

**THE WONDER-LIGHT, AND
OTHER TALES:
TRUE PHILOSOPHY FOR
CHILDREN (1890)**

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AND OTHER ESSAYS (1904)**

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**THE VOW OF POVERTY,
AND OTHER ESSAYS (1904)**

BY

JULIA KEIGHTLEY

Compiled and Edited by
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PREFACE.

THESE TWO BOOKS were originally published by Julia Keightley around the turn of the twentieth century. The first was under the name Mrs. J. Campbell Ver Planck, F.T.S., and the second under Jasper Niemand. Both authors are Julia Keightley.

Julia had two children who both died as toddlers, and I believe this is why she always had the education of children in mind. It was some time after they died that she became active in theosophy. She wrote repeatedly that children should be taught the eternal truths of the universe early on in life.

What these eternal truths are, is embodied in theosophy. *Theosophy* is the restatement of the Archaic Wisdom, or Perennial Philosophy, the synthesis of science, religion, and philosophy, leading toward the truth behind all things. It is an altruistic study based in the practice of selflessness and compassion, combined with impersonal love for *all* humanity — with no exclusions.

When these two books were written (one for children and one for adults) it was common to phrase language for children and some adults in a vernacular — a kind of accent, that is — that might not be acceptable today. This, and some pejorative situations have been left, as this is also an historical work.

I hope you find in these pages something that appeals to the spirit within both your children, and then also you. For more information on theosophy, see theosociety.org.

Scott J. Osterhage
Tucson, Arizona
Spring 2025

[The speeches of Carlo have been made by the author by various other children from time to time, and are, in substance and imagery, facts. — *The Path*.]

The Wonder-Light was dedicated:

TO THE
LION HEART
NOW KNOWN AS
HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY
THIS LITTLE BOOK
IS OFFERED
BY
THE AUTHOR.

The Vow of Poverty was dedicated:

To
William Q. Judge,
Teacher and Martyr.

**“THE BLOOD OF THE MARTYRS HAS WATERED THE GROUND,
AND THAT THE CRY ‘LORD, GIVE US EVERMORE OF THIS
BREAD,’ MAY NEVER GO UNANSWERED, WE MUST BE
PLOUGHING AND SOWING FOR HARVESTS YET TO BE.”**

*The ancient fable of the Dragon’s Blood is true today as ever. Where that
Blood was spilled, earth opened to receive it; a warrior struck the sacred spot and
armed men sprang forth conquering the World.*

*So with the Blood of the Martyrs. It waters the earth, and from that
consecration new human harvests and fresh fruits of Wisdom spring. For the
Dragon typifies that Wisdom to which the Martyrs bear witness, and those who
have seen with the spiritual sight — as those who, following after, hear the tale
with the ear of the spirit — these arise, warriors of the Soul, to war with and to
subdue the earth; in themselves first, in the ever widening human field thereafter.*

*In the heart of man is that hallowed ground which receives the creative essence
of the Dragon’s Blood. Witnesses of the doing to death of the Martyrs in many an
era, such comprehending hearts breathe a deep vow, and in each future effort towards
the True, they are sustained and nourished by the Life Blood of the Dragons of
Wisdom. They bow themselves to The Law, and whispering each to each that
“Word at low breath” which is the Mystery-Name of the Martyrs, they work on
expectant of harvests yet to be.*

JASPER NIEMAND.

London,
13th April, 1904

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**THE WONDER-LIGHT, AND
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CHILDREN (1890)**

HOW THE CHRIST-CHILD WAS BORN.

CARLO STOOD BY THE WINDOW making pictures. He made them by breathing upon the pane and drawing upon it with his fingers. His Papa was shut up in his study with all the nasty bottles and jars and things. His Mamma was where she always was now,— upstairs in bed, looking so white and tired. The servants were in the kitchen laughing over the very biggest turkey you ever saw, and Carlo was just here in the parlor, alone and cross and tired. He was tired of his play things; tired of the Christmas tree; tired of having a good time with his little cousins who had just gone home. He felt just like being a torment to somebody; that was what nurse called him when he began to fidget and ask questions.

When you are a little boy a great many questions come popping into your head, and you think grown people are put there to answer them. Carlo supposed God put them there; He seemed to do all that was done; at least the grown people said so. But Carlo wondered why God did not make them tell things right; some of their answers were certainly wrong because Carlo could not understand them. They made the world out to be quite another place from what Carlo saw. He had eyes; he could see very well; and he didn't see anywhere some of the things that grown people said were there. They were silly to suppose that he, a big boy of five years, would believe such stuff about babies, for instance. He never, never found one under the cabbages, though he had looked every day since his new little cousin had come to the world. Why should the grown people find all the babies? They didn't get up so early as the children. And when people died; that was another thing. They were put in holes in the ground. No grown person — fond as they were of puzzling children — had ever said they weren't. Except, indeed, Uncle Dick, who said sometimes they were burnt and sometimes they were roasted and eaten. That was in foreign countries, however, and Carlo didn't believe in foreign countries. He believed in what he saw, and his Papa, who was a very wise Professor, said that was the only wise way. But the sharp eyes of Carlo saw that his Mamma always looked sad at such words; looked sad, indeed, at much that his Papa told him; "just like she looks when she wishes I wouldn't," thought Carlo. And he had heard

nurse say to cook that his Papa was “a worse haythen than all thim Protestants.” He was sure this must be some dreadful thing, because nurse said it with the same voice in which she told Carlo what became of bad, bad boys when they died.

Altogether there were many questions Carlo wanted answered, if only the grown-ups would tell him the same things. They didn’t; they never did. When he asked his Papa what Christmas was, for instance, he said it was “a fool’s day,”—whatever that was. He said he wouldn’t have a Christmas in his house if Carlo’s Mamma were not so sentimental and so ill. And Santa Claus. His nurse had told him about Santa Claus, and had even shown him the real picture of the saint. But when he had said, “Papa! what is Santa Claus?” Papa had answered in his very gruffest voice, “*A lie!*” Only think! But how could there be a picture of him if he wasn’t alive somewhere? Carlo asked his Mamma next, and she said, “Santa Claus is a real spirit of love and kindness, who comes every Christmas to children whose parents love them.” As for nurse, she just held up her hands and exclaimed, “Master Carlo! Where do ye expect to go to whin ye die, if ye don’t belave Santa Claus is a little, fat, rale, live gintleman, what will lave yees a bunch av sticks an’ ye’re a bad bye, Sor?” It was so about everything. The grown-ups all told you different stories, and frowned at you if you didn’t believe them all at once. If they only knew how tired a child gets sometimes with all their mixed-up tales, and how many new questions come popping into his head then!

Now there was one, this very minute. It was a question that was an old friend of Carlo’s. He had been asking it ever since he could remember, every once in a while. He wondered what “God” was, and why He let grown-up people be naughty, and not children. Nurse was always talking about Him, and how angry He would be for every fault, “The badder a boy is, the more God keeps coming around!” poor Carlo cried out “I should think He’d hate to be so near, always getting children scolded. Why don’t he never come when I’m *good*? Perhaps because being good is so dreadful stupid,” thought poor Carlo. Down deep in his little heart was a thought he was afraid of; a thought which he knew would draw down upon him the frowns and anger of all his little world. It was a thought only to be whispered to a bird in a tree; or to the moon on bright nights; or perhaps to some trusted companion when you were both

naughty and in punishment, two stubborn little rebels together. This was the thought,— if only you please won't be shocked at it. "Perhaps there isn't any God at all! Perhaps He's just an ogre made up by the big people, like the one in Jack-the-Giant-Killer, on purpose to make boys behave!" Some days Carlo felt sure this was true; and he knew, he *knew* his Papa would not scold him for saying so. What he feared was the sad, sad look in the eyes of his pretty Mamma. But he could *think*, and think he did, that if a boy was to behave like this God of theirs did; spying, meddling, killing people in Bible stories, and being different to everybody; always on the side of the grown-ups and always hard on the children; Carlo was sure such a boy would be put into dark closets for life. "It just makes me mad," thought Carlo, "to have them say He loves me. He's nasty; I don't want Him to love me. He made His little boy grow up so unhappy and be *killed* for me. I'm glad I ain't God's little boy and I won't be, either." By this it may be seen that Carlo's Papa was partly right when he said the boy would get no good from Sunday School. But like Carlo himself, his Father dreaded the mournful look in the eyes of his dying young wife. "There are times in life," he groaned, "when a man has to choose between being a brute or a liar." Uncle Dick had suggested that there was a third way, a golden mean between the atheism of the Father and the strict theology of the Mother, but while she lay there dying, trying with her last breath, as it were, to bias the fresh young soul of her son, for whom she feared perdition if she could not set his mind in a fixed direction before leaving him;— while she so lay, it was impossible to wound her. Uncle Dick resigned himself and trusted to Carlo himself; to something that he was sure was in Carlo, and would someday speak to the boy. Meanwhile, how sad to see the awful waste of energies directed to the thwarting of nature, to the attempts to alter the immutable Laws!

Carlo's last thought made him fling himself impatiently on the rug by the fire, the better to gaze up at the Christ-child on the Christmas tree. It had wings, and a star on its forehead. It was all gold and pink and white, like pretty Mamma, and Carlo loved it. He hated to think that such a lovely being had been nailed on an awful cross, had grown up to be a man, just like Papa's friends, only better, he supposed, and had been so good that people hated him and killed him. "It is stupid to be good, and people hate men for it out

in the big world,” mused Carlo. His little brain ached with all the contradictions about him. Unknown to himself, the child felt the strain of the contest which was killing his Mother; which was rending the world all about him; the contest between Science and Theology, and, still more, between Matter and Spirit. He looked up at the shining figure on the tree, and said in his clear young voice, “Christ-child, I do wish you would tell me the real, true Truth.”

It was so still that Carlo heard all the clocks ticking. There was a pause. The child lay so still, with the fire shining on his curls, that you would have thought him asleep.

Then the Christ-child spoke in a voice like the chime of bells, and said; “I will, Carlo! What do you want to know?”

You may be surprised, you big people. Carlo was not. He had always known that there are fairies, and that things can speak. He once talked with a squirrel in a tree, though neither of them made a sound. Children know well that all that you can think is possible. So he simply answered in a pleased little tone, “Then tell me, Christ-child, how you can be God if you were a man, and if you’re up there on my Christmas-tree.”

“I am not up on your tree,” said the Christ-child.

“Oh! Christ-child! Do you tell stories too? I hear you speaking up there.”

“That is not myself,” said the Christ-child. “That is my picture. You have known before now, Carlo, that pictures could speak.”

“Yes; all the pictures talk to children,” the boy assented. “I hope I shan’t forget it when I grow up. But where are you really, then?”

“I am everywhere, Carlo. Everything is my picture, and all try to speak of me. I am in the stars and in the glowworms; I am in the winds and in the mosses; I am in the fruits, in the oceans, in the storms, and in the heart. I am All. I am God.”

“But how can you be so big, if you are just the Christ-child?”

“They call me that when I am young,” the voice said. “But I am not in one little body, like yours, Carlo. I am in all bodies, but they are not me. Listen! You will feel me in yours!”

Carlo started. Down in his heart he felt a stir, a strange sweet feeling that filled him so full of joy.

“Here I am,” said the voice in his heart “When you do wrong, it is I who speak to you and make you sorry.”

“I thought that was Carlo’s own self,” cried the boy.

“It is yourself, but I am yourself, Carlo. I am the inner Voice in your heart. I live in the hearts of all men and all things. I am *the within* of all creatures and all beings. Long, long ago I slept in the Heavens. Then I woke, and I came into the world. I came because even God wants to feel and to know the great world which is himself. When I came I was a child, because I had not grown up in that world. You know what growing pains are, Carlo! When I entered into all these bodies, when I tried to make them speak of me, and tried to make them so pure and good that they should become myself, and when they would not, then they crucified me. The nails and the thorns are their evil deeds. And when men are entirely wicked, then they kill the voice in their hearts.”

“But you are alive all the same, and I don’t understand that.”

“I am alive because I am the Christ-spirit.”

“What’s a spirit?” Carlo interrupted.

“I cannot tell you. But you may feel it. When you gave your lunch to the lame beggar yesterday, you felt a spirit in your heart. When you said you had been good, and mamma kissed you, but you knew you had told a story, you felt a spirit inside that reproached you and would not let you rest. When the storm howls outside and you lie listening to music stealing through the darkness and over the uproar of the storm, and you feel safe and happy without knowing why, then you feel a spirit. When you look up at the bright stars and one shines and shines till you can’t look away, but you love it and something goes out of you to the star, and something comes from the star to your heart, then you feel your spirit and the star-spirit meeting.”

“Then what I feel is a spirit?”

“No, Carlo. But that which causes all these things; that which is *behind* everything; that which you cannot see or hear, but only feel

when you are very still; that is Spirit and *in it I am*. I ride in that feeling as your heart rides in you.”

“And why do you take so much trouble for everything, Christ-child?”

“Ah, Carlo! My Carlo! I love men. They may be mine. They may grow up to be me. I cannot tell you how today. It is a long, long story. But I will tell it every day, if you will only listen. I will teach you better than anyone can if you will only ask me in your heart.”

“And what will you teach me first, Christ-child?”

“To love all beings, for all are mine, and I am speaking in the heart of all. Even the stones grow through the wonderful music of my Voice. If you kill the bird, you kill my picture, and you drive me out of that pretty form I loved. If you strike a child, you strike my image. No one can hurt *me*, or pain *me*, or kill *me*. For I am God. But these creatures which I came to help, to raise up to great Beings, they can be destroyed and scattered for a time. Even a little child can interrupt my work for a while. If you do not listen to me, Carlo; if you do not obey me when I speak in your heart, and believe my voice above all others, then I cannot join you to myself; then we cannot grow up to be one great, wise Being; then I cannot take you home to God where we are one, you and I. And thus you can prevent my work.”

“When I want to be bad, is it you who speak to me then?” said Carlo, puzzled.

“No. It is yourself, that thinks it does not know me. It is because you do not know that I am really Carlo; I am what Carlo may grow up to be, but what he is not yet.”

“How shall I know which Voice is you, then, Christ-child?”

“You may know by this. I shall never tell you to treat any person, or anything, any differently than you would me myself. I will only speak to you in gentle, quiet hours. And often you will make mistakes, for that is just what you are put into the world for, Carlo; you are put there to learn to know my Voice from all the rest. If you try, you will know. When people have puzzled you so much, it was I said down in your heart, ‘Never mind! Let us go play.’ For

it was not time for you to think of those things. Often I whispered to you, '*Carlo! it is not true.*' I am always speaking from your heart and from the hearts of all things. Listen for me. Try to know me when I speak from the lips of other people. For I love you! I am yourself. And you, little Carlo, you may grow to be everywhere in the great world. Wait, try, and you will understand."

"I will try, Christ-child! I will try!" cried Carlo, springing to his feet. The room was quite still. The shining figure hung upon the tree. Everything seemed as usual. Yet down in his heart Carlo felt a strange warm feeling, a something bigger than himself. When he tried to tell his mamma, he could not make it real, and she said it was a dream; but whether or not, on that Christmas Day the Christ-child was born again.

FOHAT'S PLAYGROUND.

[Fohat — Cosmic Electricity and more. See *The Secret Doctrine*.]

LITTLE CARLO STOOD ALONE in the empty nursery. It was twilight of the last day of the year, and stars came leaping one by one into the cold skies. Carlo watched them, a small dark figure outlined by the fading firelight, his black kilts and blouse making him look thin and pale. Over his whole dainty person, as he leaned, slight and lonely, against the window frame, there was that pathetic and indefinable look which every woman knows to be that of a motherless child. It overshadowed the little figure, giving it a gravity beyond its years, that smote the heart of "Uncle John," who at that moment entered the nursery. Carlo turned round with a shout of joy.

"Come here to the fire, you small elf, you," said his Uncle, folding him in what Carlo called "the bear's hug."

"No, no. You come to the window, Uncle, I want to show you something. Say, do you see that there black spot up there? Now you watch, and, I bet you, you'll see a star pop in there, and then move, and more too. All them others did it, just that way. Somebody must be a going round scratching places with a match, and making stars just that-a-way. What fun he must be having. Don't you think so, Uncle John?"

"I do indeed," said his Uncle, promptly.

Carlo gave a squeal of delight. To find an Uncle, a grown-up person, who says you're right and goes on to tell you more about it,— a grown-up who makes all your fun seem real and true instead of saying "Hush," or telling you something so tiresome that you don't want to know, and can't *can't*, CAN'T understand — why; what a New Year's present an Uncle like that is to a boy! Carlo adored his Uncle John; his favorite playfellow, his best friend. He felt that a new and delightful game or story was coming. He jumped on his Uncle, hung round his waist, wrapped his small legs round the Uncle's strong ones, gave a squeeze and a bite of ecstatic affection, squealed again, dropped to the floor, put his small thumbs in his small blouse pockets, set his chubby legs well apart, and then, in

this manly attitude, which was as like his Uncle's as he could make it, he tilted his curly head back and asked:

"Well then Siree Bob, who is he?"

His Uncle smiled. A slow smile, just to tease him. Carlo stamped with impatience and butted his Uncle with his head. This was a Freemason's sign. It meant that Carlo wanted to be taken up into those broad arms, but was so big now, he was ashamed to say so. Uncle John lifted the little form, cradled the sunny head upon his shoulder, with a suppressed sigh for the sweet young mother and sister whose soft breast would never know the touch of the beloved body of her child. The sigh was too low for Carlo to catch it. He wriggled joyfully, and again asked:

"Who is it lights them stars?"

"It is Fohat," said Uncle John, impressively.

"Fo-hat," repeated Carlo, pleased with the name. "Who's he?"

"Fohat, my boy, is one of the Great Ones."

Carlo already knew some of his Uncle John's "Great Ones," or Great Powers. He called them "those big fellows," himself. They were his giants and his fairies. He chuckled now at the idea of hearing about another.

"Is he a very big one?" he asked.

"Fohat," said Uncle John, "is one of the greatest of all the Sons of Light, and the heavens are his playground."

"What does he do in 'em, say?" cried Carlo in excitement "Tell us about him, quick."

"The heavens, you see, Carlo, are full of stars, and the worlds are full of atoms. Atoms are tiny sparks that only the Great Ones can see; they shine and they live. But where do the stars and the atoms get their life? From Fohat. He touches them, just as you said; he touches them with his flashing diamond spear; a spark leaps from it to them, and that sets them on fire, they burn and live. All the little atoms are scattered through the fields of the sky at the world's daybreak; there they are, soft and milky, white and sleeping, all huddled together like little chicks under the wings of the mother hen. The mother hen of the atoms is the Darkness. Then comes

great Fohat, winding along like a serpent, hissing as he glides. He comes upon those lazy little atoms, he pours cold light upon them; they jump up and scatter; they run through the sky. He scatters himself and runs after them in many waves of light; he catches up with them; he blows upon them till they are cold and shivering; this hardens them and they shine. When they shine they are glad, they laugh. All at once, from idle little atoms they become stars, they become souls. Fohat has done it for them. When they begin to shine and sparkle, then they begin to understand. They love Fohat; they move along in a starry dance and sing a song that praises him.”

“Fohat likes that, I bet you, *I bet you*,” said Carlo in his funny way. “But, Uncle, what is that thing you said? What is a soul?”

“A soul is the spark you feel burning in your heart. Don’t you feel it right there?” and the Uncle laid his hand on the boy’s heart.

Carlo thought a minute. Yes, he felt it. It was a warm spot down in the place where he felt things. When he felt good or when he felt bad, that was where he felt it. He had another name for it, a name most children give it. “That’s my Thinker, Uncle John,” he said gravely.

“I know; and that’s your soul. I have one too.”

“And has Fohat got one?”

“Fohat has the biggest spark of all,” his Uncle answered. “He has to have, for he has so much work to do.”

“What’s he do?”

“Oh! He has so many games up in his playground. He can change himself into ever so many things. Sometimes he puts on a cap of fire and wings of light, and acts as herald to the sunbeams; he leads their blazing march and sings songs of the sun; his songs shine, they are as radiant as the sun and moon. When clouds meet with a loud thunder-call in heaven and lightnings spring out, it is Fohat who calls and drives them on; they sweat, and rain falls on the dry earth. Then he loves to make things. He takes some star dust and makes a daisy; then he makes a big world, or a sun, all on the same pattern. When he is tired of that he becomes the great Propellor, and merrily, merrily, he pushes the worlds along.”

“He must be awful busy. Don’t he never get tired?”

“Never. Fohat can’t get tired. You know I told you the Great Ones never get tired, because they haven’t got any bodies like ours to get tired. You know that little spark in your heart don’t get tired, but it beats right along night and day. The Great Ones are great splendid sparks like that, and they can think too. Besides, how could Fohat get tired, when he is Motion itself?”

“What’s that? What’s Motion?” said Carlo.

“Motion? Well; when birds fly, or when you run through the air, that’s motion.”

“Oh! I know that. It goes fast, fast, and wind blows on your face.”

“Well; motion is not the bird. It is not Carlo. It is not the wind that blows on you. It is that going-fast; it is the fast-fast’s own self,” said Uncle John, gazing into Carlo’s eyes, to see if the little fellow would understand.

“Going-fast its own self,” repeated Carlo. I *fink* I know what you mean. I *fink* I don’t *understand* it, Uncle John, but I can *feel* it. Will that do?”

“That will do,” said his Uncle, delighted. “I often feel things when I don’t understand them. My Thinker feels them. Well, then; when you go fast, fast, fast —”

“Awful fast,” interrupted Carlo.

“Then it gets hot, it gets hotter, it bursts into fire, on your face, or like the car axles last summer —”

“Oh! I know, or like when you rubbed them sticks together in camp and the fast-fast rub made warm air (I feeled it), and then smoke, and a fire jumped out.”

“Exactly.” His Uncle, pleased, gave him a hug. “Great and fast going, as big as the world, then fire and light that fills the skies; all that is Fohat.”

“But what’s he do Sundays? Does he have to sit still then?”

“He does just what he does on other days, for to him every day is a Sunday, a day of the sun. And so it ought to be with us too. The great eye of the sun sees us every day; don’t let it see us doing

unkind things. At night the moon and the stars keep watch. Let them see our heart spark burning bright and clear, not cloudy with dark smoke made by unkind acts or thoughts. If we are unkind, our heart sparks can't help to play Fohat's favorite game."

"What's that, Uncle?"

"At dawn, Fohat calls the Sons of Light together. He says that they must bind all the stars and worlds together with diamond threads. Along every thread blow a soft breath of love and a little note of music; that will make those threads strong. Then when the sons of the shadow come along, they cannot break the singing threads and scatter the worlds down into the dark. When this is done, Fohat says; 'Now all the stars and worlds are harnessed together; come let us join all the atoms and all the heart sparks of men and women and children together with the shining threads, and we will drive them all.' Then when everything in the whole world is singing and going together, the Sons of Light are glad, they say it is good."

"But sp'ose something kicks up and rears, Uncle John?"

"If it is a star, they cut it loose, and you see it fall. If it is a man or a child, you see that he doesn't go with all the rest. He is lonely; he is unhappy. His heart spark is lonely, and it thinks sad, unhappy things. He is cut loose from the shining rays of Fohat. But, my little Carlo, when Fohat comes to light the Christ-spark in a man's heart with that diamond spear of his, then that man becomes one of the Great Ones, he is one of the Sons of Light."

"Could Carlo be?" asked the smiling child.

His Uncle whispered: "Yes, he could, if he listens always when Fohat, Son of Light, speaks through the silent speaker in the heart. You do not hear its voice with your ears, but it speaks; it thinks, and you understand."

"Sometimes it sings in there," said the boy. "It sings when Carlo loves you."

"May the Sweet Law bless your golden heart, my Darling. For it *always* sings when we love."

That night when Carlo fell asleep he was smiling. He had fallen asleep listening to the song of Fohat.

CARLO'S GAME.

“As the One Fire, after it has entered the world, though one, becomes different according to what it burns, thus the One Self within all things becomes different according to whatever it enters, but it exists apart.”

CARLO WAS PLAYING A FAVORITE GAME, although you would not have supposed him to be playing at all. He was lying flat upon his back, his small heels planted against a pine tree trunk, his dreamy little face upturned to the blue sky glimmering between the boughs. This game he called “My Remember Game,” and so he told his Uncle John who came up and asked what he was doing there.

“Playin’ my Remember Game, Uncle John,” he said. “Come an’ lie down this a way, Sir, an’ maybe you’ll remember too.”

Uncle John glanced at the feet vigorously tattooing the tree trunk, and inquired, “Why do you put your feet on the tree, Carlo; is it a part of the game?”

“Put ’em there ’cause I feel the tree tickle me. Somethin’ inside that tree runs up and I feel it makin’ me shiver. I call that the tree’s blood. Papa calls it nonsense. What do you call it, Uncle?”

“I think it must be what you call the tree’s blood, Carlo, but I have a different name. I call it the life force.”

“An’ which’s the best name?”

“Well; let us see. Why do you call it the tree’s blood?”

Giving his curly mane a toss, Carlo rolled over and bit a mouthful of sorrel grass in delight. He felt sure he should win in this game of reasons, with Uncle John. They often played thus, looking into the reasons of things and trying to find out the “Why.” He laughed aloud in his pleasure.

“Guess I’m goin’ to beat you, Sir. I’ve got a awful good ‘Why.’ When I cut my finger, other day, blood runned out. Everybody in the whole world calls *it* blood. An’ when I cut the tree, a yellow

stickiness runned out; so I called *it* blood. It must be a runnin' there, an' I bet it's what tickles my feet."

His feet were covered with yellow moccasins, bead embroidered.

"Is wearing moccasins part of the game?" inquired Uncle John.

"No. Least, I think not. But it tickles more through them than my shoes."

"I shouldn't wonder if that were really so. You gave me a right good reason, Carlo Boy. Now I owe you mine. You said the tree's blood, which is called sap or resin by most people, ran out when you cut the tree, didn't you?"

"Well it didn't 'xactly *run*, but it kinder comed out, that a way. Trees are slower than people in everything, isn't they?"

"They are, my Boy; they are. A tree is never in a hurry. We might take some good lessons from trees. And I see you've been taking some. Always, when you see anything, try to see something else like it in some other part of the world and in yourself, and then you'll understand better. To do that is called Comparison, or Analogy."

Carlo yawned.

"I don't fink I care about those big words, Uncle," he said. "I don't fink I do. But all the boys allays looks around to see what will explain things to them 'when peoples is too busy.'"

"Explain is the word, Carlo."

"I don't care for them words," said the child with some impatience. "You know what *fings* I mean; any old word will do when you know the fings. An' you aint gived me your reason yet. Did I beat you; is mine the best?"

"My reason is this. When your blood runs, or the sap moves, do you think the blood and the running are one, or two? Do you think the sap and the moving are the same thing, or two things?"

Carlo considered. "I dunno," he slowly said.

"You saw an engine moving yesterday. Was that two things, or one?"

“Two,” he shouted joyously, kicking his heels in the air. “Two!” In his exuberance he rolled upon his Uncle, now seated on the grass beside him, and began to pommel him lightly with his fists.

“Why two, Carlo?”

“Because steam made it go. I seen it. I seen the engineer too.”

“Anything more?”

“You bet I did. I saw a fire, a red one. I fink Papa said it made the steam.”

“Then there were four things, old man. The engine is like the tree. The steam is like the sap. The moving that comes from the sap and from the steam, that is what makes both run, and makes your blood run. That is Force. In living things it is life force. All things have their own kind of force, don’t you see; but all are different ways in which Force shows itself. Force puts on many masks, as the clown did in the circus yesterday, but behind the masks is always the same one moving them all. Tree’s life and engine’s life and boy’s life don’t run the same way. The tree, the engine, the boy don’t move alike either. But Force, the hidden Mover, is the same in itself. It moves you, me, the world, the ants and flowers; our ways are different, but the Mover is the same.”

Carlo breathed hard. He was interested. He knew and loved his Uncle’s ways; generally he understood them. When he didn’t he used to say: “I don’t understand, Uncle, but I love you.” Then the Uncle would answer: “That does just as well; it’s the same thing. Love will bring the understanding bye and bye.” So Carlo got to speaking of his “understanding” and his “love-understanding.” He said now: “I know what you mean with my love-understandin’, Uncle. Just that a way. An’ does all the Motion, does that Mover come from fire, everywhere?”

“Yes; that Mover is Fire; different kinds of fire. Some kinds we see with our eyes, and some with our minds —”

“Our Thinkers” — Carlo interrupted.

“Yes; and some with our understanding.”

“And some only with our love-understandin’s.”

“Some only that way just now. But I told you that love will bring truth after a while. There is really only One Fire, but when it enters the sun, the air, coal, or a man, it looks different, it has different ways. Forty-nine ways, the wise men say.”

“Forty-Nine! Is that more than a thousand?” asked Carlo, whose kilts and curls had never yet been inside a schoolroom. He was learning things outside. The world was his object lesson, and his Uncle the skillful teacher. With a pleased little chuckle he asked now: “Did you forget the engineer, Unky? Did you?”

“By no means, my boy. That engineer is very important. He can run the train up, or down, or off the track to destruction. You and I can run our engines where we please, always according to the laws of Motion. A man can run his body as he pleases, make it a good instrument to help the world, or he can do a great deal of harm, but he can only follow the ways of the hidden Mover. His ways are patterns for ours. And we must have good fires in these engines of ours; the right fuel is a good will. Isn’t that so?”

“May be so,” answered the boy, rubbing his curls. “You telled me never to say I was sure when I hadn’t tried it. Carlo aint tried that yet. I guess I don’t know that about lots of fires, but I want to know where’s the tree’s engines. Has it got a Thinker like ours?”

“Not like ours, but a Thinker of its own kind.”

Carlo sat up suddenly. “What fun! Did you *ever* see a tree’s Thinker?”

“No. Nor did I ever see your soul, or mine, (Thinkers as you call them). Nothing else has a Thinker like men. But one great Thinker is at work in us all. Everything lives, acts, goes on. That is life, and life is thought. Everything that moves has thought of its own kind. To think is to be.”

“An’ flowers an’ nuts an’ leaves is the tree’s thoughts, I know. My Remember Game told me so.”

“Is that so? Do tell me about your game, little one. What else does it say?”

“It says —” The bright eyes filled with tears. “Promise me you won’t tell Papa, nor any laughin’ people. Promise.”

“I do promise.”

“Well,” said a small and solemn voice, “my Game Remember says my beauty Mamma aint dead at all. No! She isn’t. *True!* Aren’t you glad, Uncle John? She was your Sister, you know.”

“Indeed I am glad, Carlo. She was, and is, my dear Sister. I always hoped she was not really dead. In fact, I don’t think I ever believed she was.”

Carlo caught his uncle’s bearded face in his two plump hands and squeezed it, looking eagerly in his eyes for an instant, then with a soft sigh of satisfaction he kissed his friend, “You aint laughin like the rest does,” he explained. “I wonder they want to laugh at childrens; it makes em look awful ugly.”

“Tell me more about your game, Carlo.”

“I jess lie down an’ look straight ahead at the sky, ’cause I aint really lookin’ at nothin’ you know. Then fings comes a sailin,’ a sailin’ with music, right spang frou’ my mind. A many fings. But you have to keep so still. If you jump about, an’ say ‘Oh! no, Oh! no,’ then it all stops: all them sky ships sails home again.”

“What news do your ships bring you, Boy?”

“Such stories about fings. Funny fings that Carlo used to be. Nice fings too. Sometimes fairies; not often. Sometimes they makes me understand what the birds say when they sing; an’ when squirrels chatters, too.”

“And is that all?”

“Uncle John, you allays inter-rumps at the bestest part. My Game Remember says Mamma is round me like the air. It says she’s a comin’ back to me some-eres else. It says I’ll be her Mamma, an she’ll be my little boy; bet I’ll be good to her when she’s a he. It says we were once two butterflies; two little baby deers in a forest too. It says we used to fly in the air; the one that loved God best could go fastest. Today it said we was beautiful lights, an’ God was a big Light that lit us all up and made us feel like a good long heaven shining. An’ an’ — I disremember more now. You lie down here an’ play my Game Remember, Uncle John. I call it that ’cause I fink it remines me of somefings I knew when I knew lots more than

these old grown-ups do. It makes me feel werry big in here.” He struck his breast with his hands. “Play it an’ tell me if it says true.”

“I have played it; I think it says true, on the whole,” the Uncle answered, smiling at the boy’s excitement and delight.

“Hurrah! But say; how could I be all those fings some other time?”

“Do you remember what I told you about the One Fire, and all its ways?”

“Ess” — said Carlo.

“That Fire never dies. It lives forever in a darkness of its own. It comes out of that Darkness; it goes back into that Darkness. You have seen our earth fire do that. The One Fire is the Father of all Fires, the Father of Lights. It goes into a form. It comes out, and the form falls to pieces, like the wood which is ashes when the fire has left it. That Fire goes into many, many forms, in very many ways. Each form, in dying, gives life to something else. Cinders and ashes make food that is good for grass and flowers. The acorn dies, and from its grave springs a tree. Some dead forms give birth to worms that creep, and some to winged things. Some worms die, and butterflies arise to kiss the flowers. Some germs ferment, and little children are born. So you see there is no Death; there is only another kind of life, another form from broken forms. But always the One Fire in its many ways and lesser fires gives life and motion to worlds of forms. There are shapes of air, shapes of light, shapes of fire, just as there are more solid shapes, and all are always melting away into one another like the pictures of your kaleidoscope. What makes them move and change so? The hidden Mover in the lesser fires that are the souls of men.”

“I see! I know! Them little fires is the children of the great Fire, the Fire with a Thinker as big as the world. Now I know why Mamma taught me to say ‘Our Father’; she wanted me to fink about that good Fire what makes all these splendid things. It’s a great Light; far, far away an’ everywhere too; my Game Remember says so. It loves me. I heard it a sayin’ ‘Come, Carlo; let us make errybody werry happy an’ we’ll shine forever an’ ever.’ It just *loves* to shine. Uncle John.”

The boy's voice fell. The sun was about to disappear in the west. Birds twittered in the trees. Carlo's eyes followed his Uncle's; he clapped his hands.

“See the red fire that sun makes. Is the sun one of the ways of God? Then I fink he's goin' down to that One Fire, to say that the world is werry well. The great Fire will be glad to know that; I fink it must like us werry well to take trouble to make such a many fings. An' I fink that God is here too, an' everywhere. He's the hiding Mover, Uncle John; he's life, if he never dies. I feel him movin' in me, now. He burns me; he loves me; he moves me. My Game Remember says that's God.”

Uncle John's lips did not move, yet he was saying:

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

THE WONDER-LIGHT.

ONCE A LONELY LITTLE CHILD awoke in the night and saw a great Light coming towards him. He was not afraid, for, as the Light came up about him, he saw that it trembled; it was as soft as his Mamma's arms, as clear as his Mamma's eyes.

This child was Carlo. He slept alone because his dear Mamma was dead. He sat up in his wee bed to look at the Light, and it grew brighter as if it smiled at him; a silver voice seemed to come out of it and said:

"Carlo, I have come to take care of you."

"What can you do?" said the child.

"I can shine," said the Light.

Then it wrapped Carlo up, Oh! so softly, and began shining. It grew brighter and brighter; lovely light-blue waves rolled from it; they were blue as the egg of the robin. One after another they rose, fell, and rolled on, just as if they moved to sweet music; they broke against Carlo's breast very gently, and their spray was like blue diamonds scattered on the night. They made him feel so happy, so good, as if he loved all the world and it loved him; he seemed to see in those blue deeps the angels that help and pity the poor old world. Out of these waves yellow rays of light came flashing; one touched him between the eyes, and lo! he saw more and more of the beauties of those waves. There were so many wonderful things there, they puzzled him.

"Light," said he, "Carlo can't understand all that."

"Some day you will," answered the Light. "Now you need only remember."

As the sunny beams sparkled about him, splendid dark blue lights fell from their tips, like blue bells from a high skyrocket. One fell into his mind, and as it slipped among his curls he began to understand; he knew then that the Light was his teacher and friend. He lay down again, nestling into that soft Light.

“Show me more, Light,” he said; “shine more.” Just then the Light changed all at once to a splendid green ocean, whose billows spread far, far over the earth. Carlo looked, and saw that this was a sea of green grass with the moon shining upon it. Every blade of grass danced, and on each was a tiny fairy-like creature; these tickled the earth, and more grass and flowers sprang up. Great numbers of these tiny fairies came and went; they were the earth-builders: some made the great trees full of glowing fruits, which made Carlo want to go and pick them. Others helped to build the mountains; still others tended the mosses; there were more who went to and fro among the animals and among people on strange errands of service which Carlo could not then understand. Troops of these little people were bustling about everywhere. They were not all like people; some were like specks of light with a dark ring or belt about them; others had other shapes, translucent as those of the sea creatures; some lived in water, some in fire, some in earth, but they were all busy, they all worked in the service of the world. The more they worked, the more they shone, the more they grew. All this was so interesting, so bright and bustling, that Carlo clapped his hands.

“I like this best,” he called out. “Let me go and eat those fruits.” Indeed, the fruits were so brilliant and glowing, they seemed to call to his eyes to see them and to his lips to come taste them: he could hardly keep still.

“Would you rather eat them, or see what makes them all grow?” said the voice of the Light. It was not a loud voice, it did not stir the air, nor yet did it come out of the air; it seemed to speak in Carlo’s mind.

“I would rav-ver eat them,” said Carlo, quickly. Then an odd thing happened. All the Light grew paler, darker, as if sadness came over it. It was still beautiful, but it did not shine so happily; it went under a cloud, and Carlo felt its shadow in his little heart.”

“Ah! you are not wise,” murmured the voice of the Light. That voice had been like silver bells before; now it was heavy as lead. It sank down, down deep in Carlo’s breast; the deeper it went the sadder he felt, as if joy could never dance in his heart again.

“It feels as if Carlo had been naughty,” he said, He looked again at the fruits on those splendid trees, hanging like star clusters from the boughs. I ’spose little children isn’t worry wise, and those fruits

must be puffickly 'licious." The light grew colder and darker; it began to go away. Carlo could not bear that. "Couldn't I have both?" he asked.

"You must choose," said the voice, far away.

Carlo made a great effort; he gave a big sigh, shut his eyes, clenched his dimpled fists, and shouted out fast, in a big, cross voice, as if he was afraid he'd change his mind:

"Show me how they grow, and be warm and glad again for Carlo."

At this, the Light kindled into new beauty. How it beamed! How it shone! It did not hurt Carlo's eyes, and yet it was so strong that he saw it through his forehead, when his eyes were closed.

"When peoples is good, does it make you shine more?" he asked.

"Much more," answered that silver voice.

A long ray stretched towards the tree and flowers, pointing at them, then touching them. They became luminous, inside and out, as a house does when big fires are lit in every room. Now Carlo could see into them. He saw that they were all made of the very tiniest specks of colored lights, moving fast in every leaf and flower and tree, and in all creatures too: they were like little currents in water; their motion kept everything warm and made everything live; an orange-colored light ran, thread-like, through all the rest. An orange-colored star was also sitting in the heart of every fairy, every stone, mountain, tree, flower, insect, bird, animal, child, man, and woman. Every star wore a crown; it moved to and fro just as the Light did, singing as it moved.

"What are those beautiful stars?" asked the child.

"They are my children; they are souls. I am the soul of the world; each soul is a sparkle of me," said the Light. "All are in me, each is myself, that makes all souls one."

Carlo looked again. The Light kept changing from pale to bright, and whatever change came over the Mother Light was felt by the child stars; they changed with it. Rays spread from each star out into the Light and to all other stars; these rays were veins and

arteries like those in Carlo's arms; what ran in them was not blood, it was more Light, and that Light was the life of men. Lights of all colors ran to and fro, messengers of the Mother Light to her children, carrying love and peace from star to star. From those rays a rainbow mist rose up, then fell back again in a frozen rain which took the shape of all the things in the world; all the forms that ever were seen were there, made out of the colors of the Light. These shapes seemed like magnets, they drew Light and earth about them, and the fairies worked so busily on them that presently a heart-star was kindled in their center. A warm Breath, blowing out of the Light, set the heart-star to moving in time with the Light, and when that happened, the forms became alive.

Carlo was much interested and surprised. "Just look at them," said he; "it seems as if the world was all made out of Light."

"So it is," he was told, "All things are made out of me, the One Light; all things are made out of me. These are higher and lower Lights, all are not alike, but all, from earth's fires to the Christ-Light which is the Saviour of men, all are made in and from me; they are all one Substance, it is Light. Look again."

On looking closer Carlo saw a difference in the Lights. For instance, the heart-stars of the stones were small and pale; they hardly shone at all. The heart-stars of plants were brighter; those of the animals came next, while the hearts of people moved fastest and burned brightest of all. It seemed that the faster your star moved and the brighter it burned, the greater and better you were. The vegetables and plants lived more than the stones; the animals lived more than they, but were not so full of life and thoughts as the people. As for the earth-builders, they had not so many colors in them as the rest, and their heart-star had no crown; it was more like a dot of light than a star. Carlo wondered why this was, and the voice answered him as if he had spoken.

"It is because they have not received their souls yet; they only have life. Life is the orange Light you see running through all the rest."

"And has peoples got the biggest souls?"

While he said this he looked up, and there he saw a great Being, like an angel, moving in music across the sky. This Being was all of

Light; he was robed in crystals and rainbows; he was all starry; moving tongues of rosy flame went before and after him, little love flames with singing wings. The heart-star of this angel was most glorious, larger and brighter than any Carlo had seen. By his face and the deep kindliness of his eyes Carlo seemed to know that he had once been a man like other men. But now the splendor of the Christ-Light was in his heart.

“Light, how do you make everything? I wish you’d tell me, he coaxed.”

“I make them as you make your thoughts in your mind. I am the Thinker. The worlds and all the things in them are my thoughts. When you think, when the Light in you thinks, that, too, makes forms in me, although you cannot always see them.”

“When will I see them?”

“When my yellow ray has opened your eyes. That will only be if you are a very good man. Be careful meantime not to think bad thoughts, for that would make ugly things in the Light. Come! I will show you more,” added the voice like falling water.

Again a golden beam touched his head; a violet cloud was all about his body; the Light put a golden bridle upon it; he mounted and rode away into the big world of things. He saw then that while the heart stars of stones were much alike among themselves, and all of about the same degree of brightness, and while the heart-stars of plants and animals were alike among themselves, each in its own kind, yet the heart-stars, or souls, of people differed very much indeed. While some were of a mighty brilliance and purity, others were surrounded by a thick black smoke, through which their stifled Light was scarcely seen, a smoke which prevented their shining. Though Light lit every man in the world, it could not always shine forth. This left some people in darkness; the places where they lived were like dark spots in the Light, so they stumbled and fell against each other. This made them angry, for their minds too were so dark they could not see the right of anything; they struck at each other; they shouted angry words. Those words were like poisoned arrows, they had a life of their own, they rushed through the Light, making confusion in its soft rays. Wherever their sharp sounds fell, a red fire of wrath sprang up, cracking and roaring, making new smoke and greater darkness. All the smoke in the world, smothering the

heart-stars, came from red fires of wrath in dark minds, and many of the people cried out:

“What shall we do in this dark world?”

“Let your Light shine!” Carlo shouted back. He felt so sorry for them, and, as they did not hear him, he asked the Light why it did not speak to them as it did to him.

“I do speak,” it answered, “but they cannot hear me because those red fires roar so. I am only heard in the quiet heart. My voice is the voice of Love. When they are kind to one another, when they shout no sharp words, then they will hear. When you were greedy about the fruit, you saw what a shadow it made in me. All selfish thoughts make a cloud and coldness in the Light. That runs along my rays and many heart-stars feel it. The rays are roads running from one part to another. Whatever is done by one person runs along those lines and is felt by all.”

“Make me understand better, dear Light,” said the child.

“Suppose you have a tub of water and you want to blacken one drop of that water. You pour ink in the tub; instead of blackening one drop, it blackens all. If bad, selfish thoughts are put into the Light which fills all the world, they run through that Light and cloud it; every heart-star is choked by the smoke unless it is so much purer and stronger that it throws the smoke off; hearts that move very much faster can do this, but weak hearts are hurt. Be good, *not* for yourself, but for the sake of others; then your Light will shine.”

“Ess,” said Carlo. He saw that the Light was like an immense spider-web, filling the whole world. Wherever the countless lines crossed, there was a point where something lived, whether star or man, or beast or plant or stone. Whatever it was, that point was its heart-star; if any of the lines were touched, all were moved. If touched with Love, that Love was Light; it ran along the rays and they trembled into music, moving faster, growing brighter. If they were touched with unkindness, that was a harsh red fire, smoking as it ran. What touched those lines? Not hands; oh, no. Whenever any heart-star moved, that touched them. Some moved with love and some with selfishness. Some moved for all others; some moved to please themselves. That made the difference.

“But why is Love Light?” asked Carlo

“Because the Light is all in all and is for all. To live in all — that is true Love.”

And why is selfishness a red, smoking fire?”

“Because it wants to take all for itself, just as fire burns all to feed itself.”

The child looked at the many dark hearts struggling like flies in the web of Light, the kindly web that was their home, if they only knew it. Tears of pity filled his eyes. It was too great weight for his heart. The voice whispered that he must not mind this too much, that dark hearts learned through pain, just as Carlo learned not to put his finger into the candle light after it had once burned him. Then the Light let down its pale blue curtain between the child and the world. He felt himself once more in his bed; the violet cloud was gone, and again he lay softly in the lap of the Light.

“What more can you do?” said the child to the Light.

“I can sing,” said the Light. “Listen!”

At first there was only a deep, sweet silence, such a silence as comes when you are going to sleep on the Mother’s breast. Then musical ripples arose in that silence, like waves on a moonlit sea. They gathered together, coming faster and faster, white crests on a storm of sound. On and on they rode, each sound sparkling as it came. There were sounds of all colors, more fragrant than flowers; they fell as sweetly on the lips as on the ears. Thick and fast they fell, shining snowflakes now from the dark dome of silence; they joined themselves together in radiant bands, singing a grand song. “All the morning stars sang together.” They flocked about the little child; he clapped his hands, he sang with them, he rose and danced in his small bed; his yellow curls, his white limbs shone among the shining jewel sounds; the Light gave him wings of violet and silver; it was the happiest hour in the world.

When Carlo was tired he lay down again and asked the Light what more it could do.

“I can make worlds with my song,” the Light replied. “See!”

Once more a golden beam touched Carlo’s forehead; he felt that he saw with all his body, which was full of Light. Far in the distance was a huge fountain of Light, a fountain with a dark center;

the edges of this dark ring broke into the Light that sang, bubbling up with joy. Here, too, every ray of Light was a color, and as color touched color, as ray met ray, music leaped out as fire leaps when a match is rubbed upon stone. Where the red met the green, where the blue met the yellow, they were glad, they met like brothers, a grand song arose. These songs were the life of the Light. There was something still more wonderful. When that Light sparkled through a color, Carlo saw it was made up of tiny golden specks, like gold-dust or sun mist. These specks, or atoms, crowded together, calling out in joy at meeting; the sounds they made ran round and through them, drawing other atoms to the group; the sounds touched that group here, there, everywhere; they were like hands shaping it, just as a boy molds clay or putty into a shape, and soon Carlo saw that Sound was making beautiful things out of the Light.

“Once I see Uncle John run his fiddle bow on a pane of glass what had yellow grains of sand on it, and the grains runned together at the sounds an’ made real pretty shapes on the glass,” he reflected. “Seems to me there’s an awful lot of things to know.” He saw stars made in this way, enormous stars that bounded off into the sky and wheeled about the sun with choral songs. Each star had its own color, each star had its own song, but all the colors together made pure white light, and all the songs blended into one song, the life-song of the sun. When the sun sang that, it warmed the earth; then it was that flowers bloomed, that trees arose, that birds laid bright eggs in their nests, and children were born. The seas became full of fish; out of the air came all winged things. The snake came, too, and the owl, bird of night with solemn eyes, the fierce tiger, the elephant with his trumpet, the timid things of darkness and all the poisonous lives of the jungle were drawn to that grand Sound. They were tamed by it; the wildcat purred and the tiger crouched; the snake danced, the elephant forgot his lair; they all loved the Sound and Light; in them all were gentle and kind as children are at the mother’s breast; they knew that the Light had mothered them all; they were wiser than many people are. Carlo saw that if men would do the same, if men would harken to the Light and would be filled with it, letting it shine, all things would be good, and heaven and earth would be one happy place of peace. The voice told him that there were no bad things, only the use to which things were put was bad. The creatures would not hurt men if the men had not made

dark, evil places in the Light to darken all the weaker souls. All things are made for Nature's good uses, but darkened, blinded hearts do not always obey Nature's laws. All evil comes from darkened Light, from rays turned back, or twisted or broken, where the red fire swallows up their silvery beauty and they can no longer do their proper work.

While he thought this, which the light seemed to put into his mind, he saw the singing colors cluster very thick about a place larger than our world. The place became glorious with Light, full of angels that obeyed it and flew to do its will. Soon so many rays gathered about this wonderful place, they pressed so thick, they moved so fast, such fires were struck from them, such dazzling lightnings, such moving songs arose, they seemed to be doing some mighty work, All at once a last marvelous blaze shot up, the rays melted together, a bell note pealed to the ends of the universe, and lo! a Sun sprang forth in glory, bearing the angels in his resplendent heart. The Sound and the Light had made a new Sun!

Up rose the child in his little bed. He fell on his knees and clasped his hands as he had been taught to do in prayer.

"Light, I fink you must be God," he said.

"No, I am not God," answered the Light. "I am the spoken Word of God."

"He must be werry glad he spoke you," mused Carlo.

"Why do you call God *he*? God is not a man."

"Does she love little children whose mothers is dead?"

"God *is* Love, Carlo, but God is not a woman," said the Voice.

"What is God?" the child asked.

"I do not know," the Light made answer.

"Why, I thought you knew everything."

"I do not know that. No man, no angel, no Being, however powerful, knows it. God is in me, for I feel the Breath of God and I tremble. That Breath, breathing in me, makes motion, sound, color, makes all that is. I only feel the 'Breath-which-is-eternal;' I do not see God."

“I s’pose God is the hidden Mover Uncle John told me about.”

“No; the Breath is the Mover. “God is not known.”

“What shall I call God, then?”

“Do not name the Unseen One at all,” spoke the Light. “Let your thoughts rise to It in silence and in love. Such thoughts have wings of Light to reach the Silence where dwells the Everlasting One. If your thoughts speak, they lose breath, their wings are feeble, they fall by the way. Adore and be still.”

“May I whisper something?” said the child in a small, low voice. “Often I heard peoples talk about God. Some tells all He finks about us, an’ what He does, as if they knowed Him werry well.”

“That is ignorance. They see some idea of their own minds, and they think God must be like it. Some think one of my angels is God. God means good, all the good in the world; but God cannot be seen or known even in thought.”

“If nobody knows God, what tells them God is good?”

“The divine laws they see in Nature. Those laws are good, they are laws of helpfulness, they can only come from goodness. The chief of those laws is the law of harmony and love; you saw that law working in me; it rules me; I have mercy and compassion for every creature, and I make all by the will of the unseen, eternal God.”

“How do you know that will?”

“It is whispered in the Breath. Hark!”

The innocent child listened, He heard the song of the deathless Bird, the Swan of Time. He heard what it is given to few to hear,—the almighty Breath moving upon the Universal Soul. It cannot be described, but those who have heard it never forget, and none hear it but those who love the world more than themselves and cherish every creature.

“If you have all things, kind Light —” the child began. Tears filled his eyes; his heart swelled, he could not speak.

“What do you want, little one!”

“I want — Oh! I do want to see my Mamma,” wept the lonely little child. All the glories of creation could not fill his human heart. Even as he spoke, a beautiful woman stood at the foot of his bed; her eyes were dark and deep with tenderness like still pools of the river; his sobs were stopped, his sore heart healed. “Mamma!” he said wistfully.

“It is not your Mamma her own self; it is her picture,” spoke the voice that he had learned to trust. “Her picture is all I can show you; it is the sweet house in which her soul lived. The body is the house of the soul, and the soul is not to be seen after it flies out of the body at the call of God. You may always *feel* your Mamma near you, for the soul is always near all that it loves, though it lives for a while in a better place than this poor world.”

A feeling of peace and delight filled the boy, just as it used to do when his mother rocked him to sleep. That was the best thing about his mother, that feeling he had when he was near her. It made him so happy now that he was quite content; he did not notice that the lovely picture was fading away. His sleepy eyelids fell. What was that he saw? It was his own heart, with a crowned star in the middle. He remembered what he had heard one Christmas Day about the Christ-Light.

“I want my light to shine,” he murmured drowsily.

A trumpet called out. of the Eastern skies and a voice in the daybreak said:

“I shine in all. All are myself. In me all are Brothers. Who hurts his neighbor, hurts himself. Who hurts the dumb beast, hurts himself. Who breaks Nature’s laws, breaks his own heart. But he who helps the world is he whose Light shall shine until it becomes the Christ-Light and brings him to me.”

“Can a little child help?” asked the boy.

From North and South, from East and West the Sons of Light answered:

“Of such are the kingdom of Heaven.”

BUBBLES OF THE BREATH.

“The air has bubbles as the water hath,
And these are of them.”

PIT-A-PAT FELL THE RAIN on the gabled roof of “Hideaway.” Pit-a-pat on the low, wide porches, on the overhanging branches and broad leaves. It was a wee houselet, a shelter in the hillside forest; it sat like a dark red fungus at the foot of a tall tree. The branches shaded it here, and there opened to let in the view of the slim, fair, peaceful valley girdled by hills of every delicate color-tone. To this resting place came Uncle John when the world roared too loud and too long, bringing Carlo with him. It was all of wood inside and out, lined with polished wood as a woodpecker’s nest is; the crackling wood fire cast its flickering shadows on the shining walls; it had a look as if it had grown there of itself; as Carlo said, it was “the most comfortablest place.” Everyone and everything seemed to think so; the pealing thunders of Uncle John’s organ had no terrors for the birds or butterflies that sometimes dashed through it, nor for Juno, the burly St. Bernard dog, dozing under the table. Maude with her kittens, Blondin and Brunette, lolled in their sheepskin rug, pretending it was a savage lair; Brunette, as usual, taking her dinner of fresh mother-milk, and Blondin the Bold gravely chasing a wasp entangled in the rug. Not a sound was heard except sounds of water, the rain taps and the gurgles of the stream falling into the marble basin from the outside spring in its unchecked flow. Uncle John lay back in his steamer-chair, a book on his knee and a pipe in his mouth; except for the puffs of smoke you would have thought him asleep. In a little alcove, just big enough for the organ and its stool, but not big enough for anything more, sat Carlo, swinging his dangling legs and marching his fingers over the organ keys, while he pensively watched the swoop of dark clouds over the hills and the races of rain-drops over the panes. Presently he clambered down; stealing on tiptoe into the room, he squatted down under the sage-green umbrella of the lamp, looking like Puck under a toadstool, wistfully watching for his friend and comrade to awaken. Perhaps Uncle John saw the weary little face from under his half-closed eyelids, as he had a way of doing; he gave a kind of grunt, a

signal well known to Carlo, who said, very gently and without moving:

“May you be ’sturbed, Uncle?”

The Uncle answered by another question. “A rainy day is a long day, isn’t it, old man?”

“N-o-o, not ’xactly. But the kits-cats won’t play with the bird any more.” The “bird” was a queer mass of cotton and feathers, dangling from a line passed through a ring in the roof, causing the cats to make mad leaps after it, tumbling and rolling, to Carlo’s delight; even Juno did not disdain to play with the bird. Today they had all had enough of it.

Maude got up and stretched herself. She trotted to the stationary washstand, on which she jumped, pawed the leaden plug into the basin, patted about until she had fitted it into the hole, and then demurely watched the water filling the basin until she thought it was full enough for a drink. This taken, she sprang to the window-sill and began to wash her face with her paws. Carlo ran to remove the plug.

“Naughty pussy!” said he. “Some day when we’re not here, all the water will run over. Why don’t you know enough to pull the plug out again?”

“If she could speak, she would probably say that she knows more than most cats already, his Uncle answered. Time enough for her to do that when she gets to be a boy.

“Oh! Uncle. Will she *ever*?” and Carlo opened his eyes very wide.

“Did you never hear of Reincarnation, my boy?” asked his Uncle, looking at the book he held. The book had this big word on its back, where books wear their names.

“What is it? A game?”

“That’s a capital idea, my boy; we’ll make it a game. You will understand better so.” Rising, he stretched his tall form, fastened the girdle of his yellow dressing-coat about him, and ran his fingers through his fluffy blonde hair. “Rainy days make me go to sleep all over,” he smiled, while Carlo watched him intently. Going over to

the oaken table under the book-case, he took from a hammered brass tray a clay pipe and an earthen bowl gaily painted with Japanese flowers. Into the bowl he poured hot water from a big brown jug upon the stove, and, taking a bit of soap, began to make strong suds. While Carlo looked on, Blondin suddenly caught the wasp, with a squeal as it stung his tongue, bit it, carried it in pride to Brunette, and said to her in cat language:

“You can’t catch a thing like that, Brunette. You’re only a girl.”

“Pooh!” Brunette answered in the same way, “what’s the good? You can’t eat it,” and waddled to her Mother to get some more dinner.

“I know, Uncle,” Carlo called out. “It’s soap-bubbles. That’s prime!” Taking the clay pipe, he danced about impatiently.

“We are going to do more than blow bubbles; we are going to talk about them.”

With a sigh of immense satisfaction, the child climbed on to a chair. Of all his pleasures, he valued most a talk with his Uncle.

“How I wish Mr. Bert was here,” he said, alluding to a chum of his Uncle’s whom too he loved.

“You can see if you remember what I tell you well enough to tell him,” answered the other.

Carlo wriggled with joy. Next to hearing a story, he dearly loved to tell one, even to the kittens if no other hearer was at hand.

“Now, blow me a big bubble,” the Uncle went on to say, and soon a bright globe was rounding itself from the pipe and was tossed off into air, with another and another to follow it. Blondin ran up and slapped one with his paw; the look of astonishment on his stupid, innocent little face when it disappeared was most ridiculous, and made the bubble-makers shout with laughter, while puss snapped at one with her huge jaws, and looked so sheepish and silly when it vanished, Carlo called out in glee:

“Where’s they gone, you poor old am’s” (his word for animals); where’s they gone?”

“That’s just what I ask you, Carlo,” said his Uncle. “Where have they gone to?”

“Why; into nothing, I s’pose.”

“Do you remember my telling you once that there was not a spot in the world where nothing was?”

“Well, then, into air — isn’t it?”

“Let us see. I am very much interested in bubbles, because they are just like people.”

“Oh! come now, Uncle. People isn’t so round and fat and all colors.”

“How do you know?” What did you tell me that brown seed was, the one you were planting yesterday?”

“It was a pansy seed. It’s goin’ to be one of them beautiful gold and purple flowers with pussy-cat faces, you know.”

“Why, that flower is not one bit like that brown seed, Carlo,” said his Uncle, with half-shut eyes and his quizzical smile. Carlo looked at him in quick understanding.

“You caught me that time,” he laughed. “Tell me how bubbles are like people, while I blow the best one you ever saw.”

“You know, child, how often I tell you not to judge of what a thing is like in its real self by what you see of it outside. About the bubbles: very wise men say that every person has about him a body of a rare kind of air, sometimes called ether. It surrounds him just as air surrounds the earth or the moon. Every thing, too, has just such a ball or sphere of air around it and belonging to it. Colors are said to run through that sphere of air, changing as the person’s thoughts or breath changes. So to people who see this, man would seem to be in the center of a bubble with ever-changing hues.”

“Does everybody see it?”

“Not all people, for all eyes are not the same. Many persons do. Don’t you remember telling me about a wonderful Light you saw one night?” Carlo nodded. “You saw something like that, then. But there is something even more interesting in bubbles and men. What do you think it is?”

Carlo watched a bubble bursting in the air.

“Is it that they both dies?” he asked.

“A good guess. But I do not think they either of them *die* exactly. I think they only change. Let us see. What makes the bubble? Come; tell me and I’ll match you with what makes a man.”

“Soap,” said Carlo.

“Body,” said his Uncle.

“Water,” said Carlo.

Uncle John matched that by saying “Soul.”

“No more,” said Carlo.

“Oh, yes. One thing more.” Carlo shook his puzzled head. “Stir your brains now. A very important thing. What makes the bubble, after all? What do you put into it?”

“Breath!” shouted Carlo gaily.

“Exactly,” his Uncle assented. “I’ll match that with Spirit.”

“What is spirit, Uncle?”

“Spirit is the Great Breath of God. See — we have soap, water, and breath. And body, soul, and spirit. Soap makes the bubble hold together. The water would not hold alone. You can’t blow pure water into a bubble. Bubbles such as you sometimes see on the edge of running water have gas in them, made from decaying slime or plants; it acts as the soap does. Just so the soul, the light which is the mind or Thinker of men, needs a body to hold it or it cannot act in this world at all. But if air is not blown into the bubble in some way, then no shape is formed. And Spirit is the Great Breath of Life. It is in the body; and also it is outside of the body. Without that Breath the soul could not live and think at all, and without the body it could not live in this particular kind of a world.”

“But bubbles burst, Uncle.”

“And men die.”

“Yes; I heard a man sayin’ that once when Mamma took me to church. He was up in a big box lookin’ down on the peoples. I wished it was me, up there. Say, Uncle; what is it, anyhow, *to die*? Get planted like the flowers, don’t you? I fink to die is bein’ snuffed out like a candle, just this-a-way.” He tossed a bubble on the shining

maple floor and stamped on it with his foot. "Gone! Then there's no more Carlo; no more Uncle," he said.

"How do you know that? What is that spot on the floor?"

Carlo looked at it. "Just a drop of water left from the bubble."

Then it is not all gone. That drop of water thrown off from it is like our cast-off body which is put into the earth. The drop disappears, swallowed up by the boards and the air; so our bodies sink into earth and air again. I saw some spray from the bubble fall back into the bowl, from the air, when it burst. How about that? I will tell you. The soul goes back to the World-Soul, the Wonder-Light. It stays there for a time. And the breath; where is that?"

"In the air," said Carlo.

"And so the Spirit Breath is in the Great Breath. Is that all?"

"I 'spose it is," the child answered.

"Then you do not wish to blow bubbles anymore?"

"Oh, yes I do!"

"And suppose the Great Breath too goes on making more of the bubbles called men? That would make many men. But suppose one is made again with the same spirit and the same soul, what then?"

"Oh! Why then, Uncle, why then — yes — they'd have to come back again here, wouldn't they, if the Great Breath said so?"

"Of course they would. That is called Reincarnation, that coming back of soul and spirit into a new body. Now let us see what you do. You blew breath into the bubble and confined it there; air and water were held in that form, as in a prison, by the soap. When their motion got too strong for the bubble, it broke. When the soul wears out the body, the body dies, The heaviest part of the bubble, soap and water, fell on the floor. So the gross lower part of the soul dies with the body. Some fine spray blew off into the air and back into the bowl; so the fine part of the soul, the Thinker, goes into the World-Soul, and there the Breath is always moving. The human soul waits there awhile. And now tell me what you did after breathing your breath out."

“I breafed more in.”

“So the Great Breath does. It is drawn in and Out. It breathes out and into forms; that is life. It is breathed in again, and out of the forms or bodies of men and things; that is death. Death is only a change; the soul still lives, in another state or condition, until it is breathed into another body again. The soul is the real man. It never dies. See; you draw the water and soap up again from the place where the spray fell in and you blow another bubble. It is the same water, mixed with other soap, blown by the same breath. So when the body dies, or changes into earth and lime and flowers, it is seen that even bodies do not die; *nothing ever dies*; they only change into new forms of life, they become bodies for other things, for the ant or the wheat or the fruit tree growing from the soil. The soul rests awhile, out of the body, in a peaceful, beautiful kind of happiness called heaven. Heaven is not a place; it is a condition of joy and rest. After a while, spirit in its wisdom breathes again into the soul-sphere all the glowing colors of life. The soul moves and draws together a new body, just as that spray drew new soap and water to itself, and the motion of the Breath in it helps to round out a new form. So the soul of every man comes back again and again, and this, as I said, is Reincarnation, or coming back again into a new form. Spirit is the companion of soul.”

“Why does soul come back?”

“To learn more and more, so that at last it may have such a pure, wise heart-star that the Christ-Light may be born in it.”

“But where is *I*? Where’s Carlo, Uncle John?”

“That part of you which goes into the Breath, that fine part, your Thinker, as you call it, is the real Carlo. It never dies.”

“And was my Thinker in a great many little boys?”

“Yes; it has passed through many bodies. The soul, as the Wonder-Light showed you, passes into stones, plants, animals, and then into men.”

“Goodness! Was my Thinker in all those bodies?”

“I believe so.”

“Well, then, just you tell me why my Thinker don’t *r’member* something about it. Now I’ve caught you, haven’t I?” Carlo laughed roguishly, showing all his pretty teeth in his red mouth like a cherry. His Uncle smiled, throwing one arm about him.

“Do you forget your Remember Game, Carlo? Aha! now I’ve caught you! Sometimes your Thinker does remember something about all the past, you see. But I think it remembers all the time, but you and your brain are too busy to listen. When your brain and body sleep, the soul, the Thinker, does not sleep. Often you remember what it saw, and you call it a dream. It reflects all the world as that mass of bubbles in the bowl reflects the room; see the little images there. Because you sleep, the Thinker does not sleep. So in daytime while your brains are busy with the outside world, they do not hear the low voice of the soul. Now dip your pipe *deep* into the water.”

Carlo did as he was told. But he could blow no bubble; the soapy water fell back into the bowl without taking shape.

“See,” his Uncle continued, “there is too much heavy matter there; your breath cannot blow it. So it is if the soul thinks too much of the body and mixes too much in the body and bodily pleasures, such as eating, drinking, and so on. The breath cannot inform the soul then, and, after a time, body and soul disperse, mix with their own elements, and do not return. That is only when a man has been horribly wicked. But for the most part, the Thinker passes through many forms till perfection of heart-light is reached. You are Carlo now. Last time you may have been a beggar, and next time you may be a king. So it is with us all. We all came from the Great Breath, the mover. We all go back to it and come forth again. We are brothers; men, animals, plants, rocks, creatures of the elements, all come from the World-Soul. Each has passed through the river of life the same way; each will go out and return again, so each should be kind to every other. You may change places, next time, with the boy to whom you are unkind today.”

“Oh, Uncle! I was cross with Juno yesterday. I hit her. Have I got to go back and be a dog next time?”

Carlo’s eyes grew bigger and darker. He looked as if he would like to cry.

“No indeed, my boy. Did you ever see a river flow backward! The river of life never stops, turns around and flows the other way. Souls come up into life from the lowest lives on to the highest; the river flows onward; your soul will not again go through the bodies it has left behind or take on lower forms of life. Yet be kind to all things as well as to people. If you are unkind you may hurt their lives, and your own heart-star cannot become pure and great. That star called the soul enters all bodies, knows and conquers all bodies, until it becomes splendidly pure and wise. Men are only the bubbles of the world But souls that become pure spirit are eternal, immortal; they are like God.”

“I fink it’s beautiful. Ess; I do!” the child said slowly. “Re-carnations. I’ll tell it all to Mr. Bert when he comes in. Maude is so smart. Will she be a baby boy next time?”

The Uncle smiled. “I do not think so. The animals are a long way off from men yet. And there are wiser animals than cats. Some learned men say that the elephant is the wisest of animals and has the most mind, so that the last time a soul is in an animal body, it is in that of an elephant. I do not know how true that is.”

“Oh, Maude!” exclaimed the boy, “you’ll be an elephant like Mr. Barnum’s next time. What fun that will be! Won’t she be s’prised? She’s so cute and little now. Wouldn’t it be awful for her if she came up again only a dandelion?” He hugged the cat in sympathy.

“Remember what I told you, Carlo. The law is that all things, as they come out of the Great Breath, shall go upward, shall improve. The unseen God made that law. The animal will not be a plant again, nor the plant a stone. Some animals are wiser in many things than some men are. They obey the laws of nature better than we do. The animals are true to their own nature, but men are not always true to theirs; they do not always listen to the voice of the soul, the conscience whispering in us when we do wrong. For those who do listen, a great future is in store; there is nowhere any stop on this long journey: they go on to greater lives, on to other worlds. At last, no longer mere bubbles of the Breath, they enter that Great Breath itself; they are all one with it and in great peace.”

“That’s splendid! I’ll try to be good and go on with you, Uncle.”

As he spoke, the door opened and a young man entered. Carlo ran to him.

“Here you are, Mr. Bert,” he cried, “Come in; I’ll tell you about some three-carnations — not the kind you have in your buttonhole. You think you’re a man, Mr. Bert. You aren’t any such a thing. You’re only a bubble, what the Great Breath has blown. If you’re good, you’ll get back to God’s house some day. God’s house is the Great, Great Breath.”

The two men smiled at each other over the dear little curly head. Both thought the same thing: “May we three always meet in the long journey.” Carlo, as if he felt their thoughts, said as he climbed up on to Mr. Bert’s shoulders:

“But you both must go along with me. God’s house wouldn’t be home without my friends.”

WHAT THE FOUNTAIN SAID.

THERE WAS A FOUNTAIN IN THE WOODS on the hillside. It was not like any fountain that Carlo had ever seen, but was a talking fountain, with a cool, soft voice of its own. Where it really lived, no one knew; high on the hill it came flashing out of a great wall of rock from its hidden home, falling into a bed of stone and pebbles with sound and churning, then leaping from this pool up into air again, scattering its spray over moss grown ledges. A wise man who found and loved it used its waters to heal the sick and weary, and had built a queer red hut about it below the thunder of the railroad track, which often came to drown the fountain's low voice. It is often so; the world's thunder often tries to drown the sweet, small voices of nature. The hut had a porch, overhanging the hill as an oriole's nest hangs from the branch. There Carlo loved to stand, watching birds and clouds floating above the distant valley below, where tiny men drove little horses hitched to small plows, and midges that were the town boys ran over the ball-grounds after something he could not see. Inside the hut was a little room with a barred and grated window looking into the prison of the fountain, shut up so that no one should pollute its sweet waters. Carlo clasped the iron bars with his pink hands and peeped in, happy in the songs of the waters. Happier still he was when the Superintendent would come with his bunch of keys and let him into the cool rock room whose top was not roofed over, there to sit on a ledge, chin in hand, dreaming over the troubled water. Hands seemed to wave to him out of its downward fall, and airy forms to float in its smoke and spray. He was so used to seeing these fairies of the fountain that he was not surprised when he one day heard a voice speaking to him. He had been watching the waves of the pool running to the shore. A white blossom had drifted through the bars and into the pool, where the waves had great sport with it. It was carried to the shore, or stone edge of the pool, where Carlo thought its journey ended. But no; another set of waves seemed to catch it up and to carry it round, bearing it back towards the boiling center again, wind-driven and tossing. When it reached that place, Carlo hoped the poor, tired thing would be drawn up into the air by the up-leaping spray, but it was again driven away to shore, and so it traveled back and forth,

poor wee waif, at the mercy of the stormy ripples. It looked so wet and wan; it had no rest or help; Carlo felt sad to see it.

“Oh! Fountain, let it go,” he said; “do let it go again.”

“I cannot do that,” said a voice in his mind.

“Why; who are you?”

“I am the Fountain.”

“I did not know you had a voice,” Carlo said. “Please excuse me.”

“Everything in the world has a voice of its own,” the Fountain sang, “and everything speaks, although men do not often understand the voices of Nature.”

“Why do I understand you, then?”

“Because you love me, and because little children have pure hearts. When men have such hearts, they too will understand.”

“Tell me then, please, why that leaf can’t get out.”

“It is because the good Law forbids it.”

“Now, Fountain, I act’ally don’t understand. What is a law?”

“It is a commandment which men may not break, and for breaking which they are punished. Some laws are made by men to protect people. If a man steals, the law shuts him up in prison, where he cannot steal. That is man’s law. Others are laws of Nature. If an apple is parted from the twig, it must fall, That is one of Nature’s laws. That summer shall follow winter, that cold shall turn into heat, is another law. But while man’s laws are only the copies, all Nature’s laws are the Children of the Great Law which all the worlds obey.”

“And what does that Law say, dear Fountain?”

“It says that what goes forward shall come back. That what falls shall rise up. That what you do will return. That what you sow you shall reap. It is the Law of Justice.”

“You’ll have to explain that to me, I fink, if you please,” Carlo said.

“Have you ever thrown a ball against a wall?”

“Yes; it came back.”

“Have you ever seen the ocean tide rolling to shore?”

“Yes; it rolled out again.”

“Have you ever said an unkind word?”

Carlo hung his head.

“Yes, an’ the boy I said it to was very cross at me. He hit me. And I hitted him back.”

“All that was your angry word passing back and forth. It is so everywhere. Look over the valley. Have you seen the farmer sow his seed?”

“Uncle John showed me that.”

“If a farmer sows corn, what comes up?”

“*Corn*. Didn’t you know that, old Fountain?”

“Are you sure it isn’t apple trees?”

Carlo shouted with laughter. Oh! you silly Fountain, you.”

“Why do not apple trees come up when we put corn in the ground?”

“Because *corn* makes *corn*. And apple seeds makes apples.”

“Then you see that like makes like. Anger sows anger, and love breeds love. But if an angry word of hate is spoken and you turn your heart from it and speak a word of kindness instead, only the person who spoke anger gets anger back, while you, speaking love, shall feel love return into your heart. Perhaps, too, your love can change that person’s anger to love, for anger does not cease by anger — that keeps it up — it ceases only by love.”

“I thought you said the law was that the same thing should always come back.”

“I did, And it does come back, But a thing may be changed into another thing in time, because the law makes all things go to and fro. See your heart. It beats forward, then it beats backward. You breathe out, then you breathe in. After day comes the darkness; then day again. After the beautiful days, the storms. Wet after dry; heat after cold; after the strong man works and moves, he is tired,

he is strong no more, until with rest his strength returns. Men sleep; then they waken. The earth sleeps under the winter's snows, and wakens in the spring. After a time comes a new winter and then a new spring; so on and on. The heart of man is glad, then sad; then joy returns once more. Suns and moons appear and disappear. Everywhere is this great Law of change, of what is called flux and reflux (like the ocean tides). Things change in periods, and return again to what they were before. Men die to live in 'devachan' or heaven. The soul enters a body, leaves it, returns to another body. Everywhere you find the same. Through all these changes the same thing moves; that is Life. Through all these changes, Life is the same. It looks out, like the actor, behind many masks, But as new harvests bring riper fruit and improved grains, just so Life mounts from form to form, ever seeking higher forms. And the soul of man can stop the journey of evil, turning it into good, just as you can pick up that drowned flower leaf from the pool."

Carlo picked it up and threw it into the air.

"Blow back, dear leaf," he said, "into the woods again."

But the leaf was so heavy with water that it fell back on to the window-sill.

"So it is with man," the Fountain said. "You may return a kind word for his angry one, but his heart is so heavy with the wrongs it has done and which have come back in his thoughts to live with him and hold him away from happiness, that he cannot rise. But see, your leaf has gone."

So it had. The hot sun had dried the leaf and a kind breeze had carried it away to the woods. Carlo was so glad.

"It was the sun helped it," he said.

"Yes. The sun of love helps all creatures to mount and rise to higher things. We all go to whatever we love. So if a man loves evil, help him to love the good by showing him how much happier that is, and he will change to that. For just as the world moves on to greater life through the changes of seasons and times; just as the child grows to manhood through going back and forth over the years, now in heat, now in snow; just as the rock life becomes the flower life, and as that passes on into the life of winged things, so the great Law moves ever *upward* through movements backward

and forward, and it is called Karma, or the law of action and reaction. Look at me, Carlo. I am the image of Life. I am the picture of the living soul. Out of the darkness I come; no man sees how or why. At the call of the Law, I fall. My waters plunge down deep, stirring up the sand and slime of the pool. They eddy backward and forward, shut into the narrow world they have found. Is there no way out? Yes. For the finer parts of me there is freedom, once they have cast back the sand and slime to the deeps where they were gathered. The light, diamond-pure drops of me will rise in spray into the air. They fall on tall rocks, they feed the moss flowers, the high skies drink them up, they are drawn into the sun. The drops that rise are, to the drops that fall, as wise men are to mindless babes. The falling waters know nothing of the world to which they come; senseless, they are hurled down. But the rising spray has learned all about that new world and mounts among rainbows to a place in the heavens, richer by all that it has learned. So it is with the souls of men. Down from the Infinite Dark they come. In the pool of life they drive to and fro. Like water-drops they enter many shapes. Now they live in the center, now sleep awhile on the shore. Then they are hurried into a shape again; back, back to the boiling center, and ever so, till they are free.”

“That’s what Uncle John told me something about. He calls it ‘Re’arnation’ when anything comes back into a new body after it died or slept. But tell me what can make a wave or a soul free.”

“Its own nature can make it free. It is part of the Law. It has in itself the power to rise. Bye-and-bye, after long driving to and fro — or action and reaction — the wave becomes finer, swifter; it tries to rise. And the sun, shining down into the center of the dark pool, finds a little sun shining in every drop; it attracts or calls to those little suns which are its children, parts of itself.”

“Like the mother hen clucks to her chicks, you mean, don’t you?”

“Yes. That draws the drops upward when they are pure and light enough. So the soul of man, when it loses the heaviness of this world, gives itself up to the divine Sun of Souls and rises into the higher Life. I will show you how this is. Watch this wave that is falling now.”

A white wave came out of the darkness and dived to the bottom of the pool. When it bubbled up again there were scum and sand upon it from those deeps.

“That scum is like the dark acts and thoughts of man, gathered from his lower life,” the Fountain said.

The wave was driven to the shore. It broke there and seemed to pause a little.

“So the soul of man rests in heaven after death is passed and the earth body divides and is broken,” the voice spoke. “The soul rests in the invisible world, like the wave, which you do not see *as a wave* now. Though it is broken as a wave shape, every drop of water is still there. So when man’s body breaks up in the earth, the unseen soul lives on without that form. Look deeper now.”

Carlo peered into the pool. He saw presently that under-currents took up all the water drops that had made the wave, formed them together again, and drove them below the surface of the pool, back to the center once more.

“So the life currents gather up the soul and propel it back into the visible world in a new form,” the Fountain went on to say.

“I fink the drops are stupid. Why don’t they jump up into spray when they get to shore?”

“Because the heavy scum and sand grains weigh them down and hold them in the pool. It is these earth particles that keep the drops imprisoned, and allow them to be driven back again. And it is the earth love of man and his evil deeds that draw his soul back to earth out of heaven where he sleeps.”

“I do fink he has a hard time,” sighed Carlo.

“Oh, no. Remember that his good deeds are there to help him. His soul is a part of that embodied Law which is the Sun of Souls. It is his nature to rise, just as it is water’s nature to rise, both drawn by the sun. Now watch again.”

Carlo saw the drops, formed into a new wave, rise up into the center of the boiling pool, among other waves. It was still heavy with earth grains. It struggled. It was lashed into greater life; it moaned like a thing in pain. It could not move fast. It was driven

often from shore to center, from center to shore. It seemed to think and to feel, as it wildly tried to get free.

“Poor, poor wave,” cried Carlo.

In its efforts, the wave threw down some of the heavy load it carried, losing part in every journey. Carlo saw that it grew lighter and moved more swiftly to and fro. When next the drops came into shape as a wave, it moved along with more speed, more joy. There were rainbow colors here and there instead of scum, and when it reached the center again, all the earth grains were worked off, it rose in a fine shining mist, released from the trouble of the pool, looking like an angel form as, with a low note of joy, it swept away. It would have done this sooner, only it jostled against other waves in those wild journeys. It hurt them, it broke them; it was hurt and broken by them, and this kept them all back. In much the same way men push through the world, all for themselves, never thinking that this really hurts them and others too, and so all are kept back from the higher, beautiful Life. Is it not beautiful to be strong, great, able to help all the world’s suffering ones; to be full of knowledge and power, using them for the world? The just Law gives back what you have given.

“I see,” Carlo said. “Like waves, people get low earth feelings from low lives, feelings what drags them down.”

And these act and react (or go and come, come and go) all the time. But like the wave they can drop these one by one. The good Law helps, for it says all things shall come into life, shall go through every kind of life and form until the highest heavenly place is reached. They do not go straight up in a straight line. Life rises in moving to and fro. That is the easiest way to climb a mountain — to zig-zag up. Butterflies and swallows mount into the air that way. The lark’s egg does not bring forth a robin; the apple seed knows nothing of the peach; the kind deed brings kindness and the evil deed brings sadness. But the bird’s soul, in long ages, may become a child’s soul. The life of the apple may pass into the life of the peach or the bee. Why? Because the life spirit is always the same, though it changes bodies. Because the soul in all things changes and learns. How does it do this? By moving on faster and faster with the Law. It is only if men love the low places of life and cling to them, that they cannot rise out of the earth pool. The Law brings

them into life. Once there, they are free to sink or rise. They can try to do either, All things, too, have a life and a mind of their own, different from man's mind, but just as real. Do you not hear my voice in your mind? Do you not see my life? Hurt nothing, then. Stop no creature, no thing upon its upward way. Remember, dear child, remember that what you sow you must reap. The world is the field where man sows the seed of his thoughts and deeds. The harvests are as many as the lives. Death cannot free you from the scum of life. Death cannot change the Law. Death is only a sleep of part of the soul. When you wake up in the morning, you have the wishes and thoughts of yesterday. And when the soul awakens, the earth thoughts are there, drawing it back to lower places in life. That is why there are so many unhappy men and women who do dark, wild things. Try to help them, so that they may have kinder hearts, and have a better place next life. Try to throw away all unkindness from your own heart. Then great shall be your harvest. You shall reap the seed that feeds the soul, that makes the bread of life eternal, and you shall give it to the hungry world, The just Law will bless you."

Here Carlo heard himself called. Looking up, he saw his Uncle through the window bars.

"How long have you been here, my boy?" he said. "See, the sun is setting."

He lifted the child on to his shoulder and carried him out to the porch. The red sun was sinking behind the hill, going to light another part of the world.

"I don't know if I was asleep, Uncle. I was listening. The Fountain told me a story. It was about the beautiful Law. That Law drives everything backward and forward until it is made pure and clean. Then up it goes to the great Sun."

He waved his little arms about like wings, rising on his Uncle's shoulder as if to fly into the sunset, his face bright with joy.

"Stay with me awhile yet, my boy, and tell me the story," said the Uncle, clasping him closer. He heard the whole story as they trotted down the steep, winding paths, and said that all the fountain told was true.

“Then, Uncle, I won’t plant nettles in my garden for to sting when I hit the boys with them. I’ll just keep honey blossoms for the bees.”

“And what will you plant in your heart, my son?”

“Heart flowers,” laughed the child, “and that’s just Love. Here’s one.”

And the trees all said they heard something very like a kiss as the two friends went into their funny red house.

RAHULA'S INHERITANCE.

“...The spirit promised me that I should dwell with the crooked moon in her eternal beauty.”

IN THAT WONDERFUL AGE which our nurses call Once-upon-a-time, the Prince Rahula came into the Hall of Sages and demanded his birthright. The Wise Ones heard him in silence, and he seemed to be dismissed without an answer. On the following day he came again, with the same ill success; so the third time and up to the seventh demand, being always unnoticed and even, as he thought, unseen. On the eighth day a messenger returning to the Council of Sages, found Rahula seated upon a plinth at the entrance to the temple.

“What doest thou there, my Lord?” demanded the messenger.

“I have taken up my abode here, nor will I stir hence until the Wise Ones shall have heard me,” answered Rahula.

“But is it meet that thou shouldst sit here so lowly, Prince that thou art?”

“It is meet that a man do all things to obtain his birthright. For him there is nothing else, and great or small, honey or poison, mine shall be mine.”

The messenger bowed before him. “Thou art more than royal: thou art wise,” he said. Then he hastened within, and when the Sages heard what he had seen they sent for Prince Rahula, who presently saluted them reverently and said:

“I am come to claim mine own. I am the Prince Rahula and I am well known to you; seven times already have I claimed it.”

“Yes, my Son,” answered the Elder; “but it is customary to prove a man, that his determination may show him the true heir, so that no impostor shall receive the inheritance kept for him by the Sons of Wisdom. Only those who know their rights and wrest them from Fate by strong courage, are true Princes of the royal line. But

there is still a sign and countersign to pass between us e're we bestow thy birthright upon thee. Dost thou know them?"

The young Prince smiled a smile that was rarely sweet, drew himself to his full height, and tossing back his mantle, displayed to the Sages a crimson heart, transfixed with a golden lance. The Sages rose and saluted the Emblem, and parting their robes, each showed such a heart beneath his own breast. Only in the center of theirs was written the word *Humanity*, and the lances were of living light, and a musical throb that was in itself a perfume was the pulse of each heart.

"Thou knowest the sign indeed," said the Elder to Rahula. "Take now the countersign. Remember that the wise and perfect heart pulsates for man alone. Thou hast demanded thy birthright in the name of the pierced heart: take it, and go in Peace."

At his signal the messenger brought to Rahula a large and brilliant crystal. It was shaped like the crescent moon: one side of it was covered with hieroglyphs cut into the stone; the other sparkled from innumerable facets like a field of hoar-frost at sunrise. Rahula looked at it seriously. "A strange gift for a warrior," he said. "What is its use, my Lords? What shall I do with it?"

The Elder answered: "It is the birthright deposited with us at thy coming into the world and we can give thee no other. Its use is for thee to discover. We are but the guardians, not the interpreters. I have spoken."

Vainly Rahula besought him, no other word was uttered; the Sages had resumed their silence and at last, lit by the rays of the shining moon, Rahula left the temple and re-entered life. Long he considered the jewel: of the characters he could make nothing. So he determined to hang the great crystal beneath the royal gateway, where all men might see it, and perchance its use might be discovered. This was done, and the life of the great city passed on beneath the mysterious crystal. Soon strange tales were told of it; at night its wonderful brilliance shattered the darkness with a thousand rays, which were never so softly penetrating as when they lit the weary to his home, or pointed out his task; which were never so blinding and sharp as when they shone into the face of sin and confessed it. These living rays seemed to single out certain men and passing before them, to light them to happiness and good fortune.

It was found that such men had always sought after the light with single hearts, so that people began to desire to be well considered by the spirit of the gem, and to take its rays for guidance. Others still, looking for the solution of grave problems of labor and of want, found the answer in the hieroglyphs of the crystal moon, and translated them into many longing lives. Nor was this all. The gem reflected the heavens and their mysteries to those who looked down upon it from hard won heights, and cast also an illumination from those holy lands upon the wayfarers beneath who could not climb so far. It shed from its resplendent facets the life and warmth of the sun, and through the solemn marches of the nights it testified to the living Truth beyond the stars, and so renewed the religion of the people. All who appealed in faith to its hidden spirit were helped: the sick who struggled to touch it were made whole or given great patience and content. At the first touch of sunrise, at the last ray of sunset, seven musical notes rang from its flashing rim and turned to ineffable harmony the lives of all who heard them. Thus the light of a great peace fell over the city; friend and foe alike came from afar to share it and the reign of Rahula blessed even his enemies.

The Prince thought long over the strange power of the crystal as the happy people passed and repassed beneath it. He thought it too diffused; he determined to concentrate and heighten it, and summoning his servants, bade them take down the crystal from the gateway and bring it into one of the great halls of the palace. When this was done, and the soft shining no longer lit those stony ways, the people murmured, so that the Prince went out and himself spoke with them:

“I have been long learning the use of my birthright,” he said, “The crystal is too rare a thing to hang thus exposed to the elements, to the enterprise of my rivals, the greed of envious men and to all the chances of fate. I have built an altar in the palace hall; the gem shall hang above it; incense shall rise; the gods will answer me from between the horns of my crystal moon, and send riches to me and to my kingdom. These I will myself dispense to you, and the jewel shall still bless you, but my foes shall be confounded.”

All were silent a moment. Afterwards a woman in the crowd fell to weeping and cried out: “Do not this thing, my Lord! Hide

not the light of thy birthright from us. We love the gem, and that love is more to us than any riches.”

“You shall still love it,” replied Rahula “more, you shall worship it, for this crystal is the abode of a mighty spirit; it is the signet of the Gods.”

“To worship is not always to love,” sobbed the woman, and the crowd complained loudly.

But Rahula replied again: “The gem will make my reign renowned. It shall not be profaned by the dust and steam of the byways, by the fevered touch of the sick and the desecration of unhallowed eyes. In the shelter of a sacred place it shall shine for the good alone, and those who do homage to me and who are taught of my priests, these the crystal shall bless, and not my enemies; yea, it shall still bless all my true people. I have said.”

Rahula disappeared and the crowd went away muttering.

A great change came over the city. Little by little, the old turmoil came back, the old discord and wrangling went on beneath the gateways. The memory of that soft shining died out of the fevered hearts, and soon only the aged and the little children remembered to mourn for the lost gem. But within the temple incense rolled, priests knelt consulting the oracles, wise men interpreted the hieroglyphs seeking riches and fame for Rahula, while over all the white moon hung pale and shuddering in the perfumed breeze. A change came over it like the change in the city. The smoke of worship obscured the rays, then obstructed them; then they ceased shining altogether and the face of the moon was veiled in mist. The temple music drowned the bell notes, and though it was stopped when this was discovered, those notes sounded no more, for the sunrise and sunset glow no longer flooded the crystal rim. The hieroglyphs told wonderful tales of fame and pomp and war, but all turned out illy, and Rahula found that his priests had read them backward, that only the people knew their language by instinct, as the language of their infancy. The glory and beauty of the great gem were gone; none but the priests would do it homage, and it hung, a dulled and impotent thing in the chill silence above the altar. Rahula felt a certain awe, a sense of coming disaster. He bade his servants take down the crystal, set cunning artificers to brighten and restore it, and then, ordering a great

festival to be held, he had the stone replaced above the gateway, and waited for the joy and praises of the people.

Instead he heard jeers, flouting and anger. "Does he weary of his pleasure, that he flings it forth to us again?" cried some. Others said: "The stone has brought him ill fortune, and he would cast it over the city instead." Some pointed at it as an old superstition; some prostrated themselves in loud worship, but these were men of evil conscience who sought to propitiate the Prince for their own ends. Some indeed there were who tried to read words of comfort or peace in the gem, but the artificers of the Prince had altered the signs unknowingly and all the real meaning was defaced. While Rahula saw this, first with anger, then with deadly pain and grief, a black storm slowly rolled up, gathered, burst, and in an hundred lightnings the stone was shattered, its splintered fragments hurled down the tempest and lost. The people fled the city in terror, crying that the gods had punished them for reverencing a birthright other than their own, as was forbidden to man. When the storm was over, one pallid star looked out of the clouds upon a deserted palace, and a lonely Prince brooding over his lost birthright, questioning the mystery of that destruction.

Long he searched his heart in the solitude but it gave no answer that he understood; he too had forgotten a language. He rose with sudden recollection; he would go to the hall of Sages. Even as he thought this the Elder stood before him. The Prince shot a glance of hope into that calm face, a glance that changed to one of dismay as the Sage said gravely:

"What hast thou done with thy birthright?"

"I? Nothing;" stammered Rahula. Mocking echoes multiplied the word. "Nothing! Nothing!" came back to him from all his empty halls like an accusation. He turned quickly upon the Elder:

"Answer me this," he said. "What is this gem, whose power and value are so great, and yet so small? What is it that is both everything and nothing?"

"It is Life. Life which bestowed upon the world is of priceless worth to thee and to all, and which for selfish ends is but an empty thing; Life which thou shalt lose if thou keepest it for thyself. Used as a means, Life is glorious in power and opportunity, fruitful in

blessing. Used as an end, a thing sought and worshipped in itself, it is the scorn of mortals and the sport of gods. This was thy only birthright, and thou hast lost it.”

“But I will find it again; I will seek the world for the fragments,” spoke Rahula. “They shall once more mirror heaven and once more shine upon the people.”

He went forth to search strongly, a weary search of centuries, for wherever mankind may dwell, there still wanders Rahula, seeking those broken fragments, seeking to restore their scattered meaning. Happy he, who having received Life whole from the gods, gives it back to them in unbroken integrity through the lives of all the people.

**THE VOW OF POVERTY,
AND OTHER ESSAYS (1904)**

THE VOW OF POVERTY.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.”

— Matthew, v, 3 and 5.

WHEN FIRST THE DISCIPLE CREATES HIMSELF and is recognized, it is because his heart is vowed to Poverty. This Vow, rightly understood, constitutes his discipleship.

Who is the disciple? What is the Poverty to which he is dedicate? For we are dealing now with realities, not with words which so often obscure realities, and we must be careful interpreters.

The disciple is the Soul. That man, that human mind which has so aspired to the life and the service of the Soul that he has cast all personal desire aside and has begun at least to “live the life,” he is the outward vehicle of the Disciple-Soul.

And the Vow of Poverty? Is it a thing which drives a man to quit his place in the outward life, to change conditions and to violate all his natural surroundings and inheritance of whatever order? Surely not. Surely this were to court disaster. He who has so ardently aspired towards the diviner life; he who has glimpsed the Soul in himself, he knows well that he must *evolve out* from all the conditions which surround him as a human being and that all which binds him, as all that fetters and weakens the humanity of which he forms a part, is of his and their own weaving; it is a net spread by men for their own feet and it must be undone slowly and with pains unwoven; to break it violently asunder would benefit no one and would harm and delay many: the disciple knows he must patiently endure the net he has woven until he has evolved beyond it: then the Lords of Karma themselves release him: let him not usurp the functions of his Lords.

So also with the mystic recognition which constitutes the seal of discipleship. It is not had upon outward planes. Persons do not

bestow or receive it. The heart evolves it: the Law accepts it. When the Soul is self-conscious and knows itself to be, then, then only the Vow is made in truth: then the human being must complete it: he must hearken to the silver voices of the Soul, putting aside in his turn all the wealth of personal desire, of personal expectation, of individual mentality; he must renounce upon earth as the Soul has already renounced in the heavens: he comes to long for the immortal essence alone and a bloom spreads over his sphere; his heart has put forth its vital sap, soon to burgeon into powers which are its blossoms. This bloom is as a light seen upon interior planes, where the cloud of ever-living witnesses hail the first promise of the new birth. By this new vesture of the Soul the disciple is recognized by his Teacher. By his attitude of selflessness — his “Poverty” — a poverty of the personal desire only — he may be recognized among men. He is not yet at the summit of the Soul life; he has but entered a gate leading to a path which he has willed to tread, a toilsome and even a dangerous path, but his face is now turned towards his true home in the heavens. His consciousness is lightened of a heavy burden. The ordinary man, he who still lives in desires, bears this burden about with him; that sense of self, that weight of limitation and of isolation in the midst of Nature which hedges him in, which bounds and binds him everywhere and from which there seems to be no escape. Compacted of desires, a prisoner of Fate, in the intimate and dreary companionship of his personal self-consciousness, man feeds upon the dry husks of Life, finding no abiding home, no haven of rest in the Nature through which he wanders, alien to it as to himself.

But when the Vow of Poverty is taken, all this is changed. The man has transcended his personal self: he has entered a diviner order of Being; henceforward the Law of that new order guides and enfolds him.

A something has come to the birth within him which has altered the very texture of his mind, has shaped anew the mirror of his brain. And this hidden power, indescribable but more real, more vital than anything the man has ever known, this power makes for unity; the man finds himself woven into the warp and woof of things, finds that his consciousness forms part of a coherent and universal Whole. He no longer desires anything for himself, he has taken the Vow of Poverty; for he has found his own Soul, and finds

it to be both poor and lonely, because it has nothing of its own and is nothing in itself, has no life snatched from the great Whole and peculiar to itself, but moves with the moving ocean of Being.

Thus the man has become an integral part of that Life which issues from the heart of the world, issues purely, fresh as the dawn and as yet uncontaminated by the separations and divisions of material existence. As some creature of the waters might move along the little banks of some small rivulet, might slowly and with struggles find its way into a larger stream, into a river, then a bay, then a great gulf and then at last rush with joy into the great ocean and mingle with its kind as never before, so the man has at last entered the vast and primal waters, has touched the Source and finds himself to be the Soul.

Yet it must not be imagined that he who is now the disciple has in this moment of mystery and power reached perfection. Not so. The newfound light within himself has shown its glory and radiance upon the shadowy background of Nature and has for a space unified his consciousness. But now, no sooner is this great issue reached and its prize secured, than the new order of Life begins, and with that, new trials of strength, new ideals and unimagined efforts. The man has indeed become the Soul, but that Soul is not as yet the Spirit. The hidden path has opened before the gaze of his heart and much that was dim before is clearer now, but the shining goal is still far away, there is still much to dare, to conquer and to live.

For him who has taken the Vow of Poverty there is toil, pain even, but also a great and ever increasing joy. For that which commands the recognition and the acceptance of the Divine Order, that which constitutes discipleship is indeed the true Vow of Poverty.

What then is that Vow? Is it, as some have imagined, the abandonment of all worldly possessions, the obliteration of earthly differences and distinctions, the return, perhaps, to the communal life? This cannot be the true Poverty, in so far as it repudiates all karmic debts, calls for quittance rather than make an honest payment, and refuses to work out *through* those conditions in which the Law has caused the man to be born. He has found himself, and in that moment he knows that he must not deny one jot or tittle of

that Law of Cause and Effect which has placed him *just where he stands* in Nature, with duties which must all be fulfilled to the uttermost before he can pass on further within the Veil of Nature. Nor is the Vow, as still others have thought, the giving up all minor desires for Peace, or Truth, or Mercy as one sees these to be: it is not the abandonment of all other things for indulgence in some favored forms of virtue. It is not the reading of our own predilections into the teachings of the Soul; not the propaganda of our own beliefs at the expense of the belief of another: not the urgency that all shall see as we see, however our own vision may appear to us. The Soul in us is not to be cozened with the excuse that we have sacrificed so much for the truths in which we believe. The truths which we now see are relative, are often modified by our temperament, hardened and limited by the action of the brain. We cry Peace, Peace, and yet this may be a false Peace and lawful war the only true mercy. Our Love — is it universal? Our Justice — is it impartial as the sunlight falling on the just and the unjust alike? Is our insight crystalline — or does the lens of our humanity split it up into colored light? Kindness to preferred men and objects — does it not rob others of their just due as a thief in the night, leaving some other department of Nature to pay our debt, as has been truly said? Humility; is it not too loud at times, a favorite wile of that elemental devil which lurks in every human being? Ambition; may it not undergo strange transformations and be ambition still, having its root and substance upon more interior planes of Life than we imagine, aye, and a firmer hold there upon the resistant Soul? As we review the field of attributes, we find the imprimatur of our personality and the seal of our possession upon them all, and we come at last to see that the Vow of Poverty excludes all personal sense of possession, even to the virtues in which the personal self has pride and which it loves, and the thoughts which constitute those riches of the human mind which inhibit the entrance to the kingdom of heaven. The rich man who finds it so difficult to enter is he who loves and clings to his personal self-consciousness, to the images and forms of his own mind.

The Vow of Poverty exists upon a plane deeper than that of the mind, higher than that of human love or human conditions. It is a power — the power to say at each instant and to the Divine Law, “Thy will, not mine, be done.” ... The power to abandon

hopes, fears, plans, codes, thoughts. To see each moment dawn as 'twere the last yet to live in each as though it were eternal. To avoid all crystallization, the great danger of the disciple. To have no rights, no wrongs, no *mental* possessions. To see our ideas swept away like smoke, as Life now dissolves and now forms anew, and to grasp at nothing, but to look on with a smile. To be able to take or to quit, to learn and then to unlearn as the lesson broadens and the meaning unfolds, and all the while to grave within the heart that deeper lesson of charity, world-wide and gracious, whose exquisite toleration seals discipleship. To recognize finally that the Soul does not codify, builds no creeds, establishes no limits, but teaches each one freely according to its own Law manifested within each and accepting no other arbiter. To lay claim to nothing save patience, and then to exchange that for a supreme contentment. Careless of self-vindication, careless even — at right times — for the justification in the sight of the world of persons and causes with which one is identified; careless of all save that the Soul shall be obeyed; able to labor and to wait; ready to explain, ready as well to remain unexplained. Amid a deep interior peace to go forth on outward planes for the defense of principles, the maintenance of justice. Without aggression, to defend most earnestly all that is weak, poor, forsaken and needing aid. To strike home to the core of hypocrisies and falsities, yet never to wound a human heart. Never to be caught in the trap of apparent and material facts, but to look beneath the surface for our duty and to trust to the guidance of principles. To wage war with every ally of darkness within our own nature, most of all with the materialistic brain mind, and through all these to be remote in Spirit and calm of Soul.

It is evident that he who has accepted a program so wide as this, will have neither time nor wish to occupy himself with the errors of his fellows or the defects of organization in the surrounding world, the defects of the surface things. He will most earnestly work for the establishment of a better *entente*, a more *human* feeling among mankind, and leaving humanity to do its own work on the outer planes, he will do that which is his at a point nearer the source; he will put his trust in an effort to inspire those about him and the world at large with a belief in the reality and the power of great principles to uplift us, and to infuse into our civilization as it stands the breath of Life. This is to be done — and

it waits, it wants doing — in every department of our daily existence. On the outer plane as it stands today there is no real peace, but only a base compromise with which the flaming Christ-Sword is always at war.

Not all who have taken the Vow wear an aspect of sweetness and amiability; the mendicant is a stranger to professions, but his heart is sound and kind at core with the true kindness; he has passed through the thousand gates of Sorrow and has found an angel to welcome him at each; his bleeding heart is bled of anger too. He cares not how he stands; his whole concern is for the truths of which he is the bearer. He neither invites nor rejects labor and sacrifice, joy, pain or earth's delights: he sees all these as a means and fixes his gaze on That which *shines through* all. He lays hold and quits alike indifferently. The grief of another moves him, but not his own, and with him, to be moved is to unfold a deeper Compassion, to pour out more and more Love. If his fellows err, he sorrows silently; if he has erred, he arises and sins no more; without loud grief or poisonous remorse he amends his errors and passes on his calm and quiet way. He acts, not for results, but purely that the Soul may be served. He blesses the Law when it gives and when it takes. His faith is whole and serene; a deep contentment orbs him round. What though from the human side it may seem sad? He is not living from the human side; his source is in the heavens. He is companioned by the Soul and within that Soul which he knows to be himself he has found the Universal. He commits himself to the Eternal, to the Unconscious, to That which has no possessions because itself is All. He is merged into the mystical Deep. His ever-widening mind becomes a breath and embraces the universe. Whatever the seeming of the outer man, the Disciple-Soul moves on: we have no scale to weigh it by, no means of measure or comparison. Yet we may know that the Vow of Poverty has borne its fruit; the disciple inherits the earth, and at last for him the Beatitude is more mystically translated:

“Immortal are the votaries of the Breath: because theirs is the Realm of the Over-World.”

Before the aspirant can become one of the Companions, he shall have taken the Vow of Poverty. Now this poverty shall be intimate and interior.

And when one of them is attacked the Companions shall defend him, because he is their brother. But they shall defend him without malice and without aggression, because he is their very Self.

In the Self are the aggrieved and the aggressor; the minute and the inexhaustible; the good, the evil and that which is the Cause of both.

THE PURPOSES OF SOUL.

ONE NIGHT, I watched with my dead.

This comrade was smitten in departing; his soul cried out through the body: "*Oh! my wasted life.*" Silence followed, for him the silence of high spheres; for us, the silence of the grave in that dark hour above which exhausted faith could not lift us. It was an hour of bleak despair, and, beneath that, an icy blank.

Yet other hours dawn for the student when a voice out of negation cries, "Look in thy heart and write." In such an hour, the cry of the departed one was illumined as by the awful torch of Truth. For there is terror for the human soul in that great glory; it blinds as with tempest and pain.

"Oh! my wasted life." Yet he had worked, striven, done, apparently, all. But the high soul knew well indeed that all had not been done; the conscience-stricken mind confessed its failure.

I wish, my comrades, that we could live our lives, as it were, upon the slopes of death, trying their issues by the light of the new dawn of consciousness. Think you we should not find, by that test, that these lives are full of small issues, tortuous, involved, guided by the opinions of the mass and the needs — not so much of our own bodies and minds, but of those of a complex civilization? The unseen currents pour upon us, through us; the pictures and suggestions thrown upon us by them, as upon a screen, are mistaken for "our own" thoughts and wishes. These are the traps of nature to detain us, as matter attracts and detains spirit. Can we not wish and think what we *will*, from our own centers, in accordance with the impulse of our higher mind? Is it not our first duty to do this; our duty to mankind and to ourselves; to the Law above all? What avails it, think you, to creation or to ourselves, if we allow so-called consideration for others to imbed us more deeply in the material life? Is it not for the higher good of all that we should remain apart from it, even while in it? Apart in thought, in heart. To yield to another is sometimes to assist that other in encumbering his higher soul and our own with details the mind should outgrow, but to which, lacking strength, it still clings. It clings for fear of loss, forgetting that it cannot lose its own. Could

we not simplify, think you, if we saw death drawing near, a sheaf of wasted years in his hands? In the death-moment, when those years flash across the abnormally quickened brain; when the evolutionary purpose stands clearly forth; when the life result is tested by that purpose and we see that the intent and impulse of the reincarnating ego have been crushed under innumerable petty details of a life foreign, for the most part, to the *real needs* of souls, how is it with us then? A dread accountant appears, the scales of justice in his hands, a look of alienated majesty on his brow. It is the Master, the Higher Self, denied, outraged, to whom we cry: "I have sinned before heaven and against thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

What, then, is this evolutionary purpose? Listen! *We are the Sons of God*. May we reverently consider the Deity.

There are things too mysterious, too awful for expression. Therefore when speech is attempted, others say: "But I know that." They do not know it, for to know it is to be and do it. Therefore they only know some minor differentiation, which they still neglect.

Consider with me the One Life. "The One Ray multiplies the smaller rays. Life precedes form, and life survives the last atom of form. Through the countless rays proceeds the Life-Ray, the One, like a thread through many jewels." This Ray is the Mystery. It is a conscious Flame. It vibrates in the Dark Centre; it arises; it flashes forth; it is the Knower; it swallows up the merely human consciousness and sets itself on high, the Crest Jewel of Wisdom.

There is only one way of study. It is this. We must permit that Power to set the lower mind aside. It is ready, every hour of our lives, to declare the evolutionary purpose, the next step; our part is to listen. How then shall we listen and how attract the voice of the Power?

The first step is Resignation. That we know. It is the instant, unceasing acceptance of all results, as fruits of the Law. The next step is Devotion. It evolves causes of a nature sufficiently selfless and pure to ensure higher results. They are higher, insomuch as they make nearer approach to the universal. This Devotion is the interior preparation of a ground in which the spirit can freely act. By it we hold the mind in concentration upon the Supreme. We encourage it to remain there. Surface waves come and go, but the deep inner

attitude invites the Power. Even in the outward it acts, as such thought directs the attractive and assimilative processes of bodies and organs. The myriad atoms, each a life, which we absorb every instant, are for or against the evolutionary purpose as our thought is with it or withdrawn from it.

A formula cannot be given, but we can make an approach to one. Krishna said: "With all thy heart place all thy works on me; prefer me to all things else; depend upon the use of thy understanding and think constantly of me; for by doing so thou shalt, by my divine favor, surmount every difficulty which surroundeth thee." Even in the tumult of our lives this can be done. We must treat our bodies and minds as weak places to be strengthened and upheld. Therefore religious observance is useful. Begin the day with an instant of devotion, and end it so. Standing, with reverential attitude of body and mind, repeat aloud some verse of the scriptures, the mind fixed on the Higher Self, or on the One Life, the aggregate of these selves. Such texts have a life of their own; their spoken word will quicken ours. "The ever unknowable and incognizable *Kârana* alone, the *Causeless* Cause of all causes, should have its shrine and altar on the holy and ever untrodden ground of our heart — invisible, intangible, unmentioned, save through 'the still small voice' of our spiritual consciousness. Those who worship before it ought to do so in the silence and sanctified solitude of their Souls, making their spirit the sole mediator between them and the Universal Spirit" (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 280.) It is useless to say that we must take others with us. "The soul goes alone to The Alone." Having thus set the vibrations for the day, let the student consider the One Life in all life. Let him study every event, referring all to the action of the currents of that Life, and not to the centers through which it speaks. Men are but ganglionic centers, repeating the nerve-auric impulse and passing it along. That is to say, they are this for the most part; there are souls who have achieved their higher being. The student should form the habit of observing the Life-waves, the manifestations of Life, as one. Consider the action of the Life principle in all things. In food, in air, light, sound, persons, events, the human heart; let him refer all things back to it, back to the plane of force, and try to sense them on that plane, to see Krishna in all. This service is no sinecure. But the Lord will repay. Strange lessons will be learned. Life will be seen

as made up, not of persons and events, but of manifesting currents, some of which may be rejected and some accepted at the bidding of the inner voice. It alone should command, and not probabilities, eventualities, or temporizing. He who asks, of every crisis, but the simple question, "What is my duty?" and does that regardless of events, to that man the gods appear. He will often find that we do many things because the Life-impulse is checked by some counter-current of sympathetic attraction, which, by contrary vibration in specific centers, blocks its way. Then the general current urges the accomplishment of the thought or action, in which accomplishment the counter current finds equilibrium, is neutralized, and the main current is re-established. This is the impulse of Nature. If we recognize the counter attractions as Karmic illusion, and do not pour our mind into their molds, the attractions disappear because we have fallen back upon the higher one, the Universal Life, whose flow in us we have increased until it sweeps all obstacles away.

Thinking thus always of the One Life in the outer circumstances of our days, there is still another thing we can do. The Deity is always manifesting in us, as everywhere. It impels us by means of impulses springing deep within us and registered upon the consciousness; registered further upon the brain in the proportion in which that brain is prepared to receive it. This preparation consists in keeping the thought turned expectantly toward The One. We need to keep watch for its commands; to learn to distinguish these from lower impulses, suggestions from without, so to say. Above all, we need to obey them. Increase and continuance come from use. While we fulfill the real duties of external life (which are fewer than we think), this interior watch can be kept up. We can be observant of all the impulses arising in us. Who has surprised the swift Will upon its hidden throne, or Motion, the power behind the throne? Only the man who has waited upon the gods. We are here for the purposes of soul.

At first we shall make mistakes in action, but soon an uneasy, subtle undercurrent of warning or dissatisfaction will accompany action which has not been suggested by the true Source. In practical occultism, regular chelas of a group set down all the events of each day; these are compared, and a guiding current is soon seen. Soon they distinguish this from every other *by its tendency*; in the

unencumbered field it manifests in glory and power. This course must be followed by him who desires to avoid the death-cry of a wasted life. He must also give a fixed time daily, were it but five minutes, to the consideration of The One. He must hold this ground sacred against every invasion. If he be so fortunate as to know the face of a Master, let him bring that before him as an embodiment of the Deity, trying to see it clearly before him in every free moment. "If it be a real Master, he will send his voice. If not, it will be the higher self that will speak." This subconsciousness, this undercurrent of fixed attention, of revolution around the One Life, can be cultivated and enlarges our orbit.

The true student will not speak of the Unknown One. He will be devotional in attitude and in manner when studying high themes. Such habits train the body and free the mind. The place of study should be as simple as possible, and due regard should be had to the making or breaking of currents, for these are *the messengers of the gods*. At such times all externalities should be firmly set aside, and a place cleared in life for the use of the Deity, nor should others be permitted to overrun this place, whether in opposition or in love. Example is our highest duty. We must point out the Star of the Law. If we allow the pain of another — pain unrighteous — to draw us from our duty to that other and to all, we have in so far helped him along the path of future despair. True Love is Wisdom. Is not my best goal that of my comrade also? Then I am not to linger in delights of self with him, but to draw him up to the light. Will he not come? Then I must go on and do my duty. His pain is resistance to Law.

It is a sad truth that the love of friends and associates often binds them and ourselves. A true lover of humanity says to the Beloved: "The Soul is free. Be free, Beloved! Wait upon the inner impulse; follow it alone. If thou art mine, I cannot lose thee. Spiritual gravitation makes for us. If not mine, I relinquish thee to thine own ray. Even so, thou art mine, as all are myself and thee in the One. I question not thine impulse, thine act. Come; go; do; abstain. The same law is mine." Rich rewards, revelations unguessed await him who loves thus. It is the only right Love. For if I tell another he is free to do as he will, and yet question the wisdom of his impulse or display my pain, is the liberty real? Not so. If I feel pain, it is my service to conquer that ignorance. If he

errs, then he learns that lesson. Oh! for a wider trust in the Law. Then the Deity would speak. The life would not be overlaid with material shapes and forms of fear. It congests in these molds. Obeyed every hour, the evolutionary law would manifest. Alas, my comrades! These friends cling to old observance and diurnal habit because in them they know us; they take these to be our established character, the guarantee of our love, and fear to lose us by losing these. And we do the same thing.

I make a great call for Freedom. I raise this standard reverently. Not license attracts me, but Freedom under Law. Freedom to clear a spot where we may listen, hear, obey. That spot Arjuna was told to sit upon because it was his own. Freedom to lop off the excrescences of life; errors of action, errors of thought. Freedom to speak the real mental fact now present to us, without encountering the wounds of affectional habit. Freedom to accept facts as they are, without personal tincture or emotion, so that we may study their meaning with our comrades, accomplishing thus a higher bond, with hearts that accept the freedom of soul. If any others are pained by the Soul's obedience to the laws of her Being, it is our slavery and not our souls they love. Each should see and desire to unveil the higher nature of the other, that God may become manifest in him. The Power only manifests in the free. A soul denied essential freedom, in escaping at death, appeals to the great ones to witness its wrongs, and the Lipika record the penalties of the Law. Mistakes made through "Love" (too often mere attraction or synchronous vibration on one or several planes, without root in the highest bond) do not save us from Karmic retribution. True Love is Cohesion. The One Ray is known also as Eros, because it expands freely to all; freely expands, freely obeys the impulse given by the Eternal. No Love is worthy of the name which is not a sub-ray or copy of That, and "perfect Love casteth out fear." No life so environed that it cannot prepare for the Power. We say we desire the Light and the Path, but we do not use the keys given us, while yet we ask for more, for other ways. There is only one way, and it will be harder to take in each successive life after man has been offered the keys and refrains from using them. We can never break away from the Material, to turn upward, without a shock. It will never be easier than it now is, to cut our way through.

Thus in the death-watches spoke a voice to me. The eloquence of wasted lives cries aloud to all the nights of Time. It has cost others blood and tears to learn these things. May you learn at less cost. May the One Ray shine upon us. May we know our whole Duty. AUM.

The spiritual is its own proof. Only to Consciousness can Consciousness be known.

“THE FIRST STONE.”

“He lifted up himself and said unto them; ‘He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.’”

— St. John, Ch. viii, v.7.

IN ALL DIVINER HISTORY there is no incident which comes nearer to the heart of the sinner than this one.

Comes it as close to the heart of the “good man?” I think not. The “good” (self-styled) have often praised it in my hearing, and upright minds have called it “touching” that Jesus should have stooped thus to the sinner; yet it would seem that the incident has not come so near, has not laid a touch so tender upon the heart that the virtuous have cried out: I, even I, Lord, am the greater sinner in that I exalt myself; forgive thou *me!*

When we refrain from casting stones, how often do we not invest ourselves with merit, in that we refrained? How often in the solitude of the soul, has it come to us to consider that first stone and the right to cast it?

Who, by Divine Law, possesses that right? Only the sinless; that is to say, only he who is made perfect through Compassion: he who will never use that right because his very nature forbids it, he alone may use it. If the Christ-Light judge, the judgment is true, yet it adds: “Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.” While the sins of the flesh, the body, alone are sins to our generations, the Christ demands absolute spotlessness of no man: it is not written; he that hath *never* sinned, let him cast the first stone, but on the contrary, the divine permission is given to him who is now without sin. Matchless Compassion, which having passed on through a universe of sin and sorrow to perfection, refrains from casting the cruel stones of upbraiding, anger and scorn at the sinner, because — what is the reason? Because to do so were to forfeit Compassion’s self, the very crown and forefront of perfected Being.

And we, casters of stones; what of us? What of our right, whether exercised or foregone with self-applause? Where do we stand? We stand in the shadows amidst which a faint reflected light

pales and wanes, and the deepest of these shadows impinging thickly upon the light is that poisoned shade cast by our self-esteem.

Yes, we esteem ourselves. We take up the balance, saying: Of course I am not perfect. I have done wrong. Even often, I may have done wrong (evil is too strong a word). Thou, Lord, knowest my peculiar difficulties. Here I fell perhaps; but there I stood; thou knowest. On the whole the record is not altogether bad. But I sinned not as this one did; so far as that other fell, I fell not.

And the Lords of Compassion look down; they grieve for that man whose heart has never whispered: *I fall with every sin my brothers sin.*

They know, the sinless Lords, that until a man has become the just man made perfect, he continually shares in the sinning of the whole world. Not as a sentiment. As a fact. A hard, unrelenting fact; the stone Fate casts at us who put it into Fate's hand. These sins which touch our home, our family, our nation, our era: which defile Life for us all; how come we into contact with these effects if we were not sharers of the remote causes? Did we not assist in setting the causes into motion, we who are now sufferers from their repetition in other forms? This must be true, if justice and law reign, otherwise we are the victims of chances blinder than ourselves.

Consider that if one half of us were indeed sinless, the other half would cease from sinning under the impulsion of those spiritual potencies of which perfected men are the generators and distributors. The erring ones would be wrapped in an atmosphere so benignant that they, peace enfolded, would cease to sin. Each one of us, sinners all, has that atmosphere within his reach. Yet many of us prefer to reach for the stone instead. Pitiful spectacle! Man, self-weighed, and self-excused; Man with all the sins of ages passed in Matter thickly encrusted on his sphere; Man, confining his gaze to the limits of today shocked at the sin of another, a sin, perhaps, to which he felt no urgent tempting (or has he overcome it and hardened in the pride of Victory?); Man, the disinherited, adjudges pardon to himself and a stone to his fellow sufferer. At the rebuke of the Christ, this man that each one of us is, turns not to the sinner to lift and aid the erring one; no, we go out, forgetting that in turning from the sinner we have turned from the Christ-Light also. But these two are left together.

Two poles of Being. And the one has instant power to purify and uplift the other.

If in the parable the sinful woman typifies the passive, inactive, material part of us, are we not again brought face to face with the saying: "Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin?"

Before we take the stone in our hands, or use aught which that stone represents, were it not wise; were it not according to our beloved repute for fair dealing; were it not eminently respectable and conformable to all the marks of the beast of Self-Esteem that we examine our own position for any possible weak point in it? Weak points have a way of revealing themselves under the touch of Time; were it not well to anticipate that ruthless hand and the jeers of the adversary, and, discoverers of our own feebleness, to become, perchance, our own saviours?

The weakness of our position in regard to condemnation of others would appear to come primarily from an erroneous conception of Time. Today I stand for Virtue; thou for Sin. In this view, one life is all.

Notwithstanding that view, when the Lords of Compassion look down upon the soul of a man, they see the long series of lives which blossomed from that soul according to its will and its desires; a living chain, link upon link, each link intertwined and every link a life. To us, this present life stands as a separate thing, cut off from the Great Life, a solitary sub-division of Time, and in it we are virtuous (fairly so) or sinning (not too deeply for our own pardon); not sinning, at least, by any of the sins especially contemned by our own era. But to those heavenly Lords this life is a today in which sin's energy may be momentarily exhausted in us, while yesterday and other days, lives in the long human life-period, may be full of sin. He whom we judge today for this life's sin, may have been virtuous in lives where we herded with the foulest swarms of matter and our self-complacency with its smooth face portends a degrading return to that materiality incarnate if we destroy it not.

There is ground for reflection in the fact that the only class Jesus persistently condemned were those proud pharisees, hypocrites, those who thanked God that they were not as other men were; and take it as history, or take it as parable, this points to a

stable truth in one's nature. When Christ judged, his judgment was true, "for I am not alone [in it?], but I and the Father that sent me." Not a mystical or spiritual thinker ever lived who did not insist upon the occult fact that meekness opens the doors of the kingdom; that pride and the Christ-Light are never found together. If we look ever so briefly into things unseen but mighty we find that this must be so, that the forcible compression, the hardening of Thought and Thought-ether around an image of our own greatness must prevent the passage of forces more divine. The very convolutions of the brain are altered and refuse passage to "the fires" — and so the Light and the "Father" are shut out. Wretched men, imprisoned thus from the Great Vibration!

Ah, yes! I have heard of a convict who escaped; he amended and hid his life. He attained to wealth, repute and was conspicuous for his virtue. Also for a "healthy" dislike of all "morbid sentiment in dealing with the criminal classes. Hard horse sense is what they need; they made their bed, let them lie on it." At his death he was found out and men wondered, and condemned this specialized hatred; you and I perhaps among them; you and I who, sinning not this life (perhaps), condemn those who are now exhausting the lower energies we earlier worked out and must again work out: let us pray that the strongest tide of that future retributive hour may not be our present self-acceptance.

I believe that in the sight of the Lords of Mercy we all wear much the same likeness.

If a man believes that we reap what we sow, can he cast the stone? Knows he not that it will rebound upon his own life course, deadlier for the deadly intent with which he cast it?

If a man believes in reincarnation, dares he cast the stone? Oh! by all the sins of the long, long past, No! By those sins which have brought us where we stand today, ignorant, limited, fettered, diseased in body and mind; slaves to the outer senses, prisoners, from the interior senses, orphaned of the Light; by our abject condition today, No! Poor tools, poor sport of Destiny; shall we lift our feeble hands for the first stone? If we had the right to cast it; if we had lifted ourselves from the mud where we stand — and it was our duty to have done that — then we would now be able to stand

alone with the sinner, uplifting him with a wise compassion. We prefer instead to go out from the Christ.

Little children, little children; look for the Light and cease groping for stones. By that Light, I believe that a great sinner may oftentimes be one in whom the human soul has entered into labor pangs of the new birth! Yes; I believe that sin may be the last fermentation of the human nature mightily working toward clarification and that he whom I condemn may be about to drink the new wine of the Kingdom. There are those to whom the Christ has descended even while men stoned them for “ascertained facts.”

And do we say that the Divine uses only pure vehicles? Yet is Spirit invariably linked to matter, atom for atom, in the manifested worlds, and in that does its eternal work. We forgot that the Divine sees not as we see them, our poor fractions of separated Time, but hears the ever-sounding Now. We forgot — did we not know it? — that *I am holier than thou* is written on the inner side of the gates of hell where self is the gate-keeper. We say, in this forgetfulness, that our Elder Brothers, the perfected ones, would not use such a man, would not do thus and so, implying that we know the whole of divine Law and have shared the counsel of Perfection. And then, last and blindest folly, we say that if the Masters would do such a thing as this or that, we, even we, would turn from them. Be it so. We do turn from them. Often. Yet they wait. Ages long is their patient waiting.

One would suppose it inconceivable to all but devils and maniacs that we, who know absolutely nothing of the most ordinary facts in Nature, and the Soul, should first admit the possibility of wise and perfect Beings and then expect them to judge by our small code and blinded vision. Yet we do not find it so difficult to believe that they might use *us* as agents, or cover *us* with pardon. If any one amongst us or apart from us manifest the binding power and harmony of the Over-Soul, we have got to admit that It judges not as we judge but descends where it lists.

These thoughts are not apologies for sin; not apologies for any man or woman or agency of the Divine Breath. Those who with me believe that we have some forgotten share in every sin of which we hear, will understand this. As Life liveth! I believe that the condemned are so far purer than their self-instituted judges, that

the Light, the Searcher of hearts, alone can enter into understanding of them. Our self-purification is futile, It alone purifies.

In all this is naught against civic law and order. It adjures us all alike to refrain from the interior mental attitude of condemnation — even of ourselves. It would but light a taper in the night, that we may avoid the stones we have cast, the abysses these have dug, the barriers builded of them, shutting us from the living Day. Thinking of these, my heart, refrain from the first stone. Draw apart from the turmoil, the fever and the pain. See the great Self in all, and, mingling with its harmonies, see that all tend towards that Self by paths as diverse as the minds of men, but tending to, deriving from, a single point; THE HEART. And, on that Heart reposing, find it to be — thine own!

Before man, the lowest immortal, can find the true Master, he must lose Him; that loss is pure gain. To lose Him thus, is to find Him indeed.

This should be known: the disciple who finds Him on the plane of the senses has objectivized his Karma: he loses the Master after a higher fashion.

When he speaks through the soul, the ignorant disciple says, “it is I myself;” he rejoices to be so wise.

Know that there is only the ONE SELF, THE MASTER, and lose thyself also to find Him who is never found until He has been lost.

When He is lost to every sense then the One Flame arises, pure as before the beginnings of worlds.

This thou shalt never know: thou art IT.

THE DEEP HEART.

A SHORT TIME AGO the Observer walked along a quiet street approaching one of the great thoroughfares of the city. All at once the droning air was stirred, grew tense, concentrated and broke into a cry, a cry repeated by a score of voices, and all about him, from all parts, suddenly appeared an excited mass of human beings, bearing towards one point where they gathered, intent and swarming. One moment — an empty street: the next — a great human drama: sidewalks, doorsteps, balconies, the very roofs, were alive with humanity. The clamor of the fire engine, the clang of the fire bell and trample of eager hoofs had not evoked this multitude; their advent was simultaneous. Whence, then, the summons? A dread silence falls over the crowd, and shrill above the city's drone a woman's shriek is heard. And then the crowd, before the great mansion whose every window and doorway belch smoke and flame, before the delayed ladder-wagon and the anguish of the poor creature leaning from the upper windows, the crowd utters a hoarse growl of rage, surges towards the firemen, thinks better of it, and sullenly mutters at them; then falls to cursing as the shrieks again besiege the gates of the sky.

The Observer looked from face to face and shuddered. Bitter soiled faces, wolfish, angry, the teeth showing behind the parted lips as they gazed upwards; hands clenched and nostrils dilated; eyes burning; throats emitting that hoarse growl. One was in peril — and each took that peril as an image of the strait himself might be in, and hated those who failed — My God! — who *failed* to snatch himself from the flames. And again the cry of rage broke as the smoke swirled and parted, showing the woman about to leap to the street, upright and quivering against a back-ground of flame. Then — oh! delirium! — the wagons — the ladder-wagons; and cheers arise; and a hundred hands, a multitude of eyes and voices point out the on-coming hope to her and stay her on the very brink of the mad leap. And yet, she cannot stay. The fire snatches at her; she stoops — and the crowd shudders; she gathers herself together — and a loud moan of anguish goes up and “The ladders! Stop! Stop! the ladders,” and women cling together in an agony of dread, fearing to see, fearing not to see, as the crowd parts and surges

backward to make way for that which shall fall amongst them pursued by the fire. But no! She has turned about, has lowered herself from the window to the broad cornice of the window below, and crouches there upon the narrow ledge, hunted, pursued, smoke-lumined, but, for the moment, safe upon the giddy perch.

A gasp of relief goes up. The firemen have not been idle. Driven back from the doorways they forced open, they hurl themselves upon the ladders; these are raised — and a fusillade of cheers, like scattered shot, breaks from those panting throats. A moan, a snarl, follow. The ladders are too short. Flames, darting from the window above which she crouches, leap upward and backward at the woman; her cries are cries of pain and madden the crowd.

A new hope appears. But see! she moves restlessly — she rises — is she going to leap now, *now*? Ah-h-h-h-h. A great cry — as from a single Titan's throat, goes up in the word "Stop! stop!" Gestures of command, of warning, of entreaty, lift every arm. The critical moment! One scaling pole is set against the house. The firemen run up it. Another is lifted — and the fire is unendurable; for one moment more it cannot be endured; the woman — the woman — she is leaping — she has leaped? A burst of thick, evil-smelling smoke conceals the place where she stood. A thud — an engine horse has stamped his hoof, and hysterical sobs are heard in the swaying crowd. Is it —? No! No! The smoke lifts, and the foremost firemen snatches the poor creature who leans, shrieking, out of the fiery jaws, grasps her at the very instant when she launches herself upon the air. She hangs from his stalwart right arm, a dangling, charred burden. In mid-air she is passed to another man below, and still another, reaches a ladder, stumbles down its rungs, is safe, is here, is here, falling blindly into the arms that reach out for her, is here, on the hither side of Life still. What a cry goes up. She is saved! Oh my Sisters! Oh my Brothers! We are saved. We are returned to the simple daily life wherein we think ourselves so safe till the Unknown seizes us. Women break into loud weeping. One faints and is borne away. A girl flings herself upon the neck of the engine horse and convulsively kisses his broad grey brows. The *gamins* dance and race. Men embrace one another who never met before; others stand smiling broadly, the tears running down their cheeks; one breaks into a frenzy of cursing, his eyes radiant with

joy. The crowd, the great, fused, self-magnetized crowd, one with itself and with all other selves, sends out ringing cheer after cheer. And the proud steeds, who have done it all, curvet as they draw their dazzling towers away.

And why — why all this emotion, this joy? asks the Observer. Is it because a fellow-creature, doomed to a horrid death, bodying forth to each the image of himself or herself in like peril, was saved before their very eyes? Is it possible? A fellow-creature — whose fellowship was denied an hour before and will be denied in many an hour hereafter. A mere serving-maid, one of thousands of souls passed by, ignored. One to spurn in any moment wherein she might ask alms or obtrude an unpleasant self upon our sybaritic selves. One of the many to be used, cheated, betrayed, pursued, trampled upon in the competition for gain, power, pleasure, livelihood, or life. One who a moment ago was Another, but who became all at once to each himself, myself, when set on high, the quivering prey of Danger. One who is perceived to be nothing, and less than nothing, to us, until the human heart feels the “Open Sesame!” of the human cry. That electric force runs from heart to heart and makes them one. He who has not seen the crowd fused to one single heart, focused to one single mind, a sole thought or aim, does not know the potent charm of humanity for humanity; he does not know the deep roots of the Identity of Souls.

The terrible irony of it! Our fellows are nothing to us but the sources of our power. Then in a moment anyone may become ourself — a cherished self to us — and then he drops back again into the vast seething ocean of souls. He is indistinguishable amid the general pain that is remote from us until it fastens upon our own vitals and we too sink into that bitter wave.

The Observer went his way with bent head. His heart was moved within him, for all his watchful and impassive aspect. That heart spoke.

In every man there is a Great Deep. If he listens it speaks to him. Its melodious voice interprets Life. It repeats the riddles of pain and death and confusion, and makes them over into a song — the song which is universal. The Deep Heart spoke thus to that thoughtful mind.

“Humanity is one and indivisible. Individual acts and lives deny this truth. They deride it. A moment of human peril, or enthusiasm, or inspiration arrives. Life — Life itself is threatened: or it is invaded; or exalted. It has a voice. It cries out — a mighty, silent, all-pervading cry. An impulse, more swift than the light, more subtle than the ether; more fiery than the sun, darts through the oversoul. It has a station in every mind, a register in every heart; by its possession men are unified, as separate breakers are beaten into one wild wall of storm. Man recognizes himself in man; the common identity is seen. That image of Danger or of Hope is himself; with it he weeps, with it rejoices. In moments of great excitement there are no longer different races or sexes; there is only Mankind, only the Brotherhood of Humanity.

“This sentiment is the source of sympathy, that sympathy which is the only vicarious atonement, for by it alone, and in its exercise, man puts himself in the place of another with whose pulse his pulses beat. This sympathy is the great interpreter, the world opener. It penetrates all barriers. It is identity of consciousness. He who can identify himself with the consciousness of one other self, of one other thing, is upon the occult path of adeptship. From this sympathetic identification of self with all things, and all things with self, not even the creatures are shut out. Universal Brotherhood does not stand for humanity only. It stands for the ‘identity of all souls with the Oversoul’ where every atomic life is a soul.”

So mused the man. The Deep Heart of him spoke again.

“But why wait for the sharp sudden moments to know our brother? Often we know him only when he has gone from our eyes; when his abandoned husk lies before us. Then we mourn for the winged soul — thing of air and fire — which we behold not, but which was hidden from us in the heart we so often wounded, so often denied. Ah! wait not for these crises in which to be kind to one another. See how often remorse attends the dead. Let not compassion come up tardily to the brink of the grave. Be wise, be merciful, know the brother heart now; *now*, while it lives, suffers, needs, and hungers at your side. These lightning moments of storm reveal men to one another as each traveler sees the face of his fellow in the lurid breaks of the tempest. In that tempest who can work? Know one another in the broad light of the common day. Feel with

one another now. Work each for the other now. Hope in one another now. Wait not for flame and despair to fuse your hearts. Let brotherly sympathy anneal them now, before it is too late for useful action, before it is too late for that sublime hope which lies in the conquest of self for the evolution of all higher selves. There is but one moment for brotherly love. That moment is the eternal NOW.

The true Master is felt; He is not seen.

When He who was unseen is seen, He disappears.

Then the Spiritual Presences are gathered into the unity; they know not one another, but they are the One Self.

In that darkness there is but One.

In that silence there is no knowledge, but Being — which is all — is fulfilled.

This is the path of the true disciple.

SELF-EXILED.

I LOOKED OUT OVER THE NIGHT. There was one passed along my road. He passed unnoticed by others, but I saw that he had taken the vow of poverty. And where the moonbeams fell upon his brow I saw a mark; it was the brand of pain worn by all the exiles.

Weary and athirst he pushed onward; he stayed not for hunger nor for weariness. His dim eyes were fixed upon the horizon. In them I saw the reflected image of the Far Land.

After him followed the Companions, unseen, bearing the mystic gifts in their hands.

And his thirst was so great that it stayed him. He threw himself down, struggling with faintness and pain.

Above him stood the Companions, the silent witnesses. And I said to them: "Is he not our Brother?"

They made no answer, but the Star of Compassion upon their breasts shone out with tenderest light; It irradiated the form of the exile.

"Why do ye not give to him who thirsts?" I said. "Is there no living water?" A Companion held up a cup, full to the brim.

"Give then," I cried. "Give, ere it comes too late."

Then they all turned their sad eyes upon me and I knew that they would have given if they could.

I asked: "Are there any who may *not* drink?"

One answered: "Thou hast said it. He whom imposes the conditions under which he will receive, he may *not* drink."

"Is it the Law?" I questioned him. He held out his cup to the exile, saying: "Here is water."

The weary one answered: "It is but the water of the Far Land I thirst for. How should ye have it, ye who come up from behind?" He dipped his finger into the cup and put it to his lips. A cry broke from him: "It is exceeding bitter," he said.

"Yet drink," the Companion answered him.

But the exile turned aside, murmuring: "Purify me that water and then perhaps I my drink."

The Companion sighed, and said: "I have not so received it and I shall not so impart it. It is the Law."

With his hand the exile thrust aside the cup. On it this legend sparkled out upon the night.

"I am that Amrita which in the beginning is as ashes and in the end is the water of Life."

The Companions turned and all looked at me. And I knew that none but himself had power to open the eyes of the exile.

The Companions disappeared, bearing the magic gifts. And through the dark night I heard the sobs of our Brother who fancied himself to be alone. I dared not weep; but I pondered on the awful mysteries of Life.

The Companion offers himself. He is that cup. He is the container of all that he can draw from this universe; the water of Life is not to be contained even by this universe. But each Companion sets his own limits; he contains all that he can.

He then comes to the patient worker, to the exiles who hear the brand. He offers himself thrice.

Rejected the third time, he departs.

Another day — or another life perhaps — there comes another. He too offers himself for acceptance or rejection.

And so the Loving Cup goes round and round, despised and rejected of men.

Men look for it under conditions of their own making. But it was not so received. Without limit or condition it was received; without limit or condition it must be taken.

But that which is rejected of men, is the headstone of the Master Builder.

Such are the stones in the living wall set to protect the race.

THE APPEAL UNTO CAESAR.

WHEN ROME RULED THE WORLD, in her Caesar was focused all her power. A claimant for Justice, challenging judgment with the cry: "I appeal unto Caesar!" was answered: "Then Caesar will hear you." He had taken refuge at the foot of the throne, and men spoke of an appeal unto Caesar, as a supreme and final step. It evoked an irrevocable decision. Despite the lapse of time this appeal impresses the mind with unimpaired majesty because it is the type of a living truth. The appeal unto Caesar has eternally place in the spiritual world.

When a man first feels within himself the strange throb of that power which tells of a higher life than that in which he is immersed; when it spurs him away from the material and beckons to him as from glimpses of the spiritual, he looks about him for information, for traces of a course to be pursued. He questions his fellows; he reads many books; he hearkens to teachers and authorities, both real and nominal. A huge mass of external information is sifted by him, and in the end he finds — confusion! His intellect may be fed for a while, but at last the support of the heart fails it; it is saturated, plethoric, atrophied. He turns then to Life itself. He questions the boasts and the despair, the revelry and the agony; he asks of Love, of Hope, of Fear, and Faith. He contemplates the ideals of all art and the untrammelled freedom of Nature, aiming perhaps nearer to the secret as he marks the inalterable round of seasons, and how winter draws itself together with bitter contraction to burst into the ferment, the vernal revel of spring. He snatches at the wings of dreams; he confronts the phalanx of great problems and the most shadowy suggestions alike; but he has not the clue to the labyrinth; he knows not that this eternal alternation is Life itself, and that he must look deeper still. The heart, unsupported by the intellect, now fails him also. He hears, perhaps of the teachers of the East, or of the "Leaders of the world" from whom, "*when the wind is blowing,*" comes the mystical fragrance which is the ambrosia of the soul.¹ But the wind is not then blowing (that is — his time has not come in the Law), and it is borne in upon him that he is but one of millions along the centuries who have given a momentary cry out of the press of existence, and have then returned contentedly to the "flesh

pots of Egypt," He has yet to prove that he possesses, in some degree at least, the power of flight. So he receives no valid or enduring comfort from any of these directions; and meanwhile, all about him, the enticements of Life are plucking at his garments, the currents of the world are urging him to and fro. Here, many desist: he who perseveres listens next *within*. He hears vaguely, now this prompting and now that, in the multiform vacillations of the soul, itself bewildered by the long sojourn in matter; even the inner sanctuary, in which he most trusts, seems to betray his hope. Then if his soul be as yet weak, his thought fails, the spiritual vision fades into the mists, and he resumes the accustomed march of life, keeping "lock step," with his imprisoned companions like one awakening, heavy and unrefreshed, from the phantasmagoria of dreams. We lose sight of him in the struggling multitude; he has leapt from the wave only to fall back into the depths. But he who is strong, rendered stronger still as he gathers to himself the forces he has overcome, now discards all other powers, and takes his resolute stand upon his own nature. He declares that since he can conceive a higher Life, it must exist within his reach, and he wills with an indomitable will to attain it. How, he knows not, but he relies upon that inner prompting alone.

Then he makes the appeal unto Caesar. By Caesar he is never unheard.

In those shining spheres where dwell the glorious ones forever, all is peace and silence. A far sound travels up the star strewn cope. The stir of its approach touches the Gods with a tremor; they thrill to it, bending closer, for it has that charm which alone conjures them, the essential charm of humanity.² It is the voice of man, which selfless, is stronger than all the angels, and selfish, is weaker than the dumb plaint of the brute. Perhaps this is the first intelligence of the wanderer received in his Father's house. Perhaps they have heard it coming before, and Life has beaten it back. Nearer it comes and nearer, gaining force as it advances, from the sympathies of heaven's messengers and powers all leaping forth to increase and sustain it; it falls like a star into the sea of eternity which swells to meet it, and ripples spread and overflow, magical, musical and full of healing. Oh! with what exultant flight, with what a rush of glory the strong voice of humanity cleaves the interstellar space and opens up the way from Gods to men. Along that way, long retarded souls come flocking after, jubilant among the jeweled

auroras. Celestial spheres flash responsively; the silver echoes waken, and God proclaims to God, with solemn triumph, that man once more has claimed his own! "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth."³ For this hour the God has waited longer than souls can remember. The power of the divine self rests upon the rights of the man who has appealed to it. They are the two poles of a sphere, and the might of the higher can only be universally manifest, below as above, through complete union with the lower. This union ensures immortality to the human soul, and the splendor of distinct fruition to the divine spirit. So when the Higher Self hears the appeal, it responds to the holiest of pledges. This appeal may have been made before in other ages, and the present cry may be the renewal of forgotten vows; or it may now be made for the first time in the first expansion of psychic evolution. For this no special rule can be given. In each life all previous lives repeat themselves, just as the law of reproductive thought or association operates at any cataclysm, so that all similar events may thus be seen. Each sleep brings up all former sleep, and an accident today would enable one sufficiently developed to see and feel all the accidents that had before come to the sufferer.⁴ So it seems that there comes finally one incarnation which repeats with emphasis the sum total of all other lives, so that the man is hurried through the round of experience with furious rapidity. Such an incarnation ripens the period known as "the moment of choice." The actual advent of this period is denoted by the strength of the soul which encounters it: it must *know*, before it can decide. It is not a "moment" in the usual sense of the word, but a period of greater or lesser duration, and I believe it may even extend over several lives. It cannot be entered upon, until the appeal to Caesar has been made.

This appeal is not really the initiative. The spark within, which we carry from the Father's house as a traveler takes with him the love tokens of his home; that exiled spark awakens. It does so because it has at last heard a messenger from the heavenly mansion, and it asserts its remembrance in answer, just as ties of blood assert themselves when estranged brothers meet suddenly in foreign lands, or as the bonds of humanity draw close, in automatic and inherent action, before a common danger. The divine spark knows, what the mind of man ignores, and what the soul forgets, that there

is peril for its associates, even peril of eternal death. As from time to time the God remembers the wanderer, so its responsive longings break forth in muffled warning within the troubled breast of man. The Great One, waiting patiently through the ages, sends airy heralds, an impulse of power, a formless, soundless, vibratory message like a flaming light, down the mysterious thread which connects man and God as the moonbeam connects earth and sky. Up that wondrous way every aspiration of man must travel, and down it scintillate the responses of that enduring Love by which alone we live.

He who is strong now passes into a blank darkness, which no power can penetrate for him: from the vortex of pain he suddenly snatches his soul and places it upon the outer verge of peace. Then he must find his way into the heart of the silence.

He is answered, I said; but he does not always hear the answer. The spiritual language is not understood by him. At first, the echoes of his own need are all that come back to him, fraught with a majesty and a pathos from the spheres they have touched, which often intoxicate him into a passion of self-pity. He does not recognize that this added grandeur is the olive branch brought him from beyond the waste of waters; that it is a guarantee of the divine hearing. He does not know that its significance enters his heart, his eyes, his speech, and that in the added dignity of his mien, weary seekers feel blindly an assurance that the higher life exists. They feel, though too often unable to translate clearly, that another has called upon Caesar and that the Supreme Power lives. He has touched It for a moment, though he knows it not, and all are heartened though none may discover it of himself or of the others.

A certain melancholy then floods the heart of the seeker. It is a sadness sweeter than the ringing clamor of worldly joys; its aftertaste is gracious and not fevered. It is "that which in the beginning is as poison, and in the end is as the water of life."⁵ He continues to meditate and to search his soul; to look for truth apart from his conceptions of it; to distinguish the necessities of his lower nature from the intuitions of his higher nature (though both seemingly speak through the one voice), and to send up aspirations to the God, who responds with a vivifying shower of new hopes. He feels them faintly. For as the ray of light speeds to his succor, it

encounters the material darkness in which he lives. A small portion of it may pass through and invigorate his heart, but part is refracted by the things about him, reflected in the surface thoughts and customs of the world and reaches him distorted and falsified. Then too, the more powerful the ray, the more the darkness, receding before it, impacts itself about him, denser than ever, and the faults, the errors nearest his heart are driven home and hold riot there. So it often happens that when rescue is nearest it seems to the beleaguered one immeasurably remote, and that the response of Caesar seems to condemn him in the mocking voices of despair and sin. Men fancy that the answer of the Divine Self must bring peace; it is not so at first. Jesus said: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword."⁶ There is much warfare yet; only through it do we enter into the peace. We have to wrestle with the power, as Jacob did with the angel, before it will wholly bless us. When it does so, it is for the sake of humanity and man must make his appeal for the same reason. This is the rite of sacrifice which the *Gîtâ* speaks of as having been instituted from the beginning — this interchange with the Divine. Having consciously appealed, we have challenged the Supreme: we have placed ourselves within the grasp of the law and the compact must be kept. Nor can we advance until then. A master once wrote to one who asked to become his disciple: "May the powers to which you have appealed *be permitted by still greater and much higher powers* to help you." He meant the Great One and the Law.

I knew a seeker after Truth who was beaten back at every point. He lay prostrate in despair under the most awful weight that ever crushes the human soul. All his nature cried out for God. He felt a touch that rolled the stone away and looking upward, he beheld in the air above him a shape of light all calm and resplendent, whose aspect was a transfiguration of his own. More I know not, but this my brother who was lost has been found again.

There are many of you, my comrades, who stand in just this stead; you have called and you have been answered; but you have not heard. You will say to me: "How shall we hear, and how interpret the voice?" I cannot tell you this; there are as many ways as there are men. Each of you, and he only, is judge of himself; he and Caesar. But I can assure you that every aspiration you feel, and the renewal of them, are messages from the God. His replies may

take the shape of added sorrows and gathering storms, for all these are the means of your trial and your growth, and you have elected them yourself, sowing their seeds in other lives. Try then to look upon each as just the help which you now need. So long as you have an unselfish thought, you are not deserted; so long as you have faith, you have heard. This succor stands fast in the True; it can never be uprooted, severed or lessened. It is your inheritance, your right which no one can deny you but yourself. Even your ignorance can only obscure it. The true voice will speak to you of the sorrows of the world, of the grand futurity of mankind, of your diviner Self.

The hour of appeal is the pregnant moment. If you lose it now, how long may you not have to wait, powerless dreamers in the heavenly lands, tasting rich rewards which fail at last? Then you must return again from that world of effects to this one. Seek the world of cause instead. Causes are sovereign; they alone are eternal.

Amid the roar of the world, the stupendous rush of its fierce tides, the swoop of its hurricanes, the fell power of its lightnings which reveal only darkness to the seared soul; amid its miasmatic pettiness, amid its joys and its better hopes, cling still to that one thought which, like the sea gull, can well outride a thousand storms, the thought of that Humanity which shall merge into Divinity; the thought of the Self, the All. Strengthen it with all the love of your heart, all the sweetness of your nature, and send up a mighty cry to heaven. For when through the spirit, the man wills, when his soul soars to claim its right, then distant spheres are shaken and Being is apprehended. Appeal! Appeal unto Caesar!

An active charity is the legitimate outcome of the sole article of our confession of faith — Universal Brotherhood. This is a term fitted to convey to all minds in all languages a clear, distinct, and ethical idea. It covers and conveys in its highest sense the truth of the “spiritual identity of all Being” on which alone can a real universal brotherhood, true in fact as well as in potentiality, active on all planes alike, be based.

NOTES

1. Saddharma Pundarika. {Lotus Sutra.}
2. In the Hindu and Buddhist books we find this referred to as, the growing warm of Indra, or other Deity, who thus knows that his interposition below is needed; as, when Buddha's father wished to build a lotus pond: then Indra, in one night, had it done. — J.N.
3. St. Luke XV:10 & 7.
4. A friend, sitting recently with an injured man, saw in the astral light an accident that had happened to him twenty-five years before. — J.N.
5. *Bhagavad Gîtâ*, Ch. 18.
6. St. Matthew chapter. X, v. 34.

SUFFERING.

LAST NIGHT I SAW IN DREAM, a man. He was weak, poor, an exile; his feet were torn, his wounds bled, his heart bled also. He cried out to heavens that were brass; they sent forth a dull reverberation, a sullen thunder, in reply. Around him was blackness; in his soul was a grim despair. This wretched, hunted, abandoned creature gazed wildly about him, finding nothing upon which Hope might rest, not even Death, for he knew he could not die before his time. All Life passed before him as he stood at bay, and mocked him in every tongue.

I heard a sigh as if someone beside myself grieved at this piteous spectacle and, turning, I saw One who seemed to be a guide of the country, and to whom the sufferer appeared to be known. Of him I made inquiry.

“Can no one help that man?”

“Oh yes. There is one who can help him.”

“Who is that?”

“Himself!”

“Why does he not help himself, then?”

“Because he suffers so much. His suffering engages all his attention.”

“What, then, is the cause of this great suffering?”

“Himself,” said the guide, and smiled. This smile revealed a divine pity, more tender than tears. It opened my heart, so that I said:

“Teach me more of this strange Self which is at once his persecutor and his Savior.”

“Nay,” replied that guide; “thou shalt ask thyself that question, for that self is thee also, and every other man as well.”

Then I awoke, understanding very well that we suffer from ourselves, And I could see, too, how each man was the sharer of the experience of others, for is there not that rare, tenuous aether

in which every human sphere is suspended, feeling every current, every thought, every struggle of all its neighbors, of the whole vibrating mass, and translating every vibration into thoughts of its own quality in the wonderful mechanism of the human brain? Could I not see well how these thoughts, in their dynamic and formative energy, molded that aether into pictures which lived, moving along currents that were baleful or beneficent in their action upon other spheres, according as they caught the tone of the mass, or failed to reach it? This tone was given by the Great Law Itself as the appointed chord to and by which all spheres should be regulated, in order to vibrate in unison, and, where any sphere failed to do so, vibrating at its own choice and out of time and tune, the whole aether was violently agitated, its current of light rendered turbid, its melody disturbed, destroyed. Well I saw that what was mainly required for the restoration of harmony was that each human sphere should accept without resistance the great currents of the Law as these impinged upon it. Of course at first, many of them would suffer internal confusion from this sudden change of motion; they would experience Pain, and even disintegration in some parts. Let those who had the courage so to suffer for the restoration of general harmony would soon find a new and higher form of organization crystallizing within themselves, just as the music of the master's bow causes the sand particles to thrill and to range themselves in ordered patterns of beauty, or as at the magnet's mysterious message iron filings range themselves in the same polarized lines as those of the human brain. Yes; what was imperatively needed was that every human creature should stand still long enough to feel the currents of Law sweeping through his life, and then think with and obey them. In other words, the first step is Resignation.

In the year whose last sands slip by as I write, many cries have fallen upon my heart. That heart suffers like every other. This truth gives to each heart the divine right to understand all the rest. We hear the cry of the exile, and out of our own experience we respond to him. There are so many cases. There are the comrades who wish much to do and to be. They desire greatly to work in the Altruistic Cause. Karmic circumstance fetters them. So they devise plans whereby they may be made richer, or stronger in body, or more free from care and duty, or to gain more ample time in which to work.

But that Karma which they themselves have made, and which is their only judge, refuses them these things. Then a deep sadness falls upon them with the failure of their plans; their energies are sapped and wasted by the thousand allies of doubt and despair. They forget that their plan is not needed. What is greatly needed is Harmony. This is only attained by submission. When we accept Karmic Environment and go calmly to work to take an inventory of ourselves as we now are, both externally and internally, in all our mental states and Ever Changing Motives, and then ask earnestly what such a man, in such a given condition of life, can do, just where he stands and as he is, to help Humanity, we do find an answer somewhere. We do find some work to our hand. It may be only in Right Thought that we can help, but in that dynamic power we work silently along with silent nature and the Great Vibration, whose melodies are real, are profound, and heard by the inner ear alone. In thus spreading the fluidic far reaching energies of harmonious thought upon the ambient aether, we create currents in accord with those of that Universal Mind whose grand totality is "Angels and Archangels and all the Powers of Heaven." Is this a small power? Not so. By its means we change our whole mental environment; and that in turn will order future Karmic circumstance so that in the next life, or perhaps even in this, we shall be placed where we can help our fellows more. That help is their due and our privilege. But I think we place undue stress upon material help. The heart of man is at the bottom of every circumstance. It molds every event, builds up all societies, determines the character of every age. Reforms that do not reach that strange and hidden heart are built upon the sand. Nothing can reach it but Right Thought, and it is in the gift of every person to turn that reconstructive power loose upon the wild turmoil of our time. This is the Light that stills the waves. Instead of chafing at our limitations and our failures, let us then accept them with harmonious serenity and use them as our instruments. Thus I know a sick person who uses the sympathy, evoked by that sickness as a means of gaining the attention of others to higher thoughts. I know a comrade in great poverty who realizes that this very poverty gains the ear of those likewise suffering, and of those too who think much of the material gifts they can bring, and so this brave soul drops a true brave word here and there on the thorny way. By acceptance of Karma we learn great and wonderful things, and a master has

said: "Karma is the great teacher. It is the wisest of guides and the best."

This does not mean that we should sit down supinely and think only. It means that we should accept the inevitable in material life, and gather what spiritual riches we can find, in order to give them all away.

Then, again, come the sufferers through Love, the hearts that cling to the personal sweetness, the strong human ties, the thousand endearing tendencies often cemented by a long, though unknown, Past. Death, separation or Life, sweeps between. Or the Beloved suffer, and we cry out. We cry in ignorance. Our Love is never lost. Every Universe makes for Love: that Love is Harmony, is Justice. Not one vibration of it is ever lost. Out of our deep spiritual nature this yearning Love comes pouring, an eternal fountain. Our personal mind translates its meaning in many perverse ways. We take it to mean all kinds of personal desire or hope. That we belie our nature is evident because, when these desires are gratified, the heart is never content with that, but goes on to new desire. It is the sacred truth that, in the very ground of our natures, a spark burns ever in the vibration of the highest Love. All our small personal affections are simply the straying tendrils of this one great root, and ought to draw us inward to it. Our Love rests in the highest bond. We do really desire the highest fulfilment of the loved one's Being. We can, if we will and if we seek, find ourselves consciously reaching up in hope to the perfection of those beloved natures. It is really the Higher Self, the great Ideal One, that we love. The man or woman, Its faint reflection, is there to lead us to this blessed Truth. Alas! We find self far too much in so called love, but I believe,— in all conscience I can attest it — that once we get a glimpse of this truth, that our inner natures yearn to help our Beloved to greater heights, we will make a mighty effort to continue in that higher, holier hope. From thus loving one, to loving all, we proceed gradually through the pure overflow, or the natural gravitation of Love, until we know nothing of Separation. For all starved natures there is then this hope. We are not to love less, but to love more. To expand to fuller conceptions; to realize deeper meanings; to find within the self of flesh and sense, and all the selfish corruption of our natures, these germs of living truths; these meanings we have indeed perverted, but which we are powerless to

destroy, because they are germs of that Truth which is One and indestructible, the “Law which makes for Righteousness,” the Harmony which is Love.

Those who suffer will find at the very root of their suffering, no matter of what kind, some revolt against this Eternal Law of Love. We have only to turn round and obey it. We have only to cease desiring to put it to personal use, or to grind personal comforts out of it, and all its blessings and powers are ours. It lives in every heart; it gilds and glorifies every atom; it “stands at the door and knocks;” it is Life, it is Light, it is Peace, for it is Eros, the one Ray, it is universal, divine Love. Oh! my suffering comrades; accept it, embrace it! Live by it, at any cost; die by it if needs be, for so only shall we find Life eternal, only by receiving and acknowledging the Law, only by living in the thought of all beings, in harmony with all and with Love.

“AND he who has come to his own again,
Though he speak no word and sing no song,
Himself is a Voice to the hearts of men:
For the silent Seer, the swift, the strong,
Has touched the radiant vesture spun
By the starry Gods for the Only One.”

— ARETAS.