

## National Karma

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[Page 3] THE paper of Professor J. R. Buchanan, M.D., in the *Arena* for August, entitled "The Coming Cataclysm of America and Europe", is of profound interest to Theosophists. The Professor maintains, and to quote from the summary of his article given in the September number of the *Review of Reviews*, "that periodicity is a law of nature, and that we are now approaching our revolutionary period. From 1910 to 1916 America will be devastated by a frightful war — a labour and capital war and black and white war — in which the Church will be shattered and the marriage relation approximated to freedom. . . . The Atlantic coast of the United States will be devastated by a great tidal wave. The greatest horror will culminate at New York and Jersey City. ... In the midst of all these terrors of war and flood there will occur a geological convulsion, before which all the earthquakes of the past will seem the merest trifles. After six years the war and horror will culminate, after terrible loss of human life and immense destruction of great cities, in the nationalization of everything on Edward Bellamy's principles. Europe, too, has its great calamity. . . . The beginning of the tragedy will approach with the beginning of the century, and the war will develop in about fifteen years. Two years of sanguinary revolution will be her volcanic outburst from the pent-up fires that are smouldering now in human bosoms". And so continues this prophet of woe; and a watcher says, "So be it". To those of us who belong to the Theosophical Society there is hope and salvation for the sin-ridden world, even when we feel that we must walk through the fiery waves of suffering ere we can hope to be purified and consecrated to our glorious task of helping to push the good ship Progress through the surf of the sea of human misery as we aid at the launch of the twentieth century.

Purified through suffering we must be, for *we are not strong enough*.

Honestly, and without self-delusion, let us look at the situation — we English Fellows of the Theosophical Society. We have been called to enter upon a new life. To us has been whispered a secret from the book of destiny. The solidarity of humanity has become an acknowledged fact. The pain of one is the pain of all. The degradation of the meanest tarnishes the lustre of the highest. Upon us, as the banded army of progress, rests the duty of storming the fortress of avarice; of laying low [Page 4] the castle of indolence; of cutting a pathway and building a bridge that wealth, refinement and knowledge may pass unscathed from the rich to the poor; that the dignity of toil, the discipline of sacrifice, the beauty of willing service may send its quickening force from the poor to the rich.

Fifteen years of stormy strife have passed over our Society, and, at least, some of our comrades have been enrolled in the army of battle.

While gratefully acknowledging the victories of the past, let us examine the camping-ground of the present.

This is what we see: Vast undulatory plains, and, beyond, great cities, both rich with the wealth of the nation. Those who study these things have stated that, reckoned in pounds, one billion two hundred and fifty million is the total sum of these riches.

Great is the power of wealth — great for destruction and blessing — and those who have sworn to make war to the death on the hydra-headed tyrants of sloth and selfishness, find in this produce of nature, and the labour of man, a subtle foe that paralyses their limbs and sends up its intoxicating fumes to their brains and bewilders their senses. For a curious thing has happened on this field of battle, which, more than all else, shall test the strength and the skill of the army of progress.

Prompt and sleepless to guard their own interest, the dwellers of cities have crept like a thief in the night and laid the strong hand of power on the stores of the nation. And, alarmed at the exit, the burghers run after and snatch what they can for their wives and children.

So at the dawn of the day of battle this meets the eye of the soldiers.

Less than a third of the people have seized and hold nearly two-thirds of the produce. Now here is the problem.

Twenty-five million persons of the poorest and weakest of brain, heart, and soul have got to be taught, clothed, and fed with the pitiful portion that is left from the spoils of the spoiler. Four hundred and fifty million left over to rear and make strong for the struggle for life; twenty-five million of people. Less, to count heads, than thirty-five pounds a year, and supply all the wants of each adult creature. The problem is perplexing. Not the less so that out from the walls of the wealth-bounded city the "have-alls" keep throwing, when the fancy may strike them, or the wails of the hungry break the calm of their slumbers, gifts, alms, and donations, subscriptions and sermons, all of which are gulped down with a curse for thanksgiving.

But the worst of the trouble is this: we who are banded together to fight against cruelty and wrong are smeared with the mud of that city of wealth and corruption. Most have been reared on the spoil of the spoiler. In our brains are the fumes of the incense our parents have lighted to make thick the air that surrounds us, and keep out the sight of the [Page 5] close-lying sorrow. Our hearts have been seared by the sight of want and distress at our doors. Our ears have been deafened by the cry of our sisters cast out and trodden to death because they were poor and polluted.

We know that poverty, anxiety, and that which springs from these conditions makes the average length of life of the artisan classes little more than half that of their professional brothers. We know that from fifty to fifty-five per cent, of the infants of the working classes *die* before they reach five years old. How should it be otherwise when their mothers are at work, weaving and washing, making all bright and clean, for their

rich sisters, who only lose eighteen per cent., or less than one in five, instead of one in two of their dear children ? And yet these working-men and women have hearts as sore, as they hear the dull sod fall upon the tiny coffin as would be those of their wealthy employers. We know that the Mansion House Relief Committee Report four years ago told us there would be from seven and eight thousand men apply daily, and *apply in vain*, at the docks of London for labour, for the splendid remuneration of four pence an hour. We know the smiling, gracefully-clad ladies will ask in all seriousness. "Do you think the working-men do *right* to strike ?" Would that politeness permitted the counter question, "Do you think, madam, your white skirt is right to wear while children are *dying* for the want of a portion — only a small portion — of that labour you so thoughtlessly absorb ?

Would they see, do we ourselves see, *and act as if we saw*, that at Bethnal Green the infantile death-rate is twice that of Belgravia ?

Well, we say, we must be clean, even if all through the summer months the washerwoman toils for sixteen hours a day, and no one asks what becomes of her baby, and if that is clean. We cannot do without house and pretty furniture. We have come to regard these things as a sign of moral worth — as a passport of respectability. Like Carlyle's witness, we must "keep a gig". Have we not been taught from our youth up that the race is to the swift, the battle to the strong ? Is not success in the struggle for existence proof positive that we who survive are the "fittest", notwithstanding "when we regard the general tone of feeling of our age, whether as expressed in its literature, in its social intercourse, or even more, perhaps, in its amusements, do we not find ourselves in the presence of a society from which real gladness has well-nigh died out, in which hope is almost extinct ?" In spite of our material successes — our victory in the "struggle" — we are human. The sorrows of the crushed and wounded weigh upon our spirits. In our pleasant homes we cannot shut out the thought that "in London there are 60,000 families who live in single rooms, and 30,000 who have no regular homes at all". [Page 6]

In the security of a well-ordered city we are haunted by the remembrance that 73,000 criminals are yearly arrested, that statistics show that "in 1887 the actual prison population was 14,966, and the total number of persons imprisoned was 163,048. The metropolitan prisons contain about 21 per cent, of the whole prison population".

We may try to console ourselves with the thought that these criminals are more comfortably housed and fed in prison than they would be out of prison; but we fail to convince ourselves that existing prison regulations, splendid as they may be for the physical man, are educational establishments well fitted to prepare the delinquents to create good Karma for the "morrow", when, their term of punishment expired, they shall start afresh on the treadmill of free life outside the prison walls.

As we gather round the social board, and feel a glow of hospitable pride as we glance down the long table, bright with silver and glass, and lovely with flowers, the thought will invade us that we are the leaders of the masses, that our pleasures are also their pleasures. Our feasts are made elegant to the eye; but they appeal to the lower nature of man, and from them, too often, baseness and cruelty result. The softly-lighted banqueting-halls, gay with fruits and flowers, and well-dressed guests, find their counterpart in 180,000 public-houses flashing their garish splendours about the highways and by-ways of "merry England" ; and the dark nights find in London alone over 20,000 of these death-traps set to stupefy our people.

As we sip our wine, and join in the flow of happy converse, can we forget that here, in the capital of our boasted civilization, "about 30,000 persons are yearly arrested for drunkenness; of these 15,600 are women ? " Fair and bright may look to the glance of the passing stranger the placid interiors of our far-famed English homes, but let us study the reports of the bankruptcy courts; let us read the report of the Registrar-General, no later back than 1889, and we shall see that "in London one person in every five will die in the workhouse, hospital, or lunatic asylum", and from equally reliable resources we can learn that in the third week of December, 1886, no less than 103,968 paupers were relieved, without including vagrants and criminals.

But what, it maybe asked, has all this disagreeable fact, which good breeding should teach us to keep out of sight, to do with the army of progress?. What have Theosophists to do with these social troubles ?

Does not the doctrine of Karma prove beyond dispute that this suffering *must be*? that the sufferers have earned their suffering ? that all things are arranged, in this best of all possible worlds, with rigid justice ? Are we not told that the "Brotherhood" is to be a fraternity of [Page 7] mind and spirit, not of necessity a Brotherhood of property, where those that have shall share with those that have not ?

Fellow soldiers, comrades in the fight, let us not deceive ourselves! Let us not hug the selfish thought to our hearts. What do our Teachers say ? " Let not the fierce sun dry one tear of pain before thyself hast wiped it from the sufferer's eye. But let each burning human tear drop on thy heart and there remain, nor ever brush it off, until the pain that caused it is removed."

The human tear-drops have reached society's heart, and the low sigh of wailing anguish is rushing on the wind. Those who call themselves Socialists may not be right in their attempted remedies for the sin-sick world. We Theosophists do not think they are, but they voice the misery of those who have, and know not how to give wisely to those who have not.

The 25,000,000 persons whose share of the national wealth is less than £35 per head for each adult may be reaping that which they have sown. But we have heard something about national Karma, and we cannot help asking ourselves whether we, the absorbers of the surplus, may not be making each for himself a future of want, and, perhaps, of degradation.

Not only the disciplinary effect of poverty and the perpetual struggle for bread on the toilers has to be considered, but the educational effect of a life of ease and luxury in the midst of want has to be thought of.

Let it be granted that we have the right to all refinements, all the aid in the upward progress which wealth can give us, and the question remains, for each one to answer for himself, whether we are using this wealth, which we may look upon as a condition in mental and moral advancement, in the best manner possible when we absorb it in personal and social luxury. And here it may be well to state that the word luxury is used to denote all expenditure of the common fund of national wealth beyond what is needed for the maintenance of body and mind in the highest state of efficiency, as an instrument for the Higher Ego. We cannot spend our force in two ways at once. Either we must give up all hope of bringing light into

Earth's dark places, or we must give up our present habits of labour absorption.

For Theosophists at least, there are questions of Karma to reckon with. There is the Karma now being worked out by the down-trodden masses, worked out in such conditions that it can scarcely fail to renew the crop of evil and generate fresh causes of future suffering. The money that is absorbed in personal luxury would at least do something towards placing some of the children, some of the young men and maidens, in surroundings that would be favourable to the growth [Page 8] of the best, instead of the worst, that is in them. There is the Karma that the rich are generating. Here we face the question. We *know* the state of the country. We *know* that if we expend our forces in nursing and cultivating our already abnormal desires for comfort, for luxury, for the pleasures of the senses, of beauty and sweetness — innocent and good as these may be when not founded, as with us, on hideous sights and sounds, pushed back into the darkness of the alleys, but haunts us still — we know that we are making ourselves bankrupt for the *work that serves*. Not only are we enervated, and so have little power to help, but our reserves are exhausted, and we have no longer the means at our disposal. We have swallowed our cake and then, like children, we lament that we have no bread to feed the hungry. We all think to draw a line somewhere, and balance our personal expenditure with our personal income, so that we have a good margin left over for charity. But in the unconscious competition in which most of us are engaged, the margin is too apt to be encroached upon. A successful speculation, a splendid professional reputation, a good stroke of business, results in a bigger house in removal to a more fashionable neighbourhood, increased personal expenditure. The coveted picture is bought, or the long-delayed tour is taken ; indulgences before sternly repressed are permitted, with the consoling thought, "we can afford it". But can we? That is the question. True, we may have *money* enough. But have we *character* enough ? Have we built up in the past such a reservoir of virtue that we can afford to miss this golden opportunity of doing loving deeds ? Are we so cased in the panoply of mercy that we need not fear that one arrow from the bow of worldly-mindedness can penetrate our armour ? Are we, in truth, quite sure that we have attained the hill top, and are content to be as nothing in the eyes of man ? If we have not reached this goal, we who profess to see in Theosophy the guide of life, we who desire, however feebly, to walk along the path, we, at least, cannot afford it.

And another aspect of the question presents itself to him who is desirous to act "today"; to him who sees in the misery of great cities the working of Karma, and who knows that the actions of the present generation are building up a future of happiness or woe for "tomorrow".

Experience of our own weakness, and the object-lesson in constant progress, which is given by our fellow-men, teach that there is practically no limit to our power of labour absorption. The love of luxury grows by what it feeds upon. As he who has set himself to scale the heights of being knows, after ages of struggle and conquest, that he is but at the foot of the mountain, and that before him long vistas still stretch, through which he must toil, so he who is sunk in the pleasures of material [Page 9] existence cannot see the end of the descent into Avernus. Each sense starts up with new and ever new demands, till eye and ear, taste, smell, and feeling become as so many urging demons tempting man to his destruction.

Now, we are willing to absorb about two lives apiece, that we may "have things decent" around us. It may be, with our love of flowers, our delight in soft draperies, shining silver, glittering crystal, that we could find it in our hardened hearts to absorb any number of lives that our money could buy, and think it no sin. But this shows us the need to place a limit on our desires.

There is no danger like the danger of *drifting*. Modern luxury, self-indulgence, and the sweating-dens, which are their outcome, have been brought about by *drifting*.

Not one woman in a hundred — men may be different — knows, or, at any rate, *realizes* that in her pretty drawing-room, her dainty dinners, her elegant dresses, she is absorbing *lives*. Yet it would be well that our board schools and high schools taught the outlines of political economy, with illustrations taken from life. It would be well that men and women should know that their "being decent" means the neglected babes of the East-end toiler being dead.

Now, what limit shall we put upon our desires? It is a question of moment for Theosophists. In this incarnation but few of us will gain "the faculty to slay the lunar form at will". But we may attain to some knowledge of self. We may learn a little bit of the lesson of giving up self to non-self. We may let our soul lend its ear to every cry of pain like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun". The first letters of the sweet lesson of Renunciation all may begin to learn.

And it is time to begin. We may confuse ourselves with formulas of "Destiny" and "Karma", and leave the duty that looks afar off undone, till the duty at our doors is forgotten. As a straw shows the way the wind is blowing, so a small thing, relatively, shows that with us Theosophists there must be something wrong — something that needs the personal attention of each one of us.

Charity, it is said, begins at home, but Theosophists do not much care for charity of the money-giving order. But then they care for Justice; and a person whose expenditure is so regulated that it ignores the claims of justice, stands much in need of a warning to curtail his expenditure.

Have we, who have considered ourselves strong enough to come forward and claim to be enrolled in the band of pioneers to a higher and better life — have we so freed ourselves from the trammels of life as to be able to do our duty bravely and faithfully to our comrades in the fight? Or do we seek to do battle with the shackles of self-love around us, [Page 10] sitting in easy chairs, and dreaming of the millennium? Let facts speak. In the September number of *Lucifer*, Mrs. Besant, as treasurer of the Headquarters Building Fund, has this statement to make: "The burden of the undertaking" (of the establishment of headquarters of the Theosophical Society) "falls very unequally upon those who share its advantages, the members of the staff residing at headquarters who have all given up comfortable private homes and the freedom of individual dwellings, and some of whom have given up in exchange for mere board and lodging appointments at which they earned their living, are those on whom also the chief cost of establishing the new headquarters falls. It will be seen below (in the statement of account appended to the above in *Lucifer*) that more than half the monetary contributions came from them. In addition to this, the members have each furnished his or her room, and among them have almost entirely furnished the two common rooms — the drawing-room and general work-room. . . . The heavy expenditure has been on building the new rooms required for the work of the Society, altering the interior of the house to accommodate the very large "family" of workers, relaying the drain-pipes, and building necessary sanitary accommodation; . . . but the Society, whose work makes it necessary that these rooms should be provided and the three secretaries maintained, ought not to allow the main cost of this provision of maintenance to fall on five or six persons, who give their time and work, as well as all else they have, to the Society".

How is it that when a week of self-denial of poor Salvation lads and lasses can bring in £20,000 to the Salvationists' headquarters, a miserable £136.3s. is all that after fifteen years of Theosophic teaching the European Theosophists of the General Society have to offer for their Headquarters Fund ?

There can be but one explanation. More has not been given because "self-denial" is an unknown quantity. Self-indulgent habits in personal expenditure bring empty pockets. When the demand comes for some felt want there is no reserve in hand to draw upon. And justice suffers. For it is not just that some half-a-dozen self-devoted people should have to bear the burden entailed by the work of a society the advantages of which all fellow Theosophists share. But this small illustration of a gigantic evil is useful to draw our attention to the common national habit of labour-absorption, and to point its inevitable result.

The labourers of the T.S., like the labourers of the nation, have not only to do all the work, but also to furnish the "abstinence" which is the basic foundation of that capital upon which the absorbers subsist. If this state of things is to continue, self-respect, justice, and common honesty will become traditions of the past. [Page 11]

Surely it was with prescience of coming events that the founder of the T.S. wrote in the "*Key to Theosophy*" these words: "No Theosophist has the right to this name unless he is thoroughly imbued with the correctness of Carlyle's truism, 'The end of man is *action*, and not *thought*, though it were the noblest', and unless he sets and models his daily life upon this truth. The profession of a truth is not yet the enactment of it; and the more beautiful and grand it sounds, the more loudly virtue and duty is talked about instead of being acted upon, the more forcibly it will always remind one of the Dead Sea fruit. *Cant* is the most loathsome of all vices, and *cant* is the most prominent feature of the greatest Protestant country of this century — England."

Well, it certainly looks like it. There are many indications that a general feeling is growing up that common justice would do more for the wretched toilers who "drag the coach" than all the *charity* that is poured out like water.

But what society wants is a recognised limit to legitimate personal expenditure in view of children dying of neglect and millions of beings in the centres of civilization creating individual and national Karma in gin-palaces and places too evil to be mentioned. To those really in earnest in their desire to lessen the misery around them, this limit might be suggested: To take as little as possible from the common stock of the nation's produce, and to give to that stock as much.

Here is a limit at once clear and simple.

It saves vain questioning as to the legitimacy of this or that indulgence; it reaches the understanding of the meanest intelligence; it regulates the expenses of the richest as of the poorest. Can any given product of labour be dispensed with without loss to man as a labouring, loving instrument of the silent God ? If the answer is "Yes", then dispense with it.

We may have thought the saying of the Great Initiate, who desired the rich man to sell all that he had and give to the poor, if he would become a disciple, a very hard saying, but it was a simple enunciation of a great truth. The yoke of the follower of the Master is easy, the burden light, but only when the "eye is single". You cannot take your luggage with you into battle. *That* is the burden we bind upon our backs, a burden too heavy to be borne. We Theosophists, with a few bright exceptions, who, with rare insight, have stripped themselves free of useless trappings, think to serve "God and Mammon"; we will draw to ourselves all the bright glory of Ancient Wisdom; we will listen to the voice of our Higher-Self, and the divine spark within us shall receive attention. But why should we make ourselves peculiar ? Why give up habits to which we are accustomed ? Why not do as others do ? We are not [Page 12] miracle workers that we can change the conditions of existence and reverse the experience of mankind. " Ye cannot serve God and Mammon".

We are standing on the eve of a social revolution, if history is to be relied upon for precedent. The cycle of 600 years has run out, and the signs of social ferment, which accompany these upheavals, are upon us. Let us see what is the lesson of the past, and judge what we must look for in the near future. In 1222, as we know, Genghis Khan personified brute force, swept like a living scourge over the Eastern Continent, changing the face of things from the land we now call Turkey to far Cathay. Six hundred years earlier occurred the Hegira. Move backwards again 600 years, and the Star of Bethlehem arises. Yet, again, look back for a like period, and the Light of Asia, Lord Buddha, throws athwart the gloom his bright and gentle rays. Since then we have travelled slowly into darkness, deep and ever deeper. Now, we look forward to the Revolution that shall herald in the dawn, and having touched the depths of materialism, we prepare for the upward curve that shall bring us to the light of Spirituality. But, if the first lifting of the clouds of night has awakened us, if the very fact of our having turned for guidance to wisdom of the past, which, like its source, is the same yesterday, today, and for ever, proves us heralds of the coming day, is it fitting that the rising sun finds us smothered in the down of pillows, stretching our limbs in the soft wantonness of scarcely broken slumber ?

Rise! for the day is passing,  
And you lie dreaming on;  
The others have buckled their armour  
And forth to the fight are gone!  
A place in the ranks awaits you;  
Each man has some part to play;  
The Past and the Future are nothing —  
In the face of the stern today!

We are too much inclined to think when we are called upon to take our share of the rough labour of life that the "evolution of society", "division of labour", or some other meaningless formula, muttered with more or less blind faith in its efficacy, will act like a charm and relieve us of our duty. We are inclined to look upon the advise to take as little and give as much to the world's store as the exaggerations of enthusiasm. But it is not so; for by so doing — for love's sweet sake — we call the hidden force of nature to our aid.

The burdens nature puts upon us she helps us to carry. Those we put upon our own shoulders she lets us faint under, that at last, learning wisdom in the school of experience, we may throw them down.



When we read in "What to Do" that in Russia the harvest cannot [Page 13] be gathered in for want of hands, while men and women are devising amusements to work off their superfluous vitality, we think that things are in a totally different condition here, and that Count Tolstoi's advice to people to leave their recreation and recruit themselves with honest work is inappropriate. But, in truth, things are not so different as they seem. Here the labourers want leaders as well as in Russia. Leaders in labour and leaders in the social amenities which should follow labour in all classes. The poor as well as the rich meet the softening influences of art, of gentle intercourse, of beauty, of sight and sound, the stimulant of music and poetry, to make their lives noble, and enable them to reach the full stature of their manhood. The rich need the discipline of labour, real *productive* toil, not the sham business of unoccupied leisure, which fills up the time of our moneyed classes. It is very good of our public men to come forward and lecture the masses upon the dignity of labour. But something more is wanted. They must show that they honour the calling of the manual labourer by bringing up their children as artisans and labourers if needs be; otherwise they waste their breath. As the rich are, so will those beneath them strive to become. "Already we hear", says the *Pall Mall Budget*, of September 11<sup>th</sup>, writing on Dr. Rhode's lecture at Leeds, "of harvesting delayed for want of labour. The better class labourers have gone into the towns or the colonies; and we know of villages where old men and boys have the bulk of the field work to do". And it must be so, for the lives of the agricultural labourers, in existing conditions, are little better than the lives of the brutes they tend. We have opened schools, and given the poor a glimpse of a higher state of being, and they leave the soil to rush to towns, let the charmer charm never so wisely from the agreeable altitude of the local platform. How pleasant it is to pass our time in the open air in the warm days of autumn ! how lovely are the hop-gardens with their fragrant burdens drooping from the slender poles! Could we not fancy that growing boys and girls might gather hops and health and all the genial influences of Nature once a year, when they crowd from our cities for the summer outing of the poor, without the curse of greed laying its heavy hand upon them, so that the sweet air of heaven becomes laden with a curse, even as the dense atmosphere of slums from which they have fled ? But look at this picture given by that trustworthy paper, the *Inquirer*, and noticed in the *Daily News* of September 15<sup>th</sup> 1890:—

"Hop-growers are now compelled by law to provide [hop-pickers] shelter; but in some instances, we are assured, the only protection afforded is some old army tents, through which the merciless rain penetrates when the strong night wind has not blown them away. Many of the hoppers, [Page 14] according to this authority, are received in wooden huts like rows of pig-sties, in which light enters only by the open door or an aperture in the roof that admits wind and rain. In these whole families herd, and male and female assume the indecent habits of brutes. Many of the most wretched concentrate at Maidstone, and the Local Board there philanthropically fastened a strip of thin calico round the verandah of a storehouse which stands in the cattle market; but during a rough night the calico gets torn to shreds, and sometimes as many as six hundred badly-clad, half-starved people are exposed to the fitful fury of the storm. A year or two ago one poor emaciated woman dragged herself thus far and died during the night. The doctor, at the inquest, said that death was caused by starvation and neglect, and her life might probably have been saved had medical assistance been procured". Now, the death of one poor woman, or of a hundred, does not matter. The load of life must be gladly laid down when carried along in such conditions. What is of consequence is that towns which would pour out money like water for bunting and folly, were some great personage to spend an hour in their neighbourhood, to open a hospital, bridge, or museum, should allow such an object-lesson to be given in its market-place to the rising generation; an object-lesson in callous indifference to human suffering, human misery, and carelessly induced human degradation.

Let the poor suffer in silence, by all means, if such is their Karma, but let not the rich be permitted to absorb their bodies and souls in such fashion as shall generate a fresh crop of evil without protest. It may

not be the duty of Theosophists at the present stage of the Society's growth to concern themselves much with physical philanthropy, and it is not for the *bodies* of the toilers I am pleading; but I want to point out the mental effects which cannot fail to be induced by the possession and absorption of wealth amidst the grinding poverty around us.

"Kill out all sense of 'separateness' !" Feel that each shivering creature crouching in that cattle market, screened from the gaze of the passing stranger by a thin, wind-torn piece of calico, is indeed a sister, doing battle with the lower nature, striving as best she can to learn the lesson of this earth life that she may the quicker enter into her heritage of God-given womanhood, and ask if her claim on humanity is fully met, if her credit-note is duly honoured, when to her is assigned the open "verandah of a storehouse which stands in the cattle market" for lodging.

Let us not forget in our joyous recognition of the treasures offered to the intellect in the teachings of the wisdom-religion that if through the Hall of Wisdom we would reach the Vale of Bliss, we must close fast our senses against the great dire heresy of separateness that weans us [Page 15] from the rest. Glorious and beautiful are the truths we have to make known, as Theosophists, to a waiting world, but these truths can only be shown with the full splendour of the Light of Love upon them, when by *action* we prove ourselves ready to give what "is *due* to humanity to our fellow-men . . . and especially that which we owe to all those who are poorer and more helpless than we ourselves"; till we show in our lives that we realize that" this is a debt which, if left unpaid during life, leaves us spiritually insolvent and moral bankrupts in our next incarnation".