

THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

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MAN'S only way to win his great hope and to know the truth is to seize hold on himself, assert and realize his potentially all-dominating soul-existence. Making his mind and memory register beyond all future cavil and doubt what he then knows to be true, holding himself at his true dignity, guiding into right conduct all the elements of his nature, his body, mind, and emotions, he will maintain from that moment strength and joy in life. That once done, could he but stand in that attitude for a few weeks or months, he would have made of his mind a willing instrument of service, harnessed it to the chariot of the soul, and dissolved away its limitations. - KATHERINE TINGLEY

COMMUNITY IN SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

H. T. EDGE, M. A.

"It is for lack of a real community in spiritual experience — a common faith if you will — that our knowledge has not brought happiness."



SO says a writer, whose name we have lost. The kind of faith needed is that which we already possess in some matters, a community sense. We possess it in hygiene for instance. There are many matters wherein we act, not from self-interest, but from a sense of community interest; matters of sanitary habits and health regulations. We are good citizens in many of these ways; we do not create nuisances or spread infectious diseases. It would be easy to enumerate many ways in which people behave with instinctive regard to the welfare and rights of the family, society, or community in which they live. Thus far they may be said to have a common faith and a real community of experience. Should it not be the same in those matters intended by the writer when he uses the word 'spiritual'?

But we lack faith in the reality and importance of the unseen, and pin our faith to material values. H. P. Blavatsky's message was to re-establish faith in the value of things unseen, belief in the importance of thoughts and conduct, as against possessions and material resources.

The small and petty spirit which so largely pervades humanity has seized greedily upon some of her hints and dwarfed them to puny proportions; so that we find many cults of so-called 'self-development' offering to teach us how to feather our own personal nests by the power of thought or 'concentration.' These shallow and sordid coteries have at

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least the merit of recognising that such unseen forces may count for something; and perversions may in general be reckoned as a testimony to some reality which they misrepresent. When H. P. Blavatsky called our attention to the need for recognising higher ideals and powers, she had very different aims in view than that of ministering to the spirit of self-aggrandisement and mutual rivalry, or of promoting the puny ambitions of gain and vanity. Her concern was the state of humanity, its helplessness, its ignorance of the real source of its strength, its darkness amid the illusive glare of much superficial and treacherous materialistic knowledge. The universal reign of injustice and bigotry and superstition, which she found in all the lands of her wide traveling, had filled her with a hero's resolve to be the champion of a better order of ages. She found the light and went forth dauntlessly to proclaim it.

Hence for H. P. Blavatsky and for Theosophy the knowledge of the reality of these higher potencies means promise for the true welfare of the great orphan humanity; it means, in the words of the writer quoted above, a real community of experience, a common faith.

People often wonder and complain of the darkness of the mystery that surrounds our life, of the littleness of that life and its paltry aims; and they must often feel that, not only the great universe without, but also their own selves within, must contain something that is greater, far greater, than the superficial thing they have been calling 'life.' Truly it is a fact that requires little proving that we have so far departed from the real source and fount of our beings, so deeply immersed ourselves in the externals of our nature, that we sometimes fall into despair and doubt as to whether there is any reality at all, whether the whole business is not a sorry farce. H. P. Blavatsky came to lead us back to the sense of reality.

How was this to be done? By preaching a new doctrine?

Preachers may preach new doctrines: teachers 'show how.' The hard facts of life confront us, and the teacher interprets them for us — shows us how to understand them, how to meet them. Look at the situation today. The churches are asking themselves, "Can Christianity teach people?" The efficacy of science as a promoter of human welfare is being seriously questioned. Yet life goes on, with its problems, and has to be lived. It is well to know there is something better than these doubtful resources to interpret life for us.

"Theosophy claims to be both religion and science, for Theosophy is the essence of both."

"Theosophy reconciles all religions, sects, and nations under a common system of ethics."

"Theosophy is a scientific religion and a religious science."

"Theosophy is religion itself — Religion in the true and only correct sense."

"The Wisdom-Religion was ever one and the same; and being the last word of possible human knowledge, was therefore carefully preserved."

"Our endeavor has been to uncover the ruin-encumbered universal foundation of religion."

COMMUNITY IN SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

“Theosophy considers humanity as an emanation from divinity on its return path thereto.”
— *H. P. Blavatsky*

Not as an emanation from the anthropoid ape or any other animal. This alone explains much of the difference between Theosophy as a helper and some of the current philosophies. Is man an improved ape? Is he a miserable sinner, barely rescued from inevitable destruction by a special and conditioned prerogative? Theosophy says he is an immortal Soul, divine in origin, in destiny divine. Perhaps these three several views of man may explain why the advocates of two of them have (according to their own confession) failed to inspire man with faith and strength; and why Theosophy, the vindicator of disinherited man, has proved so welcome in its message.

“A real community in spiritual experience — a common faith.” And why not a common faith in man’s essential divinity? Why not a real community in experience of the results that flow from a life lived in this faith?

We may perhaps doubt as to how Theosophy can accomplish this; but we try to see too far, to grasp too much at once. Theosophy is a leaven; its work is gradual but sure. It will eradicate the ingrained selfishness that is the canker eating the roots of human society. For ideas and ideals are very important. The present status is the natural outcome of wrong ideas and ideals. Religion has been too far removed from daily life, leaving daily life to be ruled by another religion, not less real because unformulated, the worship of Mammon. Observe the ideals held up in our newspapers and magazines: national emulation, material prosperity, supremacy in wealth and commerce, physical comfort, rivalry. How can these be the basis of a universal kinship in high ideals? Yet these are the gods we worship and hold up to reverence.

Surely the leaven of Theosophy will work, as it has already in these few years worked for the stirring up of fixed ideas and the urging of mankind to something better.

Take for an example the idea of Karma, one quite new to western thought; quite new, that is, as a philosophical tenet, though often obscurely glimpsed by our poets in prose and poetry. But these last have failed to give it form because of the theological or materialistic dressing they have had to give to their intuitions. “Each man’s life the outcome of his former living is.” Nonsense, unless we accept Reincarnation; common sense, if we do accept Reincarnation. The forces set up by a man’s thoughts, desires, and actions, must necessarily accumulate, ever seeking to expend themselves in results, in accordance with laws well recognised in material science. It is this complex of accumulated energy generated by the man himself, that is called Karma — his fate, his self-spun destiny. Knowing this, the man, instead of kicking against the

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pricks, girding at fate or providence, fancying that human injustice has deprived him of his rights, will endeavor to understand the situation in which he finds himself, and to make the right use of it. More; he will have confidence in the power of his own present efforts. For under old beliefs, what use could there be for such efforts? But, believing in Karma and Reincarnation, we see that our life is continuous, and death only a temporary interruption.

A skeptic, believing that death ends all, would, if he were consistent with his belief, surely take every care to make life here pleasant while it lasts, and have no regard to anything else. But we find such people nevertheless behaving with unselfishness and compassion; for their professed beliefs are not worthy of the fineness of their human nature, and their better instincts prompt their actions. In truth their professed belief is nonsense and cannot be logically dealt with.

These finer instincts, which guide us despite our intellectual beliefs, proceed from the substratum of our human nature. This part of our nature needs a philosophy and a science, which ordinary resources have not furnished. Theosophy interprets it.


Science has all too often shown a disposition to interpret human nature as essentially animal: it tries to prove that the common basic factor in humanity is instinctual, predatory, lustful, as though of the beasts. Theosophy does not deny that this exists in man; but it is not the essence of his nature, but only an incident. To be more precise, this lustful, selfish, instinctual nature is that of *Kâma-Rûpa*, the 'animal soul' in man. To base a unification of mankind on this foundation would be to level all humanity to those anthropological gods with a hairy face and a stone axe that we see in museums and Sunday supplements. But there is the Spiritual Soul, *Buddhi-Manas*, the real foundation of human nature, which unifies humanity, not by canceling out the higher faculties, but by ruling out the lower propensities. A sublimate, not a precipitate, is required.

Truly, human life, both in the individual and in the mass, is a mighty ceaseless struggle for mastery between the two powers — the God in man, the animal in man. Which of the twain is to have the recognition, the scientific sanction? Is the pulpit to bow the knee to those who would substitute the monkey for the God, protoplasmic mud for the Cosmic Life, our arboreal ancestor for him who tasted of the Tree of Life? Does progress mean the culture of desire and its gratifications, or does it mean the realization of life's sublimer import?

Theosophy came to bring Religion back from the clouds and replace it on earth, where it belongs and is needed. It is Religion, the recognition of the divine nature and origin and destiny of man, that alone can bring about a community of spiritual experience.

THE HOUSE I LIVE IN

C. J. RYAN

HE unrest of the age has some unique features, seldom so strongly accentuated before, such as the effort among some to set class against class as well as nation against nation, and there are even signs of a possibility of a revival of repression of religious freedom in some directions. No one can deny that standards of spiritual values have been lowered of late years. The scientific assault on the crudities of nineteenth-century theology did some good in breaking up the bigotry of dogmatism, but also helped to weaken the spirit of reverence in spiritual things; it made man believe himself nothing but a rather more advanced animal, coming from the dust, returning to the dust. Alfred Noyes, the poet, says:

“For over a quarter of a century now the intellect of Europe has been almost entirely agnostic. Our intellectuals have either been engaged in a destruction of the old faiths, or if they were constructive, their efforts were limited to making our civic or national life more efficient economically. . . . But it is tacitly accepted by them that there is nothing beyond, that all the boasted glories of our progress are doomed to final extinction, that the soul of man must eventually go out like a flame with the return of our bodies to the dust.

“Our intellectuals, of that particular kind that I have been describing, have stultified their own science by implying that the greater can be produced from the less. Again and again you will find that implication behind their work. They have whittled away the whole universe by explaining every stage of it as a product of something lower. Man from the ape, the ape from the fish, the fish from the protoplasm, and, finally, the solemn discussion as to whether the gulf between the protoplasm and nothing at all may not be bridged by that very science which depends upon the axiom that the greater cannot be produced by the less.

“There you have in a nutshell the whole attitude of a great part of our modern intellectualism towards the universe. With the loss of belief in a Supreme Power, equal if not superior to ourselves, which produces us, we have also lost the belief — or at least a great part of Europe has lost the belief — in the immortality of the divine spirit in man, and lost with that our sense of an ultimate goal. With this has come a degradation of the human affections and a general cynicism.” — *From an address to the League of Youth*

A hundred illustrations could be brought from leading writers and speakers, to prove those statements, but the question is: Do the symptoms of unrest arise from the decomposition of a worn-out body or are they the natural ‘growing-pains’ of a world that is breaking out of its past mental limitations into a larger life?

Theosophy takes a hopeful view of the future, while fully recognising the unhappy conditions of the present. The order of society is breaking down by its own weight in many directions. The world is so ignorant of the true way towards progress that the wildest quackeries are greedily accepted by millions.

According to Theosophy the ignorance or neglect of one of the funda-

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mental facts of life is the cause of the failure of many well-meant efforts by reformers to improve conditions. This essential is the true nature of man. What am I? What is the real man and what is the impermanent? Do the reformers always begin at home before they begin to straighten up other people's houses? This does not imply that most of the earnest reformers are not well-intentioned and morally estimable; but we know that the best intentions do not always guarantee success; knowledge and experience are required.

Can it be said that all the reformers have penetrated into their own complex natures in the profound way Theosophy shows to be the only path to wisdom? The effort to understand the duality of human nature, the 'angel and the demon' as we say, is the study which leads to the power to help. Yet it is the one most neglected, though its main elements are so plain that the young child can learn them with ease. Once the strength of the will is thrown upon the side of the higher self, the child who has learned the fact of duality and that he can conquer his lower nature by his own efforts grows up a force for good, and an infinitely happier being than the ordinary undisciplined, self-centered, anxious personality; he has risen above the average standard.

In the Râja-Yoga School and College at Point Loma the principle of training the student to use his own will in self-conquest, without the ordinary methods of punishment and without rewards or bribes for 'being good,' has been in operation for more than twenty years, and its success is a matter of common knowledge. The Râja-Yoga system, established by Mádame Katherine Tingley, has long passed the stage of an experiment.

The true nature of man, then, is a subject upon which Theosophy throws a strong light and which must be at least partially understood before reforms can be of permanent value. Are the materialists right in saying that the body, this bundle of chemical elements and nerve-currents, is man? Or is it merely the house I live in; the real *I* being the temporary occupier? Perhaps many factors we fancy to be inseparable parts of our very selves, such as our emotional natures, and much of our ordinary mentalities, are actually no more than the furnishings or possibly the servants in our houses!

Theosophy makes a plain distinction between the house with all its appurtenances and helpers and its owner. We have had many abiding-places during past ages; some have been very primitive, mud huts or cave-dwellings, we may say. Others were better. Some were very cramped, with low ceilings and few windows, dark and inconvenient. Sometimes, with great efforts, we have built a fairly roomy abode, but we have never been able to stay in any of them long. On the whole, though

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with many ups and downs, we hope our dwellings have been improving, but if we could fix on some good and definite plan, and not rest till we had built our houses accordingly, we should be far better equipped for real work and perhaps stay longer without moving.

The master of the house has had to live in the company of highly unpleasant companions in some of his houses. In fact, these so-called servants were really tyrants, and at the worst times he had no control over them at all. It was his own fault: carelessness, or more often ignorance of his own power of mastership. He often allowed his underlings to usurp his place through laziness, and sometimes through sheer love for low company. But at last he began to learn that he had the power to discipline and train the arrogant servants, and that if he put forth his will he could break them in and make splendid helpers of them. He discovered that they themselves would be far happier when they were trained, and that a time might come when he could invite them to sit at his table with confidence that they would behave properly and not disgrace him before his friends. Looking round he saw many house-owners who were so completely under the control of their servants that they had to live in hiding in the garret or the cellar, and in some very bad cases the masters had been driven out altogether. He is now looking forward to the possession of a more convenient home when the present one becomes uninhabitable, but he knows the same companions will find their way back to him, and so if he is wise he will use intensive methods of discipline.

Leaving metaphor aside, let us consider what kind of companions we have in our inner natures. The leading principle in Theosophy is that the immortal self of man is greatly superior to the everyday personality we call Mr. A. or Mrs. B., just as the householder is far more important than the dwelling-place. Millions are waiting for this, the grandest teaching of hope and comfort, because the general miserably pessimistic belief is that the house and the occupier are one. It is strange that the knowledge of the duality of man's nature has been so completely obscured, although all the Teachers have insisted upon the great fact that the divine was to be looked for within. "The kingdom of heaven is within," and "ye are Gods," said the Christian Teacher. That symbolized the higher nature; the lower is plain enough. Yet we see earnest people still giving respectful attention to those who declare that salvation comes from the sacrifice of some God, the particular deity depending upon the part of the world in which you happen to live.

Theosophy has once more brought forward the ancient teaching of the Seven Principles of Man. We hear a good deal about the 'sub-conscious' or the 'unconscious' mind in modern scientific works, but even Professor Freud was not the first discoverer of these obscure mental phases. He

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has forcibly drawn attention to their activities, but after all they are merely expressions of the lower mind, and the psychologists and psychoanalysts have not approached the profound analysis of the 'human complex' (to use the current phrase) made by the brilliant intellects of the ancient philosophic schools of India or Egypt.

In our general ignorance of the results of the long ages of study given in the East to the problem of man's inner nature we have lost much of great value. It is declared by the most learned scholars that such men as Plato in Greece possessed an intelligence probably superior to any modern intellect, and what the Greeks thought of the superiority of the Egyptians to themselves is well known. To the Egyptians, as Plato says, the Greeks were but children. We may know more about explosives and quick transportation, but the ancient Egyptians and others knew more about spiritual man and his needs. The principles or elements which combine to make man on earth were known to those profound thinkers, and that knowledge was not a far-off unpractical matter but an enlightening factor in everyday human life. It enabled them clearly to distinguish between the principles of our nature which survive for ever and the parts which perish at death or within a moderate time after the body ceases to exist. This knowledge is profoundly important. We must revive it or suffer from our ignorance.

For instance, if we knew what we were doing when we legally murder a man by capital punishment we should revolt from such an act with horror, not only on account of the injustice to that soul, by depriving him of the chance of reform, but also because of the unseen but very serious results to society in general.

A knowledge of the seven principles, and of the effects that follow their separation after bodily death, would also prevent many of the superstitions and errors that have arisen in all ages through attempts to communicate with the departed. Those who study the seven principles easily understand that what is so often mistaken for the soul is rarely more than the astral remains of the lower self, which is not spiritual at all in the true sense, and is not on its way to higher spheres but is disintegrating.

In the Oriental religious philosophies, and even in the Greek and Roman classics to a degree, much can be learned about the Seven Principles of Man. Sometimes only three principles are mentioned, but these are the seven in condensed form. A teacher who became associated with early Christianity, Paul -- who is said by Madame Blavatsky to have been an initiate into the Greek Mysteries,— writes of three principles and hints at four, thereby generalizing the more closely analysed seven of other teachers.

The concept of seven principles or elements in man does not, of course,

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mean that we have seven distinct souls; it is a way of expressing the fact that the One Immortal Spirit works through many different states of consciousness and conditions of matter; 'sheaths of the soul' they have been called. The lowest and the most transitory and illusionary is the physical body. There is a more enduring principle, composed of subtil matter, which is a sort of ethereal framework holding together the physical atoms, but neither this nor the principle of life is the Soul, though the astral *organizing* principle, the *Ka* of the Egyptians, survives the physical body for a while.

The self-conscious mind, which distinguishes man from the undeveloped animals, is the Thinker whose lower aspect, deeply stained by passion and desire, constitutes the personality of the average man. This center of consciousness, the thinking, feeling man, is the battleground in which the higher principles in man, the overshadowing Christos, the illuminated Higher Self, contends with the lower animal and selfish propensities. For practical purposes we usually condense the seven principles into two broad divisions and speak of the dual nature of man, the higher, immortal reincarnating Ego, and the transitory personality which has to win its immortality by union with its 'Father in heaven.'

The seeds of immortality, so to speak, are planted in the personality, and it is our own fault if we neglect them. Cultivated, they will grow into a great tree of life into which we may blend our purified personality and move on to the ineffable heights in the splendor of the Christos or Higher Self.

For a full understanding of the Theosophical teaching about the seven principles, we must study Madame Blavatsky's *Key to Theosophy* or *The Secret Doctrine*, where the subject is explained with many quotations from the wise teachers of old who had attained knowledge. An illustration from the ancient Egyptian teachings will serve to show how well the ancients knew the higher psychology.

The Egyptian philosophers attached great importance to the understanding of the elements of man's inner nature. They had definite names for each, and constant reference is made to them in their sacred writings and pictures. It is not easy for modern scholars to make out the subtil psychological meanings they attached to these names, but when read in the light of the ancient Hebrew teachings on the seven principles found in the Kabalistic books, they become clear. They are identical with the Theosophical teachings derived from Indian sources.

The central object in the Egyptian table of man's principles is the heart, the seat of the will and of the feelings. It has two names, *Ab* and *Hati*. These are very significant, for they show how clearly the Egyptians understood the duality of the human being on earth. *Ab* is the heart of

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the God of Light, Ra, and of Thoth, the Divine Wisdom. *Hati* is the heart of Khepera, the creator of the world of the senses. The one is divine, the other terrestrial, and so we see the diverse attractions of the two forces within the human heart. Above this central principle of feeling, the heart, the Egyptians placed the reincarnating ego, the true mind or soul, and above that the principle which served as a link with the Universal Divine Spirit. Below were placed the physical body, the organizing astral, and the vital force. The general idea of a higher and a lower nature was always made clear. There are many pictures of the bird Bennu (the Phoenix) sitting serene in a tree looking on at the variously symbolized lower personality. The Bennu symbolized the immortal ego which renews itself constantly by reincarnation just as the fabulous Phoenix revived from the ashes of the fire which periodically consumed it.

In setting to work to build a better house for the future dwelling-place of the true self within, one of the greatest powers is in our own hands, the creative power of the imagination, energized by the will. If this were more fully recognised we should not find so many persons looking for relief to outward forms. The imagination is a tremendous force and, like the sunshine or the electric current, it is impersonal; it can kill or cure according to the way we use it. Accounts of its fatal effects are sometimes reported; one will be found in the daily papers which recently related such a case. An unfortunate man, tired of life and unaware of the terrible fate of the self-destroyer, asked for a bottle of poison. The druggist suspected his motive and gave him a harmless drug. When he drank it his imagination worked so strongly that he suffered the agonies of poisoning, and it was some time before the physicians proclaimed him out of danger from the shock. A more recent case is that of a girl who died of terror inspired by imagination in a dream. Hundreds of such facts are known. Read the accounts of the origin of birth-marks and the effects of imagination will be seen in action. An interesting description of the marvelous possibilities of the image-making faculty was lately given by a famous Japanese moving-picture actor, who says that when he wishes to produce his most subtil effects he uses no movements but thinks with intensity "down in his heart" the emotion to be conveyed; in that way he gets the finer shades of meaning to the audience.

The Râja-Yoga system of education established by Madame Katherine Tingley encourages the wise use of the imagination; the pupils are shown how to build high ideals of conduct, to form noble conceptions of daily life, and are trained to use their own will-power to bring them into action.

It is harder for us older people, but when the spirit of brotherhood is aroused there is a strong motive for evoking the power of the imagination. Just as in all forms of natural progress, the desire for change, improve-

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ment, comes first; then the imagination, inspired by a light in the heart, builds a picture of something nobler and more beautiful than we ever before dared to think attainable; then, perhaps unexpectedly, like a thief in the night, comes the call to action, the opportunity, the battle. At first the effort to fulfil the picture created by the imagination is hard, for it is easier to run on the accustomed track; but the great object to be obtained is worth the labor.

The Bible and all the ancient scriptures say that in the innermost "ye are Gods," but without the use of the imagination we cannot realize that amazing fact or make it alive. According to Theosophy, faith without works is vain; Universal Brotherhood must be made an active power and this means actual work for others. Jesus did not encourage his followers to stay at home and privately discuss his teachings for their own personal gratification; he sent them out to urge men to *Love one another* --- Universal Brotherhood. How different the world would be if his later self-styled followers had obeyed his commands instead of spending their energies in fabricating creeds and fighting religious wars!

At this moment we have an unusual opportunity for initiating the great Brotherhood work which must be the leading factor in the New Age, or our civilization will fail. Natural Law will help us, for we are now living in a transitional period in the chronological cycles of the earth. This transition has been expected; it is not a surprise. Astronomy tells of the journey of the Sun through the twelve signs of the Zodiac in the great precessional year of 25,920 ordinary years. At present the Sun is passing out of the Sign of the Fishes, in which it has been during the Christian Era, and is entering the Sign of Aquarius, the 'Man with the Water-pot.' According to ancient wisdom, the entrance of the Sun into a new Zodiacal sign is accompanied by marked changes in the minds of men; the two cycles run in parallel lines. The upheaval in almost every line of thought, the break-up of old forms, the awful disasters in war, famine, and pestilence, the unrest and strife in civil life, are just what should be expected.

The Theosophical Society was established to meet these expected conditions, to be ready for the great work of spiritual and moral reconstruction at this period. The teachings of Theosophy are not dogmas to be accepted on any one's authority, nor are they to be rejected under penalty of any kind except that of losing the greatest opportunity in life — the opportunity of learning how to study ourselves in a new way and so to find the secret of self-control and self-knowledge, and in this way to become powers for good. This opportunity grasped, we find a new and infinitely happier life within our reach, revelation after revelation opens on the mind, and the power of wisely helping others steadily increases.

How often we are told that man is ignorant of the true direction of

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evolution — or even if evolution leads anywhere — and that we can only blunder along hoping for something to ‘turn up.’ That miserable point of view might be true if we were merely intellectualized animals, but suppose we are, as a wise Teacher said, *Gods* and made in the image of God! Suppose that nothing but the yielding to the lower propensities has clouded our higher intuitions which would guide us on the true lines of progress if we would let them! Such is the teaching of Theosophy, and it proves that there is no way out of our darkness and ignorance but self-conquest, even if it takes many incarnations to gain the final victory.

To return to our metaphor; are you satisfied with the conditions in the house you live in? Do real peace and harmony reign? And are the neighbors content with their conditions? If so, Theosophy has no message for you — yet. But if you feel that something very serious is lacking, and that your house and almost all the houses in the vicinity need putting in order, why not venture a little, acknowledge that there may be a triumphant way out of the troubles, and — try Theosophy?

WHY LIVE?

R. MACHELL



HERE was a story, that seemed strange to me, of a man who killed himself in order to avoid the monotony of life. One day he began to wonder why he was doomed to get up in the morning and to go through the same round of necessary functions, such as dressing and eating and so on for no other apparent reason than to maintain life. Looking forward he could see no mitigation of the labor, which in its cumulative aspect so appalled him that he decided to end it by suicide, seeing no purpose in life that could justify submission to such tyranny!

To most people existence would seem so desirable as to justify any amount of exertion expended to preserve and to prolong it. Life is apparently considered so desirable that no crime is greater than a capital offense, and no punishment is esteemed more severe than death. Yet suicide is on the increase in many countries and is absent from few.

But if life is the greatest good, why seek a purpose in life as a justification of all our efforts to maintain life? If life is the greatest good, what purpose can be higher than to live? And yet it is considered a reproach to say that a person's life is purposeless. Is life the purpose of life? Or is it a means to an end? If so, what end is greater?

Such questions force us to consider what we mean by life, and by a

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purpose in life, and further to inquire how it is that we can even seek to know the meaning of our own existence. Such an inquiry would be impossible if man were not a highly complex being, with an ego or self-conscious center which is capable of identifying itself with, or separating itself from, the various constituent elements of the sevenfold entity called man.

The animals apparently do live for the sake of life: and man has an animal as well as a human nature. So that if man lives without purpose he lives as an animal, and thus fails to justify his claim to superiority in the scale of evolution. But if man claims superiority to the animals, he must do so on the ground of his approximation to those beings who are superior to himself — unless his vanity is so accomplished as to permit him to regard himself as the last word in evolution, which is absurd.

By the mere act of speculating upon such a question, man actually demonstrates his superiority to that animal nature in himself which is content to live for the sake of living; because to speculate upon the purpose of existence is to separate one's self from the thing that lives, and the power to do this is evidence of a self within that is superior to the self of animal existence.

To recognise a purpose in life is to take cognisance of the trend of evolution, and to accept it as the directing influence in one's choice of a course of life, as well as of ideals of conduct, which are necessarily fashioned according to one's conception of the purpose of life or the trend of evolution. To have a purpose in life is to be superior to that life. What then is life which is thus superior to itself?

We too often confuse our own minds as well as the minds of other people by loose thinking even more than by loose talking. So we talk of life as if there were no other mode of life than that of the physical world. So we talk of life and death as if they were two different states of being. But it would be more reasonable to speak of life as the existence of the universe, seen or unseen, known or unknown, in which death is but a door that opens and closes in order to let the soul pass through from one state of life to another. By 'soul' I mean the self-conscious entity, the ego, which may for a time inhabit a physical body, and may to some extent be temporarily identified with it.

Evolution would seem to be the purposive development of the ego, by means of experience, which is life, or which is unthinkable apart from it. This trend of evolution must be impersonal and universal in essence; but when the human ego becomes conscious of it, and attempts to adapt itself to the evolutionary current, the individual begins to make his life purposive. That is to say the human ego wakes to consciousness of its own place in evolution; and the desire to realize and maintain this state

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becomes an individual purpose. Life becomes purposive, that had before seemed merely instinctual.

When the Soul realizes that its life is purposive, it tries to impress the lower brain-mind with this high ideal, and that is a long task. The brain-mind, exalted with the consciousness of power and influenced by all the passions of the lower nature, attaches itself to some object of desire, and tries to make the attainment of this object the purpose of life. It is this degradation of purposiveness that makes man at times seem lower than the animals, whose desires are limited by nature, and controlled by instinct, which is obedience to natural law. Vice is peculiar to man, because man is at the passageway between instinct and purpose, between the animal and the divine; and man can add purpose to desire, and can bring down his divine faculty of imagination to intensify his purpose and to distort desire, becoming thus demoniac.

To have a purpose in life seems to me to be the main distinction between man the animal and man the human. The nature of that purpose indicates the class of mind or the stage of evolution attained by the individual. A vicious motive is one that is opposed to the trend of evolution, or contrary to natural law; and man is able to set his will to the pursuit or gratification of personal desires that are not natural or proper to him as a human being. Being able to think for himself, he can choose his path, and the choice will result in experience; but it may be painful and degrading, or it may be helpful and beneficial, according as it is guided by a right or wrong conception of what is right and proper for man to do. For in all things there is a right and a wrong, and it is for man to learn the nature of things and to choose rightly. Nor is he without a guide.

His complex nature may be regarded as a duality, with himself the self-conscious being, able to choose between the higher and the lower. This simple statement may be verified by reference to one's own experience at any time. One's ideas of what is right or wrong may change, but a normal man knows intuitively that right and wrong and the power of choice between them exist for him. When this becomes doubtful or obscure, the man has lost his normal balance, and has fallen from his true place in the scale of evolution. When his sense of right and wrong is thus paralysed he is insane, and can no longer be regarded as a human being in full possession of his faculties. For the distinguishing characteristic of man is his power to recognise right and wrong, and to choose between them.

The existence of such a power is explained in the teachings of Theosophy, in which the evolution of the various principles in man is traced to the point of conjunction in the human being as we know him on this earth.

WHY LIVE?

But experience is the great teacher, and no man need be in doubt as to his power of choice, though many men deliberately choose to deny their own will. Suicide such as this is possible on the mental plane as well as on the physical. That is to say a man may destroy his body, or he may destroy his mind, but he cannot really destroy himself except in so far as his temporary personal self is concerned. The true self is that which chooses, and the crime of self-destruction is perhaps more correctly self-deprivation or suspension of the power of choice. That this self-mutilation is possible we all know by observation and experience.

If this is only too common, on the other hand the power of self-perfectibility is also within the scope of man, however rare may be its attainment. This is the purpose of evolution, perfection; and the purpose of life must be to work to that end. If this ideal be recognised as the true aim of life, then it must be of the first importance to gain a true understanding of the nature of man, of his past steps in evolution, and of his present position; and it is evident that there is a vast amount of ignorance on all these points, ranging from the most contradictory and dogmatic assertions to a complete denial of any purpose in life at all. Naturally, if life itself is purposeful, and if man has power of choice as an individual, then his first duty must be to gain self-knowledge, and his next step must be the cultivation of the spiritual will, in which resides the power of choice.

According to the teaching of Theosophy, man is never without a guide, though individually he may not recognise his teacher, and may follow false teachings. We are told that Theosophy, the Secret Doctrine, the Wisdom-Religion, the Sacred Science — or whatever name may be given to it at any particular time,— has never been lost entirely, though it is constantly being obscured and perverted by misunderstanding and misrepresentation, or is narrowed down to the limits of a sectarian religion by small minds anxious to give a final form to eternal truth.

This Divine Wisdom, being eternal and indestructible, must necessarily be superior to the limitations of any form, of any creed, of any religion, or church; and while any sectarian religion may be a temporary formulation of some part of the truth, it can be no more. And while all religions may be paths by which truth may be approached, they are not in any case more than temporary expedients, which continually must be outgrown.

Theosophy must be continually rediscovered and revealed, for truth is eternally veiled by illusion, or the appearance of the outer form; and man must be continually choosing between the true and the false. He cannot go forward to perfection if he is constantly looking for a permanent resting-place in the changing world of forms. If he finds such a

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resting-place and settles down there, the tide of evolution sweeps on and leaves him stranded, till his castle of illusion crumbles, or his rock of safety topples over into the river-bed again. For change is the law of life. All living things must change their form continually, and death is but a change in the mode of life.

For man to attempt to say what is the purpose of life would be for him to put himself on a level of intelligence with the supreme intelligence that controls the universe, and with the guiding will that directs the evolution of its inhabitants. Yet, irrational as such an attempt may appear, it is precisely what every self-conscious being must aim at accomplishing, and the justification of the attempt lies in the essential unity of the Universe, and in the fact that man is himself a manifestation of the divine intelligence that underlies that Universe. Thus the mind of man, however limited it may be, being of this divine essence, is able to form a limited conception of the illimitable, and to create for his own use a theory of life, that may be like a working-model of some vast machine, a toy perhaps, and yet a true model of the great reality.

So, when man makes for himself a scheme of evolution in accordance with the laws that govern his own being, he is but obeying the law of his own divine intelligence, and paying homage to the great law of life, which is the ultimate expression of self-consciousness.

If, then, man postulates perfection as the goal of evolution, he thereby expresses perhaps no more than the limitation of his own thinking principle, but if that thinking principle is of the same essence as the supreme intelligence, then he will not be further from the truth than a reflection in a mirror may be from the object it portrays.

So that, if evolution is a process tending towards perfection, man's object in life should be to live according to the evolutionary law, and in all ways to strive towards perfection. If this goal be taken as the aim of his existence, it will be hard for him to wander far from the path that leads eventually to human perfection, even though he may make innumerable mistakes, and be deceived again and again in his choice of means to reach the distant goal; for on that path he will have the help and guidance of his own Higher Self, whenever he allows that spiritual light to illuminate his thinking apparatus.

Theosophy is the recorded teaching of those who have trodden the path of perfection in the ages that are past; and it is always in the world; but the world fails to understand its value, and so lets it lie waiting till a new Teacher comes to call the attention of mankind to the old wisdom that would help to make life beautiful and intelligible.

The teachings of Theosophy renew man's hope, because they show man's possibilities; they call out all his efforts and his aspirations by

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demonstrating the reasonableness of man's highest aspiration, and justify his intuitive belief in human perfectibility.

So I would say that Theosophy reveals the purpose of existence as the attainment of perfection through evolution and experience. And thus it appeals to man to live his life according to the highest law of nature to which he can attain. The purpose of life should be to live rightly.

SEEING MOUNT EVEREST

GEO. C. BARTLETT

(Reprinted from *The Truth Seeker*, November 12, 1921)

FROM Calcutta we went direct to Darjiling; the journey by rail was twenty-four hours. We carried pillows, blankets, towels, and servants, because the sleeping-cars of India supply only leather-cushioned beds; all other necessaries and luxuries you are expected to furnish. At the base of the mountain we exchanged our spacious sleepers for narrow, open cars that wind up the mountain on a narrow-gage track about two feet in width. We were from 9 a. m. until 9 p. m. going up the mountain, a distance of forty-five miles; indeed, so steep is the railway that our train made several complete loops. We were well recompensed however, as the scenery from morning until night was a joy.

From the windows of the hotel at Darjiling we had a fine view of Kunchinjinga. Remember how you stammered at school when you tried to pronounce it? The summit of the Himâlaya range, frosted with one hundred and thirty-seven peaks, looks like an endless row of ice-bergs penetrating the sky; you enjoy an eighty-mile view of snow everlasting. Mount Janu, in Nepal, 25,304 feet high, can also be seen, as well as Mount Pandim, in Sikhim, 22,015, and Mount Gipmochi, which marks the boundary of the three kingdoms, Bhutan, Tíbet, and Sikhim. At this high distance the scenery is weird and peculiar. When the sun is not shining we live immersed in the clouds, and when it does shine the clouds sport and play before it, arranging themselves in ghost-like tableaux, and often dancing as before a mirror. It was from watching the graceful drapery of these clouds that the suggestion of the skirt-dance came to the Nautch girls; to others, the shadow dance, and the ghost, and the serpentine. The unique village of Darjiling many years ago sprouted out from the mountain-side, growing more enchanting each year; its spiral streets wind you into and out of many a delightful spot; the climate

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is never oppressive and all nature is beautiful and seems healthful. The sanatorium where we stayed was situated a little above the village, and along the road is built a high but open fence for safety, as on one side mountains loom up and on the other precipices appal. When the sun is not out the clouds meet far below. I enjoyed watching them through an opening in the fence. Their formation was a mystery, and although I could see them magically created before my very eyes, I could not understand the process; they started so small and, like specks of illusion, they grew and added to themselves in white and blue until they became large and fascinating. They would float about the glen like living things, then they would come up to us who waited by the roadside, would envelop us until they had excluded everything else from our view; we embraced them and they pressed against us, but we found nothing in our arms. We clutched them with our hands, but our hands remained empty; then they passed us by and went up and up and laid themselves against the sky. One can almost realize what spirit is while walking through a cloud.

The roads up the mountains are kept in perfect condition, and unusual are the sights to be seen while riding or walking. Looking up or down the mountain a dozen different roads may be seen alive with carriages and saddle-horses, some carrying English lads and lasses; and trotting along at a respectful distance are to be seen their Indian servants or guides, with flowing robes and ornamental turbans giving the necessary color to the picture.

On Sunday morning several gentlemen, myself among the number, started on good horses, with the usual number of footboys and a guide, for Tiger Mountain, which is the highest point that can be comfortably reached by man. It is from this mountain that the best view can be had of Mount Everest, that snow-capped giant who stands half in Nepal and half in Tibet, and who has succeeded in reaching higher than anyone else in the wide, wide world, its elevation being *five and one-half miles* straight in the air, or 29,002 feet — the last two feet certainly showing a high aspiration. It is always uncertain, no matter how favorable the sky may appear, as to sunrise in such a high altitude. We were most fortunate, however — more so, we were told, than one in a hundred. When we were within three miles of our destination the guide informed us that we were late; in consequence we pushed our horses to their utmost speed, which added to the excitement and landed us on Tiger Mountain just on time. The conditions proved most favorable. The sun fairly sparkled as it came out slowly from its night clothes. We were thrilled with delight as we saw the first flash of its rays strike the snow-clad peak of Mount Everest, that grandest pyramid of earth. We seemed as though translated to another world, a higher world, the border-land, from which a step would

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place us in heaven itself. The air was as clear and dry as crystal. Out the sun came, full and bright and near; not an inch of cloud above us and nothing but cloud beneath. Our little party of horses, servants, ourselves and guide, were suspended between two worlds! We had entirely passed the clouds and there seemed a double sky, one above and one below, or, in appearance, as though we were on an island surrounded by a shoreless sea.

I can never recall that pony ride up the mountain without being thrilled with emotion; for the grandest event that has ever yet occurred is the birth of day. If one wishes to realize the littleness of self and the greatness of the infinite, let him stand upon the mountain and watch the dawning of the morning, the separation of day from night.

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Wondrous Nature was throwing off the covering of the night. My whole being was thrilled with admiration; my sense received a distinct shock; and for the moment I was completely overcome in contemplation of that stupendous power which governs and moves the machinery of the universe.

The stars shone bright when we started up the mountain, and we watched them fade away, one by one, until they were all lost in the peep of day. Soon it became light enough to look far into the distance, and we were impressed by the immensity of the scene. Mountain after mountain following one another, some rockbound, but one especially stood apart holding millions of acres together, the clouds hugging the sides of it as it gave the blade of grass drink, dampened the leaf on the tree and moistened the tiny wing of the smallest insect. The question came to me while on that pony's back: "Is one of us of any more account than a blade of grass, a leaf on the tree, an insect on the leaf, or a drop of dew on the wing?" And through the solitude of the mountain the answer seemed to come very distinctly, "No; all life is one."

The natives that inhabit the mountains are called 'hill people.' They are a healthy race and have great strength and endurance. The women are amazons, and carry loads on their backs up the steep mountain in a way that astonishes the European. . . .

The mothers of all countries have a peculiar fashion of their own for carrying the baby. Up in the Himâlayas the little one is tucked away in a warmly-lined basket with a strap attached that is thrown over the mother's head to support the welcome burden, and when the child cries for food, the basket, by means of the strap, is swung around in front and the baby soon finds itself, like a little star, in the milky way. Fair or market day comes once a week, and is a gala day. Thousands of natives, clothed

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in bright colors and weighted down with jewelry, congregate from the country round about. They make the market-place look like an odd mosaic of human life. Little shells named 'cowries' represent the smallest value in money. It takes from sixty-five to eighty-five of them, according to exchange, to equal in value one cent of our currency.

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT IN CHINA

Sian-fu (Shan-si), November 5, 1921



DEAR LEADER AND COMRADES: It has been practically impossible for me to write a letter since I left Shanghai, and even now it is pretty hard, as I am short of time and have a heap of things to do at this far-off place. Well, I have been traveling for over ten days, the three first with the railroad and then seven days in a mule-litter, and neither the Chinese railway-cars, nor the mule-litters, are places where you can write letters. You are thoroughly shaken up in both conveyances, but the mule-litter is, of course, the more interesting means of locomotion.

I will give you a few hints about the journey, but first you ought to know that I finally have reached what is considered the heart of Old China — Sian-fu, which is the same as a part of the ancient city of Chang-an, the capital of China during its greatest periods. It is said to have been founded by the first emperors of the Chow dynasty, some 1100 years B. C. and it served as the capital of the realm (with some interruptions) for about two thousand years. During the glorious days of Tang it was a metropolis of the world, famous for its palaces and gardens, its temples and its schools, its commerce and its general culture, and for many other wonderful things about which Sir Kenneth can tell you more than I, thanks to his long memory! As a matter of fact, when you see the town in its present state, it is harder to realize its ancient glory than if you only picture it in your imagination. I will try not to destroy too much of the poet's vision.

Sian-fu is the most western place in China that I expect to reach, the center whence the roads radiate north and west, to Mongolia and to Tibet. If the roads were a little better in this country, Sian-fu would not be so difficult to reach, but under present conditions the journey to this place is indeed long and tiresome — longer than the crossing of the Atlantic on a fast steamer, although the distance from the present railway terminal to Sian-fu is only about two hundred miles. This distance is, however, seldom made in less than six and a half or seven days, in mule-carts or

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mule-litters, the latter being preferable as they do not get stuck in the mud so easily. You may know that the litter is carried by two mules on long poles and consists of a vaulted canopy made of straw under which you can arrange yourself fairly well, if you have some suitable pieces of luggage and some bedding to sit on.

I made a party with two American boys, who went up to Sian-fu on behalf of the Y. M. C. A., one of them being a particularly useful traveling companion because he speaks fluent Chinese. (I had, to begin with, an interpreter but he lost his nerve at the beginning of the road and went home.) The road was partly very interesting; it led for the first two or three days through sharply cut canyons, rising to a height of fifty to one hundred feet above the level of the road, and formed by what is called the 'loess soil.' Some variation was offered by the rivers (tributaries to the Yellow river) which were crossed either on scows or simply by wading, the water being very low at this time of the year. Then we went up over some fairly high mountains (at least five hundred feet) and got some fine views of the Yellow river — one of the most majestic waterways I ever saw. Yet I think that the finest sights we had during the earlier part of the journey were the old walled cities we passed, two of them consisting only of walls, the city itself being completely wiped out (leveled to the ground) during some revolution.

Generally speaking, nothing is more beautiful and characteristic in China than the monumental city-walls which are to be found around every city of any age or self-respect. After we had passed from the province of Ho-nan into Shen-si (which is more like a different state than simply a different province) the country became more open, the road wider — it was the old imperial road lined for miles with fine willow-trees — but it led partly over very low ground, close to the Usi river, where the mud sometimes got so deep that the mules could lift their feet only with great difficulty. Once my mules got stuck, lay down in the mud and turned the litter over. At that moment I was, fortunately, not seated in the litter, so I only saw my things rolling out in the mud, but on an earlier occasion I actually had the experience of being turned over with the whole litter just at the moment when I was trying to take a photograph. Neither the camera nor the passenger was seriously hurt.

From the above hints you may have got some notion about the slowness of the journey; as a matter of fact, we walked about three quarters of the time, easily keeping up with the mules. We started every morning at daybreak and arrived at the resting-places before sunset, it being considered unsafe to travel in the dark because of the condition of the roads and the robbers who were supposed to stop travelers at night. We heard exciting tales about these bandits (who are mostly unpaid sol-

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diers) but we saw none. The travel in the mule-litter (or walking) was as a whole interesting and refreshingly new, in spite of its slowness and the trying roads, but the nights in the inns were really too bad for civilized human beings. These inns are practically speaking fitted only for mules and similar animals, not for "homo sapiens." They consist mostly of a courtyard with stables, sometimes adjoined by mud caves or huts where travelers are supposed to stay over night. One night we slept in a cave, another in the open stable, else in some sort of sheds or mud cabins which kept out neither the odors of the animals nor the winds, etc. But we had our camp-beds and the day's walk gave us mostly a good, sound sleep. Yet, I could not help thinking about the delight of a clean bed in a sheltered room. I will have to do it all over again on my return journey, possibly under worse conditions, because of the increasing cold. I expect to stay on here until the end of November.

Here in Sian-fu I found quite comfortable quarters at the home of Mr. Haggirst, a Swedish missionary of a broad-minded and very sincere type, and I get all the assistance I need through the kindness of the westerners living here, *i. e.*, the postmaster, a tobacco agent, and some English missionaries and physicians, besides Swedish missionaries. They are all anxious to be kind and helpful to the very rare foreigners who reach this far-off place. I have already been introduced to the military governor of the province, General Fung, who is the autocratic ruler of this district, and a man of some ethic ideals. He is deeply interested in educational questions, etc. He asked me to give a talk to his officers (in English, with a Chinese interpreter); and I will probably tell them something about Scandinavian history. He is living like a soldier in a tent, and he had some of his foreign friends (including me) yesterday to a quite simple dinner. The man is an interesting specimen of a new type of Chinese leaders — but I am afraid that he has not enough wisdom and the deeper insight into human nature necessary to accomplish anything outside of the training and education of his soldiers. I may have an opportunity of saying something more about this general later on.

I would not attempt to give you now any account of what this city is like, because I have studied it only for two days. Yet I have found very little that could be regarded as remains of the Tang capital — only some fine pagodas and towers. But even if the walls are rebuilt later, they are the most magnificent city walls in China, and here are quite a number of smaller monuments and sculptures of the Tang time. The city has altogether a real old-fashioned Chinese character and gives one a different impression from any of the more western cities in China. The foreign influence is of very small account here, and two weeks here are more valuable

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as an introduction to old China than a year in Peking or a lifetime in Shanghai.

Now I really have to stop although I have hardly told you anything of general interest, or anything worthy of the subject. But some day you will hear more from me about old Changan.

This letter may reach Lomaland about Christmas-time; it is filled with good wishes and the greetings of my heart to the Leader and to all the comrades. When shall I hear from you?

Yours faithfully,

OSVALD SIRÉN

(Professor in University of Stockholm, Sweden)

OUR DIVINE HUMANITY

H. TRAVERS, M. A.

“Theosophy considers humanity as an emanation from divinity on its return path thereto.”

“Our Higher Self is a poor pilgrim on his way to regain that which he has lost.”

“Let once man’s immortal spirit take possession of the temple of his body, and his own divine humanity will redeem him.”— *H. P. Blavatsky*



THESE quotations sum up the Theosophical view of the origin, nature, and destiny of man; and are a challenge to a very different view that has been trying to force its way — the view that man is a mere biological product, at the mercy of hereditary tendencies, in a chaotic universe.

The important part of man is that divine part which was shut up within a body of clay, to work its way to light and liberation through the valleys of earthly experience.

In man’s nature is a ‘dual mystery,’ and his present stage of evolution is preparatory to a further stage wherein greater knowledge will be his.

Throughout nature we see the divine spark of universal life and intelligence struggling to manifest itself in a thousand ways and degrees; but nowhere in such full measure as in man. Yet man himself is but an imperfect vessel, and before him lie stages where he will be able to reflect more of the divine light, and where knowledge will replace his present ignorance.

Any doctrine of evolution must perforce allow that stages of greater perfection lie before man.

But man can accomplish evolution only by the unfolding of something that is already latent within him. This something is the divine part of

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his nature, present with him from the first, but not yet fully manifested. Man is in fact growing, just as a child grows out of his infantile mind into full adult sense, or just as a seed puts forth first a twig, then leaves, then flowers, and at last fruit.

In man the process of evolution is conscious. He has the divine gifts of self-contemplation and conscious volition. He does not wait for nature or chance or some external power to accomplish his growth, but achieves it himself by the exercise of his own prerogatives.

The hope of the future lies in our power to recognise our own responsibility and ability to further human evolution. Theosophy restores to man his lost sense of his own dignity and value. True, there is conceit to be found in plenty, but vanity is a poor substitute for self-respect; and along with this vanity goes an equal amount of self-distrust and pessimism.

Is this doctrine of the light within a mere dogma or theory, or is it an actual fact? Let each man demonstrate for himself. Theosophy proclaims it as a fact, and points the way to its proof.

The teaching that a second birth is possible for man is very ancient. We find it in the Gospel in Christ's private instructions to Nicodemus, where he says that man is born once of the flesh, but must be born again of the spirit; and Paul also expounds the same tenet. It was a cardinal doctrine of Mithraism, which was at one time a formidable rival to Christianity. We find it in Egyptian rituals and prayers. It implies that the forward step which the human race in general will one day take, can be taken by individuals at any epoch. It implies an awakening similar to that which a child achieves when he passes from the childish consciousness to the self-consciousness of older life. It is expressed in the phrase 'Paradise Regained.'

Redemption means the arousing of the Soul in man to a conscious power, so that by its aid the weaknesses of the lower nature can be overcome. For this teaching, the teaching of Christ, sundry doctrines of propitiatory sacrifice or vicarious atonement are often substituted. Yet, as the whole human race never accepts one savior, but one part exalts Jesus, another Buddha, etc., so a plan of salvation limited by such individual teachers would not comprehend all humanity and is obviously tinged with injustice. It is the Higher Self of man, the God within, that is his savior.

The teaching has of course been abused, as things always are; and we shall perhaps find cults or societies using the term 'Higher Self' and going in for some kind of selfish 'meditation.' But this is far from being the spirit of Theosophy; Theosophy inculcates active practical work in the cause of humanity. Such 'meditations' serve only to induce morbid mental conditions and are fraught with danger to the mental and physical

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balance. We must therefore discriminate between the true teaching and its counterfeits.

A man should try to purify his character and motives; realizing that his higher nature seeks opportunities for expression, and will make itself felt through the voice of conscience in proportion as he sets aside his selfish desires.

It is important, too, to bear in mind that personal separateness is an illusion pertaining to the state of consciousness in which we are ordinarily living; and that the higher part of man's nature is not qualified by such separateness. From which it can be seen that one who practises these selfish 'meditations' is likely to enhance his own personality; whereas he who engages in helpful practical work develops the unselfish part of his nature and is thereby much nearer the light.

There is a tendency in modern psychology to study intimately the subtil propensities that manifest themselves in our character, and to overestimate their importance. This sort of psychology has the effect of instilling into us the idea that we are largely at the mercy of such propensities. It is far more important to dwell upon the power of self-mastery inherent in our nature. We may be told that propensities, if repressed, will burst out in some morbid form; but this is only what happens when we practise the hypocrisy of hiding them while keeping them. If they are banished and eradicated altogether, they cannot burst out in morbid forms. Such propensities are various forms of selfishness, perverted into grotesque shapes; they can be starved at the root if we discourage the selfishness in our character and bring out the better elements. And this can be done by faith in the essential divinity of man, and conviction that man really is in essence a spark of divinity temporarily obscured.

It is most important for the future of the race to supplant all beliefs that tend to destroy man's confidence in his divinity, whether such beliefs call themselves religious or scientific; and to substitute for them a knowledge of the efficacy of purity of heart and right motive.

AGE NOT DECAY, BUT RIPENED MATURITY

F. P.

“What have ye done with the bodies ye once had?”



AGE and decay have come to be practically synonymous in reference to human beings in the modern life of over-strain, wrong use, and abuse of the human organism. The rare examples which controvert this general fact are not sufficiently marked by extended longevity and continued powers to establish a positive exception in the life of today.

Yet examples are not lacking of extended age without loss of physical strength and mental energy. During the exigencies of the Great War, in the French armies were many old men who were not excelled by the younger troops in endurance, while in the office and executive work of the nations, instead of proving weak and inefficient, aged men were not only of equal endurance, but proved more reliable and capable than youth. They disproved the notion that only young men are fit and capable in the active pursuits of life, which had relegated the elders to inaction and often want and poverty after long years of faithful service. This has become the curse of old age — an unjust and reasonless cruelty.

Statesmanship has always been crowned by age in the affairs of nations and the world, and the same qualities are equally efficient in the professions and business. And in the Bible the death of many persons is mentioned, and of their being of extreme age — centuries old — but not of one who dwindled away and died of declining strength of body or mind.

It is, then, a logical conclusion that longevity and sustained powers were the order of life in the time recorded of, from the fact that the cases referred to were not mentioned as being special, or in any way remarkable; hence the rule.

In those days people lived moderately and were physically and mentally temperate; were natural in their living, and knew nothing of our modern hurry, drive, strenuousness, indulgences, and excesses. They had not learned of the life which makes inroads on the noblest and most exquisite work of conscious Nature, the human organism,— a mechanism of surpassing delicacy and strength, endurance and beauty, divinely endowed with mind, heart, and soul. The ancients earned the right to live as men until their allotted work was done, and then to go out of seasoned and matured habitations returned to Nature evolved and not in ruins. If it is a function of the soul to raise and perfect matter, what material other than its body is it in such intimate association with, or

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as responsible for? Surely it must be unlawful for it to leave its body degraded by decay!

It is not insignificant that a Teacher asked: "What have ye done with the bodies ye once had?" — specially significant to those knowing of Reincarnation.

The natural order of life shows youth in impetuous, irresponsible action, and age for responsible direction, strength, and wise counsel. These facts point to vigorous longevity as being the true condition of human life. We know that modern life diverges from its natural or true lines, especially in the use and care of the body and in overtaxing the mind. And this debilitating work has been going on progressively since history began, so to us of today it seems the natural condition to be ailing and in decline. But is this a valid reason for our depleted condition?

When puzzled over our own behavior, or when seeking to establish misrule as right rule by evidence of its universality and long continuance, it is easy to set ourselves right by referring to nature and its laws. For, a part of that common life, we cannot at the same time live apart from it.

We can abuse and violate its laws, surely, by misusing our godlike powers — and did we lack this essential divinity in our natures, the human race would have destroyed itself long ago. By the interposition of this divinity in opposition to man's destructive or lower nature, he still survives as a noble ruin, to signify what men were before human beings made wrecks of themselves.

Turn to nature! The seed is planted, the shoot springs, and the tree grows in size and strength. Finally, of age, it buds, blooms, and bears fruit. According to their importance as sustainers of life, some live twenty, others fifty, and a hundred years, while a few seem to defy time, like the Sequoia. These Cyclopean monarchs, whose lives reach back into antiquity, yet tower with the mountains, still in their prime, looking undismayed into the future. Eternal, they seem.

And of the fruit of the trees: from blossoms to substantial balls of green, which expand in the sunlight and air, fed from within by the flowing sap, till grown. Until now the energy has been expended in the growth of the young fruit, and this had depended on the ground almost wholly. For the atmosphere and sunlight have had to do with its surface, its cuticle. And the orchardist will tell you that it is during the formative and growing time that the conditions are most delicate and dangerous to the life of the fruit.

And here it may be remarked that the green fruit of the trees is contentedly dependent — glad to grow, assisted and supplied by the parent-tree and smiled on by the sun, perhaps observing how things are done, and not thinking it knows everything, like the growing human.

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But the full-grown green fruit is ready to ripen into maturity. Now the process changes. The sun becomes the provider while the supply from the ground dwindles. And so the alchemy of the heavens penetrates the ready fruit, maturing the flesh, giving the fruit character or quality and flavor, and its surface blush or golden dress.

So is the fruit grown, matured, and prepared for the use of man. Of ripe age, perfected in form and development, is there any decay? Instead, the fruit is perfected ready for use. Nor if utilized by life will decay ensue, though the form changes. Only if left useless on the tree will it be attacked by disease and fall to the earth in decomposition.

Is man less than the flower and fruit, or like it — not as he now appears and is, but as he would be if living up to his nature? With body, mind, and heart matured in ripe age, then, and not till then, is a man fully fit as a utility in life. From material life drawing only needed sustenance for his mature strength, with mind and heart ripened and colored rich by the soul's light, the *man* first becomes of age; becomes effective as a helper of his fellows and a competent nurseryman in life.

Then with his allotted work done, the man goes to rest leaving to nature not a wreck of decay — sickness and disease — but the material being with which he has been most intimately associated is raised in its evolution into greater perfection, ready for nature's other uses. Ready for his return, not to take on a material degeneration, but the adequacy of material being which his previous right use entitles him to.

If the business of the soul is to gain strength and to raise itself up by entering and working to perfect matter, then it is logical and inevitable that it should leave its body more highly evolved and perfect than when it was taken on. And it is equally true that nothing can be deprived of the fruit of its labor. What a soul earns it gets.

This physical process of growth and maturity implies that the man has carried on a like evolution of his immaterial being; that he has recognised and organized himself as a spiritual entity in and ruling a material body. If the man has done this then he has spiritualized his being of flesh with a preservative against decay.

Instead of doing this work of preservation, for centuries man has lived a material life giving little regard to his spiritual being. For this reason he has made himself heir to the body of decay, which impairs his energies and faculties. In this connexion it is significant that the ancient Egyptians — one of the most spiritual peoples of record — preserved the bodies of their dead to remain intact for thousands of years. Did they have in mind their reincarnating needs, with knowledge of the progressive degradation of human beings? They were a wise people, their knowledge was greater than ours; they had a deep reason for whatever they did.

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“What have we done with the bodies we once had?” The illuminated minds, the loving hearts, and glorious souls? Why do we continue to crucify ourselves and be of the ‘living dead’? Our birthright as god-like beings is waiting for us to claim it legitimately. As essentially divine beings we are masters over life, over decay, and over death.

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(Continued from the December issue)

R. MACHELL

MEETING Jonas in the yard on his return to Crawley, Mark spoke of the necessary repairs to the footpath and stiles, and told him that old Sally had taken a strange fancy to Miss Margaret, who, to please her, had called her Granny. Jonas took off his cap and scratched his head as he replied:

“That’s strange! She had a daughter that was as handsome a lass as any in the county; and more’n once I’ve thought of her when I’ve seen Miss Margaret smiling. She must have smiled at Sally, as she would. The old woman’s lived alone since Molly went away; and that was not long after Captain Richard’s father was sold up, and the Captain went to America. Ay! She was a handsome lass, was Molly, poor girl! She’s dead, I reckon, and the old woman would take kindly to our little lady; bless her heart.”

“Ay, bless her heart!” ejaculated Mark devoutly, watching the little figure crossing the garden in the evening light. She seemed to him like an embodied benediction transforming every house she entered with her mere presence.

The experience of the afternoon had shown him that he had not rightly understood the impersonal quality of true happiness. He had attempted to appropriate to himself the blessing of her presence, and had looked on it as if it were a personal possession, which truly was as little his as was the sunlight or the air.

There was so much to think of, as they sat together after tea, that they forgot to talk, dreaming, and weaving colored threads of fancy into the dull gray woof of memory, creating mystic pictures such as fill the tapestry of human history, and straining to drive back the ghosts and ghouls that lurk in the dark places of the mind ready to reassert their lost supremacy.

At last the strain became unbearable, and Maggie turned for comfort and forgetfulness to the old piano. Mark watched her with a sense of infinite content. He felt that after all he had not lost her. The clouds of memory were rolled away before the sunlight of the music; and the inner world of pure imagination opened to the eyes that can translate the harmonies of sound into harmonious vision; and when at last the twilight darkened into

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night, even the silence seemed to glow with an inner radiance, in which no haunting ghost could hide.

That night the wind was still, and Mark was tempted to prolong his evening stroll and linger in the garden till the moon came up out of the sea and made the darkness visible. He stood beside the gate and watched the moon rise, wondering as usual why the changing moods of nature seem so significant to man, who lives habitually in disregard of all her laws, if not in opposition to them. The outer world seemed more incomprehensible to him than the inner life of fancy or imagination, more full of inconsequences and incongruities; its temper more uncertain, its moods more treacherous. Therefore the calmness of the night excited his suspicion, and aroused anticipation of a storm of some kind.

The shadow from the barn fell right across the lawn, and lost itself among the trees that overhung the cart-road leading to the lane from Crawley Cove to Winterby highroad. The lane was still occasionally used for carting cobbles from the beach to mend the road. Occasionally, also, the coast-guard's men would use the lane as a short cut to the 'Boar's Head,' thinking that their digression from the strict path of duty (which lay along the cliff) would thus attract less notice. Mark knew of these digressions, but felt no need to call attention to the matter. So he was not surprised to see a shadowy figure cross the streak of moonlight on the road, where the gate stood set in a thick and bushy hedge. But his mind jumped back to the night of Margaret's arrival; and he wondered what had become of the two men who alone seemed to share the knowledge of that strange advent. Surely such men would not keep silence once they were safe from punishment for their misconduct. Probably the story would come round in time to Winterby in some unrecognisable form, and in due course would pass into a local legend.

Expecting to see the figure pass an open space a little farther on, he kept his eyes upon the strip of moonlight, but with no result. Thinking the man had passed unnoticed, he turned towards the barn, and saw a figure standing at the garden-gate. Was this one of the men returned in hope of further hospitality? Mark chuckled to himself as he accosted the man quietly, asking his business there at such an hour. The greeting was returned in a low voice that seemed familiar, but was not what he expected. He went nearer, repeating the inquiry: "Who are you?"

The stranger's face was shadowed and not easily distinguishable in the dim light. His answer was a counter query, quiet and courteous: "Whom am I speaking to?"

Mark answered curiously: "I seem to know your voice; but who it is I cannot guess. Who are you?"

The other shifted his position to see better whom he was dealing with, and seemed satisfied as he answered: "I guess you are the man I want. You must be Mark Anstruther."

Mark persisted: "And who may you be? You know my name: that is not difficult in such a place. Besides 'more people know Tom Fool than

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Tom Fool knows.' Where have I heard your voice? Where have we met before?"

"What makes you think that we have met before?" asked the stranger, not aggressively, but as if curious to know.

Mark answered simply that he thought he knew the voice.

The other laughed as he said: "That's not unlikely. I think you had my father for a partner."

"What? Dick Cayley? Was he your father?" whispered Mark in sudden alarm lest the conversation should be overheard.

The other answered quietly, as if he realized the subject might be a delicate one to this respectable country gentleman. He explained:

"I heard of you in California, as an honest fool with mining claims to sell that no one cared to buy; and that the man I speak of was your partner. I was looking for him then, and meant to settle my account with him; but was too late. He got away with you and neither of you came back that way. Is he dead? He must be, or you would not be here with money in the bank. He would have had it out of you. Did you kill him? If you did, no one who knew him would have blamed you."

Mark peered into the man's face, muttering: "Another Cayley!"

"No, that's not my name. The only name I have a right to is my mother's, so I have chosen one to suit myself. Hugh Trevor is my name at present."

"I understand," said Mark. "But how did you find me out? What are you after? Money? Or do you propose to claim your father's former property. I warn you my title to it is good: but if you want money. . . ."

The young man waved his hand lightly as he answered: "Make yourself easy. I have no claim on the estate of Richard Cayley and still less on you. He was a bad man, as I guess you know: though you must have been a match for him, or he would have cleaned you out and left your bones to the coyotes, as he did to others that had called him partner. No! I'm not after money, what I want is information. Won't you ask me in? I will behave myself, although I had Captain Cayley for a father. Even he was once a gentleman, I suppose; and I have inherited that much, at any rate, that I like to think myself a gentleman too."

It had begun to rain. Mark had not noticed it, but apologized for his inhospitality. He led the stranger in and offered him a chair, at the same time placing glasses on the table where the decanter stood beside an old tobacco jar. The visitor was evidently a sailor, young, almost a boy, apparently with Spanish blood in his veins, but with a strange likeness to his father. He thanked his host courteously and filled a pipe, then drank his entertainer's health in sailor fashion and lapsed into silence, watching the fire on the hearth. And Mark looked at him with pity, as he thought "another of Dick Cayley's victims." Then the wind blew a branch against the window and the sound recalled the shack out there among the mountains; and he wondered what was the tie that bound him to this family; in what past life had it begun — where would it end? Suddenly Hugh Trevor spoke.

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“How did I find you out here? I’ll tell you. I met a man not long ago who said he had been in the coast-guard service. He was a famous liar: but he told good yarns of the old smuggling-days, and mentioned a family of gentleman-smugglers, the Cayleys of Crawley: said he knew the house, and the man that owned it now, Mark Anstruther, an American, who had been partner with Captain Cayley in California. That made me curious to come and see if it was true. I had believed you must be dead, if you were the man I heard of over there. And then I had a foolish notion that perhaps it was Dick Cayley himself who had come back to his old home after getting rid of one more partner and borrowing his name. That was a way of his, but he could hardly have put it over them all here. But when I got to Winterby I made inquiries and knew then that certainly Mark Anstruther was not Dick Cayley; also I heard he had a niece of his to keep house for him, Rebecca Micklethwaite by name. I asked the way to Crawley, and a coast-guard showed it me; asked him too about the wrecks and things and found that other fellow had lied considerable. This man knew all the Micklethwaites, and I soon found I was on the wrong tack, thinking the girl they spoke of as your niece was some one I was looking for, a daughter of the man I call my father. They said her mother was a gipsy. I don’t know, she must have died before my mother met that devil. Still, I was her brother, and I always meant to find her out and be a brother to her if she needed me. I fancied I was on the track this time, thinking you might have adopted her as your niece out there. Well, listening to this fellow’s yarns I went too far and lost my way coming back: but I was bound to see the house at least, Dick Cayley’s family mansion. So he’s dead, you say?”

Mark nodded. “Yes, he’s dead. He had a deed that was his title to this bit of an estate, which he had pledged for more than it was worth by making it appear ten times as big. I redeemed the deed as soon as I was able, and came here to live. It’s good enough for me, though not worth what I paid for it one way and another.”

Hugh Trevor was still holding to his point, and asked again: “You saw him dead? You’re sure it was no fake? He played that game before.”

Mark shook his head. “There was no fake about it. He wanted to live and share the profit of my claims. It was he who believed in them, not I. He died on the road in a deserted shack, and I left him there. He was right though about one of my claims; it turned out trumps. But that was not his doing: I owe him nought.”

The young man laughed sardonically. “I can believe that. I guess you are the only partner of his that ever came off alive, let alone owing him anything. What I want to know is what became of the little girl said to be his daughter by the gipsy mother, who was a dancing girl. The child was taught to sing and play by an old Spaniard that was crazy about her mother. She died, the mother did, and Cayley used the child to get money for him by her singing and dancing. I was a child myself, but she was twice as old though small for her age. She passed for a child even when she was a woman. At

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last she left him with the Spaniard who was her teacher; and that made her father mad. He turned on me, because I was no gold-mine, such as she had been; and also because he was tired of my mother. He made my life a hell; and when I left him to earn money for myself, he found me out and took it from me, making me work for him, until I quarreled with him over a particularly dirty trick he played me, and I ran away to sea. After that he left my mother, who was sick and could not work for him, and she died of want. When I heard that I started to get even with him; but he got away with it after all; perhaps it's better so. He was my father. That was all long before you met him. His luck must have gone back on him at last. He was getting old, and women laughed at him when he tried the old game on them; but still they say he kept up his old bluff and called himself a gentleman. His luck was wonderful, he always could find some one to believe in him even to the last. I guess you were the last, and you saw him lying dead in a deserted shack and left him there. I would have buried him, if I'd been there, even if I had killed him myself, as I intended to at one time. I would put a stone on top of him to keep him down, and I'd have written on it: 'He was accursed in his life: death has wiped out the score.'"

"Amen," said Mark. "Let the dead rest, if they can."

There was silence for a while, then the boy asked thoughtfully: "Do you believe in hell? I see no sense in it. My father made my life a hell for me; but what good would it be to me that he should go to hell, although I would have liked to send him there?"

Mark nodded his head. "Exactly: that is why I say let the dead rest, if they can. As for what follows death, it's mostly guessing. There's hell enough in life, I think, and the only way out of it that I know is to forget the past. Hell may be on both sides the grave, for aught I know: but I say let the dead rest if they can."

Hugh Trevor returned to his inquiry: "You surely must have heard tell of Juanita? That was the name they gave her then — perhaps she changed it when she went away. She could make money by singing and dancing. Her teacher was a genius, José Morra, but he was a gambler: and I doubt if she was better off with him than with her father. Morra was cruel, I know. I hated him. Somehow I never feared Dick Cayley as I did José. I think he hated me as I did him; but he was a good musician. I have been at sea most of the time since then, and never heard what became of him or her. I want to find her. I've a notion she has need of someone to take care of her, and I'm her brother."

"What could you do for her," asked Mark coldly. "Could you provide for her, or do you reckon on her supporting you?"

Hugh Trevor sat up stiffly, answering with some heat: "No! not that. You think I must be like my father. I can hardly blame you; no doubt your experience of him would prejudice you. But I earn my living, and save money, too. I could help her at a pinch. I hate to think of her in want.

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That's why I tried to find her: I thought you might have heard of her at least."

Mark felt ashamed of his speech, and said so. "I beg your pardon. I was wrong. I never heard the name of Juanita. I was not interested in Dick Cayley's family history; it was none of my business. We became partners because I thought that he could help me to borrow money on my claims, and because he thought that he could get them into his own hands. He had held better claims than mine, and gambled them away, drunkard and gambler as he was. I hoped to profit by his experience, and he intended to make me pay high for the lesson. We neither of us had much cash, and when he died we had about reached the end of things. Then my luck turned, and money came in as easily as it went out before. So I decided to redeem the loan or mortgage on this place; and came to live here, where I could be as far as possible away from California and the dog's life I lived out there.

"And so, young man, you may as well understand that I'm not thanking you for digging up the past. I've done with it. It's dead; and I say let the dead rest! I want to end my days here in peace. As to Dick Cayley, I bear him no grudge for what he hoped to do. I owe him nothing. My good luck was not due to him. Let him rest in peace, if he can. I'll not disturb his sleep.

"As to your sister. I should say a girl like that would never be without friends of one kind or another; and she has probably by this time settled down comfortably with a home of her own, and asks for nothing better than to be let alone and left in peace to forget the bad times. She has, of course, got another name, and a husband probably. Do you think that he would thank you for bringing up the past?"

Hugh Trevor shook his head and answered patiently: "I've thought of all that, naturally: but I know she was in trouble not so very long ago. I saw her in a dream. She called to me for help. There was a storm at the time and that came into the dream and I thought she would be wrecked, but that was perhaps my fancy reading things into the dream. Anyway, she was alive then and in some trouble. I heard her calling. Dreams are hard to read right. But when I heard that Mark Anstruther was owner of Dick Cayley's home, and me so near, I had to come and see what I could learn of Juanita; Nita I called her. Well, it's getting late, and I'll be gone. I understand the way you feel about it, and I am sorry to have stirred up such unpleasant memories. I thank you for your hospitality, and if you can direct me to the nearest inn I'll be obliged."

He rose to go; and Mark would gladly have been rid of him; but it was pouring 'cats and dogs,' and he could not turn a man out on such a night. Yet he was determined not to have Margaret disturbed, as she would be if she should meet this doubtful relative.

The shock might throw her back into the state from which she had been rescued. He hesitated, asking the boy when he was due to rejoin his ship, and found that Hugh proposed to take an early morning train from Winterby to Hull. So Mark suggested that instead of going to the inn and getting wet, as he would do, the best plan would be to sleep at Crawley and get off at an

early hour, when Mark himself could drive him to the station. There was a comfortable bed-room in the barn, which Mark himself had occupied when he first came to the deserted manor-house, and this he put at the disposal of his guest, who gratefully accepted the offered hospitality.

Mark hoped that by this arrangement the unwelcome guest could be got rid of before Miss Margaret came down to breakfast. And he devoutly hoped that fortune would make it hard for him to repeat the visit.

(To be continued)