisner about the work done on the wonderful tomb he recently found near the Great Pyramid. It is the tomb of Queen Netepheres, mother of King Cheops, the supposed builder of the Great Pyramid, and wife of Seneferu, the first king of the Fourth Dynasty. The Queen-Mother died some time after Cheops began to reign and was buried in a different tomb; this was rifled by thieves not long after the burial, and the king had her body transferred to a safer place near the pyramid. While the richness of the contents cannot compare with that of Tutankhamen's funereal furnishings, many splendid things were found, including a gold-cased jewel-box with twenty silver anklets, gold cups, implements and tools of copper, flint, and gold, alabaster vessels, chairs and a bed, boxes of linen, and many wooden panels with floral designs in faience framed in gold. The magnificent alabaster sarcophagus is covered with a most remarkable canopy of wood with elaborate copper sheathings and attachments. The tomb is a vertical shaft cut through one hundred feet of limestone and opening at the bottom into the great chamber. It will soon be opened to the public.



A new fossil man — at least what remains of a man, several teeth — has been discovered in China, and he is called the 'Peking Man.' The announcement was made at a special meeting of various scientific societies at Peking in honor of the Crown-Prince of Sweden, himself a noted archaeologist. Reports so far received are very incomplete, but it is clear that human remains of extraordinary antiquity have been found, belonging to the Tertiary Period and associated with the long extinct saber-toothed tiger and the thick-horned antelope.

While so many of the animal species have been changing form, dying out slowly, or disappearing mysteriously as in the case of the Siberian mammoths, during the past million or more years, man has remained man with little change. How long must man have taken to evolve into such a stable form, capable of enduring all climates from the polar to the equatorial, able to live on food of the most varied kinds, and although one of the weakest in bodily structure — without strong

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claws or powerful teeth, unable to run and climb rapidly, etc.—yet competent to hold his own against the terrible animals of the Tertiary and succeeding ages and to defy the untamed forces of nature!

According to the report from Peking, these teeth prove the existence of true human beings at an immensely earlier age in the world's history than has ever been demonstrated before. We shall await full particulars with great interest, as every new discovery of ancient man is leading toward the Eastern teachings of the enormous antiquity of the human race.

It is said that the new find about doubles the period man has been known to have existed; Theosophy teaches that this period will have to be doubled several times before the actual date of the appearance of intelligent man is correctly estimated, but as the lands upon which his original development took place have perished by fire and earthquakes or sunk beneath miles of water, the material proof of this will be difficult to find.

Few scientists now believe that man was derived from any kind of ape; the apes are offshoots of the unknown branch of the great tree of life and are related but not ancestral to man. The 'Peking Man,' if fully established to be Tertiary, as appears sure, will be another nail in the coffin of the ape-ancestry theory now on its last legs, for the earliest of the larger ape-like animals are not found earlier than about the period given for the new human specimen, and there is no time for the slow and gradual development required by Darwin for the transformation of one species into another.

If man's evolution into an advanced thinking being, capable of meeting all the dangers and adverse conditions of the Tertiary in spite of the weakness of his body, may be explained as taking place suddenly by the overshadowing or endowment of a *human soul* (the only possible refuge of the biologist to explain the problem with an approach to reason) this would not be far from the Theosophical explanation. But, according to Theosophy, the endowment of man with a soul, to express the matter very crudely, took place earlier than the Tertiary and was a process of great complexity.

The scientists of the American Museum of Natural History have just published a pamphlet in which they claim to have proved man's ancestor to be the *Dryopithecus*, an *arboreal ape* of the late Tertiary! They mention *three* million years as the date of the *Dryopithecus*. Other scientists—high authorities—speak of *one* million years as the Tertiary date of the 'Peking Man.' No geological periods can be dated with any accuracy in years and there is no agreement among the authorities within millions of years; we only know of the order of succession,

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the general proportion, and a reasonable probability with a very wide latitude of time for allowances. If the *Dryopithecus* lived three million years ago then presumably the 'Peking Man' was no younger than that.

According to the Wood-Jones school of biologists who have made a special study of the embryological development of man and the mammals, man can not have developed from any kind of arboreal ape because he walked in the upright position from the earliest time, as shown by the development of the leg-muscles in the embryo, and for other conclusive reasons.

Out of the welter of confusing theories, of contradictory claims, of deliberate obscurantism, as charged by scientists against each other in certain cases, the solid fact emerges that the entire trend of discovery is leading science to the important knowledge of the immense age of the human race. When the periodic law of cycles of manifestation and withdrawal, activity and rest, — *manwantara* and *pralaya* as it is called in Eastern philosophy,— is fully realized by Western scientists as a fundamental law of nature, the disappearances and rebirths of world-civilizations as well as minor changes taught in Eastern philosophy will be seen to be not only reasonable but inevitable. But to understand this we must know of the existence of a permanent soul in man, incarnating from time to time according to the general law of evolution, modified by the need of working out its own particular Karma.

## THE THEOSOPHICAL CONCEPTION OF BROTHERHOOD

P. A. MALPAS



THOSE of us who are no longer in our first youth may remember that in the early days of the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society there seemed to some well-meaning folk of ordinary mind to be something soft, something sentimental, something Sunday-schoolish, about the plank of Brotherhood in our platform. We talked learnedly about philosophy and science and let our brain-minds run wild all over the place. Intellectuality was the social password of the day, and to such folk this *Brotherhood* was merely a sort of amiable ideal tacked on to the really important facts of science.

It never occurred to most that Brotherhood *is* the basic science of life. Those facts of orthodox science, as we thought them then, are many of them dying superstitions today, but Brotherhood is coming

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into its own. Real Brotherhood does not change, though its expressions may and do change.

H. P. Blavatsky was trying to sow the seed of Brotherhood, and about the only soil available was mental soil, with some promising spots here and there. She sowed the seeds, and when the time came, Katherine Tingley brought the growing tree of Brotherhood into its true place. Some intellectuals, so-called, who could not get away from their brains as the highest expression of existence, dropped out of the ranks, but those who realized that Brotherhood as the controlling power was everything and that genuine Brotherhood needs all one's brains in its service, and not as its master, found themselves in a new world of helpfulness to humanity.

There was nothing new in Brotherhood, any more than there was in Theosophy. What *was* new was that first there was one Teacher and then a body of her students who faced the world with the assertion that Brotherhood is *practicable* and must be made practical. *That* was new.

Among other insufficiently considered experiments a whole nation once tried to put what was called Brotherhood into political practice. They called it 'Fraternity,' and it ended by making the streets of their capital city slippery with human blood. Instead of a beautiful dream, their 'Brotherhood' became a horrible nightmare. Evidently something went wrong, and quite as evidently Brotherhood is not a thing that can be played with, with impunity. It needs common sense and self-sacrifice, and the utmost purity of motive and character. And it certainly is not a political matter. Like all spiritual truths, Brotherhood has its salutary and its dangerous sides — dangerous, that is, if misunderstood or misused or selfishly used.

The Theosophical conception of Brotherhood is that it is a fact in Nature. But Nature is not limited to mere brain-minds of men. In sober truth, the mere mentality is often, and *usually*, fighting against nature. We are all inextricably bound together in our one purpose of life, to return to the Divinity which is essentially ours and whence we came. Unbrotherliness, the "insanity of the age," is felt in every atom of the body of the Great Being we call Mankind, whose atoms and molecules we are.

Two facts stand out prominently today: one, that Brotherhood is not yet the dominant note of civilization; and the other, that there is something obviously wrong with civilization; it is sick unto death. Shall we put two and two together and say that if we had Brotherhood *in practice* in the world, and above all in our own hearts, *for one week*, the world would never be so sick again? That the sun would shine more

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brightly than it ever did before? That all nature would echo with new harmonies and that we should never again descend to ignorance of the fact that we are inwardly gods, and that heaven is what we make the world, that hell is what we make the world, and that there are no other heavens or hells than the world we make for ourselves as silkworms make cocoons for their future dwelling?

The Theosophical conception of Brotherhood is that it is something to put into practice and to make a living power in all lives. It has been talked about long enough, dreamed about long enough, denied long enough as a possibility and a reality. But it has not yet been realized and made a social fact except by a few individuals who are almost unknown to the world.

Theosophical students who are trying to be Theosophists are trying to make Brotherhood an intellectual fact, as it is a fact on other planes. If they fail, what matter? If they *do not try*, it matters much. But if they try, they have impressed the almighty film of the universe with the picture, and some day the whole world will be filled with similar pictures; and then the marvel will be worked in the twinkling of an eye, a spiritual eye, so to speak. People will say, "How easy is this new thing!" They will never fully know of the superhuman efforts and sacrifices of those who sowed the seeds and struggled through the ages to grow the great golden Flower of Brotherhood, on which the world must rest, as in story the Eastern Deity rests in holy calm upon the open flower of the royal Lotus.

If well-meaning sentimental people working on the emotional plane talk about Brotherhood, let them; so long as they are unselfish, it will hurt no one very much. The acid test is unselfishness. If there is a pennyworth of personal advantage to be gained by our Brotherhood it falls so far short of the ideal of Theosophical Brotherhood. If there is the slightest tinge of selfishness or of moneymaking in it, or seeking for personal aggrandisement, it does not deserve the name of Brotherhood. Theosophy and Brotherhood are as untrammelled as the light of the sun's rays, and their power is equally curative of all ills; they are the panacea for the world's sicknesses.

False Brotherhood is very common and very plausible. When the opportunity comes our way to help another it is our bounden duty to do so, but it is not our duty and it is not brotherhood to take away another's opportunities in life; they will come again only when he is less able to meet them and conquer. We must exercise discrimination. The duty of another is full of danger.

Duties and debts to the Law of Universal Adjustment, called Karma, must be paid to that Law by the debtors and by no other. There

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is no bargaining with the Almighty; "Forgive us our debts as we forgive them that are debtors to us." The inner meaning of that prayer is not the outer meaning. In these literal days it would have been better if it had run: 'We forgive all those who are our debtors,' without any compensatory clause. The idea of huckstering with the Supreme and keeping moneychangers in the Temple is not a Theosophical idea, and it is not the Theosophical idea of Brotherhood.

There is no Brotherhood in giving a man money to go and buy drugs, or to kill himself in any other way. And yet there are thousands of good, kindly, decent people whose idea of Brotherhood is little different from that; they do not use common sense to keep their brains or their emotions in order. Help others certainly, but don't let your children starve while you are hunting in the mountains for people to 'help,' who neither need your help nor would be bettered for it if they had it.

Real Brotherhood is like being a wheel in a watch, going round in your own place as well as you can and pushing the cogs of the other wheels along when they come round to you to help them. If the mainspring got a fit of sentimental Brotherhood and went visiting the balance-wheel, or the hands went poking around among the works in a brotherly desire to get mixed up in other people's business, the watch would soon be where it belonged,—on the scrap-heap.

If we each did our own duty in our own place and especially in our own hearts, the world would be a Paradise before we knew it. The Theosophical conception of Brotherhood is to do our own duty each in his own place, not for ourselves alone but for the sake of the whole.

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S. W. STANLEY



WHITE bird fluttering from the outer darkness into a brightly lighted room; hovering a few moments in the dazzling light; and, with quivering silver wings, turning and vanishing into the night. . . .

Hardly less brief a spell on earth is ours than is this momentary hovering; as brief in the relation of the known to the unknown, and as dazzling in the change from darkness to the light of birth, and from the light again to the darkness of death; a few short years of noise and effort, and then the great and all-embracing Silence.

Such an inexplicable prolog to an endless vista of subsequent

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bodiless inactivity, would seem wanton and without meaning if this were indeed the only life of a man on earth. Thrown amid the marvels of nature on this wonderful planet, given merely seventy to eighty years in which to know it all — ! Well, reptiles live longer!

The Whence and Whither of the surviving part of a man seems to be ordinarily of less real consideration to him than are the needs of his mere body in life. This, of course, is 'natural,' as the physical faculties serve to rivet the attention to the environment.

In her material aspect alone, the fraction known by us about Nature is admittedly greatly less than the unknown; the difference being even greater on leaving behind the mortal, and approaching the immortal aspects of consciousness, soul and spirit.

"Has life any purpose at all?" asks the ignorant but truth-hungry wayfarer. "Can it be demonstrated?" counters science. "If not, then we had liefer not speculate"; and orthodox religion raises a forbidding hand. Never obvious, it needed seeking; a mystery — yes. Yet there are those always ready to enlighten the seeker. Such a precious and beautiful thing may not be exposed to ill usage and abuse at the hands of the profane.

Jesus Christ, to many, was a very real man, and bore a very real message; Gautama-Buddha is real indeed to the millions in the East who make his ethics the mainspring of their lives. There are, of course, other men and women with characters of outstanding compassion and power — characters that gleam like first-magnitude stars in the firmament of the world's history.

In the eyes of Theosophists, these rare and noble souls were one and all bearers to humanity of the Wisdom that would make men free. They gave their all, they gave their lives, they sacrificed their bodies on the altar of their heroic endeavor. They were reviled, they often suffered every conceivable indignity and persecution, yet did not draw back; their selfless love for humanity carried them through all that men could do to them, and the Message was given. History repeats itself down to our own day.

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the bearer of the Secret Knowledge of the archaic ages to the western world, under the name of Theosophy, shared the fate of her predecessors. Her mantle fell on W. Q. Judge, who bore it nobly until moral persecution brought his early death. Thence in a direct line has the duty of keeping alive the precious flame of truth descended to Katherine Tingley, the guardian and teacher of the present day.

Thus the heroic struggle goes on, and on, throughout the ages.

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When the light burns dim and moral and spiritual darkness threaten the world, a Teacher arises to hold the light high. After many ages it sinks again; and then again arises one who bears it courageously in sight of all. Such were today our three Leaders, H. P. Blavatsky, W. Q. Judge, and now Katherine Tingley, and their message, even as was Jesus Christ's, is human brotherhood, universal love, and the Ancient Wisdom.

This is a message which involves the whole life, as a moment's consideration must show. It is worthless if but the mere stringing together of words; there is little more virtue in a beautiful tenet than in a bag of wind, unless it is *lived*; mere ideals without action cut no paths through the jungle of life. But regarded as laws of conduct, the Theosophical teachings are priceless.

There are those who deny any purpose in existence; who hold the Universe and the wonders of Nature to be of unknowable origin and the sport, merely, of chance; that no beneficent and just law governs human life. In the hearts of such, the verities of Theosophy will hardly find responsive echo, and to them life must prove a meaningless affliction, or a selfish indulgence. Theosophy throws an all-penetrating light into this spiritual obscurity. Putting the nightmare-dream of chance aside, it declares and proves the whole orchestration of being to be under the direction of unalterable spiritual laws.

This speck of cosmic dust that we call Earth, is but a mere point in the framework of Being. Astronomically, in this sense, we are negligible, almost; similarly, our very solar system is negligible; and is it conceivable that Space ends with the limit of vision of our telescopes?

It is known that inviolable processes called laws govern the movements of the planets around the sun, and of the solar family around its greater sun; and imagination allied with logic conceives a yet mightier spatial center with the greater sun as its satellite.

Where is the evidence of chance here? And is the evidence less, for example, in the rhythmic birth, growth, and propagation of a simple plant? The alternation of night and day; of the seasons; the rise and fall of nations, and much more: — can sanity attribute it all to — 'accident'? Where then is the bar to the acceptance of an equally profound and powerful purpose in human life?

Viewed in the larger sense, is there anything more outstandingly improbable in the rhythmic return again and again of a human soul to earth-life, after alternating periods of sleep known to us as death, than in the ordered swinging of the earth in its orbit round the sun, and the inevitable alternation of night and day? Is, for instance, the concept of

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individual human responsibility for individual actions, and the subsequent balance of effect with cause, incompatible with the perfect balance preserved in Nature, if one thinks of oneself as part of nature's great plan, as one logically must think? These are two of the corner-stone teachings of Theosophy. The first is Reincarnation, the second is Karma.

A third concept, and foremost, is that of the essential divinity of man; who is the hub on Earth of this majestic cycle of cosmic life.

Could the planets wheel so unerringly about the Sun haphazard and without a reason? *Man*, the thinker, is inescapably involved in that reason, for he is an intrinsic part of it. Back must he come to this sorrowing earth, in a new garb of flesh and with a new stock of life, again and again, until he has purged it of its foulness and made it clean and sweet. Until the poison of hatred and fear and greed is burnt out of his heart by the kindled fire of his own essential godhood, and he comes to regard all his fellow-men as truly his brothers, spiritual co-rays of the Universal Life.

The pilgrimage into incarnation must go on until man has repaid to the uttermost farthing the debts in thought and word and act incurred in previous lives, restoring the balance disturbed by himself. This would seem to be the greater justice, the only justice.

In the depths of the spiritual consciousness of man is stored the wisdom that he needs, the fruit of former lives, his birthright.

So if you seek the purpose of life, look well and truly into the secret places of the heart. Tune the life to a spiritually constructive note and live as becomes an essentially Divine Being, a potential Master of Nature and arbiter of his own destiny.

## NINETEEN-TWENTY-SIX -- NINETEEN-TWENTY-SEVEN

EMMETT SMALL, JR.



WAS toiling along the road as I had been toiling along it many a day, when I beheld a tall figure with his back to the great dropping Sun; and I marveled that one should thus wantonly turn his eyes from such glory, nor desire his soul to seek repose among the heaven-flocks that roamed in the sunset-pastures of the West. And I hailed him, having in mind the oddness of this:

“Who are you?”

“I am Nineteen-Twenty-Six. I am wise; tarry here with me,

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for I have lived long and know much and can tell you all the secrets you wish to know."

And I looked on his face and thought it old and wisdom-tired. And so I held further parley and sought to know why he did not move on but stood statue-struck in the middle of the road.

"Look!" I urged, "there are great sunny stretches yonder where the grassy prairie-lands laugh in the sunshine beneath the brooding purple mountains; and already the pageantry of Evening is ascending from beyond the sea-rim, and soon Night will come riding in. Come on with me; for I'll be hitting the onward road!"

"Ah, child!" he murmured, "you dream; and what you say is words I have heard on the lips of other child-men caught in the webs of Dream. There is nothing beyond me. I stand with my back to a great wall and all beyond is a depthless abyss. Stand here and face with me the things that have been, for I am the end of all! I am wise, tarry here with me!"

And the while he spoke I looked on him, but his eyes seemed always to be fixed on things beyond me as though I was of equal importance with the turnstile I had passed a mile behind. His gaze was always on the past. And I, coming out of the past, had had enough of it and wished to move on; for I could see the great fields ahead running out and stretching their arms to the in-dancing sea.

And yet I thought that his face was good and old and wise. Surely I would be wrong not to heed his words. . . . And he had said that there was nothing beyond him. . . . And so my perplexity was such that I sought to see things as he did, and I turned round and put my shoulder to his and saw the whole of nineteen-twenty-six.

And in this great backward sweep I beheld terrible, pitiful, degrading things; things that could only have been born in the shadow of the Lost Self. And as they flashed by it was as though all the Winds of Heaven had been exiled and were keening for their wandering souls.

And of what I watched I remember this: I saw a boy steal; and he was not the soul of one, but the shadow of a million. And I saw him shut in a dark big house, and I saw Revenge press through the bars and sup with him; and presently they stalked out together: and then I beheld Murder, and it was not the murder of one, but the murder of a million. And I saw Death clutch a million lives and I beheld the weariness of despair on the worn-out bodies of them all. And I saw War slip in to the home of a family and sear its heart-ties with the fire of Ambition

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and Jealousy; and it was not the hearth of one home but the hearth of a million that fell in the flames that leaped up.

And I heard the words of the Old Year again — “I am wise: tarry here with me!” and I shuddered that such sights should have fed the wisdom of Nineteen-Twenty-Six.

And then I beheld things that were splendidly and royally performed, things that could only have been done under the aegis of the Higher Self, and they were as the breath of whole fields of lavender and the lutings of a great company of lutists. And of these I remember an Artist at his canvas; and here too, it was not the soul of one that spoke through his brush-strokes, but the soul of Many. But sorrow came over me when I saw his picture finished and placed in a great gallery. For one of fame and importance in the world went by and stared and did not understand; and it was not the Soul of one that could not understand but the Ignorance of Many. And so I beheld the Musician and the Educator, the Poet — but I dared not probe too far, for I had a fear of their passing by unrecognised as well.

So I stood there a while shoulder to shoulder with Nineteen-Twenty-Six; but I could not feel that the Past was all: that it held the key to Peace. For as I stood there I had entered into the hearts of a million people as they had pressed on towards the last day of the year; and I found that those that looked only backward — no matter whether it was with pride or pleasure or sorrow or joy or disgust or anger or gratified ambition or even aspiration to a degree realized — I found that those that looked only backward were gluttoned with their own self-importance, though some called it atonement, this which was really a gloating over the Good-Evil of past actions.

Enough of the Past! I was sick of it! A great nausea swept over me and I could have kicked over the Old Fellow into the abyss of nothingness he prated of as the All there was behind him. Out of my way! Let me but taste of the Future and drink in great draughts of its gold and sunshine. The Future — and I visioned the promise of nectared moments that would glide unnoticeably into the Cup of Eternity, and my lips clinging to its rim, sipping, sipping. . . .

And I swung out — (oh the Beauty and Glory I shall draw into my heart!) — and stumbled, and the pale clay road reeled up to meet me as I fell, knocking over the tall backward-looking figure of Nineteen-Twenty-Six; and together we spun through Space; and the dizziness of a billion stars flooded us; and I knew not whether it was a moment or an aeon before cluster by cluster, one by one blinked themselves out, and

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I swam up to Day again. For the air was all music-strown and I caught the lilt of light laughter, and One leaning from out the Unseen whispered:

*There is no Past but what is as a dream of the Night, picturing battles and struggles, victories and defeats; and there is naught of Good in it but what you fashion pure-flamed at the Forge of the Present:*

*There is no Future but what is as a dream of the Day, visioning the Peace of utter perfectibility; and there is naught of Truth in it but what you weave with the shuttle of the Soul at the Loom of the Present:*

*But in the arms of Today lies the glow of endless Pasts, the gleam of eternal Futures. Awake to the EVER-PRESENT!*

— And the whisper rippled into light laughter again that lilted upward yet lingered half a pulse-beat ere it paled into the pearl pavilions of Dawn.

— Or was I still balance-drunk and visioning clay roads like swords lightning-winged darting about me? Was it truly an awakening?

And I marveled I know not how long, till I awoke to an awareness of my Companion. He was standing there as before, but facing forward now in the same direction I had been traveling.

“Who was that?” I queried. “What was that laughter? Whose was that voice?”

“I do not know,” he answered.

And I, marveling still more, looked up, and cried out. Was this the face that had stayed me but a few moments before, weighed down by its victories and weighed down by its defeats, full-blown with its self-importance and deeming much a failure that was in reality a success and giving a false value to what he in his poor perspective deemed advancement: a blurred-eyed and tired old man with no vision but a backward stare? Was this the same, he who had bosated, “I am wise”? . . . And I looked again, and indeed it was a face of youth and radiance. Perhaps — perhaps. . . .

“Who are you?” I demanded, not sorry nor glad, but longing for even just a little stick to hold on to.

And the tall figure laughed. “I do not know. I am just born. *I know nothing.* — But look how the dew has dropped into the heart of this little wayside flower and is sparkling and trembling there. What happiness they share! . . .”

And so with the birds singing, and both of us but half-guessing the trick that had been turned; but glorying in the Simplicity of each Moment — unknowing yet reborn — we started down the road together.

## HOUDINI ON REINCARNATION

### I. L.

 HE late Harry Houdini left behind him in an interview published by the *Detroit Free Press*, a statement of his convictions about Reincarnation, which will probably live and be remembered long after the 'Master-Magician's' hair-raising tricks are forgotten. With the endorsement of two such famous 'philosophers' as Henry Ford and Harry Houdini, the age-old doctrine of Reincarnation may now be considered to be in serious danger of becoming actually popular! Houdini is quoted as saying:

"There is something in the theory of reincarnation. Just how much, I cannot say, nor do I believe it will greatly profit us to seek to tear aside the veil. In due time it shall be lifted and we shall see, with Milton, 'the bright countenance of Truth.'

"I firmly believe, and this belief is based on investigation, observation and, in a measure, personal experience — that somehow, somewhere and some time, we return in another human form, to carry on, as it were, through another lifetime, perhaps through many succeeding lifetimes, until some strange destiny is worked out to its ultimate solution.

"Every one has had the experience of saying a thing and immediately getting an indistinct flash of memory that tells of having formerly somewhere, some time, said or done the same thing under exactly similar circumstances.

"I, myself, have entered some Old World city for the first time in my life, so far as I was aware, and found the streets familiar, known just where to go to locate a certain house, for instance.

"Things have come to me that it seemed could only have been results of some former experiences. I seemed from earliest childhood to have a grasp upon certain faculties and a knowledge not according to my years — as if the understanding were from past education and that I had entered the world with certain fixed principles and ideas that could not have been at that time the result of any present education.

"I do not believe in spiritualism as practised by so-called mediums. I do not believe that spirits return, because to my way of thinking they are on a plane of thought which renders it as impossible for them to communicate with us earth-folk as it is for the sleeper to communicate with his friend who is awake.

"I cannot believe that the good that is in us ever dies, that the great things we do are ever wasted, or that we — those of us who have developed individual traits of character or accomplished distinctive works for good — shall perish utterly or fail to reap the reward of good things well done on earth.

"Possibly the Great Intelligence that rules the universe plans beyond our ken; knows what lives shall be most essential to the well-being of the world and sends them back to finish what they have begun and have been forced to lay down before the beckoning finger of the Dark Angel."

Theosophists and regular readers of our Standard Theosophical Literature will find nothing new in the above conclusions of Houdini, because in many respects they are quite 'on all fours' with teachings given out by H. P. Blavatsky, and her successors, W. Q. Judge and Katherine Tingley, and their students, for the past fifty years.