THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

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Consider then that the soul, being incorruptible, is in the same condition after death as birds that have been caught. For if it has been a long time in the body, and during this mortal life has become tame by many affairs and long habit, it swoops down again and a second time enters the body, and does not cease to be involved in the changes and chances of this life that result from birth.

— PLUTARCH, Consolatory Letter to his Wife, x. *Translated by Shilleto*

THEOSOPHICAL KEYNOTES

ALL who read THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH *will realize that its platform is a Theosophical platform, and that the purpose of these Keynotes is to accentuate the great message of Madame Blavatsky, the Foundress of the International Theosophical Society.*

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There are few people who realize the importance of time, and the importance of opportunities. It is true that the brain-mind cannot be forever impressed with material things and continue on the line of materiality and selfishness without losing touch with the higher things which belong to every man. If we look at the chaos and confusion of the world today, not only across the water but in our very midst, we can very readily, and without much thinking or discussion, see that there is a missing link somewhere along the way, that the majority of the world's people have only half-truths at best, and that many have none at all.

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From a rational standpoint can we expect anything different from what we have in the general aspect of confusion, unrest, ignorance, and brutality? Can we indeed? Can we not easily see that the seeding-time of the conditions which now confront us began ages ago? We shall not find it by looking back only a century ago, or to a century or several centuries earlier; we must look far, far back and realize that when religion, as it has come down to the present time and as it is ordinarily conceived, began to be formulated and organized for the world's people — for man is naturally religious — the most important, vital teachings

as to the Divinity of Man were left out. So, too, some of the sublime ideas of the Pagans who preceded the Christian era have been so distorted and twisted that the human mind all along the way for ages past has been groping in the dark, having the heart-urge and possibly great ideals — the result of man's inner thought — but not having any sure anchorage nor a firm foundation upon which to build.

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Consequently some have gone one way and some another, with the result, with which all are familiar, that there are many, many doctrines — some old, some very new, but all very young in comparison with the teachings of the Wisdom-Religion. There are also many absurdities, many grotesque teachings, many bewildering and menacing ideas presented in the name of religion today, which lead not to progress but to retrogression.

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Accept for a moment my word-picture, see the deplorable conditions in all lands as they are today; and then let the mind go back into the past to the seeding-time — the planting of the seeds of unrest and ignorance and unbrotherliness. Surely we must realize, if we think at all, that it is really wonderful that we have as few of the horrible and shocking aspects of life as we do. It is surprising, in view of the generally disturbed condition of people today, that we are allowed to commune with our best thoughts and meet each other on the line of good-fellowship. Are we sure that we shall continue to have this opportunity and others akin to it during the next hundred years? Are we not reminded by the very serious aspects of these destructive forces that are around us that we cannot stand still; we cannot wait; we must not pause? Are we not called upon to rise to a condition of mind that will enable us to find substitutes for desire and selfishness, materialism and greed? Something new must be discovered to be put in the place of these. For, if we attempt to go on doing as we are doing, if we feel that we are quite secure in our mental attitude, that all is well, we shall find that these growing forces, new aspects of crime and brutality, involving the destruction of homes and nations, will come upon us so rapidly that in a year or so from now there will be no time for any discussion or preparation, for they will be right upon us, at our very doors.

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We have before us a very beautiful brain-mind presentation of the possibilities of peace through a League of Nations. Naturally it appears to different people

under different aspects. Possibly the representatives of the different nations are attempting to do their best in the present circumstances, in trying to bring the different nations together. But let me ask, Where is the foundation? Upon what foundation do we as a nation stand? Upon what foundation do the other nations stand? How are we going to move together, heart, mind, and soul, for the reconstruction of human nature, with all the underlying differences of intention, ideals, customs, principles, and politics?

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There must first be found a basic unity in this new effort that the nations are making. We must consider ourselves so much a part of the great human family that we shall never accentuate nationalism as against justice to others, *but we shall look upon all earth's children as one universal family on the path of evolution. The deepest urges of our hearts have never been satisfied. Yet we all know that occasionally, anyway — and really all the time if we would permit it — there is a subtle, sweeping force of encouragement that comes from somewhere into our hearts and minds, bringing home to us a desire just to turn about and face the new issues and search within ourselves for those keys of knowledge which can be found only when we recognise our potential Divinity. We must take a middle-line position, where we can look at both sides, where we can deal with humanity in a new and more compassionate and more just way, where we can recognise the fellowship of all humanity, and where we shall also recognise that we cannot achieve true success unless we work with Nature unceasingly. In one of the Theosophical devotional books which Madame Blavatsky gave to her students,* The Voice of the Silence, *containing 'Fragments from the Book of the Golden Precepts,' which she herself had learned years before, is the following:*

"Help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance. And she will open wide the portals of her secret chambers, lay bare before thy gaze the treasures hidden in the very depths of her pure virgin bosom. Unsullied by the hand of matter she shows her treasures only to the eye of Spirit — the eye which never closes, the eye for which there is no veil in all her kingdoms."

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Let me assure you — as Theosophy teaches, and I know it to be,— Nature will accept no half-hearted service; we cannot reach out to her in some disappointed moment, in some dilemma, expecting an answer, and then desert her again and still expect to have help. She gives no answer to the insincere, the indifferent, the half-hearted. But Nature responds with all her wonderful and infinite power to the hearts of men when their minds are sufficiently aroused,

attuned to high and noble aims, when they are ready to put upon the Screen of Time new records of their lives. It is then that Nature gives her response, and then we shall see the inner meaning that lies beneath the outer aspects of life; we shall know that just outside, so to speak, and yet inside, in the very chambers of our soul, there is a surging, pulsating, beautifying, and inspiring life that belongs to every man.

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If we accept this as a background, is it not plain that all the conditions that we are meeting now have grown not in a moment, nor in a year, nor yet in a century? They are the result of long ages of habit, of custom, and of brain-mind thinking and scheming. Humanity has for ages habituated itself to resting its hopes and possibilities either upon intellection alone, or upon blind faith in doctrines in which Truth is so misrepresented and so twisted that the Light is not there. But if we can recognise this, if we can see the mistakes of the past, we can today begin to build on new and truer lines for the future. And with a great aim, with a sublime purpose that will carry us on the crest-wave of divine thought and ability, there will come to us all those splendid things that our hearts crave. Not all at once, for we cannot ignore evolution, nor can we ignore Karma. We must remember our yesterdays, the millions of yesterdays in our past lives; and if we cannot remember them, they are still there; they are interwoven in the fabric of our lives; and so, in the very midst of the chaos and confusion of the present we must begin to undo, so to speak, the mistakes of the past, to sow good seeds for the harvest of the future, for ourselves, our families, our institutions, and our race. We must begin to do this as the most heroic, the most patriotic, the most sublime thing in the world. All other things seem to disappear in comparison with this picture of the possibility of man's standing in his royal dignity, even for a day, conscious of his divine power.

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Once he is conscious of this, once he feels within his own being that there is in him something more than the mirror shows, something more than selfishness and desire, something more than the mere educated intellect, that there is in him a great life of power and nobility and sweetness that is seeking expression — then all the pressure of the calamities that confront us today, all the menaces of the horrible diseases and the outrageous crimes, and all the suffering and sorrow of the world, will become the very forces that will awaken us to the realization of our sacred duty to every living thing. Then shall we be able to mark this pivotal time in the world's history with records so splendid that they may be passed on

as an ever-living inspiration, for the ages to come — not only in the great archives of our institutions, but on the Screen of Time, that invisible Screen which we do not see, but on which are ever recorded all our acts.

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Nature loses no opportunity to serve us, but the great Wheel of Time is moving on. Some of the best efforts of man have never been recorded, never been recognised; but they are living in the very air and in the atmosphere of Eternity. Nature is so divinely just in everything that nothing is lost — not a sparrow falls to the ground save by the working of Nature's laws. Just behind the Screen, so to speak, just a little away from our mortal selves, are the beneficent forces of Nature, all working for our good, and as we reach out for the noblest and best, the answer comes back; it never fails; it is ever a sustaining power in our lives. As we serve our fellows according to the highest conception of man's duty, without expecting reward, again comes the comforting answer. And those who are benefited by the example of our lives, by the inspiration of our efforts, will pass on their story to their progeny, to posterity. It is ever carried on. In the beneficent forces of Nature that are always at hand to serve us there is a Divine Companionship, and an affectionate assurance that cannot be described.

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I often hear people, kindly critical, say that they are somewhat interested in Theosophy; but they ask how it is that Theosophists are so cheerful, so optimistic; that they have so few grievances; that they have a disposition to reach out their hands in good-fellowship all along the line, even to their enemies — if they will turn about and reform; how is it? My answer is: It comes from the inner consciousness, from their state of mind, through their study, their efforts, their struggles, their patience, their trust and their overcoming — through their knowledge of Theosophy, their knowledge of the meaning and purpose of life. And it is my hope, and the hope of every Theosophist, that through the effort we are making, through our propaganda all over the world, we may find a rebirth of the old Trust which belonged to the ancients, to the great Teachers of the past — the Divine Trust which the Nazarene possessed, and the Sublime and Splendid Trust which Madame Blavatsky had when she came forth into the world's struggle, when she pushed herself into the arena of public thought, and brought home to the masses so many beautiful, exquisite, and helpful ideas. This Trust! But how few have it. Well we know that nearly all humanity distrusts itself. What is it that lies back of this lack of trust? What is the principal factor? In my opinion it is the horrible phantom — fear of death, fear of the unknown!

Take the ordinary acceptance of the idea of death, as given in the doctrines of the churches, generally: the vista under such teachings is not very extended, surely. Some of the ideas are presented in beautiful, exquisite words, but the vista is so limited. Think of a man born in the Light of his own Divinity — for that he is — and then through the education he receives in youth, through his environment, moving out into the world blinded, so to speak, yet yearning towards the Light. Through all that he receives through the general systems of education, his view is so limited, the goal presented to him is so near, that he begins to die ere he has reached full manhood. He lives but a few years and then his whole thought is to prepare for death. The phantom of death is with him all the time, all through life; and I think it is a very remarkable thing in such circumstances that a man ever smiles, and when he does smile, it is half-heartedly.

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But if we can build on the basis of man's essential Divinity, and remove this fear, this obstruction, this idea of a cut-off path; if we can reach the minds of men so that they will listen and listen and listen to word-pictures of the Divinity of Man, of his perfectibility, and the great goal of life, until these ideas are so ingrained, absolutely soaked into their very systems, into the blood, the mind, the aspirations and the whole life, they will look far beyond this one limited existence, out into the broad, indescribable ocean of possibilities — into the Infinity of Universal Life. Is one life sufficient? No. Are two lives? No. Long lives, many lives, will never be sufficient to fulfil man's highest hopes, to bring him to that high state of perfection which is ordained by Divine Law. Life is a constant moving forward, a never-ceasing, great, superb effort in the evolution of man towards ever grander ideals; and there must be an elimination of every false doctrine, every false ideal and teaching that stands in the way of the real progress of the soul.

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Unless we think of these things rightly, sincerely, they will seem artificial. We have examples all along the way of masterly intellects of the past ages and the present age, and the question arises, why did they not discover this wonderful secret of life's great mystery? Many did discover it, but they did not stay long enough in their discovery to dare to oppose public prejudice and public opinion and the false teachings of the age; they did not dare to speak out freely and independently in the face of possible starvation and suffering and persecution which threatened them. Even now we are in the position of facing similar

conditions, and it is for us to take these ideas and work them out with Trust and Hope. Even though we may not fully believe in the possibilities and the progress of the soul as I have endeavored to present them; yet if we can take this word-picture, simply as a picture, surely it can become an incentive in our lives for greater things, and we can dare to do more for suffering Humanity today, than we have done in the past.

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"To dare to do" was one of Madame Blavatsky's slogans. To be indifferent to public opinion, to the criticism of friends and foes, to anything that Mrs. Grundy might say; just simply to step out with the courage of our convictions in our individual lives; to find within — each one for himself — that Key to the Knowledge of Life which Theosophy teaches is there. These are divine things. One could not stand, could not see the sunlight, nor know oneself at all, if Divinity were not in the heart of each. And our neighbors in Europe instead of slaughtering each other at arm's length would be destroying each other like wild animals if the Divinity in Man did not still linger within him — however yet unrecognised. The great message of Brotherhood cannot be fully given to the world until all are united on such a basis of rationality that when it comes to a question of principle we are all together — all united. When we begin to love each other as the great Teachers have taught and have loved us, we shall find ourselves all together; when we come truly to serve our fellows we shall be all together. When we come to recognise the unity of the whole human family, there will no longer be divisions and strife; there will be no more war -- there will be Brotherliness and Peace.

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In our processes of development along this path we shall find a higher quality of discrimination; we shall know when to say No, and when to say Yes. This splendid rational system of Brotherhood, if it could be universally accepted, would make a great mark in the world just now. Yes, just now! Saying it could fall from the heavens — on a scroll, miles long, with such power of light and force that it would attract the eyes of even the weakest and meanest and most selfish of humankind, and that all could read written on that scroll in golden letters that there is Brotherhood and Peace — an Eternal Peace, not only for our race, but for all peoples and all races! Would it not stir the hearts of even the meanest and the most degraded with new hope? It can come only through a Divine Trust in oneself, and a broad, clear belief in Reincarnation; through realizing that the Soul, the grandest power which manifests on earth, has its time of becoming,

its time to live within itself and find its powers, and then to go forth in noble service with a message to the world, carrying with it the very presence of the Divine, without utterance, almost without thought.

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I often think how many work against their best interests; how they spend two-thirds of their time in trying to get some knowledge from this writer and that, from this little fragment and that little fragment; how sometimes they follow fads and fallacies and absurd teachings — they do all these things, even when trying to do their duty; for the meanest, so-called, creature on earth has some sense of duty at times. But they undertake all this struggle, this work and care, with misgivings, with half-doubts, and when they reach the time to throw off this mortal coil and step into the new life which Nature has destined for them — over which process they have no control — they meet death unprepared, unfitted for the great change — the rebirth. They may have the urge to do right, they may have ideals, desires; they have tried here and there, but they have not taken hold of their own natures, they have not learned the power of self-control, but have temporized with their weaknesses, and have failed to find the meaning of Life.

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How can we find substitutes for selfishness and desire; how can we replace them by high ideals; contrariwise, how can we, on the basis of desire and fear, expect to accentuate our lives in noble service? We must find a new way of living, and that must be through a quality of trust, a determination of high purpose to gain self-control, to draw the line between the spiritual and the animal in man, to bring home to ourselves just how far in our own lives we have played the part of the monkey and the animal without knowing it; and on the other hand, just how far we have followed the path of right action so nobly, so daringly, gaining strength as we go on, that we would be willing to have the searchlight of the world turned on us. There must be no more temporizing, no more playing hide-and-go-seek with ourselves, sometimes on lines of justice and sometimes on lines of injustice; sometimes on lines of selfishness and sometimes on lines of generosity and brotherhood. The two forces are ever active within us, and the sooner we get away from the idea that temptation comes from without; the sooner we realize that we must look within both for the temptation and the power to overcome it; the quicker we shall come to that knowledge which belongs to every man — that he holds the Key; that the Kingdom of Heaven is within himself, or a hell, the possibilities of which exceed anything that the men and women of today ever heard of or imagined. The forces of Light and of Darkness are within.

THEOSOPHICAL KEYNOTES

The two forces are there, and the great drama of life goes on from day to day, and from year to year, from generation to generation, and through the centuries all down the ages. Until man learns self-control and self-mastery, until he exercises his heaven-bestowed birthright of divine power, he will be the victim of the lower forces that go for the destruction of the noblest and the best, just as long as the brain-mind is permitted to be the playground of evil with no self-determination towards the good.

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Merely to talk of the problems of the day, to make a digest with a view to offering some special system or way of meeting them, for our city, our family, our church or our state or country, is of no avail — it is too small. We must get out on the great crest-wave of positive effort and active life, and so, even today, in some of these simple ideas, and in the sublime teachings of Theosophy, there will be carried a warmth and a glow to the heart; and somehow, even though the yearning of our hearts is not fully answered at the time, there will come a touch of good-fellowship and Sympathy and Hope. Sympathy is the great factor that must be cultivated if we are to bring ourselves to the point of duty that our hearts crave; if we are to come to our own; if we are to place on the Records of Time monuments that will stand forever, bespeaking the Divinity of Man in small acts and in large acts, in the everyday places, and in the whole splendid Eternal Life that carries us on and on to the great goal that Theosophy promises.

"*The doctrines of Theosophy, if seriously studied, call forth, by stimulating one's reasoning powers and awakening the* inner *in the animal man, every hitherto dormant power for good in us, and also the perception of the true and the real, as opposed to the false and the unreal. Tearing off with no uncertain hand the thick veil of dead-letter with which all old religious scriptures were cloaked, scientific Theosophy, learned in the cunning symbolism of the ages, reveals to the scoffer at old wisdom the origin of the world's faiths and sciences. . . . It gives a clear and well-defined object, an ideal to live for, to every sincere man or woman belonging to whatever station in society and of whatever culture and degree of intellect.*"— H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE MEANING OF DEATH

R. MACHELL

IT is generally supposed that the greatest misfortune in life that can occur is death: and yet many people object to the idea of rebirth. This seems unreasonable. One would think that the prospect of rebirth would console a man for the loss of his present body; particularly if the idea of continued existence is associated with that of rebirth, or reincarnation. But indeed habit and early education have more to do with establishing a man's belief than any other factor; and reason seems to have no part at all in the process, unless some bitter experience has shattered his early faith in traditional forms of belief. Then perhaps reason may be called in to provide a substitute. But for reason to accomplish the desired object the faculty must have been trained, which is unusual, or it must be natural and unhampered by fear or superstition, or orthodoxy of any kind, which is even more rare.

Those who have turned to Theosophy for light on the dark problems of life, however, are mostly people whose reason is alive; and to them the teaching of reincarnation comes as a sunrise to herald a new day. The idea of rebirth will probably appear as an old friend: but it may be some time before the student comes to a clear appreciation of the full extent and application of this great fact in life.

At first it seems as if a man must die before he can be reborn, and death can only be thought of as a complete break in the thread of life. But as one thinks more closely of the way in which life renews the body, while discharging and discarding what is called effete matter, or used-up atoms, one begins to see that the body is dying all the time, and being reborn in a certain sense, without any cataclysm such as death seems to be. And then one may begin to question whether the catastrophe of bodily death is really a catastrophe at all, or merely a step in the greater process of building up a different kind of body, in which the true individual can continue his conscious existence until another physical body can be prepared for his use.

When a man has run through a certain period of his life, or has come to the end of a certain range of experience, which may have brought him sorrow, or disappointment, or even utter despair, he feels as if he were already dead, though his body goes on living as usual perhaps, and he remains in connexion with it, but so loosely bound to it that he has even begun to regard it as a burden. Then, if a new hope comes to him, he feels himself reborn; and he may be able in after years to look back to

that rebirth as to a true beginning of a new life, though the body did not die suddenly, and he did not lose hold on the memory of his early life. He may speak of his fresh start as a rebirth in a figurative sense; and it may be that the figure of speech is a more true description of fact than he can realize. For it is possible that our ordinary way of regarding death is very crude and imperfect. We may be too deeply ignorant of our own constitution to be able to understand the truth of the Biblical saying, "I die daily."

It may be that death is going on continuously, and that the death we generally think of as death is but one part of a very extended process. This would make us look upon rebirth as an equally protracted operation; while in no way altering the fact that birth and death, as generally understood, are sudden and catastrophic in character: as sudden as the passage from the waking to the sleeping state, or from sleeping to waking. Yet the two states pass one into the other, and the consciousness of self goes quietly through the change of state, and indeed is unable to note the passage. Continuity of existence is not questioned in the latter case. We do not look upon sleep as an end of life. But if when the body dies, death is not as complete and final as it is generally supposed to be, it may also be true that there is a death, of a more serious kind, that may occur while the body continues its ordinary life. Some inner and more subtle body may be destroyed without killing the visible physical body; and the soul thus may be cut off from control of its physical instrument, even to the extent of being completely separated from the then soulless shell. The lunatic asylums contain many cases of such living death, and there may be still more that remain at large, the living dead, the dead in life.

Once this idea is grasped, one is led on to study the complex nature of man, and perhaps to speculate on the condition of those in whom the various inner principles are deprived of their proper means of expression in the physical body through the death of some one of these subtle bodies.

The idea of spiritual rebirth without physical death is nothing new, of course: it plays a prominent part in mystical religions, and should be familiar to Christians of all denominations: but it is not; for it is looked upon as a mere figure of speech, owing to the general ignorance of our complex nature. People may profess to believe in the existence of the Soul, but the idea is generally hazy, and the conception too loosely formulated to be of any practical use in the understanding of our real life and evolution. Consequently the phenomena of insanity, in all its many forms and degrees, are little understood.

Everybody may admit the existence of a nervous system, and may regard it as separate to some extent from the physical body; but when

it comes to speaking of the soul, then there is a jump into regions of fancy, and all is a matter of faith or pure imagination. Yet the inner bodies, the more subtle systems, that serve to connect the physical, material body with the intelligent power, the mind; or those still more ethereal systems, that respond to the higher impulses of genius, which more rarely act upon the mind, and inspire noble thoughts and deeds — these inner, subtle, bodies or vehicles, or nervous systems, must be as real as the physical, and must be as liable to death and rebirth as is the outer form. If that be so, it is easy to understand that a perfect man would be one in whom all these latent powers and possibilities were alive and operative. And in the same way one would have to confess that the ordinary man was indeed little more than a shell, with all his inner or spiritual apparatus as yet practically unborn. There would be then no stretch of imagination required to understand the old expression, the 'dead in life'; and one might realize the truth that has been uttered by the mystics, who say that the world is 'full of the dead,' meaning by that, people who believe themselves to be fully alive.

It is hard for a person to believe that he or she is really dead, while still alive; and yet we all know that there are times when we are much more alive than usual. And we are all familiar with cases of other people who at times really do seem to be little better than animated corpses. But we probably do not realize how true the figure of speech may be.

If one stops to consider what happens when we develop a habit, or learn an art or craft, one may realize to some extent the fact that we have been stamping the impress of an idea upon some subtle inner body that can act as go-between for body on the one hand and mind on the other; for we know that a habit well established causes the body to act independently of the mind, and that the mind can alter the habit without consulting the body. So that there would seem to be a delicate system or inner body that carries the memory which we call habit. But the growth of a habit takes time, and it may well be that the inner body has to be actually created by the slow process of training, encouragement, and discipline, exercised by the mind, as in the process of studying an art or a craft.

If we consider the matter from this point of view, we shall see that all development of skill, or acquirement of real knowledge, is a matter of growth; though we talk of knowledge and talents as acquirements. In reality a great deal of what passes for knowledge is no more than memorized information: it may be more or less accurate or useful, but, strictly speaking, knowledge is a condition of power, of knowing, of having experienced and understood, and not merely a memorizing of information. Before information can be converted into knowledge, the

inner man must grow; and before this is possible, the inner man must be born. And the inner man is a complex being, almost like a group of beings ruled by oneself; so different are the various states of consciousness possible to a highly developed man.

And just as it is possible for these inner bodies or powers to be born in a man as his education advances, so too is it possible for some one or other of them to die: indeed it must be quite possible for the whole inner man (or his spiritual possibilities) to die, while the gross body lives on, devoted to the gratification of its bodily desires. Such beings may well be called soulless, because the soul has been cut off from the control of the body by the destruction or death of that subtle body (or group of bodies) that should serve as the connecting link. Without such a connecting link the human-seeming entity is not truly human in anything but outer form: and it is said that the world is 'full of the dead.' If this be true, we can easily understand the necessity for rebirth, that the mystics of all ages have preached.

The reason why ideas of a certain kind mean nothing to certain people, is simply that those persons have not evolved a body capable of responding to those vibrations. The thought may get as far as the brain-mind, but the idea awakens no response; because there is, as yet, no instrument created in that person to record the vibrations peculiar to such ideas. The birth and growth of these inner subtle bodies is what is meant by the evolution of character.

Too often character is unbalanced; some one or more aspects of the inner man may have been highly developed, while the rest have remained dormant, or unborn; the result is that strange creature we sometimes call a genius.

The perfect balance of all the faculties is the mark of the perfect man; and education should be aimed at this result; for an unbalanced man can seldom accomplish good work, even along his special line, without incurring disaster from the mistakes he must make in other directions. Experience shows that to neglect any side of the nature is to court disaster to the whole from the failure of a part. The lives of men of genius who have failed are seldom written understandingly, if at all; but they would prove interesting matter of study to a serious student; and they would serve perhaps to warn educators of the real danger of specialization carried to extremes.

Self-control is the only protection against the pitfalls that line the path of evolution, and self-control implies self-knowledge, than which nothing is more rare. The self that is to be known is so much more complex than is usually supposed. Keys to self-knowledge are to be found in Theosophy, for Theosophy is the source of all philosophies, all sciences,

and all religions. It is the ancient Wisdom-Religion; and its teachings are eternally new because eternally true. And self-knowledge is a study as old as man, and as new. Birth comes to man today as the dawn of existence, and death, to the majority, is still a new and terrible catastrophe. But to those who have begun to see a little light on the problems of life, these events are but the oft-repeated and eternally-recurring modes in which life manifests itself.

The reason why we persist in looking upon birth and death as the beginning and the end of life, is that we do not yet know ourselves; but believe the body in which we are now gaining experience to be our real self, even if we profess to believe that we have a soul, of which we know nothing.

The first step in self-knowledge is the realization that the soul, or self-conscious principle, rather than the body, is the self. Then begins the real knowledge of all the inner bodies, through which the real self expresses itself: and each step in evolution is a rebirth, as the soul obtains a new vehicle for self-expression. And as the self passes from ignorance to knowledge, it experiences the death of some outworn vehicle of thought or of emotion; and it is probable that these deaths are as notable events in our life as the ultimate collapse of our present physical body appears to be; though the latter is less so than is ordinarily believed: for it seems certain that most people quite misunderstand the meaning of death, and dread it unreasonably, or with equal unreason go out of their way to invite it prematurely. The disaster of death is only in its prematurity. Then it means loss of opportunities: for old age offers opportunities of self-development that are often closed to us in early or middle life by reason of the obsession of physical forces and the constant intrusion of the animal instincts. But when the body has served its purpose, and has ceased to respond to the impulses of the higher mind, then death means the release of the inner man from an instrument that has become a shackle and a hindrance to progress.

As to the later death of the various 'sheaths of the Soul,' the dropping of the ethereal garments, in which the released soul is enveloped at the death of the body, that is a matter that scarcely concerns us at present. We are more seriously interested in the births and deaths that take place during life, and which prepare the way for what follows after.

There are so many kinds of death that are not recognised: sleep is one; forgetfulness is another; ignorance too, and vicious habits, are all forms of death, some of which are probably more catastrophic in the sight of the Soul than is the recognised death of the body.

How willingly we let go our waking consciousness and fall asleep in the faith of a rebirth, or rather a reawakening, in the morning, when day

itself is reborn! And yet the self of the sleeper may during sleep be as free from all recollection of the body as if it were not to wake up again.

There is of course a difference between the death that we call sleep, and the sleep that we call death; but there is also an analogy that is probably closer than is generally supposed. To understand the real difference one would have to be able to retain one's continuity of consciousness in passing through the change of state, which demands a power of self-control that few have mastered. And yet it is certain that we all do pass through the gates of sleep thousands of times in the span of one earth-life, without a qualm, and with perfect willingness to let go the physical body for a while. Why then do we shrink from death? Simply because we have been taught to believe that it is the end of life. In our inmost hearts we know better: but our minds have been cramped by false ideas, so that some part of our nature is already dead, and cannot respond to the intuitive wisdom of the inner man.

The ideas impressed on a child's mind become such an habitual mold for his thought, that in after-life the man may well believe that his prejudices and superstitions are divinely inspired visions of truth, or he may accept them as natural interpretations of natural facts that bear the stamp of nature on them. Yet they may be but nurses' tales or mere traditions. So he will refuse to look at the truth, or to listen to it, because he thinks his nature is rebelling against a dangerous speculation that may disturb his peace of mind. This cramping of the minds of children by set forms of belief is indeed a massacre of the innocents, no matter how virtuous may be the intentions of the instructors.

Narrow-minded teaching sets the stamp of death upon the mind of a child, and makes its whole life abortive; for life means growth and birth, as well as death: and education should be a vitalizing and invigorating process for the whole man. But in the great majority of cases the teachers of youth effectually kill the more subtle vehicles of the soul before they have grown strong enough to defend their existence, and the child grows up with a living body and brain, and with a stillborn or deformed inner body, that shows itself in peculiarities, weaknesses, or vices of the growing man.

The tragedy of death is really enacted most frequently in early youth, when unrecognised vices may actually kill the inner man and leave a soulless wreck to drag out its miserable life in uselessness, vice, or insanity. If life were limited to one earth-life in one body, it would indeed be a horrible mockery. But that is absurd. Life is eternal, and while there is life there is hope, for while death follows birth, it is also followed by rebirth.

Death is a doorway in the house of life; and in that house are many

mansions. Death is a promise of rebirth; and there is always another chance; for life is eternal; and while there is life there is hope. Death in due season is a friend and a deliverer: and its final meaning is Life.

APOLLO

KENNETH MORRIS

WE that have grown so poor much need the gold
That you unfold and squander abroad in bloom
Of daffodil and broom, or o'er the lawns
When the glad crocus dawns. . . .
Ah, at day's birth, and when the darkening blue
Westward, at fall of dew, hath for a boon
To be o'erstrewn with opal and rose-pearl —
Wonder awhirl from out your bounty-hoard
Earth and sky-stored —
So too your spirit-largesse fling afar,
Lest our wan star grow cold beneath the blue!

For we have need of you!
You that do dwell in the very heart of the Earth,
Yet have new birth with every dawn on high,
Kindling afresh the sky;
And, rising from deep inward regions dim,
Flame o'er our vision's rim, illuming fair
Romantic regions there,
When, as we search the dusk within us, lo!
You, bardic and aglow with beauties and powers
And girt with flowers, burgeon upon our souls. . . .
Oh, lighting pearl-bright shoals
On the lone coasts of sun-rich faery seas
Not in this world, or leagues of billowing trees
In immemorial haunted forests far,
East of the Morning, west of the Evening Star,
Dawn in our hearts, and shed a flame, a dew
On all we dream or do!

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ALCHEMY

H. TRAVERS, M. A.

TODAY we pursue knowledge in many diverse directions, and the hunger of our soul and the curiosity of our mind seek satisfaction in a medley of religions, sciences, philosophies, and studies; but there have been times when Knowledge was recognised as being one and single, as in truth it is and must be. In all times there are some who recognise this truth; and for them there is no separateness or antagonism between religion and science, nor are either religion or science divided up into a number of independent sections. It is the aim of Theosophy to recall to human recollection the existence of this great Master-Science, which has been called by so many names, such as Wisdom-Religion, Secret Doctrine, Mystic Quest, Esoteric Philosophy, and the like.

Now, though the Knowledge is one, yet it is for that very reason so wide and all-embracing that no human mind can grasp it in its entirety; and therefore we find it presented from many different points of view. At one time we view it as Religion, and describe it as the one universal and eternal Parent-Religion, from which all religions have sprung, and which underlies them all. At another time we see in it the synthesis of all sciences. Yet again, viewing it from the philosophical standpoint, we find it to be the great Master-Philosophy of life. Among other aspects of this vast Knowledge, we may enumerate the mathematical one, which was so much studied by the Pythagoreans; the astronomical, pursued by the Chaldees; the schools of Yoga or self-mastery in India, and the schools of metaphysical philosophy in the same land. Under the title of 'agriculture,' that mysterious people, the Nabathaeans, studied the same universal mysteries; the symbology of ancient theogonies veils the same universal doctrines. We have now to consider that particular aspect of the question which was indicated by the word Alchemy, whereby the Great Quest, the eternal problem of life, was represented under the forms of chemistry and experimental science.

We can trace back Alchemy to indefinite vistas in past history, and may find its proximate sources among the Arabians, during their prowess, to whom we are indebted for the name itself and for many of the terms employed.

It is usual to find alchemy represented as the humble parent of modern chemistry, the first feeble and misguided efforts of the human mind in this direction. And when it is found that alchemy is of very ancient date,

and that it is connected with mythology, astrology, and many other phases of research, then the savants add that all of these phases too were the crude efforts of the primitive human mind to formulate science as we have it now. The alternative view is that antiquity possessed a great master-science, which embraced all knowledge in one unity, and that the several branches of modern science are merely elaborations of certain material applications of this master-science. When the said savants find that the ancient knowledge embraced ethics (the science of conduct), philosophy (the science of general causes), physics (the science of nature), and politics, and mathematics, etc., etc., all in one grand whole; they say that the primitive human mind was confused and had not yet learnt to distinguish between ethics and science, or between religion and natural philosophy, and so forth. This is a good instance of putting the cart before the horse and viewing things wrong side up. They say the priest and the sage were one and the same man, because the ancients had confused together the functions of science and religion; whereas we may put the alternative view that these two functions are properly and originally one and the same, and that their subsequent separation is to be regretted.

No less wrong-headed do we find the learned authorities on the subject of the secrecy which attached to the ancient knowledge. This secrecy they put down to the jealous exclusiveness of priests desiring to reserve to themselves the knowledge and the powers which it conferred. But let us look around today and see the consequences of the opposite policy as pursued among ourselves: bombs sent through the mail; every known art strained to the utmost to furnish the means of mutual destruction. Thus discredit is brought upon science. The ancient secrecy was but the pursuance of a time-honored and necessary policy with regard to knowledge — that it should not be intrusted to such as might abuse it; that conduct must be developed in equal steps with knowledge; that knowledge is the reward of discipline, and discipline the price of knowledge.

We cannot judge of alchemy from the wasted labors of such of the medieval experimenters as, not having the keys, failed to unlock the mysteries of the art. Before them were many, and even among them were a few, who realized the true meaning of that art and are therefore more justly entitled to be called Alchemists. These more enlightened ones did not delude themselves with the idea that the great art consisted merely in the attempt to produce actual gold out of actual base metals, or a fluid elixir in a bottle, able to cure diseases and prolong mortal life. They knew that, while these things could be done, they were the accidentals, not the essentials, of alchemy; the byways and not the direct route. For neither is alchemy all symbolical nor all literal in its significance.

ALCHEMY

Throughout all Cosmos, whether spiritual or material, analogy and correspondence prevail; so that what is a key to the mysteries of one part is a key to the mysteries of the other parts. Hence the making of gold is at the same time an actual metallurgical operation that can be accomplished, and a symbol of the process of self-purification which the student of Knowledge undertakes when he separates the true gold of Wisdom from the base metals of his delusions and passions.

The mistake made by those futile graybeards of conventional romance, who wasted their lives over their crucibles, was to neglect the higher aspect of their art, and, by striving to limit themselves to its material aspect alone, to lose the whole in trying to grasp the part. It would seem indeed that, not until the alchemist has reached a point where the making of metallic gold would be both undesirable and useless for him can he attain the power to produce it. It would seem that the fluid elixir of life in a bottle is reserved for those who have discovered that truer and subtler elixir which confers on its user the consciousness of his immortality while yet dwelling in his mortal tenement.

The philosopher's stone, it would seem, is that priceless inward grace which enables the possessor to transmute all earthly experience into riches for the soul, and to blend joy and sorrow into the sublime harmony of That which is neither of the twain and yet is so much more than both. And not until he has obtained this jewel can the alchemist obtain any material philosopher's stone able to turn actual dross into actual gold. Or, to put it another way, let us imagine the alchemist attaining these material gifts without having first attained the corresponding spiritual graces. Would he not then be fit subject for a fable such as that of Midas, who was cursed by the jesting God with the gift he had craved, and who found it quite the reverse of a blessing? Try to imagine the state and probable adventures of a man discovering how to make gold.

What is the status of alchemy today? On the one hand it is said that the alchemists were misled zealots, trying to find their way to scientific knowledge amid a vast encumbrance of superstition; and they are sometimes given a condescending pat on the head as having been the ground-breakers for modern chemistry. On the other hand we have learned societies that meet and read papers on alchemy, and emit a great deal of interesting and edifying matter on the question of its symbolical meaning. But with them also, for the most part, the key is missing. What is that key?

The key is that which renders a study of practical service, both for the student and for those in whose service his chivalry is enlisted.

This is the principal key that is missing in all our pursuits. We have not the requisite *motive* in our undertakings. Perhaps we think

we will pursue knowledge 'for its own sake,' while really we are compounding with our love of comfort and our loyalty to prejudice, and are hence unwilling to accept the obligations demanded by the pure study of Knowledge. Or perhaps it is some material end that we propose — wealth, power, glorification. Perhaps, even though we may cherish the betterment of humanity, it is not humanity's real welfare that we aim at, but those material possessions which we imagine to be the *summum bonum*.

We have then the following choice before us. Either we will forego the higher paths of knowledge, or we will accept the conditions imposed. Knowledge comes from experiment and experience; book-study alone will not achieve it. This is common sense, and admitted. Hence the student of divine alchemy must enter the school of actual experiment and experience. And in his case the *corpus vile,* the raw material, wherein he must experiment, is his own nature. If he should propose to study the marvelous powers and graces that are symbolized in alchemical teachings, and at the same time to make no change in his conduct, making no experiment whatever in what he is trying to learn, then he would remain a mere bookworm, and no blame to anyone else. The power to know comes "mostly from the actual practice of altruism in deed, word, and thought; for that practice purifies the covers of the soul and permits that light to shine down into the brain-mind" (W. Q. Judge). And the same voice also says:

"Never, never desire to get knowledge or power for any other purpose than to lay it on the altar, for thus alone can it be saved to you."

This is common sense, and it is easy to see why some fail and others not. What the key is, is obvious. It is sincerity in our quest. "Ask and ye shall receive." We get what we ask for; and, if we do not get a thing, it is because we have not asked for it, but for something else.

A true Alchemist, then, is one who has determined to solve the riddle of life, to find out who and where he is, what is his duty, what Man in reality is, and how he can attain that Knowledge which can set him free from the delusions of self — the only Knowledge worth having in the long run.

As to the secrets of Nature, modern science is initiating us quite fast enough into secrets of a certain order, so that the balance inclines dangerously on that side, and we need more knowledge of another kind to restore the equilibrium. Hence it would scarcely be profitable for the alchemist today to delve into that class of secrets, when, if he found anything at all, it would be likely to add to our burdens and dangers, on account of the way in which knowledge is abused nowadays. Is it

not more profitable to seek after the attainment of those principles of conduct and self-governance which will render the possession of knowledge safe and advantageous?

Alchemy had its origin in Atlantis during the Fourth Race, and its existence in Egypt was only a reappearance. For it is part of the Sacred Science and Divine Art. The transmutation of metals into gold was one of the processes. The saying, "As gold must be tried by fire, so the heart must be tried by pain," is more than a metaphor; it is a correspondence. We must all undergo the process of purification. The fire which purifies is the light of spiritual knowledge and aspiration, coming down from the higher part of our nature. It brings things to a head, vivifies our experience, burns up much that we valued before, leaving only dross and ashes. It is a well-known fact that, as soon as a person begins in earnest to try and lead a better life, the weaknesses and obstacles in his nature all rise up before him. It is as though he were a crucible into which some powerful reagent has been cast, and which causes a great effervescence and throws a scum up to the surface. This is the first stage of purification; the next is to skim off that scum; and the first stage is essential to the second. So we need not be alarmed at the violence of the reaction and the appearance of the scum.

The pain which the heart must undergo in order to be purified is what we inflict ourselves. For we feel interiorly that this experience is essential. It is no more than a surgical or medical operation to which we submit, knowing that the pain is an inevitable prelude to the cure.

The elixir of life, as sought by the materialistic alchemists, was a fluid to prolong bodily life; for the soul is already immortal and needs no elixir. But symbolically, the discovery of the elixir means the discovery of how to achieve immortality while in the body. To do this, it is necessary to identify the mind with the soul, so that the mind may share the soul's immortality and become conscious of immortality. As we are, our minds are identified with the perishable part of our nature, and we live in ideals and feelings that cannot survive. Part of the *magnum opus* is to achieve this immortality, and make this elixir. A man so endowed would live in the eternal and be beyond the reach of change, even though he would be living on earth and passing through the ordinary experiences of life.

The philosopher's stone, which turns all which it touches into gold, is surely an emblem of that inward grace by which we can make all the experiences of life into riches for the soul. Any alchemist who would study this would be a practical alchemist, not a time-waster over a crucible or a learned writer of interesting treatises. It is very helpful to look at the problem of life from different points of view, and to apply

the alchemical key upon occasion. The idea that we are the victims of an inscrutable fate or power may yield pleasantly before the conviction that we are alchemists engaged in the *magnum opus*. The student of Knowledge has to regard himself and his life as matter for experiment.

The trinity of human nature was represented by the alchemists as Salt, Mercury, and Sulphur; or Body, Soul, and Spirit. As to the Soul or middle principle in this triad, they said that Spirit could never act upon Body, nor Body upon Spirit, without the intervention of Soul, "for the spirit is an invisible thing, nor doth it ever appear without another garment, which garment is the soul."

It is said that "gold in the crucible is he that withstands the melting heat of trial." Unquestionably, sincerity and strong conviction are needed, if the alchemist is not to be thrown off his balance when he finds his whole nature upheaved by the stress he has put upon it. He will have to sacrifice pride and prejudice, and make his self-will and pride bow before the inexorable demands of the higher Law to which he has pledged his obedience. He will have to learn that courage and high aspiration are not merely things to be admired and talked about, but things to be evoked and used. Nevertheless the work is a glorious one.

Selfishness is the dross of our nature; it corresponds to the 'salt' or earthy, binding, crystallizing element. This element will try to appropriate the Light to itself and make it a means of personal enjoyment or power, thus spoiling the *magnum opus*. Covetousness has to be eliminated. The mercury or liquid silver, which represents the middle principle of the three, the field of our thoughts and emotions, has to be cleaned from the lead and other base elements that are dissolved in it, so that it may be a bright mirror reflecting clear and undimmed the light from above.

ALL riches, all glory, all association, all sacrifices, gifts, studies, penances, and observances have an end; but for knowledge there is no end.

— *From one of the Upanishads*

EVERY MAN'S CONCERN IN THE PRESENT CRISIS IN HUMAN EVOLUTION

HERBERT CORYN, M. D., M. R. C. S.

WHERE there is no vision the people perish": that is, where life has no background, no setting; where this poor little foreground of necessary daily duties, mechanical and monotonous, seems all there is; where each day, molded in advance by these duties, has no meaning and no promise; where all outlines are hard and unhaloed. But the people will not perish without first doing something!

We have just come through — if we are through — the worst war that history tells us of; worst in the number of nations and of men involved; worst because of the resources of science and invention concentrated to facilitate the killing. But we said all through: Well, anyhow, this is the last war. This is the war that will end war.

Suppose our optimism is mistaken. History does not suggest to us that the horrors of any war ever lived in the national memories vividly enough to prevent another. The people who had the actual suffering are but one generation, and by the time they are succeeded by another the horrors live no longer in memories at all but only in bloodless print.

If, then, our optimism is mistaken and at the end of two or three decades there *is* another war, what will that be like? Science and invention are moving faster than they ever did before and the first question asked at every new step is: How could this be harnessed in the service of war? So the sure thing about the next war is that it will be more destructive of life than any calculations based on the past can suggest to us. And the now ever-increasing facilitation of aërial transit will have made the old geographical barriers worthless and brought every country within striking-range of every other. Where might this present war *not* have been fought had the air been the easy pathway that it will be in five and twenty years?

What is there to prevent the coming of that possible next war? What change in human nature will or can occur to throw the future out of line with the past? For unless there is a change in human nature why *should* the future be different from the past? History is only human nature at work. Human nature is expressed as conduct. When the conduct is on a large scale, the conduct of a nation or of nations, the record of it is called history. The essential current of history, of which the most prominent feature is wars, can only change its direction and take a new one by the activity of a new or hitherto latent element in human nature. What

are the chances of appearance of such a new element, and what will it be like? Is there anything we can do in the matter?

The importance of the question is that civilization is even now actually in peril. The forces of unrest, of dissolution, aroused and let loose by the war, are at work in nearly every country, and in some threaten to come altogether to the top.

Over there in Paris they are trying to work out the details of a League of Nations so as to insure the future perpetuation of peace. But if, as we have seen, the outward conduct of the nations, of humanity as a whole, — that which gets upon printed record as history — is only the enacted expression of the forces of human nature, then unless human nature is to be henceforth different from what it has been hitherto, the outcome of human nature in action will be the same as heretofore. And that means the continuance of wars. And the continuance of wars, under increasingly skilful scientific guidance, means a destruction of life, of property, of all the products of human work, vastly greater than anything that the past can show or suggest. Remember also that human unrest is spreading as never before. It must out, and more and more, inasmuch as it corresponds to a force in human nature whose check or countervail has vanished or is vanishing. Religion is losing its hold, a loosening that began somewhere between the close of the Middle Ages and our own day. There were once practically *no* disbelievers. All men accepted, and were in some degree restrained by, the ideas of heaven and hell, of a God who punished and rewarded. All that came gradually to be questioned and by increasing multitudes either definitely thrown over or tacitly disregarded. The people have been studying science and learning and assimilating materialism. Man is now only an animal and perishes with his body. Soul and spiritual law are words that have been decided to mean nothing. To be up-to-date is to have got beyond all that. This life is all there is; let us get the most we can out of it. And we have daily evidence of this spirit. Is it too much to say that the outlook for Western civilization is as dark and threatening as it can be? That is why every one of us is concerned in the present crisis in human evolution.

Some talk of the increasing hold of the idea of brotherhood. Perhaps. Of the *idea* of brotherhood, though; not of the *feeling* of it. People do see the *need*, the *desirability* of it, just as they might see the desirability of religion. But this very obviousness of its desirability is the sign of its absence. If there were increasing feeling of brotherhood there would not be, as there is, more and more crime, more and more suicide and insanity. The dark cloud over the nations would be thinning out, not darkening. And the present war would never have been.

There is a general sense of the desirability of peace. But I may desire

peace with my neighbor either merely because quarreling is a disturbing nuisance, hindering my ordinary pleasures and activities; *or* because the feeling of brotherhood is in me. In the first case the desire is morally worth nothing. And the nations may desire peace, either that they may recover themselves or go on with their commerce; *or* because of the feeling of brotherhood for each other. Out of which of them is the League of Nations arising? We must not confuse the mere sense of the desirability of peace with that real longing for peace which grows out of the feeling of brotherhood. Only the appearance, the up-spring and spread, of that latter, can make future wars impossible. The 'blessings of peace' are hardly blessings at all unless we can translate the phrase into 'blessings of brotherhood.' Permeation by the sense of brotherhood is the necessary condition for that growth of mind and character which will make us as gods and transform human life. Peace without it is merely the condition for going ahead with our manufactures and erection of tall buildings and discovery of better ways of hardening steel and extracting gold and utilizing electricity and doing trades with each other — activities which stand in no necessary relation to true progress at all and are compatible with absolute selfishness and callousness; but which yet we call civilization or regard as the index of it.

"If there be no vision the people perish," and brotherhood is the condition and basis of the vision. What we call civilization has shown its incapacity to protect itself against its own destruction. It verily *contains* its own destruction. The forces of human nature, as they now run, have shown not only that they cannot preserve what they have made, but that they are sure to destroy it.

"If there is no vision the people perish." What sort of 'vision' is it that the people must have, that you and I must have if we are to find our lives tolerable?

What is it in the conditions of prison-life that makes the suicide rate so high, that gives the misery of the prisoner's early days of incarceration its peculiar blackness? Is it not the absence of *hope*, the sense that he can in no way bring anything into his life that will brighten and intensify it? Men do not live at all by what they have or are; always by what they *will* have or *will* be. Their eyes are always ahead, even if only on tomorrow or this afternoon. And in its deep roots this is right. The force of every sort of evolution, of progress, is there. Not to accept the present as final, our present level of being, our present quantity and intensity of life, our present mental and spiritual possessions — it is this non-acceptance that holds all the promise of our future, of our ultimate godhood. We must and ought to demand more life and more sense of life, a demand that spreads out in the background of the mind

as hope. Take it away; let a man feel that there is nothing more for him to have or be than he now has or is, either here or in any future, and his hold on life will be cut through; he will be dead.

This hope for something more and other appears of course in small things as well as great. The man will put up with the grimmest and most restrictive monotony in his week's work if he may feel that on Saturday he may break away and enjoy himself. Enjoy himself — what does that mean? Does it mean anything but get more sense of life? He may get it from alcohol, or a country walk, or on the sea, or in reading his favorite book by his fire; but what he gets, by wrong and ultimately destructive, or by right and beneficial methods, is just that. Hope is a divine energy, though that at which it is mistakenly aimed may be wicked or contemptible. If a man has a great and noble hope, a hope for a great and noble becoming or attainment, it will swallow up small and mean hopes. It will suffice to draw him forwards through his days and years without the small and mean ones. But take that away and he is left with the small or base ones as his only tractive forces. He will plan sensualities, become selfish, reach out in any and every direction for ways to get pleasure, to get more sense of life.

Now this is exactly what has happened under the influence of the materialistic or agnostic teachings of science and the corresponding philosophies and the universally loosening hold of religion. This life is all there is. It has no background. There is no future of light and expansion. There is no soul that lives on in immortality, no overshadowing Deity whose inspiration we may receive, whose companionship we may become conscious of. If there is some sort of future on earth for the *race*, there is none for us now alive; and even for the race the sun will grow cold and dead in some few million years.

So life has lost its background. The *great* hope has been taken away and only the small and mean or base ones left. And it has been taken away not only from those who know that, who have consciously lost or reasoned away the belief in greater things; but also from the far greater numbers who do *not* know it, who think they believe as of old, but the real life of whose faith and hope has been secretly sapped by infection from the skeptic atmosphere. The Time Spirit is faithless and hopeless, and he has wilted vital faith and hope in a myriad of minds that know not yet that their traditional faith is now words and thought-forms only.

So, the grander hope being gone or going, the worse and smaller ones have it all their own way. Pleasure-seeking, power-seeking, ambition, come fully to the fore. In increasing numbers of men in every nation the lower human nature comes into unchecked play and without fear of future retribution at the hands of a God or of a divine law now

understood to be non-existent. It has found its great opportunity in the war, in the weakened and preoccupied governments and in the hunger and wretchedness and despair of some of the peoples. And the next war will be more costly by far, and more lethal, and involve a far completer suspension or diversion of productive activity and destruction of the instruments of production, and therefore more deprivation of necessities and more want and misery. Whilst religion, if the current still sets as now, will have yet further lost its hold.

Our civilization rests on more precarious foundations than most of us realize, and if it fails we shall have to go down into and slowly toil up through centuries of repeated 'Dark Ages.' Is it not clear, then, how much each of us is concerned in this crisis in human evolution? And while wishing every success to the Peace Conference and hoping *something* from its deliberations, we see there is much more and deeper work to be done. For the larger hope and horizon must be restored to men's minds.

There is a lost key in human thought, a forgotten standpoint from which alone life can be intelligently and hopefully surveyed. When this key was lost or abandoned and men's minds contracted upon their earth-life that was actually in process, so that they no longer thought of it as one of a long series; when they gradually lost belief in reincarnation — then life began to lose its meaning and perspective and proportion and horizon. For so profound a truth could not be lost without a general mental dislocation. *One* life here, if that is all there is, is meaningless.

We sometimes speak of life as a great school. But we do not press into the inwardness of our own words. A school consists of many classes. The pupil enters at the lowest, and, passing up through them all to the highest, is thus made ready for real life. What should we think of a school in which the pupil, having entered it at one class and learned — perhaps very imperfectly — what that one could teach him in one term, was then expelled from the school, neither allowed to pass to the next higher class nor even to have another term in that one so as to complete and perfect his acquisition of what that one had to teach? It is a true — though a partial — vision or intuition of ours when we call life a school. We have seen part of life's meaning. But we do not follow and trust our own intuition.

Men did not suddenly lose their belief in reincarnation. They had at first a direct and unquestioned sight of the great fact. Then it dimmed a little into a *belief*. Then as they grew more and more preoccupied with the immediate present, their minds ceased to dwell on the belief and finally lost hold of it altogether, so that it seems now strange and fantastic when they hear of it. But still they kept some hope and horizon for their lives by thinking very vividly of some richer life hereafter, the

other side. And then the vividness went out of this. Lastly, in our own immediate centuries came a science and philosophy which negated all hope and horizon. Is not that the reason of the world's trouble today? As, by often thinking and speaking of something that never occurred, you come at last to believe in it: so, by ceasing to think and speak of a truth, it becomes an unreality to you and is at last forgotten.

Reincarnation is the lost and forgotten key. It is the great truth that opens up all the others, the only restorative to the world of the larger hope and horizon. Life is altogether unreasonable without it. We talk of evolution, of the ascent of man. We picture human life as mounting from height to height of development, new powers and wider prospects. But the picture is absurd. A company of comrades are climbing a mountain, exultant at the promise of ever new scenery as they near the summit. But it turns out that they may take but one step and must then vanish! It is another company altogether, somehow appearing on the scene, that takes the next step; and another the next! What real interest would they have in the climb?

Upon restoration of belief in reincarnation all else must wait, all larger hope and horizon, all sense of the rationality and meaning and promise of life, all growth of the feeling of brotherhood, all reinvigoration of belief in soul and immortality. Think, on the one hand, that we are tossed together promiscuously and accidentally here on earth for a few years, rubbing against each other, contending against one another, and then leave life separately, we know not whither, if any whither: and on the other, that the race is here as its home, one vast kin and family, learning together, progressing and ascending together, making the future for each other, sharing and re-entering upon common knowledge and thought and achievements, mounting always upon a past of our own collective making. Contrast these two pictures, these two views of human life, considering which of the two it will be that will foster the sense of brotherhood and comradeship; so coming to understand that the growth of this divine and all-regenerative feeling depends and waits upon reappearance of belief in reincarnation, the only belief that rationalizes life and saves it from looking like a blind tragedy and absurdity. If, too, we once take reincarnation seriously into our minds we shall feel a new sense of our responsibility for everything that takes place anywhere. We shall consider that we were not always Americans or Englishmen or always of *any* one nation. If we could look back into our past lives we should see that we have been members of many nations, sharers and makers of human history in many world-centers and epochs, sharers and part makers therefore of the long chain of causes that runs its links back from everything that is now happening anywhere and will go down in history.

And if brotherhood rests on reincarnation for its growth, so does belief in soul for *its* reinvigoration. For the very thought of reincarnation carries with it the thought of a permanent within the impermanent, of man as a dweller within his body, passing on, when one body has worn out, to the experiences which another will afford him. The enduring dweller within successive temporary bodies – that is soul — destined at last to reawake to the knowledge of its own nature and divinity, the maker and quickener of its own future, itself beyond the reach of death, to which the Greek oracle appealed in its famous exhortation, *Man, know thyself!* And this self-knowing, this illumination, could only begin in one who had thought of himself as *in* and not *of* the body, passing on towards an ever-expanding and more glorious future. The thought of an ever-perfecting human life on earth can only become real and vivid and inspiring to us when it rests on the belief in reincarnation, when we think of ourselves who are here now as actually sharing in that progress, that ripening and consummation. The picture of progress must be half unreal unless we can see our own figures amid the rest.

So reincarnation is the lost key. With it alone can we justify our intuition that life has meaning, that life is a school, that it is a graduated ascent for us to unimaginable heights. We have this intuition; it is a never-failing voice within us; it is the utterance of life itself, interiorly uttering to itself its own truths. And then we stultify ourselves by refusing to see the one condition by which this intuition can have verity. Herein is the larger hope and horizon for humanity. Herein is the way out of the evils which threaten to engulf it, for here alone is the root from which brotherhood can grow.

Reincarnation cannot be proved, no more than can immortality. But if you think of humanity as one brotherhood, one family, of one essence, with one common destiny and future, then you must presently think that this family of ours will remain together, the members of it returning again and again to their kith and kin to help and share the attainment of that destiny and future. And if instead, you think at first of life as a school of many grades of learning from the simplest onward, then you must think also that perfection and completion in this school must require that we enter and re-enter it time and again till mind and soul and character are all rounded out. The thought of reincarnation and the feeling of brotherhood each generate the other. For if you have the feeling of brotherhood really aroused, you will surely wonder why you shall not return among those for whom you have it, why death shall separate you from those you love and for whom you long to work. For it is *here on earth* that they need you, need all you can do for them.

We are all of us concerned in this crisis in human evolution. In the

deeper sense we let ourselves drift into it. We let the vitality of our spiritual beliefs die away. Never looking steadily into our minds and demanding of ourselves, *What is it that I believe about life?* we have most of us come at last to have no real, vitalized belief at all, nothing beyond mere passive mental assent to this or another teaching. This demand is the first step for us to take, this daily question of oneself, *What do I believe?* Beliefs thus examined change and grow and deepen, get the power to mold life and character, spread through and tinge the whole of thought. *Do I believe in human progress? What do I mean by human progress? What by soul? Is human life the working out of divine purpose? What is duty toward humanity?* All these and many like questions we should daily drag from their slumber. It would need but a few minutes, but in a little while, if we never let the thing become perfunctory, we should transform and tighten the strings of our whole natures.

It was said of old that three righteous men could head off the spiritual destruction of a whole city. Perhaps it was a small city, but the lesson remains — that a few, strong enough, can be a binding and steadying center for the many. The malady of the age is lost faith, lost hope, lost horizon. Theosophy can bring them back once more to mankind.

A SONNET SEQUENCE

Kenneth Morris

I

THEY say I have not seen thee as thou art,
Because in sooth, dear heart, I scorn to see
Aught that is unmagnificent in thee,
Or heed at all thine uneternal part.
What should I seek in love or thee, dear heart,
But the quick heart of Boundless Mystery,
And to surprise, in that dim sanctity,
The Everlasting crooning there apart?

So when they say: "Thou hast spent thy heart in vain;
Thy love is even less fair than others be;
'Tis thou thyself hast dreamed her loveliness,"—
I answer: "In her speech and eyes, nathless,
I have heard the Stars of Morning sing amain,
And seen the shadowy Kings of Faërie."

II

Beloved, in what star soe'er mayest be —
For I do hold that where God's peerage are,
Thou dreamest in some saffron-citron star
Lapt round in azure, purple, lazuli; —
Midst thy high dreams and haughty ecstasy
Hast thou not felt some wandering sorrow mar
The loneliness of Heaven — some cry from far?
It was the joy I have, adoring thee!

Oh, I shall wreck thy peace! I know, I know
Thou wilt give ear at last, and wing thee down,
And all our mountains with thy sweetness fill;
And our pale hearts, fulfilled of thee, shall glow
To mastery and deeds of high renown; —
Have I not here thine emblem Daffodil?

III

Sweet, if the things men care for fall away,
And Fortune hold for me no gift in store
But cold rebuffs, and disappointment sore,
And the harsh happenings of this adverse day;
Why, I say, let her use me as she may!
She can but drive me thee-ward, more and more
In star-possessing ecstasy to adore
Thy beauty. Let her do her worst, I say!

Since thou hast taken hold upon me quite,
And no joy else, nor grief, remains to know;
Since in thy temple, deep at heart in me,
Singing thee grand trishagions day and night,
I kneel before thine altar there, and glow
White-hot with adoration endlessly.

IV

I heard a bird sing through the rain this morn,
And at her music, Sweet, my soul took wing
Thee-ward o'er seas that opaled foamings fling
On coasts beyond these regions passion-worn.
Oh, she went winged on love and pride, upborne
On scorn, and on such songs as spirits sing —
Love that brings all, pride that hath all to bring,
And scorn of her own love, pride, song and scorn!

Weak-winged, I guess, she brushed thy window-pane,
And fell to me again. I do divine
Love's self would only desecrate thy shrine,
And pride too lowly were to tread therein.
—She brushed thy window-pane; thou wast within,
And she swooned back to me through the silver rain.

V

For Love's own perfect sake I may not stay
To render nothing but love's dregs and lees.
Love's grand dues must be offered; and for these
I must go pilgrim where the planets play.
And there be fields beyond the Milky Way
That wait my sickle; there be glimmering seas
Strewn with Hy Brasils and Hesperides
To sack for splendors on thy shrine to lay.

So, if I have no word but this Farewell,
Deem not that while time is my love may die
(Wherein time is not, but eternity!)
'Tis for thy sake I must go harrying hell,
Raiding the dawn for gold, the midnight sky
For diamonds, and for peace, and mystery.

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THE ANGEL AND THE DEVILS

H. T. EDGE, M. A.

STEVENSON'S well-known tale of Jekyll and Hyde is justly deemed a classic. It comprises the essentials of a gem of art both in idea and form: a powerful idea artistically expressed. To paint such a vignette, the artist had to limit himself, as is always necessary when we wish to paint one particular scene. Hence, in satisfying dramatic demands, philosophical breadth had to be sacrificed. Of this the author was fully aware. He says, speaking through Jekyll:

"I thus drew steadily nearer to that truth, by whose *partial* discovery I have been doomed to such a dreadful shipwreck: that man is not truly one, but truly two. I say two, because the state of my own knowledge does not pass beyond that point. Others will follow, others will outstrip me on the same lines; and I hazard the guess that man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens."

And again:

"Had I approached my discovery in a more noble spirit, had I risked the experiment while under the empire of generous or pious aspirations, all must have been otherwise, and from these agonies of death and birth, I had come forth an angel instead of a fiend."

And of course it seems evident that the decomposition of the compound Jekyll should have resulted in the separate emergence, not only of an evil principle, but of a good one as well. Otherwise what becomes of the good principle? Again, Jekyll contained some evil principles which were not represented in Hyde: namely, his vanity, his fear, his hypocrisy. Hyde was at least whole-hearted. As the author suggests, the personality of man is very complex; and if a sudden violent dissolution of its tenement could liberate the denizens from the family union in which they are held together, their name would be found to be Legion rather than Two. There are on record certain experiments in what might be called a psychological vivisection, wherein the operator has succeeded in dismembering his unfortunate subject's personality into quite a number of distinct and different entities.

The motive of Jekyll's experiments was to find a means of gratifying his evil instincts without hindrance from other motives. Faults in our methods of education are responsible for the fact that some evil tendencies in human nature are not overcome but merely masked or suppressed, so that they still exist, and, being denied expression, run to morbid forms. They may cause diseases, hidden blemishes, neurotic conditions, etc. This

is sometimes made the theme of morbid writings which are served up in the sensational press; they exaggerate and present only the somber side of the question. We probably express a good deal of our bad tendencies vicariously. We pick quarrels, in order that we may vent our irritation without having to shoulder the blame; we subtly inspire others to do the things we dare not do ourselves. And, though we cannot send forth a physical Hyde to do our deeds of darkness, we can and do send forth into the aether evil thoughts, which may express themselves through the organism of some receptive individual who thus becomes, as it were, our Hyde.

It is probably true, and many can confirm this out of their experience, that sentiments impossible of expression in the waking state may find expression in dreams; for then it is possible that the element of self-consciousness, which is so destructive of pure feelings, may be wholly absent.

As themes for the romancer, one might suggest the author's idea that, had he drunk his potion under a noble impulse, an angel would have emerged; or that, following the usual rules of decomposition, two beings would have emerged simultaneously to pursue unhindered their respective paths. The details of the narrative would require some modification and working up; if only to get over the difficulty as to clothing which would arise when the portly Jekyll dismembered himself into two separate beings. But that is a matter of detail. Imagine that the wayfarer in the tale, instead of encountering a human fiend doing a deed of darkness, had met with an incarnate angel, representing the good side of Jekyll, doing deeds of love and charity all unhindered by the hostile elements. Imagine the drama that could be made with the angel and the devil both at work, now separate, now lost in recombination.

It will be best for us at present to resist any temptation to dwell on the dark and morbid side of this question and to present instead the bright side. In man there are the angel and the devil. The devil is simply the animal side of our nature, which, harmless enough in itself, has appropriated a spark of mind from the higher side of our nature, and has thus become what no animal can be — a self-conscious gratifier of appetite, a schemer of evil. Science has insisted enough on the animal side of our nature; and dogmatism has emphasized our sinfulness. Let us try to dwell on the brighter side.

We have not to try and find some extraordinary method for liberating the angel from his enthralment in the body, so that he can fare forth unlet to do his good deeds. To do that would be to flee the field of battle, the field of duty and opportunity. We have to make a temple for that angel in the shrine of our own physical tenement. In the tale, we find

that Hyde was always present in Jekyll, and often made his presence felt; that the Doctor sometimes gratified his propensities in his own person and without liberating the fiend. Hence the idea of a decomposition of personality and body is not essential. Finally the devil takes possession of the body entirely, in defiance of the drug. And thus with the angel: can we not sweep our mansion and make it a fitting tenement for the angel, so that the devil may be driven forth?

It is necessary, of course, to guard against considering the angel and the devil as separate infesting creatures: that would be superstitious and harmful. That way madness lies. We do not need to create personal devils, but to uncreate them; we do not want angels to work for us, we want to work for ourselves. The practical thing is to bear always in mind that we stand between the two influences, and have the power of leaning towards either. Then there is the power of habit; actions engender habit; the body is built up by habits of thought and feeling and action.

The possibilities of self-delusion are enormous and surprising, especially to those who have entered seriously upon the examination and reform of their own nature. It is only necessary to allude to the lengths to which anger and fear, suspicion and jealousy, vanity or depression, can carry us, in creating pure delusions of the imagination, which are as solid as realities, when not checked and dispelled by reference to actual facts. But this should be for us a lesson in the possibilities open to us on the brighter side of the question. If our creative powers of imagination and emotion can create such illusions of darkness, what may not the imagination and the liberated will, acting in conjunction, be able to accomplish in creating good influences?

Spiritual forces act on a higher plane than other forces, and are therefore much more potent. Hence the power of a pure aspiration: it calls into play the higher forces in our nature. Should the idea of personal aggrandisement or satisfaction, in any of its numerous forms, inspire the wish, then the spiritual forces are not called into play, but only the lower forces of desire, and the result is more delusion. If the aspiration is mixed, then an alchemical process of purification and precipitation will take place. Delusions will arise, quickly come to a head and burst, and the pure metal will shine forth beneath the dross. Alchemy is a very apt way of expressing the problem of self-purification. We aim at purifying the gold in our nature. In the crucible is a woful mixture. We add the powerful reagent, the mixture melts and seethes; the dross coagulates and comes to the surface, so that it can be skimmed; and the pure metal remains.

Let the tale of Jekyll and Hyde serve not merely as a warning against the evil that is in us, striving to find a means of unhindered expression,

but as a bright promise of the unexpressed good, that is likewise seeking for expression. Let us give the good side of our nature a chance. Sometimes, when we meet another person with a cloud on his brow, and realize that he is dwelling in a prison which he has created for himself, and is missing all the joy of life on account of his preoccupation with his gloomy thoughts and his troubles, purely imaginary perhaps — we are helped to realize our own similar condition of thraldom. It is some form of fear, anger, vanity, etc., that is holding us in this bondage; and we are weakly heeding the whisperings of the almost tangible demon we have built up in ourselves by the indulgence of such moods. But the bare idea that this is the case is sufficient to deal the illusion its death-blow.

Shakespeare might well compare life to a stage. Each one of us is a whole drama in himself; and a drama of Shakespeare's, with all its persons, might be taken to represent but a single individual, with all the diverse and conflicting elements of his character. Personality is indeed multiple; and it needs no experimenting mesmerist, with his neurotic subjects, to tell us so; for we see it in ourselves and our fellows. It is not two souls, but many, that dwell in our breast. Yet this does not mean that the whole thing is a delusion and that we have no real Self at all. An actor is a real man, however many parts he may play; and though we may change our costume often, the body remains the same. There is a true Self, and this we have to discover.

"The light that burns in thee, dost thou feel it different in any wise from the light which shines in other men?"

There is our ideal. The more the idea of separateness prevails, the more are we liable to delusion. All the emotions enumerated above have the quality of personality in them.

The angel in man is simply his own real Self — not a ministering deity. It is as though Man, the pilgrim, had lost his way in the mists and false lights. He needs to rub his eyes and drive away the dreams.

"WE find two distinct beings in man, the spiritual and the physical; the man who thinks, and the man who records as much of these thoughts as he is able to assimilate. Therefore we divide him into two distinct natures; the upper or the spiritual being . . . and the lower or the physical."

— H. P. BLAVATSKY: *The Key to Theosophy*

THEOSOPHY, THE LAW OF RIGHT LIVING

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE ISIS THEATER, SAN DIEGO, BY
GERTRUDE VAN PELT, B. SC., M. D.

NOTHING is so vital to us as a knowledge of the Law of Right Living. We all *must* live. There is no escaping it. Death is but a passage to another life. Annihilation is a fiction. From the seemingly inert stone to the mighty sun, guiding and controlling its destiny through space, all is life. Every infinitesimal point in the limitless ocean of space is keenly alive. There is nothing but life — life everywhere. We are bathed in it, breathe it in, are a part of it. What knowledge then can be so dear as that of the law governing life? To be steered by this law means joy and peace. To ignore it, means constant suffering and friction.

Theosophy has named it the Law of Compassion. But quite likely the average man, if asked to consider it, would think first of some system of hygiene, or the many related systems growing out of such study, which would fill books, and which perhaps, in their totality, cover the area of physical life. Then there are many, recognising the relation between body and mind, and desiring a fuller and richer enjoyment of what is called life, who might declare that right *thinking* is the law of right living. Perhaps some might have in mind our laws, and how they might be improved, and surely many would turn to their various religions and seek in them the law of life.

But the hygienists are constantly changing their theories. The seemingly best established grow old-fashioned. Even contemporary doctors cannot agree, much less does one generation of authorities endorse another: so that the poor layman, unless fortified with a strong armor of common sense, is left walking with a very certain *un*certainty, which perhaps grows into recklessness. One cannot deny that right living follows right thinking, but when the latter is directed from the outside, so to speak, that is, when it is attempted for the purpose of bringing about physical or personal enjoyment, it instantly becomes wrong thinking, and there is no possibility of getting it right through that method. Religions *have* the truth, and state the law, but it is often buried under so much dogma, and obscured by so many excrescences which have been placed in the foreground and catch attention, that many fail to find it there at all. Thus religion, the great unifier, the binder together of men, has been more parodied than any other force. In consequence it has often promoted strife, and has, it is said, been the excuse for the most terrible wars in history.

The fact is, the world is at sea regarding the law of right living — at sea, and yet searching for it everywhere. The scientists are seeking it diligently, patiently, in every nook and corner: students rummage in ancient lore, or hope to find it revealed in the pages of history: the average man, with perhaps a better chance, looks for it on the path of common life. But somewhere behind all these usual places of search, the law must be. Behind all physical forms, everything cognised by the senses; beyond even thought-life, there must be an underlying law of existence, upon which every other which has been, or is yet to be discovered, must hang as the fruit upon the tree. Without a knowledge of, and obedience to, this fundamental necessity, the law of right living will be forever missed. Like the branches of the trees which grow in all directions, its different aspects or expressions reach into all widely separated and hidden recesses of the world; but not, like them, fed from the roots, unless the pursuers of these subsidiary laws link their minds with the basic law and work primarily in harmony with it. Failing to do this, disaster follows sooner or later. Success may seem to attend them for a very long time, possibly for the most or the whole of a lifetime, but inevitably a moment arrives when everything crumbles and that which had seemed to be success, becomes like many a fruit, fair on the surface, but rotten at the core. So in spite of eager search, the world has not found the law of right living; as current events show only too plainly. It is written without doubt on every leaf and grain of sand. The earth, the sea, and the air, do nothing but proclaim it, each in its own language, but the world has lost the key for translation of the Riddle. The Rosetta Stone of life is in the hands of the few.

Yet it should be plain to all who pause and think, that this knowledge must exist somewhere. During all the ages upon ages that this earth of ours has been rolling in space, preserving a steady purpose, never flinching or swerving, some mighty intelligences must have been guiding it — some that had lived and suffered and learned, eternities before our little planet was born. On a clear night, one has but to lift one's eyes to see the record of an infinite number of infinitely great and greater beings, who guide the worlds filling the limitless abyss of space; each having its wonderful and unimaginable duties, and possessing such a comprehension and mastery of the law, as to be infallible up to the point of its obligations. The very existence of these worlds is the testimony of *their* existence. Nothing proceeds with exactitude and co-ordination without a mind behind it. Even in the small enterprises of earth-life, nothing can be carried forward without someone directing it who is responsible for it. And in the larger ones there must be heads and sub-heads, in a decreasing scale, depending upon the magnitude of the undertaking.

Let there be wavering or uncertainty at the center, and the whole fabric trembles. Let the head disappear, and unless promptly replaced, the whole organization disintegrates, just as surely as does a human body when the soul leaves it. The inference is inescapable that there are beings whose function it is to guide our earth and its inhabitants — beings who have mastered every mystery of earth-life, and had done so, ere it was born. Without them the earth could not be. Every degree of life must teach the next lower. Someone to learn implies someone to teach. What is more natural than that at certain favorable epochs, which the Wise Ones will know, the guides of this planet should restate the law to their bewildered younger brothers; that they should place in their hands the lost key, without which they could not find the law of right living? Is it not unreasonable to deny this possibility; and even puerile conceit to be unwilling to be taught?

But in the main, the world today is not unwilling. This is the rainbow of promise arching the sky, even though the storms are not ended. For, in truth, men are weary of strife and bitterness. Plainer and plainer it grows that these lead nowhere; that like the squirrel in his cage, man travels this path without advancing; that he builds but to destroy; that he suffers without compensation.

And so, from the depths of the great heart of humanity, there has gone up an inarticulate but all-searching cry for help. It is heard in the dark corners of the crowded cities; from the vast army of slaves to passion and ambition; from those who have lost faith and hope; from the scoffers, the sceptics; from the heart of science, which in its hungry pursuit of truth has reached a land it cannot enter; from the weary man of affairs, whose routine has become meaningless. The frivolous emit it, even in their frivolity. And to the listening ear which never closes, it is also heard from those who in their blindness are complacent and satisfied. It is expressed in discords, in shrieks, in moans; in hurry and confusion; in uncertainty and fear; and from no land is it absent.

Such cries are heard above earth's laden atmosphere. They reach the ears of those who know the law, and are answered. Thus it was that in 1875, as this restless, fevered, distracted age was hurrying to its consummation, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky came, bringing with her humanity's birthright, so long buried under false creeds, delusions, and the ash-heap of mental débris.

The birthright is a statement of a full philosophy of life; teachings as to man's origin, evolution, as well as of all that pertains to this earth; an outline of the history of the planet from its birth. Missing links in science are supplied; modern theories discussed and, when necessary, corrected. Almost every conceivable subject is, at least, touched upon,

and its place in the scheme of things made clear. The purpose of life and how to live it; the nature of death and how to meet it; the relation of human beings to each other — all are taught with a master touch. In short, enough is made known to put humanity on the right path; to banish suffering and sickness; to bring back the Golden Age. That is to say, if all this does not follow, it need not be for the lack of knowledge. For the lost key to life's problems has been restored. But man himself, of course, has to use the key; to become the master of his own evolution; to assimilate the teachings, and through the mind, to weave them into every fiber of his being. We often say that nature is the great teacher, but the key given makes it always possible to interpret her lessons aright.

The great underlying law upon which all the teachings referred to are based, is the Law of Compassion, as said in the beginning. This is no idle sentiment, without relation to the man dealing with stern facts, but verily the Law of laws, and the sternest fact in life, with the strength of the universe behind it. To ignore or contest it, is as likely to be successful as an attempt to turn the earth out of its orbit.

There is a saying which has come down through the ages, protected by the majesty of truth. As its background is the philosophy now again given to the world, and reaching into the very roots of being. Infinite wisdom has framed it and brought it forward as the epitome of itself. It is saturated with compassion and had been sung into life by an invisible choir which fills all space. Volumes could not reveal its full import, but the untrammeled soul, with unlimited vision, sees it stretching into every corner of every world, and reads: BROTHERHOOD IS A FACT IN NATURE. And just because of this fact, compassion is the underlying law. It means that all existing things and beings are not only similar, but in essence identical; that separateness is the illusion, and unity, the reality; that subtle inner currents bind together every atom of life in a wonderful web of destiny.

So vital is this truth, that the Law teaches it in first one way, then another; indeed, is forced to teach it in its own workings. If easy and normal methods are not accepted, then come those difficult and disagreeable, and finally, these being disregarded, pages of horror, of anguish and unutterable torture, follow and force home the truth, which in the beginning was as plainly to be seen and as all-encompassing as the clear blue sky. Life is full of safety valves to prevent soul destruction. If need be, bodies and forms may be crushed under the inexorable wheel of destiny, but that which is their sustainer, that for which the universe exists, must be piloted safely through dangerous labyrinths, through the river of death, yea, even through hell itself.

Madame Blavatsky, when she came in 1875, in addition to the work

mentioned, organized a body whose purpose it was to form a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood.

In 1889, in an article entitled 'The New Cycle,' she wrote:

"Our century must be saved from itself before the last hour strikes. This is the moment for all those to act who see the sterility and folly of an existence blinded by materialism and ferociously indifferent to the fate of the neighbor; now is the time for them to devote all their energies, all their courage to the great intellectual reform. This reform can only be accomplished by Theosophy, we say, . . . The paths that lead to it are many; but the wisdom is one. Artistic souls foresee it, those who suffer dream of it, the pure in heart know it."

In 1900 Katherine Tingley founded the Râja-Yoga System of Education. The system is new to this age, from the foundation upwards. It is based on new premisses, and it rears a structure which is firmly knit with its foundation. And indeed a new, fresh start seems necessary. Our present life is so confused, so intense, and so complex. The forces that are working through humanity, have reached such a point of power. The same individual is so good and so bad, so great and so small. The currents for and against evil are so intermingled, twisted and tangled, that before they can be used or controlled, they must be separated, marshaled into order, and understood. What potencies lie in our great cities! Their gigantic development represents such industry, brains, perseverance, talent, severe training, determination, and courage. So much has been done in every material direction and so well done. Yet, though we can find there, sending their poison into every crevice, corruption, falsehood, ambition, vice in all its horrible and hybrid forms, there is not so much that in a wholesale way can be pushed aside and condemned. For, shaken in and mixed up with it all in unexpected ways, are love and trust, aspiration, endurance, and patience. If it were unmitigated evil, we could let it all drop without a sigh, but the evil is strengthened and given vitality, covered over, even made beautiful to many by the little sprinklings of truth woven into and all through its fibers. To remodel the old systems would seem like tearing to pieces a universe. So a *new* system of education comes, the fruits of which must gradually permeate the old order, and under the workings of the higher chemistry, rearrange the elements of life into combinations which make for righteousness.

It is difficult to remold the adult mind, to break old habits of thought and shake loose from prejudice, but the fresh young mind of the child can, if wisely guided, often as easily take the right-hand path as the left. The yielding to pleasure, the search for physical comfort, have dulled the senses and paralyzed the limbs of many a full-grown man, but youth moves with the freedom of health. The intense individualism of today too often imprisons our men and women, but our children see the stars with ease. And though Theosophy has accomplished seeming marvels

in many who have passed the half-way point, it is in the children especially that its transcendent power will be revealed.

This new system is based upon the recognition of the unity of life; upon the self-evident fact that the quality of the whole is dependent upon the quality of the parts. And it is guided by a hand which understands the complexity of human nature and its possibilities in both directions. It recognises that all that is evil in the world today has its seeds in the natures of the children which are its product; and that seeds are more easily removed than strong plants whose roots have struck deep and intertwined their fibers with the essential structure of the organism. It perceives that each unit contains within itself the potentialities of the whole, in other words that it is a microcosm in the macrocosm; and that therefore the same elements which are warring in the larger body are but a magnified reproduction of those in the individuals. No possible combination of men at peace within themselves could produce a condition of national disturbance, however great their number, however different their viewpoints, however diversified their physical interests. Prosperity growing out of such a union is not an imitation, an unstable, critical affair, but rests upon a solid foundation, is a true and living force. It is peace in action. The real government, of which all true outward governments are but the reflexion, has been set up within the units, and the Higher Law manifests therein. The individual houses have been set in order and therefore order is found in the realm, which implies that the true master of each house — the soul — has assumed control, and not some minor principle, such as the mind or the desires.

The new system, therefore, evokes the soul, which will place the various elements in their proper relation. Under the glorious radiance of its light, every possibility is stimulated. The intellect flowers, the body develops in beauty, the desires are enriched and purified. To some slight degree this has at times taken place in our recorded historical periods, and such are known as times of renaissance.

Nothing is killed, but all is transmuted. The old grotesque forms, under the divine magic, gradually merge into shapes of lordly and graceful proportions. The warrior spirit appears on the field, grown great and beautiful, no longer engaged in producing havoc and destruction, but in subduing evil passions; in slaying the dragon of selfishness, in arousing the sleeping faculties; in defending truth, exposing hypocrisy, and opposing evil wherever found. This is a warfare which awakens enthusiasm. The natural child, naturally trained, responds to it with joy, and in responding, finds the key to freedom. For he then perceives that no slavery can be compared in ignominy with the slavery to passion, ambition, and desire. The dual elements exist in all their strength in

each unit. The pendulum of cosmic forces finds room to swing from one pole of the universe to the other, right in the heart of man, and life can never grow tame to one who begins to live it in earnest. Every foe vanquished, brings added vigor and courage. Every region subdued, leads to another outshining it in interest, and the spiritual warrior marches forward into an ever-growing glory.

The promise may seem distant to some, since the task is herculean, involving no less than a reversal of the currents of thought from intense individualism and separateness to unity and harmony. Yet we have hints daily that many are silently awaiting its fulfilment.

Bishop Gore of Oxford has recently written:

"There is no question that the whole of our conception of civilization — national, international, commercial, and to a very large extent, religious and almost more than all, educational — has been built up on a basis of selfishness, and it has collapsed."

And this anonymous verse was found in the pocket of a Captain killed in action in the War:

"Suddenly one day
The last ill shall fall away.
The last little beastliness that is in our blood
Shall drop from us as the sheath drops from the bud,
And the great spirit of man shall struggle through
And spread huge branches underneath the blue.
In any mirror, be it bright or dim,
Man will see God, staring back at him."

And so the new system may, nay must, prove a surprise to the faint-hearted. There is an incident recorded by Matthew Arnold, which is suggestive here. In writing of Celtic Literature, he speaks of the barriers which had been built up and fostered for centuries between the Saxons and Celts; the lack of sympathy felt and shown by the English, making any real adjustment of political difficulties hopeless. He says that he himself, when young, had it impressed upon him that there was an "impassable gulf" between them; that his "father, in particular, was never weary of contrasting them"; and that "Lord Lyndhurst, in words long famous, called the Irish 'aliens in speech, in religion, in blood.'" This general attitude, he says, cultivated and so emphasized the antagonism, that "it seemed to make the estrangement immense, incurable, fatal."

In this unhappy state of affairs, strange to say, the ethnologists, as Mr. Arnold observes cause and effect, came to the rescue. Their divisions of the human family into Indo-Europeans, Semitics, and Mongolians, began gradually to work their way into the common consciousness, and by degrees took off the edges of the barriers that had been built up, and ended finally, under the solvent influence of the idea of kinship, in bringing

about a feeling of sympathy. And he says further in this connexion:

"Fanciful as the notion may at first seem, I am inclined to think that the march of science — science insisting that there is no such original chasm between the Celt and the Saxon as we once popularly imagined, that they are not truly, what Lord Lyndhurst called them, *aliens in blood* from us; that they are our brothers in the great Indo-European family—has had a share, an appreciable share, in producing this changed state of feeling."

Our feelings are modified, often controlled, by our ideas. There is certainly a reciprocal action, and an interaction; but in the long run our feelings (meaning our ordinary ones, those not born of intuition) come under subjection to our ideas. The indispensability of right living, of true ideas, of a philosophy of life based on realities, thus becomes apparent. It is like a solid foundation upon which any structure or superstructure may be raised. It is like a pure soil, from which all good things can grow. Art, literature, poetry, science, can spring into a normal and not a deformed life, with a vital elixir in their veins, and bear flowers which are a worthy reflexion of their divine prototypes.

If so comparatively slight a cause as a new scientific classification of the human races, could, as Matthew Arnold believes, become a potent factor in transforming antipathy into sympathy between two rather diverse peoples, what *would* be the result if all races and beings could be shown beyond a shadow of doubt, to have a common origin, and common destiny; to be superbly poised together, so that advance, success, growth of any one was conditioned by that of all the others; if indeed Humanity could be shown to be one Mighty Being, united in every part by a sympathetic nervous system, ramifying everywhere? Rivalry would melt away, or rather be transformed into a noble emulation to perform each his part to the highest degree of perfection. Such co-operation on a grand scale has often been seen for selfish purposes (selfish meaning anything limited, anything short of the whole) which proves its possibility. What is needed is to extend and constantly extend one's horizon.

Suppose this picture of unity out of the world of reality, were suddenly developed into the world of actuality, and could be seen under whatever sky, goldened by the sun or silvered by the stars — who can imagine the magic of its influence? Under it slowly, perhaps quickly, the storms would subside; construction supplant destruction, and all the splendid qualities now so often neutralizing results would turn their energies toward fulfilling the real purpose of life, and the nations begin the orderly and dignified march toward their destiny.

It is another part, in fact the main part, of the mission of Theosophy to clear away the clouds which hide this picture; to demonstrate to the waiting world that Brotherhood *is* a fact in Nature; and not only to emonstrate it to the head by the presentation of the Ancient Wisdom,

the basis of all philosophies and all religions, but to awaken it in the heart; to arouse the intuition latent, if not active, in all, which will clarify the mind and bring with each tomorrow a truer interpretation of life's meaning.

Things that work with nature move on wings, and those that touch causes, instead of effects, show results quickly. We have been draining our abscess of social corruption for ages, but not since the Mysteries were closed in Greece until now, have we had working openly among the people, true physicians who knew the nations' sickness and were able to apply the remedy. There is, moreover, a point often overlooked, that health is contagious, more so even than disease. And when a true system of education is born, which has the power to awaken the sleeping divinity, something is lighted whose force cannot be estimated. The fire of the elements can destroy in a night what it has taken ages to construct. Who knows but the spiritual fire may be able to redeem in a night what for long ages past the darkness of ignorance has sought to crush out?

MENS SANA IN CORPORE SANO

STUDENT

"Theosophy has to inculcate ethics; it has to purify the soul if it would relieve the physical body."— *H. P. Blavatsky*

"The training of bodies and spirits is one of the express objects of Theosophy."
— *H. P. Blavatsky*

"Development, to be thorough and enduring, must proceed equally on all lines."
— *W. Q. Judge*

TO say that there is a right and a wrong way of doing things is to put the matter somewhat crudely, and probably a closer approximation to the truth would be attained by saying that there is one right way and *two* wrong ways. For the departure from rightness to wrongness is marked by a relapse from singleness or unity into duality or diverseness; or, in other words, when people depart from truth they run to extremes, and there are always at least two extremes, opposite to one another, and both wrong. Now, in the matter of healing, we find those who propose to heal by bodily treatment alone, and those who propose to heal by mental treatment alone. These are the two wrong extremes. The truth, of course, is to be looked for in an equal and proportioned treatment of both the mind and the body, and in the recognition of the fact that mind and body each has its proper place and requires each its appropriate treatment.

To heal by mental treatment alone is possible within certain limits, but these limits are well marked; and the attempt becomes palpably absurd when it is a case of wounds, fractures, or lesions, that call for surgical aid.

But there is another grave objection to the attempt to heal the body by mental treatment alone. That is, that it makes the body more important than the mind, renders the mind a mere servant of the body, and concentrates the attention on the curing of physical ills as the prime good to be attained. Now one aspect of physical diseases is that they are evils on their way out of the system, this being their final stage. Most bodily ailments were created originally by the mind, and having been driven out of the mind, they manifest themselves as bodily ills, and are thus carried out of the system. Now the effect of trying to heal these ailments by auto-suggestion and suchlike means is frequently to drive the evil back into the system again, damming up, as it were, their channel of exit, and thus merely postponing the process of cure. The case is analogous to that of stopping a running sore or suppressing some symptom —a thing that it is often unwise to do; though here as elsewhere it is necessary to avoid absolute statements and to bear in mind that such symptoms can be treated effectively by means that will not drive the evil back into the blood, but will prevent ulterior consequences.

We should heal our mind because it is right to have a healthy mind, and not for the mere purpose of healing our body. It is true that a healthy mind will in time produce a healthy body, but nevertheless we should not make physical health our main motive. If we do, then we are indulging in the materialism of making all subservient to the needs of the body. But it is impossible to lay down absolute rules in these matters, the whole business being a question of balance and proportion and common sense, like so many other practical affairs — life being rather an art than a science.

The rule observed by those who believe in rational and harmonious development is that the ills of the mind should be cured by the will, and the ills of the body attended to by a physician. Thus, if I have a cold, I would not try to stop it by means of mental concentration or auto-suggestion; for I should feel that I was using the wrong tool for the work; and also I should be afraid that, even if I succeeded in thus stopping the cold (a very doubtful question), I should merely drive the evil somewhere else and find myself troubled with some other difficulty, perhaps a mental one; so that ultimately I should have to have the cold after all, at a later time, in order that the evil might be carried out of my system. Nor would I leave the cold alone, in the hope that it would pass away naturally and cure itself. It might do so, but there is the risk that it would de-

velop into something worse; especially as I am not living in a state of nature but in a highly complex civilization teeming with harmful influences. No; I should go to the doctor, who would give me medicine and treatment for my cold. And meanwhile I should try to discover if there was anything in my habits, mental or otherwise, that would be likely to provoke such a physical condition, and I should set about rectifying this. This is the common-sense method; and though the first person, "I," has been used in giving it, that was only a literary convenience, for the same method is readily recognised by all reasonable people who are not extremists. In short, the above is what a reasonable person does.

The physician who treated my cold might, if a wise man, also give me some excellent advice as to my habits, mental or otherwise, and tell me that habits of thought and emotion influence the body, and advise me to attend to this. I might not find his advice very palatable, any more than his physic, but (if wise myself) I would endeavor to gulp it down, feeling sure that it was for my good, as intended.

When we said that life is an art rather than a science, we meant that it is a question of nice adjustments and balances rather than one of exact and invariable formulae. It is this distinction which makes all the difference between a walking man and a mechanical automaton that stiffly waddles. Hence we cannot lay down absolute rules. Nevertheless the broad principles are clear enough, just as are the colors of the rainbow, although these shade off imperceptibly one into the other. No one would be likely (or is it saying too much in this age of cranks?) to kneel down and pray to God, refusing all other help, for a broken leg. He would hardly even pray to God and expect by that means alone to cure a bad cold or a fit of indigestion. A dose of physic would act quicker than God in the case of indigestion; and besides it is likely that, if the deity were a respectable deity, he would bid the patient reform his eating habits or take the consequences. But there are ailments which lie so nicely between the physical and the mental that we cannot tell just where they belong, and then the question of their treatment becomes an art — whether, for instance, a fit of the blues shall be treated by an effort of will, or a dose of salts, or a judicious administration of both.

The ordinary physician would certainly seem to be at a disadvantage in that he knows how ailments depend on mental conditions, yet has little or no means of influencing the patient in the latter respect. Consequently he has to palliate and to try and cure diseases which he knows will soon be reproduced by the patient himself.

Doctors tell us that they are often obliged to give medicine when they know perfectly well that what is needed is advice; but the advice

would not be taken; it would give umbrage; and, as fees are not given for good advice, and the doctor must live, why — .

Doubtless it is this state of affairs that is largely to blame for the opposite extreme — that of attempting to cure without the doctor at all. The course of wisdom would require a physician who should be in a position to advise the patient as to his habits and state of mind, and with a reasonable chance of getting that advice attended to; and thus the phial could be handed out in company with something less palpable but not less serviceable, intended for the "reading, marking, learning, and inwardly digesting" of the patient. Such a state of affairs can exist where there is an organized body of people accepting the Theosophical principles as a guide in life and working together under the administration of a competent leader for the furtherance and realization of those ideals in human life. The physician himself, in common with his patients, will then recognise the same principles, and thus there will be a basis of mutual confidence and understanding; while the constant practice and experience on both sides will daily add to the stores of knowledge at the disposal of physician and patients alike. The physician will probably be aware from the symptoms, as a result of much past experience, what errors the patient is subject to in his mental attitude or habits, and will advise him accordingly, while administering the necessary medical treatment. As an example we may take the many and frequent cases of indigestion, ranging all the way from the more direct stomach troubles to the remoter symptoms that attend non-assimilation and malnutrition in all its stages. Such ailments are peculiarly susceptible to the influence of mental conditions — of anxiety and worry, of anger and discontent, of excitement, etc. The doctor knows by experience the peculiar effects of each of these states of mind; and he not only gives the appropriate medicament and regimen, but a modicum of excellent advice as well.

We have been trying to bring out the difference between sane and reasonable healing of the mind and those fanatical extremes to which people sometimes rush. For there is all the difference between giving good advice and wise counsel to a patient and trying to practise some kind of mental magic upon him or bidding him to practise it on himself. In the former case we appeal to his reason, conscience, and good sense, and induce him to exercise his own will and power of self-control. In the latter case we attempt to do by stealth and force what ought to be done by natural and harmonious means. The curing of the mind, or of diseases through the mind, is not some newly-discovered magical art, but is simply a return to common sense and an adoption of old and well-tried methods. The difference is rather like that between the naturalist who learns about animals by watching their habits and the scientific

experimenter who tries to learn about them by killing them and examining their inside with a microscope. Thus a true physician would be a physician of the mind as well as of the body, a wise counselor, full of experience of human nature, able both to diagnose a mental condition and to prescribe for it. It may be difficult to see how, in the present chaotic condition of society, such an ideal is to be realized; but Theosophy, working from within outwards, sketches out the plans for what is to be in the future and realizes them at first on the small scale.

THE CREST-WAVE OF EVOLUTION

KENNETH MORRIS

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IV — AESCHYLUS AND HIS ATHENS

GREECE holds such an eminence in history because the Crest-Wave rolled in there when it did. She was tenant of an epochal time; whoever was great then, was to be remembered forever. But the truth is, Greece served the future badly enough.

The sixth and fifth centuries B. C. were an age of transition, in which the world took a definite step downward. There had been present among men a great force to keep the life of the nations sweet: that which we call the Mysteries of Antiquity. Whether they had been active continuously since this Fifth Root Race began, who can say? Very possibly not; for in a million years cycles would repeat themselves, and I dare say conditions as desolate as our own have obtained. There may have been withdrawals, and again expansions outward. But certainly they were there at the dawn of history, and for a long time before. What their full effect may have been, we can only guess; for when the history that we know begins, they were already declining: — we get no definite news, except of the Iron Age. The Mysteries were not closed at Eleusis until late in the days of the Roman Empire; and we know that such a great man as Julian did not disdain to be initiated. But they were only a remnant then, an ever-indrawing source of inspiration; already a good century before Pericles they must have ceased to rule life. Pythagoras — born, probably, in the five-eighties — had found it necessary, to obtain

that with which spirituality might be reawakened, to travel and learn what he could in India, Egypt, Chaldaea, and, according to Porphyry and tradition, among the Druids in Gaul — and very likely Britain, their accredited headquarters. From these countries he brought home Theosophy to Greek Italy; and all this suggests that he — and the race — needed something that Eleusis could no longer give. About the same time Buddha and the founder of Jainism in India, Laotse and Confucius in China, and as we have seen, probably also Zoroaster in Persia, all broke away from the Official Mysteries, more or less, to found Theosophical Movements of their own; — which would indicate that, at least from the Tyrrhenian to the Yellow Sea, the Mysteries had, in that sixth century, ceased to be the efficient instrument of the White Lodge. The substance of the Ancient Wisdom might remain in them; the energy was largely gone.

Pisistratus did marvels for Athens; lifting her out of obscurity to a position which should invite great souls to seek birth in her. He died in 527; two years later a son was born to the Eupatrid Euphorion at Eleusis; and I have no doubt there was some such stir over the event, on Olympus or on Parnassus, as happened over a birth at Stratford-on-Avon in 1564, and one in Florence in the May of 1265. In 510, Hippias, grown cruel since the assassination of his brother, was driven out from an Athens already fomenting with the yeast of new things. About that time this young Eleusinian Eupatrid was set to watch grapes ripening for the vintage, and fell asleep. In his dream Dionysos, God of the Mysteries, appeared to him and bade him write tragedies for the Dionysian Festival. On waking, he found himself endowed with genius: beset inwardly with tremendous thoughts, and words to clothe them in; so that the work became as easy to him as if he had been trained to it for years.

He competed first in 499 — against Choerilos and Pratinas, older poets — and was defeated; and soon afterwards sailed for Sicily, where he remained for seven years. The dates of Pythagoras are surmised, not known; Plumptre, with a query, gives 497 for his death. I wonder whether, in the last years of his life, that great Teacher met this young Aeschylus from Athens; whether the years the latter spent in Sicily on this his first visit there, were the due seven years of his Pythagorean probation and initiation? "Veniat Aeschylus," says Cicero, "non poeta solum, sed etiam Pythagoreus: sic enim accepimus"; — and we may accept it too; for that was the Theosophical Movement of the age; and he above all others, Pythagoras having died, was the great Theosophist. They had the Eleusinian Mysteries at Athens, and most of the prominent Athenians must have been initiated into them — since that was the

State Religion; but Aeschylus alone in Athens went through life clothed in the living power of Theosophy.

Go to the life of such a man, if you want big clues as to the inner history of his age; — the life of Aeschylus, I think, can interpret for us that of Athens. There are times when the movement of the cycles is accelerated, and you can see the great Wheel turning; this was one. Aeschylus had proudly distinguished himself at Marathon; and Athens, as the highest honor she could do him for that, must have his portrait appear in the battle-picture painted for a memorial of the victory. He fought, too, at Artemisium and Salamis; with equal distinction. In 484 he won the first of thirteen annual successes in the dramatic competitions. These were the years during which Athens was really playing the hero: the years of Aristides' ascendancy. In 480 Xerxes burned the city; but the people fought on, great in faith. In 479 came Plataea, Aeschylus again fighting. Throughout this time, he, the Esotericist and Messenger of the Gods, was wholly at one with his Athens — an Athens alive enough then to the higher things to recognise the voice of the highest when it spoke to her – to award Aeschylus, year after year, the chief dramatic prize. — Then in 478 or 477 she found herself in a new position: her heroism and intelligence had won their reward, and she was set at the head of Greece. Six years later Aeschylus produced *The Persians*, the first of the seven extant out of the seventy or eighty plays he wrote; in it he is still absolutely the patriotic Athenian. In 471 came the *Seven against Thebes;* from which drama, I think, we get a main current of light on the whole future history of Athens.

Two men, representing two forces, had guided the city during those decades. On the one hand there was Aristides, called the Just — inflexible, incorruptible, impersonal and generous; on the other, Themistocles — precocious and wild as a boy; profligate as a youth and young man; ambitious, unscrupulous and cruel; a genius; a patriot; without moral sense. The policy of Aristides, despite his so-called democratic reforms, was conservative; he persuaded Greece, by sound arguments, to the side of Athens: he was for Athens doing her duty by Greece, and remaining content. That of Themistocles was that she should aim at empire by any means: should make herself a sea-power with a view to dominating the Greek world. Oh, to begin with, doubtless with a view to holding back the Persians; and so far his policy was sane enough; but his was not the kind of mind in which an ambitious idea fails to develop in ambitious and greedy directions; and that of mastery of the seas was an idea that could not help developing fatally. He had been banished for his corruption in 471; but he had set Athens on blue water, and bequeathed to her his policy. Henceforward she was to make for supremacy,

never counting the moral cost. She attacked the islands at her pleasure, conquered them, and often treated the conquered with vile cruelty. The *Seven against Thebes* was directed by Aeschylus against the Themistoclean, and in support of the Aristidean, policy. Imperialistic ambitions, fast ripening in that third decade of the fifth century, were opposed by the Messenger of the Gods.

His valor in four battles had set him among the national heroes; he had been, in *The Persians*, the laureate of Salamis; by the sheer grandeur of his poetry he had won the prize thirteen times in succession. — And by the bye, it is to the eternal credit of Athenian intelligence that Athens, at one hearing of those obscure, lofty and tremendous poems, should have appreciated them, and with enthusiasm. Try to imagine *Samson Agonistes* put on the stage today; with no academical enthusiasts or éclat of classicism to back it; but just put on before thirty thousand sight-seers, learned and vulgar, statesman and cobbler, tinker and poet: the mob all there; the groundlings far out-numbering the élite: — and all not merely sitting out the play, but roused to a frenzy of enthusiasm; and Milton himself, present and acting, the hero of the day. That, despite Mr. Whistler and the *Ten O'Clock* — seems really to have been the kind of thing that happened in Athens. Tomides was there, with his companions — little Tomides, the mender of bad soles — and intoxicated by the grand poetry; understanding it, and never finding it tedious; — poetry they had had no opportunity to study in advance, they understood and appreciated wildly at first hearing. One cannot imagine it among moderns. — And Milton is clear as daylight beside remote and difficult Aeschylus. To catch the latter's thought, *we* need the quiet of the study, close attention, reading and re-reading; and though of course time has made him more difficult; and we should have understood him better, with no more than our present limited intelligence, had we been his countrymen and contemporaries; yet it remains a standing marvel, and witness to the far higher general intelligence of the men of Athens. The human spirit was immensely nearer this plane; they were far more civilized, in respect to mental culture, than we are. Why? — The cycles have traveled downward; our triumphs are on a more brutal plane; we are much farther from the light of the Mysteries than they were.

And yet they were going wrong: the great cycle had begun its downtrend; they were already preparing the way for our fool-headed materialism. In the *Seven against Thebes* Aeschylus protested against the current of the age. Three years later, Athens, impatient of criticism, turned on him.

— He is acting in one of his own plays — one that has been lost. He gives utterance, down there in the arena, to certain words — tre-

mendous words, as always, we must suppose: words hurled out of the heights of an angry eternity —

"Aeschylus' bronze-throat eagle-bark for blood,"

— and Athens, that used to thrill and go mad to such tones when they proclaimed the godlike in her own soul and encouraged her to grand aspirations — goes mad now in another sense. She has grown used to hear warning in them, and something in alliance with her own stifled conscience protesting against her wrong courses; and such habituation rarely means acquiescence or soothed complacency. Now she is smitten and stung to the quick. A yell from the mob; uproar; from the tiers above tiers they butt, lurch, lunge, pour forward and down: the tinkers and cobblers, demagogs and demagogued: intent — yes — to kill. But he, having yet something to say, takes refuge at the altar; and there even a maddened mob dare not molest him. But the prize goes to a rising star, young Sophocles; and presently the Gods' Messenger is formally accused and tried for "Profanation of the Mysteries."

— Revealing secrets pertaining to them, in fact. And now note this: his defense is that he did not know that his lines revealed any secret — was unaware that what he had said pertained to the Mysteries. Could he have urged such a plea, had it not been known he was uninitiated? Could he have known the teachings, had he not been instructed in a school where they were known? He, then, was an initiate of the Pythagoreans, the new Theosophical Movement upon the new method; not of orthodox Eleusis, that had grown old and comatose rather, and had ceased to count. — Well, the judges were something saner than the mob; memory turned again to what he had done at Marathon, what at Artemisium and Plataea; to his thirteen solid years of victory (national heroism on poetico-dramatic fields); and to that song of his that "saved at Salamis":

"O Sons of Greeks, go set your country free!"

— and he was acquitted: Athens had not yet fallen so low as to prepare a hemlock cup for her teacher. But meanwhile he would do much better among his old comrades in Sicily than at home; and thither he went.

He returned in 458, to find the Age of Pericles in full swing; with all made anew, or in the making; and the time definitely set on its downward course. 'Reform' was busy at abolishing institutions once held sacred; imperialism was the rage; — that funeral speech of Pericles, with its tactless vaunting of Athenian superiority to all other possible men and nations, should tell us something. When folk get to feel like that, God pity and forgive them! — it is hard enough for mere men to. Aeschylus smote at imperialism in the *Agamemnon* — the first play of this last of

his trilogies; and at the mania for reforming away sacred institutions in the *Eumenides* — where he asserts the divine origin of the threatened Areopagus. Popular feeling rose once more against him, and he returned to Sicily to die.

Like so many another of his royal line, apparently a failure. And indeed, a failure he was, so far as his Athens was concerned. True, Athenian artistic judgment triumphed presently over Athenian spite. Though it was the rule that no successful play should be performed more than once, they decreed that 'revivals' of Aeschylus should always be in order. And Aristophanes testifies to his lasting popularity — when he shows little Tomides with a bad grouch over seeing a play by Theognis, when he had gone to the theater "expecting Aeschylus"; — and when he shows Aeschylus and Euripides contending for a prize in Hades; and Euripides winning, because his poetry had died with him, and so he had it there for a weapon — whereas Aeschylus's was still alive and on earth. Yes; Athens took him again, and permanently, into favor: took the poet, but not the Messenger and his message. For she had gone on the wrong road in spite of him: she had let the divine force, the influx of the human spirit which had come to her as her priceless cyclic opportunity, flow down from the high planes proper to it, on to the plane of imperialism and vulgar ambition; and his word had been spoken to the Greeks in vain — as all Greek history and Karma since has been proclaiming. But in sooth he was not merely for an age, but for all time; and his message, unlike Pindar's whom all Greece worshiped, and far more than Homer's or that of Sophocles — is vital today. Aeschylus, and Plato, and Socrates who speaks through Plato, and Pythagoras who speaks through all of them, are the Greeks whose voices are lifted forever for the Soul.

Even the political aspect of his message — the only one I have touched on — is vital. It proclaims a truth that underlies all history: one, I suspect, that remains for our Theosophical Movement to impress on the general world-consciousness so that wars may end: namely, that the impulse of Nationalism is a holy thing, foundationed upon the human spirit: a means designed by the Law for humanity's salvation. But like all spiritual forces, it must be kept pure and spiritual, or instead of saving, it will damn. In its inception, it is vision of the Soul: of the Racial or National Soul — which is a divine light to lure us away from the plane of personality, to obliterate our distressing and private moods; to evoke the divine actor in us, and merge us in a consciousness vastly greater than our own. But add to that saving truth this damning corollary: *I am better than thou; my race than thine; we have harvests to reap at your expense, and our rights may be your wrongs:* — and you have, though

it appear not for awhile, fouled that stream from godhood: — you have debased your nationalism and made it hellish. Upon your ambitions and your strength, now in the time of your national flowering, you may win to your desire, if you *will;* because now the spirit is quickening the whole fiber of your national self; and the national will must become, under that pressure, almost irresistibly victorious. The peoples of the earth shall kneel before your throne; you shall get your vulgar empire;— but you shall get it presently, as they say, "where the chicken got the axe": — *Vengeance is mine, saith the Law; I will repay.* The cycle, on the plane to which you have dragged it down, will run its course; your high throne will go down with it, and yourself shall kneel to races you now sniff at for 'inferior.' You have brought it on to the material plane, and are now going upward on its upward trend there gaily —

> "Ah, let no evil lust attack the host
> Conquered by greed, to plunder what they ought not;
> For yet they need return in safety home,
> Doubling the goal to run their backward race"—*

the downtrend of the cycle awaits you — the other half — just as the runner in the foot-races, to win, must round the pillar at the far end of the course, and return to the starting-place. — That is among the warnings Aeschylus spoke in the *Agamemnon* to an Athens that was barefacedly conquering and enslaving the Isles of Greece to no end but her own wealth and power and glory. The obvious reference is of course to the conquerors of Troy.

I have spoken of this Oresteian Trilogy as his *Hamlet;* with the *Prometheus Bound* — another tremendous Soul-Symbol — it is what puts him in equal rank with the four supreme Masters of later Western Literature. I suppose it is pretty certain that Shakespeare knew nothing of him, and had never heard of the plot of his *Agamemnon.* But look here:—

There was one Hamlet King of Denmark, absent from control of his kingdom because sleeping within his orchard (his custom always of an afternoon). And there was one Agamemnon King of Men, absent from control of his kingdom because leading those same Men at the siege of Troy. Hamlet had a wife Gertrude; Agamemnon had a wife Clytemnestra. Hamlet had a brother Claudius, who became the lover of Gertrude. Agamemnon had a cousin Aegisthos, who became the paramour of Clytemnestra. Claudius murdered Hamlet, and thereby came by his throne and queen. Clytemnestra and Aegisthos murdered Agamemnon, and Aegisthos thereby became possessed of his throne and queen. Hamlet and Gertrude had a son Hamlet, who avenged his father's

**Agamemnon,* (Plumptre's translation)

murder. Agamemnon and Clytemnestra had a son Orestes, who avenged his father's murder.

There, however, the parallel ends. Shakespeare had to paint the human soul at a certain stage of its evolution: the 'moment of choice,' the entering on the path: and brought all his genius to bear on revealing that. He had, here, to teach Karma only incidentally; in *Macbeth*, when the voice cried 'Sleep no more!' he is more Aeschylean in spirit. That dreadful voice rings through Aeschylus; who was altogether obsessed with the majesty and awfulness of Karma. It is what he cried to Athens then, and to all ages since, reiterating *Karma* with terrible sleep-forbidding insistency from dark heights. I have quoted the wonderful line in which Browning, using similes borrowed from Aeschylus himself, sums up the effect of his style:

'Aeschylus' bronze-throat eagle-bark for blood,'

which compensates for the more than Greek unintelligibility of Browning's version of the *Agamemnon:* it gives you some color, some adumbration of the being and import of the man. How shall we compare him with those others, his great compeers on the Mountain of Song? Shakespeare — as I think — throned upon a peak where are storms often, but where the sun shines mostly; surveying all this life, and with an eye to the eternal behind: Dante — a prophet, stern, proud, glad and sorrowful; ever in a great pride of pain or agony of bliss; surveying the life without, only to correlate it with and interpret it by the vaster life within that he knew better; — this Universe for him but the crust and excoriata of the Universe of the Soul. Milton — a Titan Soul hurled down from heaven, struggling with all chaos and the deep to enunciate — just to proclaim and put on everlasting record — those two profound significant words, *Titan* and *Soul*, for a memorial to Man of the real nature of Man. Aeschylus — the barking of an eagle — of Zeus the Thunderer's own eagle — out of ominous skies above the mountains: a thing unseen as Karma, mysterious and mighty as Fate, as Disaster, as the final Triumph of the Soul; sublime as death; a throat of bronze, superhumanly impersonal; a far metallic clangor of sound, hoarse or harsh, perhaps, if your delicate ears must call him so; but grand; immeasurably grand; majestically, ominously and terribly grand; — ancestral voices prophesying war, and doom, and all dark tremendous destinies; — and yet he too with serenity and the prophecy of peace and bliss for his last word to us: he will not leave his avenging Erinyes until by Pallas' wand and will they are transformed into Eumenides, bringers of good fortune.

Something like that, perhaps, is the impression Aeschylus leaves on the minds of those who know him. They bear testimony to the fact

that, however grand his style — like a Milton Carlylized in poetry — his thought still seems to overtop it and to be struggling for expression through a vehicle less than itself. Says Lytton, not unwisely perhaps: "His genius is so near the verge of bombast, that to approach his sublime is to rush into the ridiculous"; and he goes on to say that you might find the nearest echo of his diction in Shelley's *Prometheus;* but of his diction alone; for "his power is in concentration — that of Shelley in diffuseness." "The intellectuality of Shelley," he says, "destroyed; that of Aeschylus only increased his command over the passions. . . . The interest he excites is startling, terrible, intense." Browning tried to bring over the style; but left the thought, in an English *Double-Dutched*, far remoter than he found it from our understanding. The thought demands in English a vehicle crystal-clear; but Aeschylus in the Greek is not crystal-clear: so close-packed and vast are the ideas that there are lines on lines of which the best scholars can only conjecture the meaning. — In all this criticism, let me say, one is but saying what has been said before: echoing Professor Mahaffy; echoing Professor Gilbert Murray: but there is a need to give you the best picture possible of this man speaking from the eternal. — Unless Milton and Carlyle had co-operated to make it, I think, any translation of the *Agamemnon* — which so many have tried to translate — would be fatiguing and a great bore to read. It may not be amiss to quote three lines from George Peel's *David and Bethsabe*, which have been often called Aeschylean in audacity:—

> "At him the thunder shall discharge his bolt,
> And his fair spouse, with bright and fiery wings,
> Sit ever burning on his hateful wings;"

— his — the thunder's — fair spouse is the lightning. Imagine images as swift, vivid and daring as that, hurled and flashed out in language terse, sudden, lofty — and you may get an idea of what this eagle's bark was like. And the word that came rasping and resounding on it out of storm-skies high over Olympus, for Athens then and the world since to hear, was KARMA.

He took that theme, and drove it home, and drove it home, and drove it home. Athens disregarded the rights and sufferings of others: was in fact abominably cruel. Well; she should hear about Karma; and in such a way that she should — no, but she *should* — give ear. Karma punished wrong-doing. It was wrong-doing that Karma punished. You could not do wrong with impunity. — The common thought was that any extreme of good fortune was apt to rouse the jealousy of the Gods, and so bring on disaster. This was what Pindar taught — all-worshiped prosperous Pindar, Aeschylus' contemporary, the darling poet of the Greeks. The idea is illustrated by Herodotus' story of the Ring

of Polycrates. You remember how the latter, being tyrant of Samos, applied to Amasis of Egypt for an alliance. But wary Amasis, noting his invariable good luck, advised him to sacrifice something, lest the Gods should grow jealous: so Polycrates threw a ring into the sea, with the thought thus to appease Nemesis cheaply; but an obliging fish allowed itself to be caught and served up for his supper with the ring in its internal economy; on hearing of which, wary Amasis foresaw trouble, and declined the alliance with thanks. Such views or feelings had come to be Greek orthodoxy; you may take it that whatever Pindar said was not far from the orthodoxies — hence his extreme popularity: we dearly love a man who tells us grandly what we think ourselves, and think it right to think. But such a position would not do for Aeschylus. He noted this doctrine only to condemn it.

> "There lives an old saw framed in ancient days
> In memories of men, that high estate,
> Full grown, brings forth its young, nor childless dies,
> But that from good success
> Springs to the race a woe insatiable.
> But I, apart from all,
> Hold this my creed alone:
> Ill deeds alone bring forth offspring of ill
> Like to their parent stock."

Needless to say the translation — Dean Plumptre's in the main — fails to bring out the force of the original.

We must remember that for his audiences the story he had to tell was not the important thing. They knew it in advance: it was one of their familiar legends. What they went to hear was Aeschylus' treatment of it: his art, his poetry, his preaching. That was what was new to them: the thing for which their eyes and ears were open. We go to the theater, as we read novels, for amusement; the Athenians went for aesthetic and religious ends. So Aeschylus had ready for him an efficient pulpit; and was not suspect for using it. We like Movie Shows because they are entertaining and exciting; the Athenian would have damned them because they are inartistic.

I said, he had a pulpit ready for him; yet, as nearly as such a statement can come to truth, it was he himself who invented the drama. It was, remember, an age of transition: things were passing out from the inner planes; the Mysteries were losing their virtue. The Egyptian Mysteries had been dramatic in character; the Eleusinian, which were very likely borrowed or copied or introduced from Egypt, were no doubt dramatic too. Then there had been festivals among the rustics, chiefly in honor of Dionysos not altogether in his higher aspects, with rudimentary plays of a coarse buffoonish character. By 499, in Athens, these had

grown to something more important; in that year the wooden scaffolding of the theater in which they were given broke down under the spectators; and this led to the building of a new theater in stone. It was in 499 Aeschylus first competed; the show was still very rudimentary in character. Then he went off to Sicily; and came back with the idea conceived of Greek Tragedy as an artistic vehicle or expression — and something more. He taught the men who had at first defeated him, how to do their later and better work; and opened the way for all who came after, from Sophocles to Racine. He took to sailing this new ship of the drama as near as he might to the shore-line of the Mysteries themselves; — indeed, he did much more than this; for he infused into his plays that wine of divine life then to be found in its purity and vigor only or chiefly in the Pythagorean Brotherhood. — And now as to this new art-form of his.

De Quincey, accepting the common idea that the Dionysian Theater was built to seat between thirty and forty thousand spectators (every free Athenian citizen), argues that the formative elements that made Greek Tragedy what it was were derived from these huge dimensions. In such a vast building (he asks) how could you produce such a play as *Hamlet?* — where the art of the actor shows itself in momentary changes of expression, small byplay that would be lost, and the like. The figures would be dwarfed by the distances; stage whispers and the common inflexions of the speaking voice would be lost. So none of these things belonged to Greek Tragedy. The mere physical scale necessitated a different theory of art. The stature of the actors had to be increased, or they would have looked like pygmies; their figures had to be draped and muffled, to hide the unnatural proportions thus given them. A mask had to be worn, if only to make the head proportionate to the body; and the mask had to contain an arrangement for multiplying the voice, that it might carry to the whole audience. That implied that the lines should be chanted, not spoken; — though in any case, chanted they would be, for they were verse, not prose; and the Greeks had not forgotten, as we have, that verse is meant to be chanted. So here, to begin with, the whole scheme implied something as unlike actual life as it well could be. And then, too, there was the solemnity of the occasion — the religious nature of the whole festival.

Thus, in substance De Quincey; who makes too little, perhaps, of the matter of that last sentence; and too much of what goes before. We may say that it was rather the grand impersonal theory of the art that created the outward condition; not the conditions that created the theory. Mahaffy went to Athens and measured the theater; and found it not so big by any means. They could have worked out our theories

and practice in it, had they wanted to, so far as that goes. Coarse buffoonish country festivals do not of themselves evolve into grand art or solemn religious occasions; you must seek a cause for that evolution, and find it in an impulse arisen in some human mind. Or minds indeed; for such impulses are very mysterious. The Gods sow their seed in season; we do not see the sowing, but presently mark the greening of the brown earth. The method of the Mysteries — drama serious and religious — had been drifting outwards: things had been growing to a point where a great creative Soul could take hold of them and mold them to his wish. If Aeschylus was not an Initiate of Eleusis, he had learnt, with the Pythagoreans, the method of the Mysteries of all lands. He knew more, not less, than the common pillars of the Athenian Church and State. I imagine it was he, in those thirteen consecutive years of his victories, who in part created, in part drew from his Pythagorean knowledge, those conventions and circumstances for Tragedy which suited him — rather than that conventions already existing imposed formative limits on him. His genius was aloof, impersonal, severe, and of the substance of the Eternal; such as would need precisely those conventions, and must have created them had they not been there. Briefly, I believe that this is what happened. Sent by Pythagoras to do what he could for Athens and Greece, he forged this mighty bolt of tragedy to be his weapon.

The theory of modern drama is imitation of life. It has nothing else and higher to offer; so, when it fails to imitate, we call it trash. But the theory of Aeschylean Tragedy is the illumination of life. Illumination of life, through a medium quite unlike life. Art begins on a spiritual plane, and works down to realism in its decadence; then it ceases to be art at all, and becomes merely copying what we imagine to be nature, — nature, often, as seen through a diseased liver and well-atrophied pineal gland.

True art imitates nature only in a very selective and limited way. It chooses carefully what it shall imitate, and all to the end of illumination. It paints a flower, or a sunset, not to reproduce the thing seen with the eyes, but to declare and set forth that mood of the Oversoul which the flower or the sunset expressed. Flower-colors or sunset-colors cannot be reproduced in pigments; but you can do things with pigments and a brush that can tell the same story. Or it can be done in words, in a poem; or with the notes of music; — in both of which cases the medium used is still more, and totally, unlike the medium through which the Oversoul said its say in the sky or the blossom.

Nature is always expressing these moods of the Oversoul; but we get no news of them, as a rule, from our own sight and hearing: we must wait for the poets and artists to interpret them. Life is always at work to teach us life; but we miss the grand lessons, usually, until some human

Teacher enforces them. His methods are the same as those of the artist: between whose office and his there was at first no difference; *Bard* means only, originally, an Adept Teacher. Such a one selects experiences out of life for his pupils, and illumines them through the circumstances under which they are applied; just as the true artist selects objects from nature, and by his manner of treating them, interprets the greatness that lies beyond.

So the drama-theory of Aeschylus. He took fragments of possible experience, and let them be seen through a heightened and interpretative medium; with a light at once intense and somber-portentous thrown on them; — and this not to reproduce the externalia and appearances of life, but to illumine its inner recesses; — to enforce, in plays lasting an hour or so, the lessons life may take many incarnations to teach. This cannot be done by realism, imitation or reproduction of the actual; than which life itself is always better.

What keeps us from seeing the meanings of life? Personality. Not only our own, but in all those about us. Personality dodges and flickers always between our eyes and the solemn motions, the adumbrations of the augustness beyond. We demand lots of personality in our drama; we call it character-drawing. We want to see fellows like ourselves lounging or bustling about, and hear them chattering as we do; — fellows with motives (like our own) all springing from the personality. Human life is what interests us: we desire to drink deep of it, and drink again and again. The music that we wish to hear is the "still, sad music of humanity"; — that is, taking our theory at its best, and before you come down to sheer 'jazz' and ragtime. But what interested Aeschylus was that which lies beyond and within life. He said: 'You can get life in the Agora, on the Acropolis, any day of the week; when you come to the theater you shall have something else, and greater.'

So he set his scenes, either in a vast, remote, and mysterious antiquity, or — in *The Persians* — at Susa before the palace of the Great King: a setting as remote, splendid, vast, and mysterious, to the Greek mind of the day, as the other. Things should not be as like life, but as unlike life, as possible. The plays themselves, as acted, were a combination of poetry, dance, statuesque poses and motions and groupings; there was no action. All the action was done off the scenes. They did not portray the evolution of character; they hardly portrayed character — in the personal sense — at all. The *dramatis personae* are types, symbols, the expression of natural forces, or principles in man. In our drama you have a line, an extension forward in time: a progression from this to that point in time; — in Greek Tragedy you have a cross-section of time — a cutting through the atom of time that glimpses may be caught of eternity.

There was no unfoldment of a story; but the presentation of a single mood. In the chanted poetry and the solemn dance-movements a situation was set forth; what led up to it being explained retrospectively. The audience knew what was coming as well as the author did: that Agamemnon, for instance, was to be murdered. So all was written to play on their expectations, not on their surprise. There was a succession of perfect pictures; these and the poetry were to hold the interest, to work it up: to seize upon the people, and lead them by ever-heightening accessions of feeling into forgetfulness of their personal lives, and absorption in the impersonal harmony, the spiritual receptivity, from which the grand truths are visible. The actors' masks allowed only the facial expression of a single mood; and it was a single mood the dramatist aimed to produce: a unity; one great word. There could be no grave-diggers; no quizzing of Polonius; no clouds very like a whale. The whole drama is the unfoldment of a single moment: that, say, in which Hamlet turns on Claudius and kills him — rather, leads him out to kill him. To that you are led by a little sparse dialog, ominous enough, and pregnant with dire significance, between two or three actors; many long speeches in which the story is told in retrospect; much chanting by the chorus — Horatio multiplied by a dozen or so — to make you feel Hamlet's long indecision, and to allow you no escape from the knowledge that Claudius' crime would bring about its karmic punishment. It is a unity: one thunderbolt from Zeus; — first the growl and rumbling of the thunders; then the whirr of the dread missile,— and lo, the man dead that was to die. And through the bolt so hurled, so effective, and with it — the eagle-bark — Aeschylus crying *Karma!* to the Athenians.

So it has been said that Aeschylean Tragedy is more nearly allied to sculpture; Shakespearean Tragedy to the Epic.

Think how that unchanging mask, that frozen moment of expression, would develop the quality of tragic irony. In it Clytemnestra comes out to greet the returning Agamemnon. She has her handmaids carpet the road for him with purple tapestries; she makes her speeches of welcome; she alludes to the old sacrifice of Iphigenia; she tells him how she has waited for his return; — and all the while the audience knows she is about to kill him. They listen to her doubtful words, in which she reveals to them, who know both already, her faithlessness and dire purpose; but to her husband, seems to reveal something different altogether. With Agamemnon comes Cassandra from fallen Troy: whose fate was to foresee all woes and horror, and to forthtell what she saw — and never to be believed; so now when she raises her dreadful cry, foreseeing what is about to happen, and uttering warning — none believe her but the audience, who know it all in advance. And then there are

the chantings of the chorus, a group of Argive elders. They know or guess how things stand between the queen and her lover; they express their misgivings, gathering as the play goes on; they recount the deeds of violence of which the House of Atreus has been the scene, and are haunted by the foreshadowings of Karma. But they may not understand or give credence to the warnings of Cassandra: Karma disallows forefending against the fall of its bolts. Troy has fallen, they say: and that was Karma; because Paris, and Troy in supporting him, had sinned against Zeus the patron of hospitality,— to whom the offense rose like vultures with rifled nest, wheeling in mid-heaven on strong oars of wings, screaming for retribution. — You may note that Aeschylus' freedom from the bonds of outer religion is like Shakespeare's own: here Zeus figures as symbol of the Lords of Karma; from him flow the severe readjustments of the Law; — but in the *Prometheus Bound* he stands for the lower nature that crucifies the Higher.

Troy, then, had sinned, and has fallen; but (says the Chorus) let the conquerors look to it that they do not overstep the mark; let there be no dishonoring the native Gods of Troy; (the Athenians had been very considerably overstepping the mark in some of their own conquests recently;) — let there be no plundering or useless cruelty; (the Athenians had been hideously greedy and cruel;) — or Karma would overtake its own agents, the Greeks, who were not yet out of the wood, as we say — who had not yet returned home. This was when the beacons had announced the fall of Troy, and before the entry of Agamemnon.

Clytemnestra is not like Gertrude, but a much grander and more tragical figure. Shakespeare leaves you in no doubt as to his queen's relation to Claudius; he enlarges on their guilty passion *ad lib.* Aeschylus never mentions love at all in any of his extant plays; only barely hints at it here. It may be supposed to exist; it is an accessory motive; it lends irony to Clytemnestra's welcome to Agamemnon — in which only the audience and the Chorus are aware that the lady does protest too much. But she stands forth in her own eyes as an agent of Karma-Nemesis; there is something very terrible and unhuman about her. Early in the play she reminds the Chorus how Agamemnon, in setting out for Troy, sacrificed his and her daughter Iphigenia to get a fair wind: a deed of blood whose consequences must be feared — something to add to the Chorus's misgivings, as they chant their doubtful hope that the king may safely return. In reality Artemis had saved Iphigenia; and though Clytemnestra did not know this, in assuming the position of her daughter's avenger she put herself under the karmic ban. And Agamemnon did not know it: he had intended the sacrifice: and was therefor, and for his supposed ruthlessness at Troy, under the same ban himself.

Hence the fate that awaited him on his return; and hence — because of Clytemnestra's useless crime — when she and Aegisthos come out from murdering him, and announce what they have done, the Chorus's dark foretellings — to come true presently — of the Karma that is to follow upon it.

And here we must guard ourselves against the error — as I think it is — that Aeschylus set himself to create the perfect and final art-form as such. I think he was just intent on announcing Karma to the Athenians in the most effective way possible: bent all his energies to making that issue clear and unescapable; — and that the natural result of that high purpose was this marvelous art-form,— which Sophocles took up later, and in some external ways perhaps perfected. Then came Aristotle after a hundred years, and defining the results achieved, tried to make Shakespeare impossible. The truth is that when you put yourself to do the Soul's work, and have the great forces of the Soul to back you therein, you create an art-form; and it only remains for the Aristotelian critic to define it. Then back comes the Soul after a thousand years, makes a new one, and laughs at the Aristotles. The grand business is done by following the Soul — not by conforming to rules or imitating models. But it must be the Soul; rules and models are much better than personal whims; they are a discipline good to be followed as long as one can. — You will note how Aeschylus stood above the possibilities of actualism with which we so much concern ourselves: in the course of some sixteen hundred lines, and without interval or change of act or scene, he introduces the watchman on the house-top who first sees the beacons that announce the fall of Troy, on the very night that Troy fell,— and the return of Agamemnon in his chariot to Argos.

In the *Choephori* or *Libation-Pourers*, the second play of the trilogy, Orestes returns from his Wittenberg, sent by Apollo to avenge his father. The scene again is in front of the house of Atreus. Having killed Aegisthos within, Orestes comes out to the Chorus; then Clytemnestra enters; he tells her what he has done, and what he intends to do; and despite her pleadings, leads her in to die beside her paramour. He comes out again, bearing (for his justification) the blood-stained robe of Agamemnon; but he comes out distraught and with the guilt of matricide weighing on his soul. The Chorus bids him be of good cheer, reminding him upon what high suggestion he has acted; but in the background he, and he alone, sees the Furies swarming to haunt him, "like Gorgons, dark-robed, and all their tresses hang entwined with many serpents; and from their eyes is dropping loathsome blood." He must wander the world seeking purification. — In the *Eumenides* we find him in the temple of Loxias (the Apollo) at Delphi, there seeking refuge with the god who had

prompted him to the deed. But even there the Furies haunt him — though for weariness — or really because it *is* the shrine of Loxias — they have fallen asleep. From them even Loxias may not free him; only perhaps Pallas at Athens may do that; Loxias announces this to him, and bids him go to Athens, and assures him meanwhile of his protection. — To Athens then the scene changes, where Orestes' case is tried: Apollo defends him; Pallas is the judge; the Furies the accusers; the Court of the Areopagus the jury. The votes of these are equally divided; but Athene gives her casting vote in his favor; and to compensate the Erinyes, turns them into Eumenides — from Furies to goddesses of good omen and fortune. Orestes is free, and the end is happy.

No doubt very pretty and feeble of the bronze-throated Eagle-barker to make it so. What! clap on an exit to these piled-up miseries? — he should have plunged us deeper in woe, and left us to stew in our juices; he should have shunned this detestable effeminacy, worthy only of the Dantes and Shakespeares. But unfortunately he was an Esotericist, with the business of helping, not plaguing, mankind: he must follow the grand symbolism of the story of the Soul, recording and emphasizing and showing the way to its victories, not its defeats. He had the eye to see deep into realities, and was not to be led from the path of truth eternal by the cheap effective expedients of realism. He must tell the whole truth: building up, not merely destroying; and truth, at the end, is not bitter, but bright and glorious. It is the triumph and purification of the soul; and to that happy consummation all sorrow and darkness and the dread Furies themselves, whom he paints with all the dark flame-pigments of sheerest terror, are but incidental and a means.

And the meaning of it all? Well, the meaning is as vast as the scheme of evolution itself, I suppose. It is *Hamlet* over again, and treated differently; that which wrote *Hamlet* through Shakespeare, wrote this Trilogy through Aeschylus. I imagine you are to find in the *Agamemnon* the symbol of the Spirit's fall into matter — of the incarnation (and obscuration) of the Lords of Mind — driven thereto by ancient Karma, and the results of the life of past universes. Shakespeare deals with this retrospectively, in the Ghost's words to Hamlet on the terrace. The 'death' of the Spirit is its fall into matter.

And just as the Ghost urges Hamlet to revenge, so Apollo urges Orestes; it is the influx, stir, or impingement of the Supreme Self, that rouses a man, at a certain stage in his evolution, to lift himself above his common manhood. This is the most interesting and momentous event in the long career of the soul: it takes the place, in that drama of incarnations, that the marriage does in the modern novel. Shakespeare, whose mental tendencies were the precise opposite of Aeschylus's — they ran

to infinite multiplicity and complexity, where the other's ran to stern unity and simplicity (of plot) — made two characters of Polonius and Gertrude: Polonius,— the objective lower world, with its shallow wisdom and conventions; Gertrude,— Nature, the lower world in its subjective or inner relation to the soul incarnate in it. Aeschylus made no separate symbol for the former. Shakespeare makes the killing of Polonius a turning-point: thenceforth Hamlet must, will he nill he, in some dawdling sort sweep to his revenge. Aeschylus makes that same turning-point in the killing of Clytemnestra, whereafter the Furies are let loose on Orestes. If you think well what it means, it is that "leap," spoken of in *Light on the Path*, by which a man raises himself "on to the path of individual accomplishment instead of mere obedience to the genii which rule our earth." He can no longer walk secure like a sheep in the flock; he has come out, and is separate; he has chosen a captain within, and must follow the Soul, and not outer convention. That step taken, and the face set towards the Spirit-Sun — the life of the world forgone, that a way may be fought into the Life of the Soul: — all his past lives and their errors rise against him; his passions are roused to fight for their lives, and easy living is no longer possible. He must fly then for refuge to Loxias the Sun-God, the Supreme Self, who can protect him from these Erinyes — but it is Pallas, Goddess of the Inner Wisdom, of the true method of life, that can alone set him free. And it is thus that Apollo pleads before her for Orestes who killed his mother (Nature) to avenge his Father (Spirit): — a man, says he, is in reality the child of his father, not of his mother: — this lower world in which we are incarnate is not in truth our parent or originator at all, but only the seed-plot in which we, sons of the Eternal, are sown, the nursery in which we grow to the point of birth; — but we ourselves are in our essence flame of the Flame of God. So Pallas — and you must think of all she implied — Theosophy, right living, right thought and action, true wisdom — judges Orestes guiltless, sets him free, and transforms his passions into his powers.

ALLEGORY AND HISTORY — "Allegory and a mythical ornamentation around the kernel of tradition, in no wise prevent that kernel being a record of real events." — H. P. BLAVATSKY: *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 235

AWAKENING

R. MACHELL

FOREWORD

MORNING and spring-time ripening into summer, the fragrance of the flowers and the flicker of green leaves, the warm soft sunshine and the shade of trees, bees and innumerable birds, and rustling branches, and the low whisper of the wind. The wanton exuberance of nature in the first flush of summer, and an inward surging of the stream of life.

Now Life makes holiday with youth, decked out with hope and faith in the eternity of joy, and in the inexhaustible resources of the heart's treasury.

Ephemeral eternity of youth, that for a moment hides the face of death, and veils the mystery of rejuvenation.

Life's masque of love goes on eternally, old as man's ignorance, which fell upon the ancestral Gods, when they came down to recreate the creatures of the earth and raise them to divinity. The tragedy of human life, and its mad carnival, and all its subtle comedies, that go to make the drama of our evolution here on earth, all these endure unendingly, ancient as Time himself, whose evanescent children mock him, flaunting the iridescence of their youth before him as he sits dreaming of Infinity.

Now summer and the scent of roses quicken the joy of Life and sharpen its inexplicable pain — pleasure and pain, inseparable as light and shade, that for a moment can beguile the Soul even from its contemplation of divinity, and draw it down to earth to share the transient rapture of the heart's revelry.

CHAPTER I

ONE thought of flowers and sunshine when one saw her pass; she brought a breath of summer with her, and her smile was welcome as the light that filters through the rain-clouds on a stormy day: for there are storms, you know, in summer, thunder-storms with lightning and sudden deluges of rain, and life was not all a summer holiday with Beatrice Cranley.

Her father said she was a paradox; her mother sighed, and thought she must have got her temper from her father's family; the Cranleys were all hot-headed; one might almost call them violent, she thought,

but never said as much. She was not given to speculation on problems of psychology, but took things as they came, wondering a little at the sudden changes in the moral atmosphere of Comberfield, which seemed to be imbued with all the moods and elements of storm and sunshine that made up the Cranley character. Why people should be so uncertain in their temper, she could not understand, but since it was so, she accepted it, as she accepted other strange and unaccountable peculiarities of destiny, such as the ruin of their fortune, that put a stop to all that flow of hospitality which she had looked on as the natural order of her life at Comberfield, ordained by Fate, that popular lay deity, which serves as a substitute for God with people who, like Mrs. Cranley, feel that God is really too remote to be concerned with the arrangement of domestic matters; while Fate, being more impersonal, cannot resent the imputation of arbitrary interference in the existing order of affairs. In this case Fate took the blame, and Mrs. Cranley felt absolved from all responsibility.

Her brother, who was the vicar of the parish, said that the failure of the bank was without doubt a judgment, in which the finger of God was plainly visible. But then his fortune was invested otherwise and the loss did not fall on him, although his name was still associated with the bankrupt house. He was convinced that God was specially attentive to his interests; and he on his part never failed to ask for guidance in all matters of importance, such as the reinvestment of his capital. He had foreseen the ruin of the bank, and humbly placed the credit for his own prevision to the account of God, who caused him to withdraw his funds before the final crash. True, there were some who thought the bank might have been saved, if he and another had not set the example of withdrawal just at a critical moment in the history of the bank. He saw in that the hand of God, but Mrs. Cranley mildly wondered, somewhat admiring her brother for his piety and sagacity.

Her husband certainly was less fortunately endowed, and as to piety, well, the less said on that the better. The Cranleys were not temperamentally devout. Augustus Cranley was not quite polite in his expression of opinion on the matter at the time; but once the thing had forced itself upon his mind as an accomplished fact, he laughed, and set about arranging life in the old house on a new basis of economy, which naturally worked out as oddly and as unexpectedly as most of his schemes did. His methods were not business-like, but they were picturesque at times and always had in them the possibility of a surprise. The unexpected generally happened in the Cranley family; perhaps it was the will of God, as Uncle Jonas used to say; I do not know.

The comfortable assurance of divine protection specially bestowed

on him might well have made a man of less humility appear overweeningly self-satisfied: but Jonas Marshalsea was a minister of God, to use his own description of his office, and felt himself far removed above the laity in general; and, if the truth were told, it certainly would have to be admitted that he believed no other member of the ministry, below the rank of bishop, was so particularly favored by divine protection as himself. He had a noble-hearted pity for the Cranleys generally and for Augustus in particular, who called him flippantly "the parson" or sometimes jokingly "his reverence." And Beatrice openly made fun of him, except on Sundays, when she dutifully went to church and put on her best behavior, treating her uncle with a certain dignity, that somehow made him feel uncomfortable: it was as if she looked beyond him and showed respect to an ideal. He felt as if he suddenly became aware of some discrepancy between his great pretensions and the actuality embodied in his insignificant though pompous personality.

This strange sense of his duality distressed him unaccountably. He was master in his own household, and could command at least a reasonable show of the respect he felt himself entitled to, but with Beatrice it was different, and at heart he was afraid of her, afraid lest some day she should strip him of the flimsy veil of spiritual authority he vainly wrapped around his little weaknesses. But on Sunday she never seemed disposed to mock him, and he sometimes wondered at the expression in her eyes when she sat in her usual corner of the family pew gazing up at the old stained window in the chancel during the sermon. What was she dreaming of? Not the sermon, certainly. His own family, her cousins, were entirely unlike the Cranleys, and Beatrice herself was frequently a puzzle to her own family. Her mother never sat wrapped in a day-dream in that fashion, and her father slept unconcernedly and without concealment through the sermon. He felt that he had made sufficient sacrifice of personal comfort and convenience in going to church at all, and so long as he did not snore too loudly, he thought that no one would or could object to his behavior; and in that he was quite right. Indeed, most of the older members of the congregation followed the good example of the Squire and closed their eyes as soon as the text was read and the preacher was fairly launched on his discourse.

But Beatrice sat and dreamed. There was an angel in the window opposite her seat, who had a history for her. He was an old, old friend: she found him out when she was quite a child, and used to smile at him until at last she got acquainted with him and he smiled back at her. That was the opening of the story of her life: the angel took her away with him into a world of such intense reality that she could hardly realize the ordinary circumstances of actual life when she came back. No

wonder her uncle Jonas could not understand her strange behavior to him on Sundays. The angel was her teacher as a child, a child himself, but wise and beautiful and what he taught her was kept absolutely sacred and secret in her heart. As she grew older the companionship of childhood ceased, and there were times when she could awake no answering gleam of recognition in the angel's eyes. At first she pleaded, then grew indignant at this unusual indifference, and finally she took an attitude of command towards the image in the window, demanding that he make way and let his spiritual counterpart reveal himself. The revelation came as a surprise and marked the second chapter of her life-story.

Uncle Jonas was not in the pulpit that day. He had gone to take the service at Chenstead, as he did regularly once a month, when the curate in charge of Chenstead took the vicar's place at Comberfield. He was an earnest well-meaning young man, and like all the young men of the neighborhood looked on Beatrice Cranley as a miracle of feminine grace almost beyond the dreams of an aspiring curate — almost — and yet not altogether so. George Leavenworth was well received at Comberfield: his family was old and well connected, and he was not dependent on his curate's salary, having a small income of his own; but intellectually he was a mere nonentity and knew it.

He caught a glimpse of his divinity as he went up the winding stair that led from the old-fashioned reading-desk up to the pulpit. The eyes of all the rest were fixed on him, but her's were on the stained-glass window in the chancel, and her expression was almost stern. It startled him, and, as it were, lifted him out of his own self-consciousness into a clearer atmosphere: it seemed so other-worldly that he felt ashamed of the personal vanity that had induced him to look sideways at the Cranley pew for evidences of interest in the preacher of the day. He had enjoyed his share of 'curate worship,' that cult that is accountable for such a large proportion of the feminine congregations of fashionable churches, and he was only looking for what a young man of his position was entitled by experience to expect. The disappointment did not wound his vanity, but made him ashamed of it.

Beatrice was far away already. She was a somewhat perfunctory churchwoman and followed the service with the most complete indifference. The family attendance was a tribute to respectability, regarded as a duty to the state and to society: religion was a word without significance in the Cranley family. But she was a most regular attendant and she never went to sleep; what more could any clergyman demand? Yet that set face and strangely fixed expression troubled the preacher; it made him feel as if he were an interloper intruding his profane presence on a mystic rite that was beyond his comprehension. He longed to

turn and look at her again. He read his sermon carefully, almost laboriously, but his mind was in the chancel where something mysterious was happening. There was a strain of mysticism in his nature that had drawn him to the church, but it had lain latent since his ordination: there had been nothing hitherto for it to feed upon. Now it awoke and troubled him strangely. Several young women in the congregation noticed his evident distraction, and attributed it to the attraction of the Squire's daughter, who was, however, hidden from them by the high pew in which the family were ensconced.

Beatrice was far away indeed. The miracle had happened at her command; the angel in the window faded from her sight, and she was for a moment blinded by the light that suddenly streamed in as through an open casement. It wrapped her in a radiant mist, and in the trees beyond she heard the choir of birds chanting a celebration of the day. She passed out through the open window into a land that was familiar to her formerly, but now there was no child companion waiting for her, only a pathway stretching out beyond the trees far out beyond the fields, that lay between the churchyard, and there were mountains melting into the golden haze of an infinity unknown. But distance did not seem to count for anything; she passed, and that was all.

The mountains opened at her coming and revealed a city by a lake, a city of palaces it seemed, beautiful beyond her dreams of magic palaces, yet strangely real and absolutely mundane in its architecture, though unfamiliar to her. She stood beside the lake and waited, then grew impatient, or rather seemed to understand that she must call the guide or ferryman. The thought flashed through her mind, and instantly a boat appeared approaching leisurely as if self-propelled; it drew up to the shore and she went aboard still gazing at the City Beautiful. The water of the lake seemed musical as the boat skimmed swiftly along the rippling surface. The sun was setting as she neared the quay. She stepped ashore, and someone stood beside her: she could not see his face, but felt as if she knew him well. She followed him unquestioningly.

They passed through gardens redolent of flowers unfamiliar to her, yet somehow not unknown. The palaces too seemed to be places she had lived in, as a child perhaps, or else had visited in former lives. Nothing was altogether strange, yet all was new. And then they came to an arena filled with people in white robes; and others like herself came also accompanied by guides, and all the neophytes were, like herself, in ash-gray robes. She knew that they were neophytes and that they came, as she did, for initiation in the mysteries. She knew it all, just as it happened, but not till then. It was as if a living picture in which she took a part were being unfolded out of her memory in dramatic sequence.

At length the ceremony ended, and she stood in a circle of white-robed figures, herself white-robed as they were, and a voice intoned the words: "And now to God the father, God the son, and God the Holy Ghost . . ." and she stood up as usual to hear the final benediction delivered from the old pulpit in the church at Comberfield.

The curate saw her then and wondered. The sunlight fell upon her from a window overhead and made a golden haze about her, and she was gazing at him with a look that was strange and far-seeing, while she herself was evidently unconscious of his presence. It did not hurt his vanity, it almost seemed as if he were admitted to a mystery, as one not yet initiated, but made aware of something hitherto unknown. . . .

That Sunday was a birthday to the curate and he fancifully thought of Beatrice Cranley as his mystic godmother unconsciously ordained.

"SINCE the metaphysics of Occult physiology and psychology postulate within mortal man an immortal entity, 'divine Mind,' or *Nous*, whose pale and distorted reflexion is that which we call 'Mind' and intellect in men — virtually an entity apart from the former during every period of incarnation — we say that the *two* sources of 'memory' are in these two 'principles.' These two we distinguish as the Higher *Manas* (Mind or Ego), and the *Kâma-Manas*, that is, the rational but earthly or physical intellect of man, incased in and bound by matter, therefore subject to the influence of the latter: the all-conscious SELF, that which reincarnates periodically — verily the WORD made flesh! — and which is always the same; and its reflected 'Double,' changing with every new incarnation and personality, and therefore conscious but for a life-period."— H. P. BLAVATSKY: *Psychic and Noetic Action*