

# THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

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“You will do the greatest service to the state, if you shall raise not the roofs of the houses, but the souls of the citizens; for it is better that great souls should dwell in small houses than for mean slaves to lurk in great houses.”

— EPICETUS, *Fragment* lxxxii; translated by George Long

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### CAN A MAN BE HAPPY?

RALPH LANESDALE

**H**appiness attainable by man? If so, under what conditions? Is it necessarily impermanent? Is it to be found on earth? Is it to be achieved by effort? Or is it to be looked for as a gift from some higher power, a boon, a favor, a reward? Must we live miserably on earth in order to find happiness in another world? These questions and many more float through the minds of masses of people who never stop to answer them in words, but by their individual lives give evidence of the way in which the question has resolved itself for them.

Generally speaking, I imagine that most people feel that happiness is theirs by natural right, even though not by actual experience. Something has occurred in their life to spoil the music, perhaps even to destroy it beyond repair. But still they cling to the belief that happiness is theirs by right. They may have no clear idea of what perfect happiness would be like; but generally speaking it would be a fair guess that the ordinary individual would include the full gratification of all his desires and the free exercise of his individual will as essential to happiness. And this in spite of experience, which shows us that self-indulgence does not bring the desired result.

Of course this universal experience is generally explained away by the supposition that the unhappiness resulting from self-indulgence is due to external causes — the interference of others, the malignancy of fate, the wickedness of the world, miscalculation or mistake, accident or evil intent; but never due to the natural sequence of cause and effect.

But what is happiness? Not the complete satisfaction of every desire, for experience teaches us that there is more pleasure to be found in the pursuit of a desired object than in its attainment. Indeed, there can be no such thing as the complete gratification of desire, for to the senses

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satiety is death, while desire is immortal. The pursuit of pleasure is the path of disappointment.

But leaving aside such a limited conception of happiness as that of sensuous indulgence, we may ask whether bliss can be attained by the gratification of mental desires. Having discarded the lower appetites and sacrificed the gratification of the grosser senses in favor of such aims as wealth, fame, power, the respect of men, and so forth, have we in reality changed our position in regard to the real object which we call happiness? Have we not, rather, changed one set of desires for another? This is a natural step from the first position but in the same direction — that is, self-indulgence or self-gratification. It is doomed to the same failure and for the same reason, for desire is insatiable. The attainment of the desired object merely reveals the fact that the object is not what it appeared to be; and its attainment leaves the goal of bliss as far away as ever.

In this case, as in the former, the attainment of the immediate object brings a terrible sense of the worthlessness of what seemed so desirable from a distance. The excitement of the chase being over, exhaustion replaces the joy of action; hope dies down; and disappointment, the sad crown of self-indulgence, brings despair.

This is an ancient truism no doubt, but as it is universally ignored in practice we may reasonably infer that it is not believed; and one reason of its rejection may be lack of understanding, lack of true knowledge of the laws of nature, lack of a true philosophy of life.

This needed knowledge is to be found in the teachings of Theosophy which illumine the crude facts of experience and save the student from pessimism and despair.

There is a clear reason why the pursuit of pleasure does not bring happiness, and that is, that man is not merely an intelligent animal, living solely for the gratification of natural appetites and personal desires, but is a complex being, seeking self-knowledge as a necessary step in the evolution of perfect manhood.

It is taught that the personal man is indeed little better than an intelligent animal until his Higher Self takes command of the lower nature and guides it in the path of right experience. But even so, the personal man is unconsciously led on by the overshadowing Spiritual Self, and is unable to find happiness in a life that is repugnant to that inner, deeper Self.

The lower personal man seeks satisfaction in the repetition of experiences that can bring only disappointment; for the only lesson to be learned from such repetition is its uselessness. Seeing this, the ascetic philosophers adopted a system of self-mortification as a means of freeing

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themselves from the tyranny of desire. But Theosophy shows the fallacy of this method of attaining bliss, for the desire of the mind for liberation may be purely personal; the bliss so attained is but little more enduring than the pleasure of indulgence and is no liberation from the bondage of the lower nature. This can only be attained by realization of unity with the Real Self, or self-knowledge.

The first step in that direction is to understand the spiritual unity of the Universe, with its practical expression known as Universal Brotherhood. If that ideal can be grasped as the central fact of life, then a big step has been taken in the direction of self-knowledge, for once the fact of Universal Brotherhood is grasped, there is a basis for individual responsibility, which is duty. The performance of duty must be based on the feeling of individual responsibility due to the spiritual unity of all selves in the One Supreme Spirit, the Self of All.

Before this can be achieved, however, it may be necessary to practise self-discipline, self-control, self-forgetfulness, altruism, and all moral virtues, in order to bring the lower nature into some sort of submission to the dictates of the higher. But such virtues become immediately spontaneous on the realization of the true Self and the unity of the Universe. This realization is the result of the spiritual enlightenment of the mind.

As a theory, it may be intellectually grasped, but the realization of it demands the awakening of the soul. Theories of truth may be formulated in the mind, but the realization of truth is in the heart from whence the light reaches the mind as the sunlight shines on a mirror. The mirror itself is not the source of light. I think it would be correct to say that real happiness can come only from this source, and therefore it is taught that all other joys are illusive, impermanent, and merely reactions from pain, the other pole of sensation. If pleasure is indeed merely the opposite of pain, as one end of a stick is the opposite of the other, then it is certain that one cannot exist without the other, for you cannot have a stick with but one end, and however tightly you may grasp it, your grasp will in time relax as your hold on pleasure weakens and disappointment takes its place.

Happiness is to be found in the performance of duty, if that performance be impersonal; if not, the pleasure experienced will be no more than what is commonly called self-satisfaction, which is very closely allied to self-righteousness, a wholly personal condition, entirely different from the state of bliss, which I call happiness, in which all sense of self vanishes. Therefore Theosophy teaches the punctilious performance of duty, not with a view to the happiness to be got from it, but simply from the direct perception of obligation, which must be felt in the heart

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as an impulse overpowering all other considerations of whatsoever kind.

The perfection of such bliss would be a state of ecstasy such as is spoken of in the mystical books of all ages, under many names and allegorical figures. Ordinary human happiness is probably but a reflexion in the mind of the pure inner Light, which even in a momentary flash can transmute all other emotions of the heart into pure gold, as one might say. The purest of metals is still of the earth and the purest joy known to man, however earthly, may be transmuted like gold in the crucible into gleaming light.

Happiness is like the light; joy is like the reflexion of the light on earth or on the sea. Happiness is universal; joy is personal. Therefore the student is taught to work impersonally for the sake of a cause, for the accomplishment of duty, or for love of humanity; and if he cannot work without a personal object, then he is taught to renounce all sense of right in the work as soon as done, and to "place it on the altar of the Supreme," as a sacrifice. Such was the lesson of sacrifices to the gods: the renunciation of all rights and all possessions. But man too often made the sacrifice in the spirit of barter, and trafficked with the gods, and his religion, therefore, became commercialized and lost its spirituality.

Theosophy takes us back to the heart of things, not backward in time, but in the sense of seeking our source and origin in the eternal Universal Self. Feeling the One Life pulsing in our heart, we are aware of Universal Brotherhood, which is Love impersonal, from which the stream of life emerges and to which all must return. The knowledge of this Self is Happiness.

This true happiness is not a possession that can be held, but a condition that must be attained. A momentary glimpse of such a state is enough to alter a man's life and to give him a standard by which to measure all lesser joys. When he has caught sight of the sunlight he will not mistake any reflexion for the source from which it originates.

I am attempting to distinguish between human happiness and the elemental joy of life, which, natural as it should be to all creatures, is almost impossible to man because of his mind and personal desires. Until he has become master of his mind he will be hurried from one desire to another, from one ambition to another, and will lose his natural right to the elemental joy of life and yet be debarred by his own passions and appetites, his wants, his likes and dislikes, his hopes, fears, or regrets, from the pure bliss that is the crown of human evolution. So the poet pictured the Peri at the Gate of Paradise as a human soul fallen from bliss and seeking the key to her lost home.

The mind is the maker of discord. It is the mind that criticizes, seeing only faults and inventing more. It is the mind that measures life

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by little rules, which it mistakes for principles. It is the mind that is suspicious and jealous and mischief-making. The mind is the slayer of man's peace. It must be mastered and put in its place as the servant of man, and that cannot be done till man feels his Divinity in his heart and identifies himself with his true Self. The accomplishment of that victory may be far away, but it is said that the one who enters on the path of self-mastery brings himself within reach of the true Sunlight of Happiness.

### MAN HAS THE POWER TO MAKE HIS LIFE A BLESSING OR A BLASPHEMY

EMILY LEMKE-NERESHEIMER

**L**OOKING around us, at the life of the ordinary individual that we meet daily, watching the faces of men and women as we pass them in the streets, or sit near them in the cars, we cannot but see how eagerly they all seem to be pursuing some special object or aim. Almost everyone looks hurried or worried, and one wonders what they are all and each individually getting out of life. They do not seem to be getting much happiness, on the whole, and so much of the laughter we hear has a hollow, or an artificial ring in it, that makes the heart of the thoughtful man and woman ache; and the question presents itself, "What is the real purpose of life? What is all this hurry and bustle and worry and striving for?"

It does not take much thought to realize through our observations, that a lasting kind of satisfaction or pleasure is not to be gotten out of the gratification of our desires. The more we have the more we want. Each satisfied pleasure leaves us with a feeling of emptiness that urges us to seek to renew the experience but in an intensified degree, and this only leads to disappointment again, and in the end to satiety, and restlessness, and to a feeling of unsatisfied longing for something more, or something different from what we have had before.

A little while ago a notice appeared in a daily paper that a wealthy woman offered a large sum of money to anyone who could suggest to her some new sensation, something new to amuse and interest her, and bring some sort of thrill into her life. Excitement, always more excitement, is what people are asking for, and if they cannot get it they either grow depressed and weary of life, or else they hustle and hurry through life as if they were driven by an invisible force constantly behind them. One cannot but wonder what it is all for, and ask oneself whether there is not,

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after all, some real goal and purpose in life, the pursuit of which would give some actual and lasting satisfaction. We need something that will be a rudder with which to steer our course over the ocean of life to some definite goal that we desire to reach.

What is this rudder? What is this goal? Theosophy tells us that the final aim of man is perfection: that in essence man is divine. He is a spark of Divinity itself, and to find the rudder that will guide him across the ocean of life to the realization of his goal, he must seek to become fully aware of his divinity, and let it permeate him through and through. This Divinity is not a God outside of and above us. As Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is within"; but it is so hidden and veiled over in most of us, that we have almost lost the power to recognise it.

It has been said that it is as difficult to be absolutely and completely evil as it is to reach the sublimest heights of perfection. It must be a long down-hill journey that will lead to the killing-out of everything in the nature that responds to what is sweet and true in life, as must be the case in order to become 'perfect in evil.' However, a glowing sunset, the vast star-lit skies, oft an old half-forgotten melody, a kind word or smile, may awaken a response in the heart of even the hardened and depraved, and the voice of conscience is heard once more, and will not be stilled.

But it is a fact that we must realize, sooner or later, that we can only get just as much as we give. There is a proverb to the effect that as we call into the wood so the echo comes back to us. As the soul reaches out to receive so also must it open out to give. What flows in must also flow out. The moment a selfish impulse to grasp and to hold what we receive for ourselves alone enters the door of our hearts, in that same moment it closes that door to the good which would otherwise flow in. Indeed, happiness and all that is best in life, does not come to us from what we acquire, but from what we give. We soon find out that the satisfying of our desires only begets more desires. We can see this in the case of the man whose whole energies are centered on getting rich. The more he gets, the more he desires to have. The acquiring of more money does not quench his thirst for wealth, it only serves to feed his desire for more wealth, more excitement and power, and with that he grows more and more selfish, restless, and dissatisfied.

And so it is with everything else that man strives to acquire for himself alone. With the acquisition of power he desires more power, with the feeding of vanity he desires more praise; in the end he can swallow such big doses of flattery that everyone else can see what a fool he is, except he himself. Finally, however, disappointment is bound to come, and what then? What was the use of all this craving and striving for things

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which, no sooner acquired, are found to have lost their power to satisfy? Can they be the object and end of life? If not, then we come back to where we started, with the questions: "What is man? What is life? What is the purpose of life?"

To begin with, let us ask, Is he his body? No, he has a body; and what a wonderful complex mystery this body is, composed as it is of myriads of small lives, each a tiny living entity with a consciousness of its own. When we think of it, each of these living entities, however small, has an existence and special functions of its own, of which we, as human entities, realize but very little. While we are sleeping or waking, occupied in one way or another, eating, drinking, working, or resting, these little lives are carrying on their functions, quite apart from the workings of our minds. But at times they come together and send us a message; they will tell us, for instance, that they are hungry, or tired; or they become sick and try to tell us what is the matter with them, that we are perhaps giving them too much, or too little, or the wrong kind of nourishment, or insufficient exercise or rest; and so, when we come to think of it, we are responsible for the welfare of these tiny lives, individually and collectively. In fact, we are the God of this little world of the body, and upon each and all of these tiny entities that go to build it up, depends the welfare of the human organism.

These little lives are similar to others, like themselves, distributed throughout the whole of nature: all dependent and interdependent of each other, verily a brotherhood forming one single organism in nature. Our earth, stones, metals, vegetable and animal organisms of all kinds, all are built up and composed of these little lives, ceaselessly active, striving to fulfill their destiny, to grow and to develop and unfold to the greatest extent of their strength, usefulness, and beauty. However, they possess but an elementary consciousness, and it is only when we come to the human kingdom that we find something that invests the evolving entity with self-consciousness and consequent responsibility.

Here man, and man alone, has the power to shape his ends, and guide his life, by using the will to control his feelings and desires; and, above all, he has the faculty of imagination, which our teacher, Katherine Tingley, has called "the bridge between the mind and the soul of man."

By crossing over this bridge we can go forward and enlarge our sphere of consciousness, and realize that we, as human beings, build up the lives of yet greater entities than ourselves, in the same way as the atoms do that go to build up the human body. There is, to begin with, the entity called the family; then there is another, the community in which we live. A still greater entity is our country, and another the race to which we belong, and then there is an entity greater than all of these, the whole of



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Humanity. Of each of these entities we are a part, however apparently small and unimportant — though not unimportant indeed, for as human self-conscious beings we are, to a degree, responsible for the welfare of the whole, being indissolubly linked up with each and all of its constituent parts. The ideals of the individuals that constitute a family give that family its peculiar character. The ideals of the families that make up the community give the community its character; while the ideals of aggregations of communities again determine the distinctive traits of a nation. Many nations together determine the quality of a race, and the ideals of all races make up the character of the whole of Humanity.

Thus we see again that brotherhood is a fact in the constitution of all aggregate organizations of nature; that we share life with all that lives, and that it is not in any sense a personal possession that we can with impunity fritter away for personal purposes and ends.

With our delinquencies and failings and selfishness we poison the organism of Humanity, as well as our own, and, like effete matter in the human organism, we shall, as useless units, finally be cast out by nature.

But this casting out is in reality accomplished by ourselves. Gradually we isolate ourselves more and more by selfishness and egotism. We lose sight of the greater consciousness of Humanity in which we might at will participate, and the life-currents of sympathy and of strength that flow through the Universe, cease to flow through us, and we grow hard and blind. We cannot live for ourselves alone.

Though in truth there is not anything in the whole wide world that we can really call our own, yet everything is ours, if we know how to take it. For instance, when a person possesses just a little knowledge, he thinks that he knows a great deal, and is very wise. Then, as he begins really to learn something he realizes how vast a field lies unexplored before him, and how truly ignorant he is; at length he finds out that there is nothing that he can think or feel that has not been, or is not being, thought and felt by others also. But it lies in his power to open out his heart and mind to all the best, the noblest, and the highest in the Universe. The store from which he may draw is endless and limitless, and it is his privilege to share it with others, and in that way to make it his own. Then a new urge can spring up in his heart, ever growing in intensity and scope, that will become love in its divinest sense. By means of this love man may realize that he is not only a part of Humanity, but of the whole world, one with everything that lives and breathes, with the whole Universe, and the very soul of the Universe itself. There is no limit to the glory and majesty that man may attain, that his consciousness may embrace.

Our question therefore, "What is Man?" is answered when we say

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that man is divine, being divine in essence. He has the power to catch a glimpse of what his true destiny is, and to make his life a blessing for himself and others, thus truly realizing who he is, what life is, and the meaning and purpose of life itself. By neglecting his opportunities he indeed makes his life a blasphemy — a blasphemy against his Real and Divine Self.

There are two paths before us, and we have the power of choice every moment, every hour. On the one hand we can remain indefinitely partaking of the sensations of the personal life, drifting between pleasure and pain, making our lives a gamble for what we mistakenly call happiness; and on the other we can direct our steps forward in a purposeful way, towards a higher goal, and make our lives a blessing to ourselves and others. Theosophy teaches us that we must be ever watchful of the duality in our natures. At one moment we feel impelled to follow the beckoning hand of nature with all her allurements, and at other times we are possessed of an urge towards the realization of nobler impulses and aims. When our hearts are filled with longing for what is inspiring, true and beautiful, then we realize how unreal our personal wants and aims are and what a blasphemy they seem against the Divine Glory that is seeking to express itself in and through us.

And so we may step out towards the light, or wander in the shadows of alternate hopes and fears, of pleasure and of pain, sinning and being sinned against, blind to our destiny, and in our blindness spurning the divine in our natures, making of our lives a blasphemy indeed. Is not this the sin against the Holy Ghost, of which the Bible speaks? — the repudiation of our own divinity, the unforgivable sin, leading to destruction and to death.

The light of the Divine shines on the pilgrim from the moment that he starts on the upward path, and by degrees on “stepping-stones of our dead selves we rise to higher things.”

The first step for him to take will be the duty lying nearest at hand. By small duties well performed, by little deeds of love for those around him, man sends out a force of sympathy, of love, and understanding that radiates in all directions, in ever-widening circles. Katherine Tingley has said that we must begin to build in the home, and that homes should be temples of love and unselfish service. Such love and service cannot confine itself to two people alone, and so it touches first the various members of the family, and then all those who come into the home, and being infectious in nature, it affects every heart with which it comes in contact; that is, if it is in a condition to catch that benign infection. And so we may see how one little center of harmony creates other similar centers of harmony, and we can readily imagine what the life of hu-

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manity would be, when such conditions of harmonious understanding and sympathy become universal.

This may seem to be a wild dream, and indeed it will ever remain so until we make a beginning, and do something to make it a reality.

The life at Point Loma has revealed to me, as indeed to many others who have eyes to see, that the same harmony that can be established in the life of a family can also be established among a larger number of people when these get together for co-operation in the spirit of real brotherhood in the realization of a great ideal. It is inevitable that such a serious body of people must expand by reason of its united efforts for unselfish service, and impress its deep significance on the progress of the life of Humanity. This larger family life has been created by one of the greatest home-builders of the world, Katherine Tingley. It was her vision, her genius, that saw the possibility of this practical application of Theosophical ideals, and it was her courage that has made its realization possible, in spite of opposition and persecution on all sides. But there it stands now, a monument of Theosophy, as an indisputable and practical reality, a challenge and a sweet message of hope to all the world.

Let us remember that the world is made of us, and of others like ourselves, and that if we would make our life a blessing and not a blasphemy, if we would make it a veritable benediction to ourselves and others, we must begin by reforming ourselves; for it is of just such units like ourselves that Humanity is formed. Jesus said: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted?" Let us therefore grasp our opportunities, great and small; step out boldly, and go forward unafraid along the path that leads to perfection.

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H. T. EDGE, M. A.



CERTAIN writer, dating about the middle of last century, discussing the question of Napoleon's divorce of Josephine, recognises only two views: the political and the Christian. Political expediency demanded that the Emperor should sacrifice his personal affection and marital vows on the altar of ambition or perhaps of concern for the future welfare of his country. He had no heir by Josephine; and by espousing an Austrian princess he could at the same time expect a direct heir and ally himself with ancient royalty. Against these strong reasons of expediency, what has the said writer

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to set? The Christian teaching as to marital constancy: that and nothing more.

It seemed to us, on reading the above, as it will doubtless seem to others, that Christianity is made to cut rather a sorry figure; also that a somewhat sorry estimate of human nature is taken. The teachings of Christ seem to be here represented as a kind of substitute for natural morality; and humanity appears to have become so corrupt that it needs to be taught by maxim and injunction the truths which it is no longer capable of seeing and feeling for itself.

It does not seem to have struck the writer that a man who sacrifices love and fidelity on the altar of (supposed) expediency has dealt himself a mortal blow in a vital spot; that he has done an evil deed — evil, because in violation of his better nature — and that evil results must necessarily follow, as much as if he had cut his own vitals with a knife. It should not need the authority of a religion to teach us this; and, if a religion does teach it, we should obey because it is true and not merely because the religion says so.

This instance seems to us a good peg on which to hang an answer to those who allege that, if religious dogmas are set aside, morality will disappear. Is humanity in such a terrible state, we ask, that it cannot be saved from depravity except by following injunctions in a spirit of blind obedience and without feeling the reason for following them? Was there nothing else but the sayings of Christ and the teachings of the Church to restrain the monarch from his fatal step?

The same writer quotes the words of Napoleon himself in after-life, in which he recognises that this step was the beginning of his misfortunes, and admits that those who follow the unillumined workings of the mind follow a false light, delude themselves with a false logic, and utterly mistake the meaning of the word expediency. Was it, we ask, the punishment of an angry deity that brought those misfortunes? No need for a God to interfere, if all he wanted was to see the sinner suffer; for unerring law can be trusted to work its will. The man deliberately chooses one of two roads, and forthwith goes whither it leads him. He dismisses his lodestar, bids farewell to his luck, and sets up Mammon for his God. The result was only what might have been foreseen.

Modern science has shown us that a large part of nature — the part which that science studies — is pervaded and actuated throughout by exact and harmonious law. But surely this must be true of the whole of nature, of everything in the universe, not merely of that particular section which science studies. And is not man endowed with an intelligence sufficient to enable him to study and comprehend the natural laws of every kind by which he is surrounded? Or who shall dare set limits to

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the reach of that intelligence, and to tell me that my knowledge is restricted to certain things, and that there are other things which I cannot or must not know?


What is greatly needed is for people to realize that all life is regulated by laws, and that morality is, or ought to be, the knowledge and observance of the laws that reign over human conduct. We should then be in a position to accept the sayings of great Teachers, like Jesus, as the wise words of wise men, intended to guide and help us, not as arbitrary rules for us to obey against our wishes or judgment.

When Jesus, or any other Teacher, points out that a marriage-vow and a plighted love must not be violated, he is simply directing attention to a natural law — a law relating to human nature; human nature which he has studied more deeply than have other people. He is not issuing an edict, he is expounding and teaching. The view suggested by the writer whom we have cited seems to take no account of the Heart. It speaks of the Head, and over against this it places the creed. But it seems to us eminently possible that some person, knowing nothing whatever about any religion, might sacrifice worldly expediency to the promptings of his own heart, and refuse to kill out his own love and plighted fidelity at the beck of ambition and imagined expediency. It seems that the lowly bird with its mate might easily accomplish such a result.

And what is this Heart that we have thus set over against the Head? I would prefer to say that what is called the Head is intelligence misled by personal desires and by delusions; and that the word 'Heart' refers to a nobler, brighter influence that can illumine the intelligence and cause it to see with a clearer wisdom the proper path for man in life.

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C. J. RYAN

N these days of clash of opinion about every conceivable subject, we hear a good deal about 'primitive man'; and it is taken for granted that when a skull is found — or more correctly, as a rule, a few fragments of a skull — belonging to some individual who lived several hundred thousand years ago, which possesses characters more closely resembling the lowest tribes living today than the civilized races, the owner must necessarily have been a brutal savage destitute of all the higher human qualities.

But is this necessarily so? Does the possession of a low forehead, a large and effective jaw-apparatus, and a flat nose, etc., compel the deduc-

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tion that the worst passions and the least self-control must accompany these physical characters?

Where should we look to find reliable, first-hand testimony on the point? To those who have lived for years among modern savages noted for the 'primitive' structure of their skulls we should turn for information, should we not? And before we gave our verdict we should make clear to ourselves what are the qualities to be looked for that might allow the individuals under examination to be classified as 'brutal savages' or otherwise. If we found them to possess - and more important still, to act according to - the best moral and humane qualities that distinguish the more spiritual-minded representatives of the civilized races, even if they were deficient in certain intellectual qualities and the power of combining to gain personal advantages, would it be altogether just to class them as mere brutes because their skins were black and their foreheads low and they had not enough mental power to invent a weapon like Lewisite which, according to Edison, "dropped upon London, could asphyxiate everyone in three hours"?

These questions are suggested by an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* by A. Meston upon the daily life of the Australian aborigines, from which a rather unusual impression of their good qualities is obtained, but which is not unsupported from other sources. The writer first tells of the opinion of six early settlers who lived for years with the blacks: "All these men spoke in very high terms of the aborigines, and of the generous treatment they received."

Speaking from his own intimate knowledge of the natives, Mr. Meston gives them an excellent character for politeness, good judgment of character, respect for elders of both sexes. He says hospitality is one of their champion virtues, and greed and selfishness are two of their most detested vices. On one occasion, after questioning him as to his favorite article of diet, a man went ten miles to the coast and ten miles back to get some crabs for his supper! The mothers are devoted to their children and never strike them. The father alone may correct a boy. Education - of the kind suitable to their manner of life - is carefully attended to. Boys and girls are in separate camps, and the young men are in camps by themselves. The young girls are very carefully guarded by their mothers at night and also by day. No young women can go out of the camp alone but must be chaperoned by responsible old ladies. (Mr. Meston's word; why not?) The older men and women teach the younger folk about the birds, the animals, the plants, fruits, and seeds upon which the tribe depends for subsistence. The writer says it would astonish university professors to learn how little they know about the bush in comparison with a native boy of twelve. Special instructors give lessons

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in tracking and the use of the boomerang and other native weapons.

Their kindness to the old and infirm is pronounced; on the march the old people are carried for miles. When the hunters return to camp with the game or other varieties of food in the afternoon, it is all divided around, the old people getting the choicest dainties. Mr. Meston describes the happy crowd cooking and eating their supper and talking over the events of the day.

The writer gives an interesting account of the reception of a strange white man to a native camp, an experience he often took part in. The stranger is expected to wait outside and 'coo-ee' for attention. Soon, several gray-haired men come out; these are "men of fine physique, men with stern faces, very dignified, very polite. Likewise they are keen judges of character and you are subjected to a severe scrutiny." You then give them the friendly sign, and when they are near they return it; you respond with another sign and they walk up in perfect confidence, "just as the wild black did to Sturt in response to a Masonic sign." You are then escorted to the camp, and treated with the best they have. Mr. Meston says that the white man who had least trouble with the blacks, and the only one who commanded their respect, was the man with the instincts of a gentleman who had a decent regard for the feelings of others, for they understood and practised gentle and refined behavior.

There is another question in regard to the native Australians; are they, after all, so mentally dull? From Mr. Meston's article and from the reports of many other thoughtful and sympathetic observers, it would seem that they have many of the best qualities of true manhood, qualities which are not always characteristic of persons who think themselves infinitely superior in every way; but what of the intellect? Here are a few words from a lecture on 'Human Development,' given by Mr. Neville Chamberlain, reported in *The English Mechanic*, October 7, 1910:

"It was very questionable whether in pure intellect we had any advantages over races which we were accustomed to consider quite inferior . . . even the aborigines of Australia showed similar capacity, for in Victoria the Aboriginal School for three years running stood highest of all State schools in examination results."

Native Australian women have been found with only 930 cubic centimeters skull measurement (the average white skull measures from 1300cc. to 1500 cc.). Now the *Pithecanthropus* Java 'Ape-man' (of which little remains to measure by) is estimated by Professor Keith to measure about 850 cc., others, such as Professor Mair of Berlin, have recently claimed that "the pithecanthropus skull did not differ essentially from other types of human skulls, and that it coincided very closely with that of Aurignac man." Aurignac man had a *brain capacity larger than that of the modern average*, made carvings in ivory and, according to Dr. Keith, was a

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magnificent race, "capable of conceiving and appreciating high works of art."

Then there is the Piltdown man, *Eoanthropus*, supposed to be almost a missing link by some. Yet, according to science, his skull capacity was not less than 1400 cc. These two 'Primitives,' about whom so much is spoken, with brain-capacity probably far larger than the Australians of today, are looked upon as hardly human. But if the small-brained Australian possessed such excellent human and *humane* qualities as Mr. Meston's and others' evidence suggest, what right have we to infer that the earliest Primitives known were utterly brutalized and beastly savages!

The last word has not been said by anthropology upon 'primitive man.'

## LIFE'S EVER-PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES

GERTRUDE VAN PELT, M. D.

O enumerate life's opportunities would be something like writing a medley in music — an infinite series, with every man a composer, and every shift of circumstances a possible new composition. The difficulty lies not in having too few but too many. One may fail to see them, ignore and side-step them, though they impinge on every side like trees in a dense forest; though the moments of life are crowded with them, and they hang like ripe fruit before the eye. But the obligation of their presence is inescapable. Sometimes they are so transcendently great that for the many who are unequal to them they become a cipher. Often then they are said not to exist; yet it is those very overwhelming difficulties and obstacles which furnish such superb possibilities for growth, grasped only by heroic souls. It is true, however, that life's chances, to be available, must be measured to the man. The small cannot reach the heights of the towering giant of soul. But in any case, they are so superlatively abundant that all can be served to their utmost. Milton lived in troublous times; lost his eyesight before the prime of life; endured domestic friction which might have nagged to bits the idealism of many; and on the outside, political dangers and disappointments encompassed him; yet out of this dark setting he produced a masterpiece of the English language.

Notwithstanding this superabundance there is a general failure to recognise the richness of life's possibilities. This would seem to signify ignorance of the perfectibility of man. Humanity, having lost a conception of its goal, is not awake to the various means of reaching it. If it were, so many of them would not be neglected. The prevalent limited theory



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of but one earth-life for each soul naturally hampers the mind and concentrates attention upon the kind of success which can bloom during the course of that single life. One must have been offered opportunities for development of practical, mental, or artistic qualities or life has defrauded him. In a way this is true, but the infinitely broader outlook and more searching disclosure of humanity's latent powers which comes from a study of Theosophy illumines the moments and the fields of action, and shows golden possibilities verily flooding both time and space.

There is so much to be awakened in our crude, undeveloped natures; such strength of purpose, such iron will to be aroused; such enormous sympathy, concentration of mind, clear insight, self-control to be evolved, before these present selves will be even in a position to enter seriously upon the true Path of life, with eyes open and a full consciousness of the meaning of the journey. Were all this even in view, all incidents, pleasant or otherwise, every duty, difficult or easy, would have a new interest, and we might be able to follow Mr. Judge's teaching, who said:

"We must be ready to say at any moment under whatever circumstances, whether expected or unexpected, 'It is just what I in fact desire.' Any other course is blindness. All the passing shows of life, whether fraught with disaster, or filled with fame and glory, are teachers. He who neglects them, neglects opportunities that seldom the gods repeat. And the only way to learn from them is through the heart's resignation."

In fact, life is a wonderful school in which all the lessons are set with absolute exactness to the daily needs. They adjust themselves automatically, so to speak. We weave and weave, creating not only our bodies and mental equipment, but our external environment. The process is interminable and inevitable. We act and think so as to produce certain results, which then become our teachers and lessons; something new for us to deal with, and to call out our latent powers.

William Q. Judge once wrote:

"It is a mistake to say — as we often hear it said — 'If he only had a fair chance; if his surroundings were more favorable, he would do better,' since he really *could not* be in any other circumstances at that time, for if he were, it would not be he but some one else. It must be necessary for him to pass through those identical trials and disadvantages to perfect the self; and it is only because we see but an infinitesimal part of the long series that any apparent confusion or difficulty arises. So our strife will be, not to escape from anything, but to realize that these sheaths are an integral portion of ourselves, which we must fully understand before we can change the abhorred surroundings."

Results, pleasant or unpleasant, bring their own difficulties and temptations, which are resisted or succumbed to, and quite often it is the pleasant which will the more easily throw one down. The effects are not always evident at once. It may be the soil is not favorable for their growth, or it may be that death stops the turning of the wheel before they have ripened. The teaching is that a following incarnation may possibly be

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occupied with earlier seeds, and that the causes of any given life may not bring their specific effects for several lives later. If, then, meantime, the tendencies or weaknesses upon which those results have depended have been overcome in some other way, the difficulties will be quickly and lightly disposed of — an agreeable exercise of power; will answer as a sort of review. But if not, and if on the contrary such defects have been allowed to increase, then the obstacles will seem insurmountable and the unfortunates may curse their fate. Nevertheless these fruits of previous action are the only efficient teachers, and must eventually call out the latent energies of the soul to meet them.

All a real Helper can do in such circumstances is to point this out; to try to present the true viewpoint, arouse confidence in the inherent strength of the victim of events, and thus awaken courage and gratitude for the opportunity offered. The opposite of this course is unfortunately too often pursued, through lack of understanding of impersonality, and through an abundance of sentimentality, and is responsible for race degeneracy. Nature's divine methods are meddled with; the saving difficulties she has created are smoothed out, artificially removed. She is insulted by assuming that she did not know her business, and false standards, false ideals, are erected in place of true ones. Strength is sapped and virility destroyed. Yet this offers no excuse for selfish indifference to the fate of others. No one can declare, "I am not my brother's keeper. Nature attends to this"; for each is a part of nature, and being this, must work with her and not against her, if he too will not have an even worse avalanche of woes fall upon his head. And yet again, it is not the woes he is to fear. Life is subtil, and draws exquisitely fine lines; and poise — true spiritual poise — means more than at first appears.

Some idea of the lessons yet to be learned can be gained from the lives of the great Teachers who have from time to time incarnated, though necessarily they can only be viewed from a great distance and only realized as one approaches them. Also much can be inferred from the infinite variety of experiences that earth-life offers. There must be a natural relation between the opportunities a school affords and those to be trained in it — the supreme expression of supply and demand.

Nature may be lavish, but she is not superfluous, and all her expedients for drawing man out from his shell must be needed. It will not suffice to dip superficially here and there, nor even everywhere. Earth's possibilities must be utilized to the utmost. Every lesson must be learned forward and backward, down and up to its limit. There must be reviews in every grade, and every aspect studied from every other aspect, until mistakes are impossible and insight and comprehension and discrimination perfected; so that man may finally emerge from this comprehensive

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school with complete mastery over every conceivable condition or combination of conditions it can offer; and yet without the faintest taint of love of power for itself, or of self-glorification; with an intellect that can seize in a flash every essential of any situation; can grasp the most knotty problems at once, and know the method of solving them; can penetrate to its depth the nature of any organism and perceive its workings. He must have gained such comprehension of the Law and such control of his own personality, that he can be counted upon infallibly to work *with* the Law; and with all this he must be the soul of compassion unreservedly devoted to the service of others. He must be so free from vanity that the sense of self as separate from other selves is absolutely wiped out. He must have the towering strength of the giant in every direction and the unfaltering courage of the Titan. Something like this must be the survival of the fittest when earth graduates her pupils.

With such an ideal in view, it is easy to see that no moment is empty of resources. One's duties may be humble, then one might learn humility, if the time were not wasted in secretly longing for a place of importance. When uncongenial tasks seem to force themselves into one's life, often the entire energies are lost in a chronic attitude of complaint; yet they offer a glorious opportunity for developing self-control, a devotion to duty, and the high quality of rising above surface-frictions and breathing an invigorating air. When one meets harsh and perhaps unmerited criticism, an occasion offers to seize the rising anger and dissolve it. Perhaps the chance to do a deed of kindness is presented, but just at the fateful moment a selfish thought obtrudes itself and stays the act, bringing a sequence of regret in place of joy. A gossip (possibly in the person of an acquaintance who has through his own weaknesses lent himself for the time to that) may bring a temptation to bear ill-tidings of another, to insinuate bad faith, or otherwise to cast a slur on his good name. It is a moment when the school of life offers a royal chance to develop that noble power of silence. Or one may find himself in a situation where no chances of any kind seem to be present on the surface, where there are no visible obligations, no incentives to work; and one is tempted to bemoan his uselessness and sink into despair. Then is the time to reach into one's inner stronghold and learn faith in oneself. Self-confidence is easy on the crest of the wave of success. It comes with the condition, but it cannot be gained there as a lasting power of the soul. It is resistance which brings out strength and power. Moral qualities as well as the muscles of the body must have a counter-force before they can grow. Even the feeling of laziness, physical or mental, is a part of the scheme of salvation — a part which means the death of any faculty, if yielded to.

Indeed, life is a vast pageant whose mobile pictures are created for

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the development of the Soul. They serve their purpose and are dissolved. Those who can be, are deluded as to their permanence, and fasten their hearts upon the unstable forms. Then gradually, as the great shifter of scenes breaks the outlines, their hearts break with them. This also is part of the training. Shakespeare took an occasion to express impermanence of form through the mouth of the magician Prospero in *The Tempest*, at the close of the faery scene he had called up.

"These our actors  
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and  
Are melted into air, into thin air,  
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind."

Outward victories carry with them the possibility of defeat on inner lines, and for larger issues. Unfortunately, almost all seem to reach for these outward victories alone, whose immediate brilliant results deceive inexperienced souls. What finally survives is only the motive power put into them, be it good or evil. There is no need to mention the ephemeral quality of material wealth. All know the elements may wipe it out in a moment of time. But those gifts of fortune which seem intimately attached to the personality, are more misleading. Fame is a favorite prize. Let us imagine it achieved. Certain temptations inevitably accompany it, appealing to one or another temperament. It may bring out a disposition to belittle the attainments of others, which draws the reaction of criticism. Pushed further, under certain conditions, this may become arbitrariness, which repels instead of attracting. Continued, it extends beyond social relations and affects the quality of the work. Imagine these forces in operation for a part or for one or more incarnations, and where is the fame? We do not say with many who comment on the perishable nature of earthly joys, that they end with death, because Theosophy does not teach this. Death has no power over tendencies of character. In entering another body, they reassert themselves. And one who worships fame for itself will continue to do so, until he sees the folly, or until he has followed it to the bitter end and sincerely recognized its hollowness.

Another ambition, the love of power over others, incites jealousy in those who themselves have not passed the point of desiring it, and arouses rebellion which finally destroys it. It is quite a different thing when present as a result of unselfish service, becoming then an inalienable right, a lasting possession. A tremendous intellectual development to

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the exclusion of higher faculties finally destroys its own ends; for leaving out of account the most essential factors in life's problems, it runs into absurdities, and the soul finds itself stranded.

These larger activities are opportunities which teach that the universe is founded upon a spiritual basis, not the reverse, and that one who attempts to build in any direction, ignoring the only possible solid foundation, is certain to erect structures which will crumble to nothingness. In his own nature, one who so builds is like a fruit, fair on the surface, but rotten at the core. What matters then a whole or a series of incarnations which seem empty of glory if they teach some such simple and fundamental virtues as patience, endurance, sympathy, tolerance; and chiefly if they teach that there can be no right thinking or acting when directed upon self only? For the very concentration upon oneself implies in the mind of the thinker a belief of his superlative importance over the rest of humanity — something which is fatal. It immediately throws him out of balance, and out of relation to existing facts; involves a twist which makes it impossible for him to have true vision in any direction. Moral and even mental perspective have disappeared. Unconsciously, when not determined, a secret, swift thought will appear on the scene during any deliberation, and claim an advantage for self, color any conclusion, throw every decision out of line. Certainly the measure of the possibility of apprehending truth is the measure of impersonality. As long as personality is a factor there can be no absolutely clear vision, and when it reigns supreme, only grotesque and distorted pictures play over the mental screen. Without a basic moral life, everything else, which has been gained with such effort, will fall away and decay. It is only a matter of time. Thus the very opportunities which are commonly ignored and despised, might, if appreciated and seized, turn out to be the richest. A realization of this which Theosophy makes so clear brings a contentment with one's fate; it puts a zest into a life seemingly colorless; it brings an inward peace.

With an infinite past behind us, and the present and past so complexly and intricately linked, who can be sure that an apparently trifling victory may not release some snarled knots tied in the dim distance of years? We play on the surface, but the deeper strings catch the motion, and vibrate to unknown depths. The eyes may rest upon a foreground picture. By focusing on the distance, an entirely new set of forms comes into view, yet both are parts of the same picture. The new development in photography sometimes produces an effect, brought about artificially, which suggests a reality. The eye is fixed upon a certain picture. It changes; and yet so subtly, that one cannot observe the change, only the effect. Other parts of the picture seem to melt into something else.

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The transformation rapidly and yet so imperceptibly proceeds, that when it is complete, and an entirely new aspect within the same old outline is before the eye, one questions whether this is not really what was present before; whether he was not deceived in accepting as true the first impression. The original, by a reverse process may return and these two images toy with the senses, back and forth, without the mind at any time seizing the act of transformation, until it is convinced that these two are aspects of one and the same thing.

We are bound to our former selves; for we are steeped in the waters of eternity. The whole past is included in the present; yet most of it lies buried and fastened, until the right solvent loosens the seal and reveals the hidden treasures. No one can estimate the meaning nor the potency of the smallest act: we are too marvelously made, too richly endowed, we have lived too deeply for these little brains which are now claiming attention, to guess the winding paths over which all have traveled, the numerous pieces of unfinished work we have been forced to drop many times when the night came too soon.

A companion, perhaps unwelcome, whom fate seems to force into close relations, may be one of those longed-for opportunities, more precious than gold. His shortcomings may be the outcome of our failure long ago to give the help we owed him. He may be one of those spoken of in *The Voice of the Silence*, "who, in their pain and sorrow are born along with thee, rejoice and weep from life to life, chained to thy previous actions." Superficial values are deceptive, and when the fairy camera plays over their surfaces, pictures may come out of surprising interest.


The duty which looks so unattractive may be like the last move in a puzzle: the card which looses a long series of tied-up situations, and puts into order a sequence of unsatisfied obligations. Who can tell these things? Such conjectures are not fantasies, founded on airy nothings. They are possibilities at a given time, but certainties at some time. And they are built upon the foundation of our immortal origin.

I will close with these words of Katherine Tingley's:

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

## THEOSOPHY AND THE CHILD

H. TRAVERS, M. A.

 HE hidden sources of premature decay and wrecked lives, due to mistakes contracted in early years; an evil peculiarly characteristic of civilization, and getting worse as civilization grows more complex; — what power on earth can avail to stem this fearful and insidious evil, except THEOSOPHY?

And Theosophy *can* do it, as shown by the Râja-Yoga education and its results.

Theosophy put into practice, on the original lines marked out by H. P. Blavatsky, and now carried out by Katherine Tingley.

The cures proposed seem in some cases worse than the disease. What is wanted is not cure but *prevention*.

Theosophy offers no specific. It does not cure symptoms. The evil in question is a symptom. It is symptomatic of a general lack of balance, loss of control, want of knowledge of one's own nature and how to regulate it.

The child, however young, is a dual being. There is the spiritual will, and there are the selfish instincts. Let parents ask themselves how often they have sought to evoke in their child the power of the spiritual will; and how often they have yielded their own will to the importunities of the child's selfish instincts. Perhaps in the answer to this question lies the secret of the mystery.

Contrast that with the Râja-Yoga method: to show the child how to use his own spiritual will in overcoming his selfish passions.

Now imagine two children brought up in these two different ways, and see what an immeasurable difference it must make in their habits. The one has had his impulses systematically strengthened by indulgence, and his will correspondingly weakened by the same cause. He has never been taught to use his spiritual will; he has not even been told that he has such a power. The other has had his will strengthened by continual use, and his instincts cannot master him; he knows how to keep them in their proper place. Does not this sufficiently explain the success of the Râja-Yoga method, and the failure of other methods?

Man is divisible into three parts: moral, mental, and physical. But, if this were all, he would be a boat without a rudder, as indeed he largely is at the present day. Unless we give a much larger meaning to the word 'moral.' As things are, the moral and the mental seem mixed up together in a sort of confusion that suggests the blind leading the blind.

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Everywhere we find questionings. Everybody is looking for something real and true. What are the essential facts of life? Is there a soul; and, if so, how shall we find it? Where is the true seat of authority? What is man, and for what is he here?

Study the Theosophical teachings, and you will see what a number of things man has *forgotten*. No need to seek further for the cause of his perplexity. When H. P. Blavatsky stood forth to proclaim Theosophy, she undertook to recall a few of these things that mankind has forgotten.

She has given us an analysis of man's nature that is unique and incomparable. No wonder we have gone astray for want of this all-important knowledge. She has restated, in terms adapted to modern needs, the ancient truth about the dual nature of the human mind. That part of the mind which is wedged into the brain is only half of his mind ---- and not the better half either. The higher part of man's mind is the source whence come all our pure and noble and unselfish aspirations, the voice of conscience, faith in the divine. Religion (so called) has too often ignored the very existence of this higher mind -- has perhaps even gone farther and denied it, telling us that we are wholly evil. And we have been taught to look elsewhere for grace and aid.

It was to counteract this terribly wrong teaching, and to turn man's eyes in the right direction, that H. P. Blavatsky proclaimed that ancient truth.

In all ages men have known of this source of light within them. But they have not understood its nature. They have called it something else. They have supposed they were specially favored by the deity, or specially inspired. Sometimes they have lost their heads and become fanatics.

But Theosophy shows us that we have a source of light and knowledge within us, that is superior to the brain-mind. Theosophy does not tell us to throw away our intellect and give the rein to emotionalism. That would be going to extremes in the other direction. But Theosophy does show us that the part of the mind which is lodged in the brain is deluded by the passions and animal instincts, and needs a ray from above to enlighten it. And it shows us that it is within our own power to summon and evoke this light.

This is not *quite* the same thing as 'mental science' and those cults which undertake to show us how to gain personal advantages by methods of concentration and auto-suggestion. Because it is simply *impossible* to evoke the spiritual will by a selfish desire. All that you will evoke, if your motive is personal, will be your own desires. People talk of the 'will,' but what do they mean by it? The will is rather like the electricity in the cables: it is a transmitter of power; but the power itself is in the engines that turn the generators. The will is usually driven by desire;



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so that a man with a strong will is a man with a strong desire. But the spiritual will means the will driven by high aspiration. Which shall we evoke? The aid and light from the higher mind can only be evoked by unselfish aspiration, not by the desire to gain some personal advantage. This is the true meaning of prayer. Prayers do not always reach the sky at which they are aimed; this is for want of wings to carry them aloft; and they fall back on those that sent them.

Theosophy sheds a radiant light on the physical nature of man also; for its teachings touch every problem. The mysterious connexion between mind and body, and how the one acts on the other, is made clear; and thus the essential conditions of health are shown. All science is at sea for want of a knowledge of the *linga-sarîra*, the fluidic link between mind and body; and of the astral plane, which underlies physical matter, and contains the properties which are exhibited in matter.

We cannot go at length into the Theosophical teachings; the present purpose being to show their immense importance as a means of overcoming the evils arising from bad education and ignorant upbringing of children.

We are always brought back to the children, when we consider reforms: that seems the real starting-point, the crucial question. The rising generation, which will do so much to determine the character of the near future. But we must educate the parents and teachers, and people generally: educate them up to a new idea of the meaning of life; to a larger conception of their responsibility — of their opportunity, let us say.

A child is an old soul in a young body. How many parents and teachers have given thought to that?

It is the parent's duty and privilege to guide the first steps of this soul on its new pilgrimage through life. The danger is that the soul and the spiritual nature will be drowned under the weight of impressions from the animal life. In the great majority of cases it is to be feared that the parent, knowing or caring little about any other life than that of the lower mind, discourages the spiritual intuitions of the child and fastens its attention on the material life.

In the street, on cars, everywhere, we see children being fed with candy and peanuts; asking for things and getting them immediately; crying, complaining, and generally behaving as though they were ill at ease. The thing that most strikes people, when they see Râja-Yoga children in an assembly, is that these children, however small, never seem uncomfortable or restless or tired, but are perfectly happy and contented. It is not that they are under restraint; restraint could not produce such effects. It is simply because they have not been allowed to acquire the restless uncomfortable habits due to the indulgence of every little want. They have health; they have balance, poise.

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Thus it is easily seen that frailties and vices of various kinds are mainly the result of little faults indulged in tender years and grown strong; and that these defects would never grow at all, if the original cause were gently obviated.

All this seems simple enough — like all important truths, when once you have heard them. But why has it not been attended to before? Because we have had our attention misdirected by all sorts of wrong doctrines, scientific, religious, or otherwise. It has needed Theosophy and its Leader to turn people's attention in the right direction.

## RELIGION AND THE DRAMA

R. MACHELL

**T**HE importance of the drama as a factor in the evolution of humanity is hardly to be exaggerated, for life itself is a drama and the whole world a stage; and our drama is not merely a mimicry or a mockery of life, but is at all times an indicator of the level of our civilization, and occasionally a potent factor in the fashioning of that civilization. So the right use of the stage is a subject of deep interest to all who wish to help on the evolution of our race.

The popular conception of the utility of the drama is based on the general belief that the function of dramatic art is to amuse, to interest, or to distract the mind. Its educational value may be admitted, and a few may see possibilities of its use in religious propaganda. But undoubtedly the dominating consideration in our day has been commercial. This last aspect of the matter has swamped all higher ideals and made the drama subservient to what may be supposed to be popular taste. The public does not demand sermons from the stage and is credited with a desire for mere amusement. So religious drama in our day has depended for popularity on the exploiting of some familiar sentiment connected with the orthodox religion, rather than upon awaking in the public any new religious enthusiasm.

But real religious drama is a rite in which all present, actors as well as auditors, and all the assistants behind the scenes or in the body of the house, are participants, conscious of the religious character of the ceremony, and understanding the purpose and meaning of what they are beholding just as far as their own development will allow.

I am using the word 'religion' in its deeper sense as a recognition of the Soul in nature and in man. In this sense it may be said that all true art is religious, though such a statement would be ridiculous if the words

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art and religion are used in their ordinary sense. In truth, there is little difference between the essentially religious conception of the universe as a manifestation of the divine, and the aesthetic worship of abstract beauty which manifests itself in people and things; for beauty is the evidence of the soul within that transforms all outer appearances and reveals the mystery beyond.

Of course the true value of such words as art, beauty, religion, and the soul, must be unintelligible to the mass of people, too much absorbed in ordinary affairs to have time for thought; but the realities are perceptible by all intuitively even without understanding, for the soul of man is not separate from the soul of the universe. To the general public the word art is at least allied to amusement, the word religion is not. In the public mind religion means the worship of some kind of God, art to the public means nothing of the sort.

But there are those who see the divine as the essential principle in life, the root of all intelligence, itself the universal consciousness inseparable from life. The recognition of this principle is the root of all religion however sublime or degraded may be its outward form. So too in art there is a divine principle which we call Beauty, which presents itself differently to different minds, and which has found expression in the most diverse forms at various periods in the history of man's evolution, but which is still a spiritual quality that lies hidden in life until discovered and revealed by man. It is universally diffused; for it is the spiritual essence of all things, which man feels as beauty when the soul within him responds to the soul of nature.

It is a common thing to speak of beauty as of many kinds, because we identify the spiritual quality with the things in which it seems to reside. But it is as little affected by the character of the things in which it is found as is the sunlight by the objects that are illuminated by it. We may hear beauty spoken of as a snare and a delusion, but this would not be necessary if the term were justly applied. There are people and things that have some power of appeal to the lower side of the character and who are wrongly called beautiful until their essential ugliness and vulgarity are discovered; then comes a denunciation of beauty as a snare and a delusion. But the snare lies in the emotional impulse that induces us to see beauty in that which appeals to our senses alone, and frequently to our lowest and grossest senses.

The mind is the great deluder persuading us to see beauty where there is none, and inducing us to accept some substitute for the real thing. The mind must be controlled by the spiritual will if man is to escape the delusion of the senses.

We live in a material age in which all high ideals are vulgarized,

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beauty perhaps most of all. And yet even in its most degraded form it is recognised as an abstract quality that eludes the grasp of the mind, and baffles definition. Surely it is a revelation of the soul of things, the universal soul, that makes us what we are, not what we seem.

In the dark ages of a civilization, art and religion are invariably degraded into mere modes of entertainment or accessories to social life: art is to make this life agreeable, and religion is a kind of insurance against the possible consequences of long self-indulgence, a comfort in old age when sin has lost its flavor, or a bridge to span an imaginary gulf between this life and the next. And yet even in the darkest age the light of Beauty is not entirely obscured, nor is the radiance of the soul quite hidden from the few who seek it or from the many who unconsciously desire it. The soul is not dead, but its outer shell is very dense.

Many a student of Theosophy has learned the true meaning of religion after rejecting the dogmas of the church in which he was brought up. While for lack of Theosophy many a disappointed devotee of some particular religion has passed for an atheist in spite of his yearning for the light. So too from lack of Theosophic understanding many people think that there is no connexion between religion and art, whereas in fact these two are equally expressions of the principles of human life.

The drama of the stage is more, far more, than a mere mimicry of nature; it is a revelation of the spiritual world for those whose intuition is awake. It is an appeal to the sleeping soul of the spectators. A dramatic presentation may become for all concerned a veritable initiation into the mysteries of life. And here as elsewhere the halls of initiation are within the heart of each individual. It is for him to open those mysterious doorways of his consciousness that he himself has closed. There can be no secrets in the universe to him whose inner eye is open; it is for him to open it. All drama and all arts will be ceremonies of initiation, steps to interior illumination, if the drama and the art are to be worthy of the name. And to be worthy does not mean to be pompous, or solemn, or gloomy, or very high-flown: it is to be true, to be a true revelation of the soul in things, be the things noble or commonplace, heroic or humorous. "Nothing is great, nothing is small, in the divine economy."

The essence of religion is the recognition of the soul in all things; and life is not all tragedy; there is much comedy; and when man understands life better he will laugh more heartily, and will perhaps consider that mirth is as truly religious as solemnity. When religion is seen to be the understanding of the law of life, then religion and the drama will be inseparable, and we shall have not only divine tragedies but also divine comedies: we shall laugh as the children laugh and as the sun shines, for joy of life.

## THE INSANITY OF WAR

T. HENRY, M. A.

**T**HEOSOPHY is truly, as H. P. Blavatsky said, the hope of humanity; and those who work in this sublime cause must not hide their light under a bushel, but must do what they can to impart to others the strength of their convictions as to the power of Theosophy to clear up the various problems of human life.

And there is no problem more urgent today than that of war, the unmitigated evils of which are every moment making themselves more obvious and undeniable to all thinking minds. Even those who may feel disposed to regard war in past times with toleration or indulgence, can hardly find any excuse for so regarding it today. So greatly has the advance of civilization changed the circumstances that we can no longer judge by old standards.

It has been pointed out, as a striking illustration of the vast changes produced by modern invention, that, up till a century ago, the means of locomotion at the disposal of mankind have been the same through all the ages of history; whereas now we travel in trains, cars, and aeroplanes. And of course the changes during the same period in innumerable other respects have been equally vast and momentous. The principal effect of all these new discoveries has been to link humanity together in an altogether unprecedented degree, whereby is entailed upon us the necessity for a code of practical ethics conceived on a correspondingly larger plan.

This binding together of humanity, this vast increase in the facility of intercommunication, has raised problems that never before occurred. It has broken down the barriers of sectarianism and nationalism, rendering imperatively necessary the adoption of rules that shall regulate the common weal of mankind on a far larger scale than ever before. Internal affairs are fast becoming impossible; for no nation can make changes in its policy without immediately affecting, and being affected by, the policy of other nations. The world has developed a new, widely branching, and sensitive nervous system, that gives it a wholeness of organism quite unknown to bygone times.

However, it is not our intention to elaborate this point in general, but merely to adduce it as profoundly affecting the great problem of war, now before us. Is not the question of war profoundly influenced by this new unification of mankind?

If we had any doubts as to the answer, they must surely have been set at rest by the actual demonstration we have recently witnessed. We have

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seen, as we might have known we should see, that no war can any longer be started without drawing into itself almost the entire world. And we know well that, if war breaks out again, this will be the case in even a greater degree than before. The progress of invention in means of destruction has grown more since 1914 than it has ever grown before up to that date; and nobody can contemplate without horror what would be the outcome of another world-conflagration.

War is a manifestation of anger, a destructive passion. The message of Christianity, of Buddhism, of all the great religions, is that anger ceaseth not by anger, and that gentleness turneth aside wrath. Recent events have demonstrated this to be a profound truth. All our ideas as to the possible benefits and nobility of war have been roughly shattered; we know now by experience that war does not ennoble; and that its effect is shattering, blasting, truly destructive, alike on civilization and on individual character. Who today can be found to say a good word for it?

The stupendous development of civilization that has taken place has proved that humanity needs a corresponding development in applied morality to keep pace with the development in material resources. Secularism in religion has had to give way before the new demands created by a world-wide unification of mankind. The vast destructive resources of science have rendered the prospect of future wars so horrible that no one dares think of them. Whatever war may have been in other ages, today it means nothing less than the destruction of civilization.

To imagine that it is possible for us to fight to any sort of a conclusion is as mad as to think that a drunkard can drink himself into sobriety, that a drug-fiend can drug himself into a state of health. War is anger, and anger is a fire, that grows with what it feeds upon.

The laws of morality are not antagonistic to the interests of humanity. It is only the *false* interests, the selfish desires of individuals or classes or nations, that run counter to the dictates of morality. Hence it matters not whether we say that, in working for the abolition of war, mankind is following its interests or following the moral law; for the two are one.

The important thing for anybody desirous of stopping a quarrel is to avoid being drawn into it. It is vital for civilization that, when a large area of it is on fire, some spots should be preserved untouched.

As each day passes, the conclusion becomes more apparent that we cannot assign to any particular quarter the blame for the recent war. Each angry nation points its finger at some other nation; and the wise man sees that this is folly. The war was simply a boiling up of the spirit of selfish emulation, long nurtured among men of many nations. It could have been foreseen — was foreseen — long years before. The effect could have been surely calculated from the known causes.

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Who can gainsay that the causes which lead a nation into war are ANGER and FEAR? Anger at supposed wrongs or insults; fear lest, if we do not arm, we shall be destroyed. But are anger and fear noble creative forces?

People who rush into a quarrel tell themselves that they are asserting their individuality. It is their personality they are asserting. Their individuality is something far nobler. They can assert it by declining to be drawn into the quarrel. The dignity of human nature can be championed by a refusal to join in the madness of destructive strife. The sacred names of duty and honor may be so abused as to entice people to neglect the real calls of duty and honor in order to rush into folly.

It is often said that it is in human nature to fight; a familiar sophistry that is used to excuse many failings. It is no doubt equally true that it is in human nature to drink, to debauch, to commit suicide, and many other horrors. But these aspects of human nature belong to the destructive side; and are there no constructive forces in human nature? Biology recognises catabolic and anabolic forces – destructive and upbuilding forces; but that does not necessarily mean that we are to give rein to the destructive forces. When these forces get the upper hand, fever sets in; and unless they are stopped, death will ensue. Could there be a better description of war? Could anything be more like a fever? The one hope of a patient in a fever is that some part of his organism will remain cool and whole, and not be drawn into the general consumption.

If duty, heroism, courage, be our watchwords, how better can we be true to them than by asserting the *higher* aspect of human nature?

It has always been the mission of Theosophy to set before man the fact of his higher nature. Ordinary lights, whether scientific, religious, or what not, have over-emphasized the lower nature of man, and have either ignored the higher nature or actually taught us to slight it. What demon was it that whispered to poor discouraged man: "Thy nature is inveterately evil; thou art born in sin; presume not to hope thou canst ever be more than a helpless miserable sinner; impiously daring is he who seeks to raise himself by his own might; fall down in self-abasement before the throne of mercy, and seek propitiation of the anger which alone thou hast deserved." What evil counsel is this to which mankind has lent itself?

When we turn to the actual scriptures and teachings of the Masters, we find them declaring that man is made in the image of God, that the kingdom of God is within him, that he must undergo a second birth of the spirit. Theosophy is the essence and cream of all the sacred teachings of the Masters of Wisdom in all ages. It goes back of the man-made glosses and perversions that have been put upon those teachings. It restores

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the ancient truth that man is a divine, immortal, spiritual Soul, united with a body akin to the lower creation. Man is a dual being. He has a consciousness that can unite itself either with the lower side of his nature or with the higher.

The arguments in favor of war are all based on the "wisdom that is earthly, sensual, devilish" — or, as this old-time English has an altered meaning today, let us say the wisdom that is earthly, materialistic, elemental. It means the wisdom of the lower half of man's mind; the wisdom that calculates interests on a basis of rivalry, competition, anger, jealousy, and false notions of honor and duty. In contrast to this we have the wisdom that is from above, generally considered as pertaining to religion or poetry, and having no concern with politics.

But let us be practical, as behooves both our self-esteem and our interests. What has the earthly wisdom done for us? It has been weighed in the balances and found wanting: that is what all the trouble is about. And what is the remedy? More of the same — on the principle of curing the effects of drink with more drink? That is what some people seem to be proposing. But this, as we have seen, leads to the abyss.

Why not give the 'wisdom from above' a chance? Or rather, what else is there to be done? Regarding our civilization as an afflicted patient, the question now is, not whether he can do a thing with comparative impunity, but whether he is to live or die: it is a question of life or death to civilization. The destructive forces which we have been cultivating for so long have gathered such momentum that they must be checked or they will kill the patient. That is the question of war in a nutshell.

The Theosophical Society was founded to establish the nucleus of a universal brotherhood of humanity. Let us say, a nucleus of sanity. It is of vital importance that the area of that nucleus, the area of sanity, be spread as wide as possible; so that there may be some uninfected spot to resist the all-devouring progress of disease. The *principles* inculcated by Theosophy are not mere adornments to life, but the essential elements of life itself; without which civilization cannot cohere.



"WE behold all round about us one vast union, in which no man can labor for himself without laboring at the same time for others."

— LONGFELLOW in *Hyperion*



## HUMAN NATURE

B. S. VICKERY

**T**HE proper study of mankind is man," and surely that part of man known as human nature furnishes an inexhaustible opportunity for study. Human nature is complex, contradictory, beautiful in its highest aspect and fiendish in its lowest; in fact, running the whole gamut of qualities from the diabolical to the divine. Human nature is unexplainable except by the teachings of Theosophy, which show it to be a sort of ladder, so to speak, by which man may climb from the very lowest element in nature to the highest.

Theosophy teaches that man is dual in his nature, that there are two perfectly distinct centers and activities of consciousness — namely, the higher and the lower self. It also teaches that although man is divine, consciousness of his divinity can only be obtained through the conquest of the lower part of himself.

Many people realize that they, themselves, as well as those they contact, have a good side and a bad side to their natures. However, they accept the side that happens to be uppermost as inevitable, taking pride in the good part and excusing whatever may be done while under the control of the lower, by saying, "Oh, well, it is human nature!"

True, it may be, but it is often an insult to the higher, nobler part which is also known as human nature, to call its lower aspects by the same name.

When men attain to a knowledge of their Divinity, the lowest aspect will be considered worse than what is called the brute-nature of animals, for, whereas animals have instinct only, men have the divine quality of intuition, which, if they will but rely on it for guidance, will aid them to attain to the fullest development of the godlike qualities within each human soul.

The combination of noble and ignoble characteristics found in human nature is a never-ending source of mystery. Persons having apparently beautiful characters will suddenly, under certain conditions, show traits that are quite the opposite; on the other hand, some of the very worst characters often manifest a nobility of soul and consideration for others that surpass those who are considered far above them.

If we study ourselves we find a diversity of attributes that is often astonishing. In fact, in each and all of us there is an ever-changing panorama of different qualities, sometimes good and sometimes bad, according to which side happens to be uppermost.

We go to plays and 'movies' to see human life depicted, while if we

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would but realize it, we ourselves and all whom we contact are actors in the drama of life, taking many different parts, not only when we take up a new life on earth, after the rest between lives known as death, but with each change of emotion and feeling — often many parts during the same day. Things do not go well; we become depressed and the world looks gray and burdensome; the spell passes, we meet a friend who radiates good cheer, hear some good news, listen to uplifting music, and lo! all looks bright again. Life is worth living once more. If such comparatively trivial changes lift us out of our low places, how much greater are the possibilities for transcending all difficulties when we ally ourselves with the divinity in each human soul which, if we will but rely on it for guidance, will enable us to overcome all our difficulties and raise us from this plane of struggle known as human life to where we shall have the power to transmute all so-called evil into good.

Then we shall be ready to take our places as helpers of humanity and work with those who have so nobly and unselfishly aided mankind through the ages, holding back the clouds of Karma, until men have progressed far enough to work out by degrees the aggregation of the consequences of all their past thoughts and acts.

Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom, and no petty meanness or undesirable element in our natures is too small to bring under the supervision of the guide and teacher within ourselves, which Theosophy teaches is the Higher Self, for they are the weeds that, unless expelled, will grow and thrive until they eventually choke out the best in us; nor should we pride ourselves on our achievements in self-conquest but grow as does the flower by unfolding beneath the sunlight of our spiritual nature, offering all we are and all we may attain to the Self which is the Light of all, and of which we are an immortal part.

There is inspiration in the fact that the Universe would be incomplete without each of the units which go to make up the whole; so each unit known as a human being has the sacred opportunity to help the whole by using every effort to conquer the lower, selfish part of himself and so become free to help others, for the progress of the whole is hastened or delayed by the thoughts and acts of each individual unit.

Theosophy teaches that the bundle of passions and desires which go to make up the lower nature is ever holding man back from attaining consciousness of his Higher, Divine Self, and not until he depends upon the Higher Self for strength and refuses to surrender to the demands of the lower will he gain conscious immortality.

The selfish, lower nature is so subtil in its demands for gratification that it often blinds even the good man and causes him to yield to his desires; but as it is wholly the lower, selfish part of himself, he can over-

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come it by refusing to be separated from the self that feels its unity with the Self of All.

The divine, immortal part of man incarnates again and again in different human bodies until the individual ego, or Eternal Pilgrim, has experienced every phase of human existence, and has had the opportunity to resist every temptation to which the lower self can subject it.

As the human form is the vehicle of the divine, under whatever shape it may be manifested, so is human nature the vehicle of the divine nature, the real, immortal actor playing multitudinous characters through the various personalities with which human nature is clothed during its many lives on earth, the earth being the theater where the great drama of human life is taking place in the present phase of our evolution, the purpose being to raise all the lower elements of human nature into the higher, in order that the human soul may progress upward and onward for all eternity.

## A DREAM

E. L. N.



HERE was one I loved, and she was summoned to the Temple of the Gods to take part in a great ceremony, and to hear a great message. I went with her to the temple gate; but there I had to leave her, and so, with a heavy heart, I turned to retrace my steps alone. But as the great door of the temple opened to let in her whom I loved, a voice, sonorous and sweet, sounded forth, and its vibrations went with me upon my way.

Further and further I went from the temple; away from the city, out, far out, into the forest beyond. With all my heart and soul I clung to the words of the resonant voice, for I knew that if I let my thought wander, or stopped going forward, the voice would cease. Now and again thoughts of my dear one came to me, and a great longing and loneliness. My footsteps faltered, and my heart quailed. Then the voice grew faint and fainter, and all around me in the forest became dark, and the path seemed rough and stony, and hurt my feet as I stumbled along.

With a great effort I fixed my thought upon the voice, in fear lest it might fade away completely, and lo! it grew strong and resonant once more, and my heart was glad. The sun shone through the trees, the birds sang, and the flowers grew everywhere along the path. The voice rose and swelled, uttering words of deep and wondrous meaning; leading me on and ever on. Although I knew that I must go alone, I also knew that when I reached the goal my loved one would be there; that all paths lead to the same goal — for the final goal is one.

## THE RE-EMERGENCE OF ANCIENT TRUTHS

RALPH WYTHIEBOURNE (Written in 1905)

**T**HERE is a very significant and important change apparent in the language used by present writers upon the subhuman 'kingdoms' or planes of existence. Nowadays we see articles by leading scientists with such titles as "Life and Diseases of Metals" (E. Heyn, in *Harper's*) and find such curious expressions as, "Nature seems to delight in devising a complicated problem or puzzle (in plant growth) in order to show her ingenuity in its solution." It is not so much the discovery of new facts, however important, which gives significance to such terms; it is the new idea or viewpoint which they represent. Only a few years ago metals were 'inanimate,' plants grew by 'natural law,' and animals were never permitted to have any mental power above 'instinct.' But now we hear learned scientists discuss the *life* of metals, the *mentality* of plants, and the *intelligence* of animals. Very likely the actual facts newly discovered are comparatively unimportant, but a new basis of reason has been taken, the whole structure of human thought is being reconstructed upon new concepts of what 'Nature' is and the means whereby her processes are accomplished.

Life and intelligence, in some form or degree, are now recognised as being universally diffused and inherent in all things, and are no longer regarded as chance attachments or attributes. This great change of viewpoint is a parallel and equivalent to the one forced upon chemistry by the discovery of radium, which compelled the recognition of the long scoffed-at transmutation of metals.

For those investigators sufficiently broadminded to push forward along these new lines, we cannot do better than recommend a careful perusal of *The Secret Doctrine* and of *Isis Unveiled*, both by H. P. Blavatsky, the Foundress of the present Theosophical Movement. Therein will be found a clear statement of the fundamental principles and truths upon which the new science must inevitably be based. These books, which were ridiculed by many when they appeared, are now justified and proved to be scientific works of a high order, though unusual in style.

Science and its devotees are to be most highly congratulated upon having at last found the basic principles which will render possible a comprehension of man's true place in nature and his duties, rights, and responsibilities there. We may at last succeed in obeying the scriptural injunction to "subdue the Earth and have dominion over it" to such good purpose that "the lion shall lie down with the lamb" outside of him, and there shall be "Peace on earth, goodwill toward men."

# 'THE EUMENIDES' OF AESCHYLUS — A MYSTERY DRAMA

A THEOSOPHICAL INTERPRETATION BY JOSEPH H. FUSSELL

Secretary, Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society

**M**ANY, and perhaps most, of those who saw Katherine Tingley's recent presentations of *The Eumenides* in the Greek Theater at the International Theosophical Headquarters, Point Loma, would find it difficult to describe exactly the impression made upon them. No doubt the magic of the setting had something to do with it, and Katherine Tingley's conception and visualization of the Play. The music and the lighting added their influence, but I am convinced there was something more. The interest of the audience never lagged for one instant. Was it the Play itself, the plot of the Drama? And here we meet with serious difficulty.

Did the ancient Greeks, did Aeschylus himself, approve of the murder of a mother by her son, although she had been faithless to her husband and was his murderer? And that is not the chief difficulty. In the Play it was Apollo who instigated Orestes to murder his mother and then sent him to Athena's shrine to save him from the avenging Furies, and it was she, Athena, who by her casting vote acquitted him "from charge of blood."

It is not the murder of a husband by his wife, and then the murder of the mother by her son to avenge his father, that make us pause and question. Such or similar tragedies have happened again and again. The recital of them is horrible and makes us shudder. But that Orestes should have been counseled to the deed by the god Apollo and should afterwards be acquitted by Athena, Goddess of Wisdom,— here is the perplexing problem; and yet I think that here too is the key to the wonderful influence of the Play, here is that something more, that something above the art and the music and the spectacle and the acting which gives to the Play its subtil and entralling power. It was the unseen influence of the Divinities that hovered over all and guided all to the marvelous consummation, the "springing into light" and the transformation of the loathsome, vengeful, pursuing Erinyes into the beneficent Eumenides, 'Bringers of good fortune.'

I am confident that Katherine Tingley had all this and more in mind in her arrangement of the Play, and it was from her that I received my first clue to an interpretation of the inner meaning which I felt, indeed

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I may say I knew, it must have. And I am convinced that it is to this inner meaning, whatever it be, that *The Eumenides* of Aeschylus, the greatest of Greek dramas by the greatest of Greek dramatists, owes its wonderful and almost inexplicable influence. Inexplicable, certainly, if we accept the Play literally and merely at its face value. But surely not without explanation if we realize that Aeschylus was an initiate into the ancient Mysteries, and that *The Eumenides* was a 'Mystery-Drama' intended to convey a deep moral and spiritual lesson.

Although little has come down to us of the ancient Mysteries — the Samothracian and Eleusinian in Greece, the Mithraic and Isiac in Italy, the Mysteries of Isis and Osiris in Egypt, and the Mysteries of ancient Âryâvarta, — we still have traces of their teachings, and the ancient records, fragmentary as they are, tell us something of the manner in which those teachings were conveyed both in the Lesser and in the Greater Mysteries. The Lesser Mysteries were open to all who chose to fit themselves by purificatory rites to participate in them, but the Greater Mysteries only to those who had passed successfully through the Lesser. It was only the latter who were privileged to present themselves for further initiation and, in the words of Plato, behold "the most sacred and blessed of all visions."

The teachings of the Mysteries were all symbolic, and were given very largely in the form of dramatic presentations, designed to convey not only moral and spiritual lessons whereby the neophyte might learn to govern aright his daily conduct both as regards himself and his fellows, but to teach by allegory and symbol the origin and destiny of the soul, immortality, the nature of the life after death, reincarnation, and the reign of universal law; also to teach the deeper truths of science, man's place in nature and his relation to the universe. The central teaching of all was the essential divinity of man, the duality of human nature, and the unavoidable conflict which man must wage with himself — himself against himself, the higher against the lower nature.\*

As already said, the first clue I found to the inner meaning of *The Eumenides* was from Katherine Tingley in a remark made by her which I overheard during the recent performance (September 2, 1922) in the Greek Theater, Point Loma. It was to the effect that the Furies who were pursuing Orestes were not objective beings but existed only in his mind and consciousness. Thinking of this, there came to my recollection the interpretation given of the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, by William Q. Judge both in his preface to that marvelous little work which Emerson speaks

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\*Those who wish to learn more of the ancient Mysteries should turn to the writings of Madame H. P. Blavatsky, especially her great work, *Isis Unveiled*.

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of as "the pearl of the World's scriptures," and in his notes on the same, published in his magazine, *The Path*.

The *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* opens with a description of the opposing forces of the Kurus and Pândavas drawn up in battle array, while between the lines Arjuna in his chariot, accompanied by Krishna acting as his charioteer, surveys the field of battle. In his preface to the work, William Q. Judge says that in interpreting the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* from the standpoint of the human soul (for it may also be interpreted, he says, cosmically and in other ways), the long enumeration of the Kurus and the Pândavas, the "grandsires, uncles, cousins, tutors, sons, and brothers, near relations, or bosom friends" whom Arjuna beheld on both sides of the battle, all "his kith and kin" in fact, was an enumeration of the human powers and faculties. He says (p. vii): "As the Theosophical scheme holds that there is a double line of evolution within us, we find that the Kurus spoken of in the poem represent the more material side of those two lines, and the Pândava princes, of whom Arjuna is one, stand for the spiritual side of the stream -- that is, Arjuna represents the immortal Spark." And further, that Arjuna "represents not only Man as a race, but also any individual who resolves upon the task of developing his better nature. What is described as happening in the poem to him will come to every such individual. Opposition from friends and from all the habits he has acquired, and also that which naturally arises from hereditary tendencies, will confront him; and then it will depend on how he listens to Krishna, who is the Logos shining within and speaking within, whether he will succeed or fail.

This then is the clue which I have followed, for the thought came to me: Is not the symbology of *The Eumenides* similar to that of the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, is it not susceptible of similar interpretation? And so it is along these lines that I have endeavored to interpret it. There are many difficulties which I have not yet solved, and perhaps in some details my attempted interpretation may need correction, but here is what I have to offer.

If the Furies exist only in the mind and consciousness of Orestes, being objectivized merely for the purpose of dramatic presentation and to convey a lesson as to the possibilities of the Lower Nature, the Demon, — which exists at least potentially in the heart of every human being, — may it not be that all the other characters, Apollo, Athena, the ghost of Clytemnestra, even the twelve judges — the Areopagites — also are powers of the higher and lower nature of Orestes, who represents Man, or the human soul, and that the field of action is the mind and consciousness of Orestes?

In *The Eumenides* Aeschylus presents the tragedy of every human

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soul and of the conflict that must be waged in every human heart. It is a profound study of the dual human nature, of its potentialities and the influences which are ever at hand ready to respond to the thoughts and deeds, good and bad, of every human soul. On the one hand are the protecting, beneficent, spiritual powers, the powers of Divinity itself represented by Apollo, the Sun-God, and by Athena, Goddess of Wisdom; on the other hand, the powers born of the dark side of Nature, with their counterparts in man, demoniac, baleful, vengeful, represented by the Furies.

These are the extremes, the ultimates of the dual human nature; while in between, in the middle ground as it were of the nature, are all conflicting degrees of good and evil, with all their varying predominance which we find in our experience of human life. But there is no middle ground for Orestes, he has taken the final step, and committed the supreme act which, from the standpoint of a literal acceptance of the Play, if it has no inner meaning, is the greatest crime which a man may commit — the murder of the mother who bare him. So there is no middle ground for him, the human soul, he has appealed to the Divinities, he comes as a suppliant to them, his life must henceforth be ruled by them, or — there exists for him only the abyss into which, lacking the divine guidance and sustenance which he has invoked, he must fall, to become a prey to the torturing and soul-destroying powers of evil.

The whole Play centers around Orestes' murder of his mother, and the principal difficulty lies in interpreting this act, which on its face and literally is so revolting and unforgivable. Let us ask then what is the meaning of it, and to answer this we must determine who or what is Clytemnestra; what does she represent? In the ancient symbolism woman is at one time the symbol of the highest, the symbol of Divine Wisdom: Athena, for instance, among the Greeks, Sophia among the Gnostics, Isis among the Egyptians; while at another time woman is symbol of matter, the material nature.

At the outset and taken merely literally it might appear that Aeschylus places motherhood on a very low plane, but he does not refer to human motherhood, the most sacred natural relationship that exists, but uses the term symbolically only. He makes Apollo say:

“Thus I declare, learn ye how just my words.  
Not mother of her so-called child is she,  
Who bears it; — she is but the embryo's nurse;  
He who begets is parent; she for him,  
As stranger for a stranger, rears the germ,  
Unless the god should blight it in the bud.  
Sure warrant of my word will I adduce; —  
Without a mother may a father be;



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Witness this daughter of Olympian Zeus,  
Not nurtured in the darkness of the womb,  
Yet such a scion goddess never bare."

— From A. Swanwick's metrical translation

Absurd, revolting, unthinkable, if taken literally, but pregnant with spiritual and withal scientific meaning if taken symbolically. For symbolically, spirit is the father and matter the mother; the son, the soul, is of spirit alone, and yet for its manifestation on earth a material vehicle is required. Spirit, the father, must be united with matter, and hence matter is *called* 'mother,' just as we speak of 'Mother Earth.' And so when Orestes asks: "But am I with my mother one in blood?" Apollo later rightly answers symbolically, that the mother, gross matter, "is but the embryo's nurse," *i. e.*, of the soul. Orestes, the soul, is son of his father, spirit, alone; just as Athena, Divine Wisdom, is no child of matter, and has no mother but is child of her father alone, sprung from the head of mighty Zeus, Jupiter.

Taken symbolically, however, the deed of Orestes, the slaying of his mother — not his human mother, as a human being — is the deed that lies before every human soul, namely, the overcoming of the material lower nature, and the slaying of all that is base and ignoble in the lower human nature. Does anyone think the symbolism far fetched? If a Christian, let him then explain the words of Jesus: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother . . . he cannot be my disciple." Taken literally this would make Jesus an advocate of hatred and not of love; but taken symbolically, as *The Eumenides* must also be taken symbolically, and rightly interpreted (the father here, however, not meaning 'spirit' but having a different significance) these words are words of spiritual instruction.

Orestes declares that he has been purified from the matricidal stain: "by rites of slaughter'd swine . . . not blood polluted am I, nor doth stain cleave to thine image from thy suppliant's hand." This must also be taken as symbolical: the rites of slaughter'd swine symbolize the conquest of the lower sensual nature; but though thus purified, Orestes is still pursued by the Furies, symbols of haunting thoughts of doubt and fear. He has broken away from the thralldom of matter, but has not yet reached a sure foothold of spiritual consciousness. Like Columbus he has left the old world, he is out on the wide ocean; he has not yet reached the New World, and the crew mutinies, harassed by doubts and fears. Or like the children of Israel in the wilderness hankering after the fleshpots of Egypt, complaining against Moses, so the powers of the lower nature which Orestes, by slaying his mother, has aroused from sleep, mutiny against his control. The struggle in which he has gained the first victory

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against the material nature, is transferred from the plane of gross matter to that of the mind. Only by becoming a suppliant at Athena's shrine, by accepting the guidance of Divine Wisdom, can he free himself from their pursuit.

Here again we have proof that, as Orestes stands for every man, so there is hope for every man, because the Divine Wisdom rays down its light into the heart of each. To quote from the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*: "for it is Wisdom itself, the object of Wisdom and that which is to be attained by Wisdom, in the hearts of all it ever presideth."

Though Orestes appeals to Athena, she does not immediately declare her decision and save him. She first calls upon the twelve judges. Who are they? What do they represent? The significance of this act of Athena is, I think, that man must first use what powers he already has at his command before he can call upon higher powers which exist for him potentially but can come into actual manifestation only when he has used every means that is already at hand. Thus the twelve judges, whose decision is divided, represent the human mind and reason, now swayed to this side, now to that, unable to render any definite decision unless illumined and guided by the spiritual light of Divine Wisdom. There is a very distinct teaching contained in the division of the judges' votes. It is, I think, that the human mind is but an instrument of man in his search after truth, enabling him to weigh and consider both sides of a question, but that it is not the final arbiter. Man himself stands above his mind and reason, they only belong to the middle ground of his nature, and hence now at one time may lead him rightly and another may lead him wrongly. The brain-mind, in other words, may be likened to the scales which weigh the pros and cons of an argument, or the weight of evidence, but cannot declare the decision. That can come only from the judgment illumined by Divine Wisdom, that is, Athena must give the casting vote.

But it is the finale which presents the greatest of all the lessons of this, one of the greatest of the few mystery-dramas which have come down to us from antiquity, and one of the greatest dramas of all time. This lesson is contained in the transformation of the Erinyes, the Furies, into the Eumenides, the beneficent ones, from which the drama takes its name. It is the overcoming and transmuting of the evil, vengeful, and pursuing elemental powers of the lower nature, daughters of dark night, into beneficent, helpful influences, good fairies, ministering angels, to be no longer a curse, but a blessing to Athena's city, the habitation of the soul.

The transformation takes place only by the power and persuasion of Athena, not by her command, for self-evolution comes only from consent and co-operation, never by force. To interpret this rightly it is to be

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remembered that the Furies are powers of the lower nature of Orestes — the haunting thoughts and fears that harass him because of his deed, and their consent to change in response to Athena’s plea is really the consent of Orestes to use the powers of the lower nature and the forces of passion which are opposed to the Divinities, and his own aspirations, and to transmute them into helpful and beneficent influences. The lesson of this in its application to each one of us is, I think, that the energy that we throw into the gratification of the lower nature in passion, appetite, ambition, is an energy which can be turned into a direction for good. It is in fact the first lesson with which the neophyte in all the ancient Mysteries was confronted, namely, the conquest of the lower passional nature.

Orestes, the human soul, first awakens into life and action the sleeping elemental, demoniac powers, and it is he alone who can bring about their transmutation. This he is enabled to do by following the advice of Apollo, representing his own inner radiant self, the Higher Ego, and by seeking the shrine of Athena, and supplicating her aid. It is this reliance on his part on Divine Wisdom that calls forth that aid. And herein lies the supreme responsibility of the human soul, and its supreme hope. Herein is portrayed the divine power of the human soul, and the lesson that all evolution centers in man, in the soul, that the transmutation of the evil into good within himself and in the world — for the world is but the theater of human existence — depends upon this one thing, namely, that man, the soul, shall seek the guidance of Divine Wisdom, of the Higher Self, the Ray of Divinity that is mirrored in the heart of each.

One of the first acts of Mme. Katherine Tingley when she became Leader of the Theosophical Movement, and our Teacher, as successor to Mme. H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge, was to found the School for the Revival of the Lost Mysteries of Antiquity, which is now known as the School of Antiquity, but which still bears the significance of its first name and has for its first principal object to revive the ancient sacred Mysteries, and restore their teachings in all their spiritual significance. This was in 1897, and in 1898 after her First Crusade around the world, one of the first lessons that Katherine Tingley gave to her students and to the public was in the presentation of *The Eumenides* in Carnegie Lyceum, in New York City. Later in the same year it was presented in the Buffalo Opera House, and in April, 1899 at Point Loma.

Speaking for myself, and doubtless for many others, little did we see the significance of those earlier presentations, little did we know of the lessons which that masterpiece of Aeschylus contained for us, and for all who choose to study it. It was in very truth, in my estimation, the beginning of the revival of the lost Mysteries of Antiquity. It was an opportunity and a challenge then, and now, after more than twenty years,

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that opportunity and challenge are again offered to us students, and to the public also. Written all over *The Eumenides* on every page and in every line is the challenge of the ancient Mysteries, "Man, know thyself!"

In my judgment a further and wider significance even than this challenge, which should be supreme for every individual, attaches to this revival of the mystery-drama. It is applicable to the world at large. The collective soul of humanity, not only throughout Europe and in the war-devastated countries, but in these United States and throughout the whole world, is harassed by the pursuing Erinyes, the Furies, of selfishness, hate, misery, brutality, and degradation. The haggard shapes of starvation and destitution stalk in almost every great city. War again threatens, and destruction of civilization. Never has the soul of humanity as a whole, or the individual soul of man, been so harassed and so perplexed. What then so needed at the present moment as the lesson of *The Eumenides*, that the Bright Divinities are not far away, that Apollo is still at hand to counsel, and Athena to save. It needs but the recognition of the presence of Divine Wisdom which is potentially in the heart of every man. And this Divine Wisdom has again been proclaimed to the world under its old Greek name 'Theosophy.' It is the message of Athena herself, and is the solace for the world's woe. The human soul both collectively and individually can still seek Athena's shrine, and not in vain. The twelve judges, the human reason and the diplomacy of all the governments and diplomatists of the world, have failed. It rests with Athena to give the casting vote, and all that is needed is a recognition on the part of those who have the destiny of the world in their hands,— the guiding and controlling minds of the governments of the world — to acknowledge that there is something above human reason, to go as suppliants to Athena's shrine and to ask for that help which alone can come from Athena, Divine Wisdom, Theosophy.

It should be said that a full understanding of this great drama can be had only when it is studied in connexion with the two other plays *Agamemnon* and *The Choephoroi* which together with *The Eumenides* form what is known as the Orestean trilogy. It will be of interest to all who had the pleasure of seeing the recent performance of *The Eumenides*, as well as to others, to learn that Mme. Tingley has expressed the intention of presenting next year, not only *The Eumenides*, but the other two plays.



"As a temple is adorned with gifts, let the soul be adorned with discipline."

— IAMBLICHIUS

## ONE OF PLUMAGE

F. M. P.

SHE was a little thing, daintily frail,  
Much like a humming-bird caught in a gale.  
Timidly helpless, almost a child  
Cast out alone in the jungle-like wild.  
Trapped there an innocent, innocence lost,  
Into the waste pit ruthlessly tost.


Yet she was part of the infinite sweep —  
A majesty moving under heaven's keep.  
Infinite souls who stumbling roam,  
Yet move in procession marching towards Home,  
Grandly triumphant, each in its place,  
Children of heaven full of its grace —  
Even the little one, daintily frail,  
Her pinion plumage plucked in a gale.

*International Theosophical Headquarters,  
Point Loma, California*

## THE LORD OF THE PLANET

KENNETH MORRIS

I: THE GOD

 HIS, then was the Earth — that Death Planet whereof so many tales were told. He must arrive at some clear view of it, if he was to do his duty in that state to which, for his sins, he had been condemned. — So he put it to himself; but his sins were not as ours; it was a matter of over-impetuosity that entailed his fall or banishment; it was his grand sweeping warwardness against Chaos; and because he, the dawn-chapleted Khorónvahn,

*Whose throne was in the Isles of Capricorn,  
Whose dragon navies cruised the Milky Way,*

was the most ardent of the Stars of Morning that sang. — He must certainly think; he must understand this new scene of his labors, and (impossible task!) somehow bridge the gulf between his own consciousness and the consciousness (as he supposed he must call it) of his new subjects,

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Men. For the sentence pronounced against him was, to reign God of this planet for some few million years; and it would take hard thinking indeed to find out what any deity might make of the job.

It was beautiful, this Death Planet, to a degree that surprised him; but the beauty soaked through, piquant, treacherous with . . . an adverse inexplicable something (he knew no such word or concept as sorrow, or might have defined what he felt). And withal, it was somehow august. Rumor had been right in speaking of it with a certain strangeness and awe; he had sensed that from the first. At the moment of crossing the boundaries of its atmosphere, he had felt himself, troubledly, in the presence of the unknown. — A tiny little God-forgotten nonentity of a globe, beneath contempt in a way,— and yet infecting one with a sense that one might be out of one's depth. . . .

At his feet the river emerged from its mountain gorges; and lay, a streak of flame and silver, along the dusky plain. Out in front the sea gleamed to the horizon, a bow now all crimson and orange and flickering sapphire and green. On either side and behind him rose the mountains, sunset-flushed to richest purple; a lark trilled in the mid-air far below; but for that and the call and hoarseness of the river in its gorges, there was silence: men came not here, nor had ever come. He was a little weary after the day he had spent (a thousand years as we count time) going up and down the world and trying to make men aware of his presence. Here, on this hill between the precipices, he would rest, and brood for a while, and find a way.

He had heard of old of these Men; and perforce taken all he had heard well salted, because there are limits to the possible,— or he had thought so. But seeing was believing. Or some way towards believing; for here was a vast deal indeed for a god to believe. Consciousness, he had supposed, meant delight; no other conception seemed possible. But here. . . . Well, he had hardly arrived, you may say: only a thousand times had the little globe with its shining seas and its mists and mournful beauty swung round the sun since it saw the falling star of his arrival: and already the task of finding out what consciousness could be — what it was, here,— had wearied him in some measure. His mind was not clear, as it used to be; puzzlement was on him, in a way; uncertainty as to the labor that lay before him; wonder as to how he should begin. For of course the first thing was to establish connexion between his mind and some mind — one at least — among the earth people; and there was the difficulty. He had not been idle since his coming: there was no community of men that he had not visited; no individual, even, that he had not in his own way striven to approach. You might say: why not sink a populous island here and there; heave a mountain or two on to some

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few cities; rend the earth a little, and bury recalcitrant millions? But we do not understand the gentility of godhead, to which such ideas seem vulgar. What on earth should he do?

It was to be supposed that they had a sort of intelligence: one could see that they had built up an order of living,— possessed what might be called civilization. But it was an intelligence to him disparate and alien; an order of living and a civilization that no mere god could understand. In *his* circles, to be was to be delighted to be, and to take delight in all being; — what we should call love; only he, having no conception of hatred, had none of love either, as a thing in itself: existence, consciousness, love, delight, were to him one idea, and one only. But here, these fierce, cunning, crawling, fighting creatures,— well, it was an amazing revelation, undreamed hitherto in his philosophies,— they could move about, build their civilizations,— they could be and live, in short,— and yet their being seemed to be based on, motivated by, another name for, non-being; their life was the negation of life. Ah, that accounted for the name, the *Death Planet*; he began to understand the meaning of that extraordinary term. Sentient existence, as he had understood it, was one, and knew itself one, in all its embodiments; but here it was at war with itself, paradoxical, inspired by self-antipathies. And it was his business to make this new kind of consciousness aware of and at one with his own kind; to bridge the gulf between himself and Man. Good Lord, what a problem for a God to solve!

No wonder that in such an atmosphere, do what one would, one could not keep one's mind clear. There was a drowsiness, a heavy something — the infection of this strange negation of life. . . .

Well; he would rest here, and think the thing over; he would watch the sea, and rest, and find a means. . . .

The mountains faced the sunset,— the plain, about nine leagues wide, between them and the sea. From two chasms, with a hill high enough to be a chair for him between, the river poured out into the plain, to unite or re-unite its waters a little below, and thence flow on seaward slowly and deep. Here he sat, and leaned forward; his chin on the palm of his hand, his elbow on his knee. Sheer precipices on either side of him, beyond the river, the mountains rose to the level of his head; so narrow was the gorge on his left, that one standing among the pines at the crag-top there would have been within a stone's throw of his face. Behind him, range on range rose white-peaked to the sky.

He sat there, brooding; and the glow of the sunset died away, and the stars shone out, the grand procession of them passing over him to sink in the sea. Yes; the air of this planet was soaked in heaviness, in sleep. How was he to make that passage between his mind and the minds of

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men? The stars passed, and the sun rose and sank, and the stars followed; the sea shone and darkened, shone and darkened. How . . . was . . . he . . . to . . . ?

The sun drifting through the heavens to set in the sea; the traveling moon with her phases; the multitudinous procession of the stars; the gleaming and darkening bow of the sea,— how should one think, watching them? They became a wonder and a vague delight to him; they filled the fields of his consciousness . . . in this oblivion-laden atmosphere of the earth. True, there was something else to be considered . . . some-time . . . but consideration was difficult . . . in this oblivion-laden atmosphere of the earth. . . . The sun and the stars went dropping into the sea; he watched them, and did not know what they were. A million years passed. Time long since had turned his bodily presence into stone, as the rhythm of the drifting lights had lulled his mind into quiescence.

But all things grow weariness at last; and an age came when he had no more peace in watching. He could not be happy because of something he could not remember: the memory of his purpose, his identity, his ancient glory, ebbed long since beyond the reach of his cognitions, haunted him,— an irksome bewilderment lurking in the vast inanity of things. There was something, formidably important,— not the sea nor the lights of heaven,— which he ought to know. He could not tell what troubled him; could formulate no questions, yet was conscious of questions en-ambushed beyond his vistas, and had no delight because of them. Well; he would reach out and grasp them someday: in effortless quiescence, or in the throes and agony of thought. He was drawing nearer to that success with every dropping of the stars now; he was drawing nearer to it. . . .

Then all drifted away again. There came a humming and a drowse of sound perpetually from below; it caught his ear, and was a refuge from the unknown questions and from the sea-bow and the sun and the stars. He gave himself up to the comfort of listening, and desired only to hear. The voices of millions of men, rattle of wheels incessantly, hoofs pounding and clattering: it was full of mystery, infinitely complex, unfathomable. Day and night it rose to him, intriguing as poppy fumes that minister to dream. . . .

(At the feet of God they had built Khóronvehm, the City of God; and because God was there, visibly present above the city, Khóronvehm became the mistress of the world. They carved his temple in the hill, and built it out to be his footstool; his tall temple that was the wonder of the world. All of polished porphyry and onyx and alabaster, they



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flanked it with columns on this side and that: a half-moon of beautiful columns about the temple-courts. Tribute-bearing ships came up the river, and unloaded at the temple-court steps the treasures of the world. Very mighty were the Khóronvehmians; very mighty and religious; they oppressed the world, and the world obeyed them; for did not God sit visibly in their midst?)

All things become weariness at last. Time came when the noise of the great city held him no longer; then beyond the horizons of his mind the questions rose again; and century by century he strove towards them more eagerly ever. And now, now, now, he was on the point of grasping them; he battled against the strange and heightened turmoil from below; he sunk his mind inward, furiously striving after the things that concerned him; until at last, yes, there was another light before him than the sunset; yes, he was that dawn-chapleted Khorónvahn from the Isles of Capricorn; he had been sent hither to be —

Like a heavy wave, sleep struck him.

That, to be exact, was on the day of the full moon in the month Argad, in the Year of the City, 10,581. Everyone knows what happened then. There had been civil war, between the factions of the kings and the priests; and God at last had made his power known. His priests had been victorious; and on that day their and God's enemies, the king with his family and adherents to the number of a thousand, had expiated their sins on the altar. Then the great yearly Feast of the Sacrifices had been inaugurated; and everyone knew that upon the rigid observance of that festival depended the favor of the "Almighty and Most Merciful Father, Our Lord God, Dawn-chapleted Khorónvahn, Maker of the Stars Made Visible"; (I quote from the *Book of Liturgies* of the priesthood at Khóronvehm). Since then, God (through his High Priest) had ruled the city and the world.

### II: THE PRIEST-PRINCE

RUMOR was, in Khóronvehm, that the High Priests' Path was so perilous, that, a hundred to one, unless you had learned the clues beforehand, you should take some wrong turning and drop soon and suddenly into dark waters and caverns quite fathomless,— that the whole mountain was honeycombed with devilments, a place for nightmare to batten on. Yet here is one, certainly, taking that path with no clue or guide in the world but trust: he is to have speech at the summit with God; and God, he knows, will bring him past every peril. It is Vahnu-ainion the Priest-Prince, today to succeed to High Priestly sovereignty; he goes

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unshod, white-robed; he is wasted by long anxieties to frailty and the semblance of age, but now the vastness of his hope half makes him young again: — he goes up to his God.

As to the path he travels: his forefathers the High Priests have trodden it before him: each once and once only,— at his accession, when he went up to receive from Deity that last sanctification which should fit him to be Deity's Vicegerent; — and no man else has trodden it at all since slaves of old tunneled it out under the northern gorge and the river, and up through the mountain, or sometimes giddily along the face of the precipice; and built that little shrine of alabaster, the Holy of holies of religion, right on the brink of the chasm at the top. There, hidden from the world by clouds, communing with God, each Priest-Prince in his turn had attained infallibility and High Priestly status; for from that point the Divine Countenance was well within range of a voice not unduly uplifted: if God spoke, though it were hardly more than in a whisper, who stood at the altar should hear.

Vahnu-ainion was wasted with anxieties, as well he might be. After all these millennia of triumphant domination, disaster latterly had fallen on Khóronvehm. Continents had risen rebellious; navies had been sunk and armies slaughtered; until now the mistress of the world cowered within her walls hungry and despairing. The plain below was white with the tents, and the sea with the sails of her besiegers; and unless God should arise and his enemies be scattered, help or hope there was none. And today must be the end of it; there could be no holding out after today.

For that matter, so far as he was concerned, Vahnu-ainion knew, and had never doubted, that God would arise, and his enemies be turned into friends; that was not where the steel had pricked him. Though Priest-Prince, he believed utterly in the goodness of God. But he had been living through all these months of gathering national gloom, knowing that the priests (in their minds) and the people (often openly) attributed the whole evil to him. He doubted that, save God, he had any one friend as an offset against so many foes; and guessed that only God and his own hereditary sanctity — the habit of mind of some ten thousand years — had kept the knife or poison-cup from doing its work on him. The Khóronvehmians were above all things religious: God dwelt visibly among them, and they owed their pre-eminence to that. The High Priests — their absolute monarchs — had always been of the Vahnu family, whose name hinted at divine descent; and Vahnu-ainion was its only living scion. In all history, no High Priest had been deposed, nor any Vahnu done away with; and for lack of a precedent, deeds whose doing all desire and would approve are often left undone. So he was still alive. . . .

He was hated both as an innovator and as an innovation. All his

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predecessors had been great statesmen, princes of the church militant, urbane and masterful men, and exceedingly clever. He, — well, you shall judge. The Feast of Sacrifices at the full moon of the month Argad — that rite of atonement which ensured the favor of God for his city — was abhorrent to him; he loathed policy, and took no pleasure in universal sway; he had an idea that the High Priest of Khorónvahn should be the chief servant, not the master, of mankind. This is what I mean by saying he was an innovation, — or part of it; had he left things there, so much might have been excused. But no, he must be innovator too, active, pressing his views. He had set his face against the sacrifices, hinted at a desirable new dispensation; had even achieved saving one intended victim. And he meant openly to do much more: meant to petition God, today, and learn His will; was certain that God's will coincided with his own, and that the divine command would be given: *Abolish them: bring flowers, not men, to my altars.*

How could he square all this with history? Every High Priest before him had gone up whither he now was going, and received God's mandate for the ordering of the world; and yet the sacrifices and pomp and domination had persisted — it could not be supposed but by God's will. I do not know how he managed it; but the truth is that he believed in God and loved and pitied man with equal fervor; believed in his religion, and wished to change it; considered that an Inscrutable Wisdom might have allowed much of old that It desired altered now; was not too logical to follow the urgings of his heart, — nor perhaps so illogical that you could be sure the ground would never tremble under him.

He was an innovation in another way too; by ill fate this time, and not wilfully. Time out of mind the High Priesthood had passed from father to son, each trained for the office by his predecessor; and none of them all had made this journey without instruction. They knew what should be done in the white temple: what invocations chanted (he supposed), what ritual used; but he knew nothing. For his father, the God-aureoled Vahnu-gonai, — imagine three epic pages filled with his titles, — had been during the last ten years a senile and most monkeylike babblers, so stricken before a thought of death had visited him or old age warned him to prepare; all the wisdom he had had to utter had been scraps of old street songs, nursery rhymes, — even flat blasphemies that would have brought another to the stake; and at the last, before he passed to his apotheosis yesterday, when some flaming up of mind and oracular dictum might have been looked for, the best he had given was a sneering stare at his son, an ugly chuckle unexplained, and some mutterings in which the word *fool*, often repeated, was to be caught. So now Vahnu-ainion went ignorant to this his greatest occasion. — Further, he had

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been, as regent, ruling the world, playing High Priest, for ten years, though uninitiated. He had stood to mankind as God's deputy, who had never spoken with God. His office had called for the constant overshadowment of Deity, and he had had nothing to bring to it but the shallow wisdom of men. No wonder disaster had befallen!

All this he felt; and yet did not know wherein he had failed. The rest of the world might be certain; he was still more certain that the rest of the world was wrong. He went without fear to meet his God, and had no thought colored by apology. That which had brought most rancor on him, he most gloried in: there he had acted for God with an intuition he felt to be infallible. — It was saving Artalach, that captive savage king, from the altar. He remembered how, when he saw the tall, chained, proud man landed from the tribute-ship at the temple-court steps, and marched with the others to the prison of the victims, the conviction had struck him: *This man is to do some grand service for Our Lord!* It was as if Khorónvahn himself had cried it from amidst the mountaintops and clouds over the city; he had never doubted Whose will he was doing, then or since. Later he had come to know that poor Artalach's history; — but he was going up to speak with Godhead now, and such tragic dark dealings should never be again. Aye, and he would make amends to the tall savage: would teach him the truths of religion, and for temporal sway and perishable honor, give him treasure where moth nor rust corrupts, nor thieves break in and steal. — He had taken Artalach into his own service, I must tell you; and was having him taught the Khóronvehmian and what else a gentleman should know. The time might come when he should find in that quarter what all his life he had lacked,—friendship. The man would serve God, and signally: that he knew. A proud seared spirit, so far; but the Priest-Prince believed his own pity stronger in the long run than any pride.

And he believed in God, and went on and up with joy overcoming his weariness, and hope banishing the memory of his anxieties. God would save the world, changing the order of things. God would appease and convert, not smite, the rebel princes in their tents beyond the walls. God would speak the word to him, that would be the solvent for the bitterness in men's hearts. God would teach him to redeem even the priesthood.

So by the tunneled steep passages and unrailed stairways cut in the cliff-face he went up, busy with his thoughts, and unaware of the one with the spear that followed him. There were many places on those cliff-cut stairs where Artalach might have leaped forward, picked him up, and hurled him down through the clouds; but the savage meant that God should see his revenge. It was God he hated, the God of Khóron-

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vehm; not this frail woman-hearted priest. The thing should be done on the altar in the temple above, under the eyes of awakening Deity. (Vahnu-ainion seeking to sow hope in him, had made him understand the occasion). So, when it was done, God would act; the last thing he desired was to escape. God, by whose will his wife, his children, and all his braves had perished, would vent omnipotent anger on him; would devise ghastly deaths no doubt; — and should learn what strength to endure was in the spirit of Man. He would die deriding the impotent omnipotence that could win no groan from him. As for the Priest-Prince: death, that would take him swift and suddenly, was no misfortune; and Artalach would make amends, protecting and befriending him in the beyond.

A long steep passage up through total darkness; then a stairway beginning, and winding spirally up, up and up; and at last the black air thinning gray; and then, almost suddenly, light, and no trace of fog in it: one was above the clouds certainly; ay me, one was in the Holy Place! There were no walls; it was a round roof, peaked, resting on pillars; now the westering sunlight slanted in, mellow golden and dappled with pine-tree shadows, on the floor inlaid with mosaics of many-colored marbles and on the altar of onyx stone between the delicate columns in front; beyond which, and across the gulf, very near, it shone full and gloriously on the Face of Very God. Ah the calmness and vast majesty of that countenance, lighting the soul of Vahnu-ainion to intensest worship and joy! Advancing, rapt in the marvel of the vision, he stands at the altar,— that only between him and the abyss; wonderful it is to look down upon the clouds, now flushed to richest cream, suffused with softest amber; and to see, out of that shining moveless ocean of opacity, the divine breast rising, a formidable precipice, and the deific beauty of the neck and head above! Ah, Most Beautiful, Most Beautiful! what need for ritual here? In silence shall the uplifted heart invoke thee; with adoration call thee forth! — Vahnu-ainion kneels at the altar, resting his arms on it; and with clearest light in his mind, firmest will and most glowing compassion in his heart, pours his thought out towards Khorónvahn above the clouds.

— “Khorónvahn! Khorónvahn! hear, O Most Merciful! It is mankind that cries to thee through me!”

As if a stone had been thrown into a mountain-lake, where was only placidity and utter dreamlessness before: in some far vagueness ripples of thought are rising and widening; there is a cry *Khorónvahn! Khorónvahn!* and there is that, unaware of itself until now, that hears.

— “Now wilt thou declare thy heart, O Compassionate! Now wilt thou save the people of thy world!”

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—“Who calleth Khorónvahn?” — so the thought-ripples ran; —“it was a name that . . .”

Artalach, watching at the back of the temple, heard nothing. There was no voice, either of priest or God, that any ear could hear.

—“Behold, O God, how my spirit yearns to thee! Thou hast enlightened my understanding and shone into my heart; give thou now the sign and token, that I may go forth and thy will be done!”

—“Ah, fumes arose from below and put sleep on me. I was . . .”

—“That there may be no more cruelty on earth; that thy priesthood may go forth healing and serving; that the nations may be at peace, and the fire of thy being kindled in men’s hearts!”

—“There was a humming and a drowse of sound from below, that came between my thought and . . .”

—“That sorrow may depart from the world; that order and love may reign here, as they reign among thy stars in heaven!”

—“There was a gleaming bow out before me afar, and lights streaming above and sinking; and because of these I could not . . .”

—“Khorónvahn! Khorónvahn Omnipotent, hear!”

—“Khorónvahn? Khorónvahn? It was the name of one that . . . came down out of . . . that came hither to be . . .”

The Priest-Prince’s fingertips, resting on the altar, became aware of inscribed letters there; and memory came floating into his mind . . . of lessons he had learned long ago: an ancient script and language, the sole subject his father personally had taught him when he was a boy; and he remembered the solemn pledge he had been made to take then, never to reveal, except to his own eldest son, that which he should learn; “for the writing on the white altar is in this tongue,” said his father: words unexplained then, and forgotten these thirty years; but now returning, and heard distinctly in memory as if they had been just spoken. Here, then, was the secret: here written the words he should speak that God should hear and answer. He rose, and bending over the altar, deciphered it slowly.

*“Son, now knowest thou all. Thou hast come into the secret place: art hidden by the cloud from the eyes of men.*

*“What camest thou up to see? What findest thou? That stone idol yonder? Look well and listen: hath he spoken to thee at all? Hath he moved a lip or an eyelid? They say that he was God once; time long since hath turned him into stone. The High Priests know: senseless as thou seest him he hath been these million years.*

*“Therefore rejoice thou; for were he God indeed, thou shouldst be destroyed,*

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*thou and thy power and thy glory and dominion. If he could be Lord of the Planet, would he leave that lordship with thee?*

*“But since he is stone he upholdeth thee; uphold thou then his worship, as thy fathers have upheld it before thee. Let blood flow continually on his altars, that the world may remember he is God. Chastise mankind in his name, that it may fear him; fearing him, it shall obey thee. Men say, ‘God’s will is inexorable’; be thou inexorable, that men may know thee the Vicegerent of God. This is the wisdom of thy fathers, whereby they have ruled the world.*

*“For men are fools; but be thou wise. Walk in the way of thy fathers; on the day thou departest from it thou shalt die. Art thou wise now, believing nothing? Go then! there is nothing more to know.”*



As if a great wind had risen suddenly, and the lake, where the ripples were flowing and broadening, were lashed suddenly into tempest: there was that which cried through the place of awakening consciousness: “Sorrow! ah, the sorrow of men! It is my heart that understands! It was I that came down out of the star-worlds to heal the sorrow of men. I will arise, and go to my people. . . .”

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

### III: THE AVENGER

ARTALACH, waiting his moment, has seen Vahnu-ainion discover the inscription, and read it; he, too, guessed that it held the secret that should awaken God. Standing behind, he has seen nothing of the Priest-Prince's face as he read. What follows confirms his surmise. He sees Vahnu-ainion sink down on the altar, then rise and throw up his arms as in invocation; but he has already seen, beyond the chasm, the eyelids flicker, the lips quiver, motion taking the head, a straining; and now, when he is sure that God is watching, alert, and will see — now, as the Priest-Prince's arms go up,— he knows that the time is come. He knows nothing of the sudden shock to the man long wasted with trouble and fasting,— of the rush of blood to his brain; he sees but the invocation effective, God aroused, and in act to answer; — and his spear flies; and Vahnu-ainion (I doubt, dead before the weapon touched him) fallen, on to the altar, on to the floor, over the precipice. So: he has insulted God, slaying God's Priest; and with satisfaction and calmness now strides forward to the brink, that God may see him and realize well what has happened, and take what steps he will.

But — heavens, what has he done? — of what mightiest magic is he, all unknowing, the master? Vengeance? As if it had been God, not the Priest-Prince, his spear transfixed! Up out of the clouds the colossal breast rises, swaying, cracking, rending, groaning; the arms shoot up above the head; the whole vast mass totters, staggers; there is stumbling as the feet break through the temple-roof beneath; rending of stone, cracking, breakage; noise as of thunder and earthquake; — and a fragmentation and a crashing down of all, forward, on to the city: to crush to ruin palaces and temples and famished panic-stricken populace — they, and the hosts that have been pouring in through breaches in the walls an hour old. Priest, God, and city; he has destroyed them all; grandly indeed he is avenged. The cloud is dispersed by the fall of God; he can see something of the ruin he has wrought. His work is finished; and he turns, and is going. . . .

But where? What next? His plan has miscarried, in a way, and left him with nothing decided; there is nothing further for him to do . . . better follow the Priest-Prince, over the brink, and into that beyond where . . .

A hand is laid on his shoulder, and a voice speaks: "Brother?"

He turns, amazed, to face the speaker, a shining figure in the dusk, shedding light on the white pillars; and — he had been watching that colossal face beyond the chasm, and, despite the change, the human stature, could not be mistaken; . . . and, somehow, hatred, bitterness,



all the searedness and constriction of these last years melt away from his heart. For moments he is silent, and then:

—“God!” said he. “God! take . . . thy . . . revenge! I am the man. . . .”

—“Thou art man, and I am God, my brother. Come with me; they need us, below there. We are man and God, and we must help them.”

—“I go with thee, my brother,” said Artalach.

. . . . .  
That evening the Golden Age began.