

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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IN MEMORY OF H. P. BLAVATSKY

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[The following White Lotus Day address by Robert Crosbie first appeared in *Theosophy* (Los Angeles) for May 1922.—Eds.]

FELLOW STUDENTS OF THEOSOPHY:

Those who have made a study of the Theosophical philosophy, and are at all acquainted with the Secret Doctrine regarding Nature and Man, will understand why the Being who brought Theosophy to the Western World is so often spoken of among us. There is something more than respect for a person, something more than reverence for a Personage, behind this commemoration. No Entity having her knowledge could appear among us except under Law, nor unless that Entity had previously acquired that knowledge in the orderly course of spiritual, mental and moral evolution.

We have read and studied and spoken of Evolution time and again. We know that evolution rules in every department of Life, in every class of being; that all Beings above man must at some period have passed through our stage; that all beings below man will some day arrive at the human stage. This law of all evolution being applied in the light of Spiritual Identity and Brotherhood, must lead us to recognize that there are Beings above us, Beings who once were men, who return at cyclic intervals when Their aid is needed in the world, when everything is in a transition state, to give further light and guidance to mankind, so that we may more conscientiously and responsibly pursue our own task of progression and in turn help on the evolution of all Nature below the estate of man.

That such Beings do appear in the world is testified to by tradition,

by all religions, by historical records, by great Teachings and by great examples of the noblest Altruism. All the story of the past shows that at different periods of the world's history there has come among men in human guise some Being who was hailed by some of his own time and accredited by succeeding generations with being a Divine Incarnation. Such great Beings have been the Founders of all the world's great religions. In our Christian religion we have such an example. It is written of Jesus that he "became in all things like unto us" — in order, we may well believe, to make possible the transmission to those to whom he came of that portion of the "ancient, secret, constant and eternal Doctrine" most necessary for their well-being. And in all ages, before and since the time of Jesus, such Beings have come among men, sometimes in lowly guise, sometimes in high estate, but all and always to inculcate once more the doctrine that man is Divine in essence, and that to *realize* his divinity he must think and act as a divine being; for it is by our thinking and acting that we produce the causes that bring to pass the effects, divine or infernal, that we experience.

We have been accused of following a person because we speak so much of H. P. Blavatsky as we knew her. That is not, with us, the following of a person; it is the recognition of a great Fact in Nature, and that fact has to have a name. The fact is valuable, because it points to the Source of the Message. Many others have sprung up since she passed from among us, who have taken to themselves the credit of her Message, who have used and misused what she brought to them, and have sought to elevate themselves by virtue of its delivery. So it is essential that the one who brought the Message of Theosophy should be recognized, should be known, by all Theosophists, should be presented to all those who would study Theosophy, for in no other way can the truth of that Message be obtained, undiverted and uncorrupted.

We are to consider and present the idea of a Being far, far above anything we can truly imagine, one with knowledge and power we cannot conceive of — a perfected Being — leaving those fields that were earned, in order to come among us, to come among us in a body like ours, in a body of this race, that the ancient Wisdom might once more be presented to us in terms of our own understanding, even in a language which is not the language of metaphysics, but a language which has grown up among a fighting and a trading people, from which the terms are absent fitly and fully to present the many grades and degrees of consciousness, feeling and perception we need to understand.

We all know that H. P. Blavatsky was born in Russia in August 1831; that she came of a noble family; that she married at an early age General Blavatsky; that it was never a marriage in fact, and that she left home and friends and place and disappeared for some ten years. During those ten years she was in many lands, but for the greater portion of that time she was in that quarter of the globe where she was in touch with those Masters of whom she spoke. During those ten years she served in many ways — that body served, for *it* was not the Entity — served as a soldier in Garibaldi's Army of Liberation. After Mentana that body was picked up for dead, but came back to life and was nursed to strength again. Then she returned home with a fearful wound in her side, which never fully healed. From the time of her return it was noted and commented on by relatives and friends that the character and nature of Helena Blavatsky had been completely changed.

There is a reason for that — an Occult reason, the knowledge of which is absent from our race. Most of us are subject to birth from necessity — Karma; that is, our thought and action in the past have been such as to bring us into a certain family, into a certain race, at a certain time and in a certain way under certain conditions and circumstances. Such births as ours are under Law; we are thus reaping what we have sown. But in the case of those Beings of whom we have been speaking, They do not always come to earth and enter into a body by our road of birth. Truly They come under Law, as do we all, but They *know* the Law and all its modes and processes, and They come by choice through that mode which best serves the occasion of Their coming. They may take a body which the Ego, or natural tenant, is leaving, and by agreement made on higher planes than those we know, such an abandoned body is used by that higher Entity for the purpose of His work in the world.

There have been two such occasions within our time. H. P. Blavatsky was one. The tenant occupying that body really left it when it was wounded unto death on the field of battle, and another Entity by agreement took it. That incoming Entity was one of "Those who know," one of Those who had reached perfection, and who used that body for the purposes of the work of the great Lodge of Masters in the world. William Q. Judge was another. In that case the body was that of a child of seven or eight who was dying, who was pronounced dead by the physician in attendance. After a time the body showed signs of returning life, and recovered, but the nature of the child was different from what

it had been before. To the parents it was still the same child. They saw the same body and thought it was the same Identity or Entity, but they soon saw the great change in the character, in the nature, in the tendencies.

Now these two cases point to something worth our utmost attention, to try to understand: the *occult* laws governing Nature visible and invisible. They are all outlined in the last chapter of the second volume of *Isis Unveiled*, where this very mode of superhuman "birth" is broadly hinted at and illustrated: the fact that a Being of higher knowledge and attainment can, by choice or by agreement, enter a body, *borrow* a body, when the former tenant is leaving it.

These two Beings did not come into human life through the door of birth as we all have; they entered in with *knowledge*, and immediately on entering began to train those borrowed bodies to respond to their own attainments and requirements.

Many have heard of the great powers H.P.B. possessed, and many during her lifetime were witness to phenomenal exercise of those powers. William Q. Judge had the same powers. H.P.B.'s powers were heralded abroad by those who saw their exhibitions and believed them, as well as by those who heard of them and disbelieved. Those possessed by William Q. Judge were not so heralded; in fact, so far as was in his power he sedulously concealed the spreading abroad of the knowledge that he had them.

Now, I may be excused if I speak a few words personally of him in particular, the misunderstood and misrepresented Colleague of H.P.B. I met William Q. Judge in 1886 and at that first meeting I found something I had never felt before — the confidence, the realization of the power and knowledge of that Being — and never was I mistaken in it. Never was he false, never did he lack or fail in a single instance in the expression or the use of that power and knowledge. Always he sought to rouse, in those with whom he talked, the idea of the inner immortal nature of every man; always he sought to implant in their minds the desire and aspiration to realize their own Divinity. And to those whom he trusted he showed again and again great control over the powers of nature. Always, in such cases, he showed those powers, not to gratify curiosity, not to display his knowledge, but always in illustration of the workings of some great law in nature. In Theosophy there is no such thing as miracle. All those occurrences that seem to us incredible or miraculous are brought about by a knowledge of the higher

and finer laws of nature.

You will remember that H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge were only the names attached to those bodies — their students have more often called them “H.P.B.” and “W.Q.J.,” for by those initials they recognize or indicate the Entities that used those bodies, not the bodies themselves.

Those who were close to them — close in loyalty and trust and devotion to the Cause they served — were able, at least to some extent, to perceive the wonderful Natures masked in those personalities; the divine compassion that dwelt in them; the gentleness, the self-sacrificing nature that desires nothing for itself, but desires only to help mankind on its rough and thorny path to perfection. Those who could see could perceive that higher, finer, better Nature in these two Beings, could feel a response in their own inner natures. For there was something in the very contact and connection with those Beings that, as it were, burned into the very soul and aroused the highest and noblest of which the man might be capable. Yet withal, there was a simplicity there, a modesty there, that would disarm most people, that turned aside the self-seekers and the contentious.

So, if we look upon H.P.B. and W.Q.J. as something more than ordinary men, as Beings of power and knowledge, who had to step down to communicate with us in our paucity of ideas, in order to enable us to grasp at least a small part of the great *message* of Theosophy, then it is that it will be understood why we speak of them in terms of the greatest love and the highest reverence. No one who ever sought them as a Friend but found — and will find — their help — no matter how many the weaknesses, no matter how small the ideas of the inquirer. Always that assistance and guidance was given and will be found that enables the earnest seeker to grasp something of the great Truths about the Soul of Man that was and is the Message that they brought.

GOOD FRIENDS, bear us witness that we have always disclaimed anything like “leadership”; that we have invariably referred you to the same standard authors whom we have read, the same old Philosophers we have studied. We call on you to testify that we have repudiated dogmas and dogmatists, whether living men or disembodied Spirits.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE WOOING OF SPIRIT

KING: My words fly up, my thoughts remain below;
Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

—*Hamlet*: Act III, Scene 3

IN FRAGMENT III of *The Voice of the Silence*, the following stanza occurs:

No light that shines from Spirit can dispel the darkness of the nether Soul, unless all selfish thought has fled therefrom, and that the Pilgrim saith: "I have renounced this passing frame; I have destroyed the cause: the shadows cast can, as effects, no longer be."

This in effect means that the man need not labour under the fond delusion that whatever he may do, the Spirit will in the end work his salvation. The purpose of evolution is not so achieved. All efforts at extricating himself from darkness have to be initiated and sustained by the embodied Soul through long incarnations. This is but natural, for in the distant past it was the Soul that slid from out of the shine into the shadow. If he erred thus, the only avenue open to him is to force himself out of the darkness and place himself directly within the ambit of the light. An earthly analogy should make the position clear. The Sun gives warmth and comfort to all who place themselves under its benign rays. It does not, however, follow him who strays away from its light and plunges deep into the thick darkness of the jungle growth.

The light that emanates from Spirit is self-luminous and lasts throughout the periods of manifestation so long as there is a Soul to perceive it. It is really the nether Soul which by its own acts — voluntary or induced by karmic heredity — raises an impenetrable veil, thus cutting itself off from the light divine. On this side of the veil, all is dark, all is mortal. Those who even in their mind's eye can sense no glimmer of light stand the chance of being broken on the wheel of life, to be ultimately swept away in the next great upheaval.

Man's immortality is in Spirit and through Spirit once it is aroused and made a creative potency through the WILL of man. That immortality can be reached by no other way. Bell, book and candle are powerless to achieve it — are in fact mockeries that delude and degrade. Until the thick opaque crest fabricated by the man himself is made opalescent and then transparent, he can merit no grace and experience no efful-

gence. Unless a deliberate effort is made by the man to come out of the enveloping darkness, he will find himself being enmeshed and closed fast in the hard crust of matter. The Soul lost to its Parent because of its intimacy with matter will in time be pulverized into matter. This is real death; a rending, disintegrating process through which the stifled Soul meets its end; never more to incarnate, never more to reach to man's estate. Souls die thus in their hundreds and their thousands, and no tears, no litanies nor offerings can bring them back into the school of life.

If immortality is to be realized, if it is to be striven after, if death can bring the man no nearer to it, then considerations arise with which quite a few people are unfamiliar. No student in school can expect to make the grade under the mistaken notion that he will be able to answer all questions if, while he played truant from school, his Teacher went on reciting the texts at stated intervals. Even a dunce can see the logic of this. How foolish, then, to expect that the priests by their chants and hymns, their invocations and extreme unctions can turn a dead man's sins into virtues, remove the inner scars of his misdeeds and bring forth roses where in justice weeds alone can thrive! When death comes, the man's ledger of life for that incarnation is closed. The debits and the credits cannot be added to or altered. There can be no cheating — not even window-dressing. The ledger is a reality. It is no myth and it contains stark realities. Death brings no miraculous accession of knowledge. In fact, it stops the intake of experience. The man loses his reasoning and hungering faculties. He ingests no food. His will is gone and his volition is dormant. After his sowings on earth, this is his period of rest. But death brings no transmuting hand. The weeds remain weeds and the roses, roses. After death the Soul cannot devise or initiate steps to gain its immortality. His selfish intentions which plagued him during earth-life have gone to form the ghost that haunts churchyards and séance-rooms. The Soul is surrounded by the aroma-breath of such memories as are consubstantial with its nature. But that is all. The school and laboratory of life is closed to him and he must remain unborn and without power till Karma ticks away the hours that must elapse before he can again be ready to assume an earthly vesture.

The stanza from *The Voice of the Silence* with which this essay opened instructs that the greatest obstruction to the light of Spirit comes from selfish thought. It is this thought which raises a dense and impenetrable cloud which allows no glimmer, or hardly any glimmer

(depending on the degree of selfishness), to percolate through. This producer of darkness is the bane of men on earth. It not only makes the man oblivious to the fact that light in all its effulgence lies hid behind the dense clouds of selfishness, but it also makes him, by force of long habit, find his comfort in his mansion-house of darkness. He becomes a stranger to light and oft-times turns away from it like the caged bird that shuns the open door.

The combating of selfishness lies not so much in the resisting of it as in the inculcating of the opposite virtue of Brotherliness. This feeling of kinship with men and nature has to be total. It must embrace all kingdoms from that of the Devas to those other kingdoms that lie below the mineral. There can be no brotherhood *in actu* unless there is built into the act the quality of non-violence and the essence of charity — which latter, to have its true connotation, must reflect love immortal. The dissociation of the man from selfishness comes by degrees, even as the effort mounts to free the consciousness from the lure of seeking one's good at the cost of another. The lower rungs of charity are reached by humility and a willingness to take the lesser role.

It is when the man persists in his endeavours to lead the higher life that he finds himself torn by an inner conflict. This inner struggle intensifies in proportion as his aspirations mount. Disharmony between profession and practice, between word and act, invites the penalties of karmic infringement. The inner balance and equilibrium which the virtue of *Shila* inculcates has to be gained at all costs. This is for the simple reason that he who fails to maintain harmony in word and act and so fails to counterbalance the cause and the effect finds that the shadow of fear (sometimes perceptible, but oft-times untraceable) follows the man, making him unstable on his feet. It is this fear which makes the goal appear distant and unattainable. It topples him from his sure retreat in *Kshanti* (patience sweet, that nought can ruffle) and makes him look back and yearn for the more familiar life of ups and downs which was his lot before he opted for the occult life.

When the man vows to dedicate himself to the spiritual life, he, by that resolve, sets up a peculiar vibration that thrills through that and the succeeding incarnations. This refashions the flow of his karma to suit his own peculiar needs for the gathering of experience of the occult side of man and nature. He has chosen, and he can no longer go back on his choice nor arrest the tumultuous precipitations of the karmas of his own making. When he forgets the code of discipline and ethics

that is now his, and in action seeks not their implementation, then is it that the nameless fear enters his heart. His divagations show his selfish bent. The veil descends on him and if he heeds not the warning, the total blackness that falls on him induces such fear as fixes his feet in terror to the spot. This darkness has to be shunned and its vortices destroyed as soon as they are formed. This requires a courage that refuses to be daunted and that has its moorings in devotion and faith.

Says *The Voice of the Silence*:

The holy germs that sprout and grow unseen in the disciple's soul, their stalks wax strong at each new trial, they bend like reeds but never break, nor can they e'er be lost. But when the hour has struck they blossom forth.

DREAMLAND

IN A LETTER printed in *Lucifer* for September 1890, the writer describes a vision he had, while asleep, and seeks for an explanation. An intimate bond existed between him and a friend with whom he was in almost daily correspondence, but whom he had never met bodily, though he had an intense longing to do so. On retiring one night, he fell asleep while thinking of his friend. In his dream, he had a vision of the friend, which the latter later verified as "very accurate." An Editorial Note appended by H.P.B. states:

The vision is very easily explained. He fell asleep thinking of his friend whom he had never seen in body, *willing* to see him, and thus passing immediately from the waking to the dreaming state. What wonder, then, that his will, stirred to powerful action by strong desire, his *human* mind (the lower Manas) being paralysed, moreover, by the sudden sleep of the body, acted through the divine and omniscient "Seer" instead of doing so through his uncertain, human principle of thought, which confuses and throws into confusion all it sees in sleep, upon awakening? "Kshetragna" (our Higher Ego), says Indian philosophy, is the embodied Spirit, that which knows all and informs at times our *Kshetra* (the mortal body). The case of the "Dreamer" was one of such special cases. He saw *through* and *with* the spiritual, all-seeing eye of his Divine Ego. Impressing the sight upon its human sleeping, and therefore plastic and passive mind and memory, the latter remembered what the Ego had seen, upon awakening. This is quite natural and no *miracle* is involved.

THE WOMAN'S MOVEMENT

[1975 is being observed as International Women's Year. Apropos of this, we reprint here excerpts from *Theosophical Free Tract No. 21*, first published in June 1950.—EDS.]

In Kosmos, the equilibrium must be preserved. The operations of the two contraries produce harmony, like the centripetal and centrifugal forces, which are necessary to each other — mutually interdependent — “in order that both shall live.” If one is arrested, the action of the other will become immediately self-destructive.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY (1888)

Theosophists are of necessity the friends of all movements in the world, whether intellectual or simply practical, for the amelioration of the condition of mankind. We are the friends of all those who fight against drunkenness, against cruelty to animals, against injustice to women, against corruption in society or in government, although we do not meddle in politics. We are the friends of those who exercise practical charity, who seek to lift a little of the tremendous weight of misery that is crushing down the poor.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY (1888)

I am uncompromising in the matter of woman's rights. In my opinion, she should labour under no legal disability not suffered by man. I should treat the daughters and sons on a footing of perfect equality. . . . Women must have votes and an equal legal status. But the problem does not end there. It only commences at the point where women begin to affect the political deliberations of the nation.

—M. K. GANDHI

FEW HISTORIANS see deeply into the heart of mankind and therefore most do not stress the real, world-stirring movements of a century or an era. One of the epoch-making events of the 19th century was the birth of the Woman's Movement. This movement, studied against its background and with another of our present century, namely, the meeting of East and West, should fill all educated women with a deep sense of responsibility, even of destiny.

Few realize that the *feminist movement* first became popularly articulate in the novels of three remarkable women writing in the 30's of

the last century: George Sand in France, Countess Ida H. Hahn-Hahn in Germany and Helena Andreevna Hahn in Russia. Their novels followed each other in quick succession and boldly challenged the social position of women, laying the foundations and pointing the direction for a great social reform.

George Sand (1804–1876) is the best known of the three; her books were widely translated and are still read. The writings of Countess Hahn-Hahn were not all or widely translated, and are now little known. But it is said that after the death of Helena Andreevna Hahn (1814–1843), Russian literature grew in depth and breadth.

Helena Andreevna had a remarkable daughter: Helena Patrovna Hahn, later known as Helena Patrovna Blavatsky, the founder of the present Theosophical Movement which has from its inception (1975) promoted understanding between Man and Woman, East and West. Its motto is: "There is no religion higher than Truth," and its primary object, "to form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour."

It was natural and fitting that a great and noble woman should re-proclaim for this cycle (the 19th-20th century) the immemorial truths of the spiritual life — which she named, for our era, Theosophy. She demonstrated that the System of Thought which she recorded was nothing new. Theosophy presents the spiritual, integrated view of life and regards all human beings as Souls, not as bodies. Sex, pertaining to the body, should neither confer upon man or woman, nor deprive either of any special rights, social or political. The Self of every human being is sexless and beyond form but, to live and act in this objective world, a body, male or female, is required. This view helps to put sex in the proper perspective.

In all ages and civilizations, there have been great women as well as men, moulding with their thought and lives the destiny of humanity. Both tradition and history bear ample witness to this fact. But the modern Woman's Movement *per se* is something distinct. It may be regarded, however, as a natural part of the *Intellectual Movement* which for centuries was developing in Europe toward the emancipation of the human mind and freedom of the human spirit. In the early centuries of the so-called Christian era began the unholy alliance of Church and State, which resulted, in the Dark Ages, in a lowering of women's status. And by the 17th-18th centuries in Europe women were gradually being ground between the upper millstone of licence and vice and the

lower one of narrow religious tyranny.

The darkest hour is ever before the dawn; and this darkest hour came for Western women at the end of the 18th century. Some description of it is given by H. P. Blavatsky in her article "A French View of Women's Rights" (reprinted in *A Modern Panarion*) where she quotes and comments on a booklet by Alexandre Dumas, *fils*, in defence of women's rights. Dumas wrote:

There is no reason why woman should not have equal rights with man. What difference do you find between the two which warrants your refusing her such a privilege? None at all. Sex? Her sex has no more to do with it than the sex of man. As to all other dissimilarities between us, they go far more to her credit than to ours.

Then she continues with her own comment:

Had woman no other rights in France, the fact alone that she was called upon to sacrifice 1,800,000 of her sons to Napoleon the Great, ought to ensure to her every right. The example of Hubertine Auclaire will soon be followed by every woman in France. [She had refused to pay her taxes on the plea that political rights belonging to man were denied to her as a woman.] Law was ever unjust to woman; and instead of protecting her, it seeks but to strengthen her chains. In case of crimes committed, does law ever think of bringing forward as an extenuating circumstance, her weakness? On the contrary, it always takes advantage of it. The illegitimate child is given by it the right to find out who its mother was, but not its father. The husband can go anywhere, do whatever he pleases, abandon his family, change his citizenship, and even emigrate, without the consent or even knowledge of his wife.

She can do nothing of the kind. In case of a suspicion of her faith, he can deprive her of her marriage portion; and in case of guilt may even kill her. It is *his* right. Debarred from the benefits of a divorce, she has to suffer all, and finds no redress. She is fined, judged, sentenced, imprisoned, put to death, and suffers all the penalties of law just as much and under the same circumstances as he does, but no magistrate has ever thought of saying yet: "Poor weak little creature! . . . Let us forgive her, for she is irresponsible, and so much lower than man!"

Then came the American and French Revolutions, these being socially responsible attacks on the prevailing social irresponsibility.

Of this period H. P. Blavatsky wrote in her article "Progress and

Culture" (*Lucifer*, August 1890, reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, Vol. 43, No. 3):

Indeed, so long as the Church — the deadliest enemy of the ethics of Christ — was in power, there was hardly any progress at all. It was only after the French Revolution that real culture and civilization had a fair start.

The following Victorian era, however, still classed women legally with imbeciles, criminals and infants, excluding her from all public offices and professions, denied her education and regarded her as the chattel of man.

The clergy vehemently opposed the champions of the women's cause, quoting scripture on the supposed inferior "sphere of women." George Bradburn, expressing his disgust at the conceit and bigotry of the clergy, stormed:

Prove to me, gentlemen, that your Bible sanctions the slavery of women — the complete subjection of one half of the race to the other — and I should feel that the best work I could do for humanity would be to make a grand bonfire of every Bible in the universe.

To open a parenthesis, we may here quote again from H. P. Blavatsky's translation of and comment on Dumas' defence of women:

All these women, he says, are the embodiment of the idea which for some time past has been fermenting in the world. It is that of the entire disenthralment of the woman from her old condition of slavery, created for her by the *Bible*, and enforced by tyrannical society.

But it is not alone in the West that priest-ridden religious orthodoxy has tried to keep women in a subordinate position. In India, Brahminism has done the same and Gandhiji's comment on this follows:

It is sad to think that the *Smritis* contain texts which can command no respect from men who cherish the liberty of woman as their own, and who regard her as the mother of the race. . . . The *Smritis* bristle with contradictions. The only reasonable deduction to be drawn from the contradictions is that the texts that may be contrary to known and accepted morality, more especially to the moral precepts enjoined in the *Smritis* themselves, must be rejected as interpolations. . . . The largest part of our effort, in promoting the regeneration of women, should be directed towards

removing those blemishes which are represented in our *Shastras* as the necessary and ingrained characteristics of women.

On this important subject H. P. Blavatsky, in a letter printed in *A Modern Panarion* (p. 245) entitled "Hindu Widow-Marriage," also expressed her convictions:

I have not made a study of Hindu law, but I do know something of the principles of Hindu religions, or rather ethics, and of those of its glorious Founders. I regard the former as almost the embodiment of justice, and the latter as ideals of spiritual perfectibility. When then anyone points out to me in the existing canon any text, line or word that violates one's sense of perfect justice, I instinctively know it must be a later perversion of the original *Smriti*. In my judgment, the Hindus are now patiently enduring many outrageous wrongs that were cunningly introduced into the canon, as opportunity offered, by selfish and unscrupulous priests for their personal benefit, as occurred in the case of Suttee, the burning of widows. The marriage laws are another example.

In the West, the numbers of women working in social reform movements increased steadily. After slavery was abolished with their aid, they instituted and joined Temperance Leagues, societies for prison and penal reforms, for peace, education, civic betterment, and other humanitarian causes.

That the temptations of materialism and its sterile amusements have a spiritually destructive power is evident when the past 60 years of the Woman's Movement and its present problems are surveyed. A summary of the trends and events since 1914, as recorded by women themselves, makes a tragic but fortunately not an utterly hopeless picture.

The work of women during 1914-1918 made their acceptance as citizens after the war, plus their right to vote, inevitable. Not that laws discriminating against them were all changed. But women had gained a voice and means to power; and the generation after the pioneers was confronted with a momentous trial and choice.

The 20th century is proving one of transition and of crisis. At its beginning it was generally believed that the advance of science, industry and mechanical inventions would bring an increase of social and individual well-being and happiness. The "Scientific Outlook" was emphasized, mechanistic dogmas took possession of people's minds in the West, writers and leaders used and spread them. Sense values, sense desires, sense liberty, became the centre of creative endeavour and life and

caused science to become for the most part rapidly and surely divorced from morality.

To understand the present dilemma it must be seen that the women's struggle coincided portentously with two other world forces: (1) The advance of materialism in science, spreading industrialization with its blighting effect on family life and its exaltation of sense values and sense-centredness — a socially irresponsible force; and (2) the advance of education; the enormous extension of individual opportunity for knowledge and action, engendering a consciousness of responsibility. The chaotic years from 1918 to the present were made so by the moral contradictions and conflicts in the hearts and minds of men and women living through them, these being reflected in the social, economic and political fields.

Somewhat before, but definitely after World War I, women believed that to shake the strongholds of prejudice they must form themselves into societies to work towards the industrial, social and political reforms which they deemed desirable, and, through organizations, bridge the gulf between the ignorant, suffering masses and the educated, philanthropic and crusading few. There were so many wrongs to redress that it is not surprising that organizations multiplied rapidly. As declared by Ethel M. Wood in her *Pilgrimage of Perseverance*:

The myth of male superiority in everything except . . . cooking, church and children had flourished so long that, like an unchecked weed, it had ceased to be harmless and choked better growths. Though cut back in many directions it is by no means exterminated even yet and would quickly reassert itself if left alone.

There are constantly recurring indications that this is so.

Although urged to take action on women's rights, the League of Nations had not been able to do so for lack of data. These data had been collected in subsequent years and after World War II the "facts as to the status of women throughout the world" were presented to the U.N.O. Finally the Charter of Human Rights was drafted to cover women's rights undistinguished from those of men. As Dorothy Kenyon, a judge in New York City, wrote:

. . . you cannot segregate women. Their problems are universal and are common to mankind. If we could only learn to treat people everywhere like human beings, without distinction as to colour, race, sex or creed, the problems would melt away. . . . That is what we want.

Women record that they have achieved considerable success in the chief spheres of their efforts. They now have theoretical "equality" in most things with men. The franchise is won. Their sex life is in their own control through adjusted marriage and divorce laws, etc. Almost all fields of activity and service are open to them. Have they enhanced happiness and content through their achievements? A possible cause for women's failure to establish a better social order and to achieve in it some degree of contentment is that they became side-tracked into the notion that warring, domineering, drinking, smoking, sex laxity, etc., all freely indulged in by men, had something to do with freedom and should therefore be taken up by themselves. In other words, instead of holding up the ideal of a higher moral standard for all, they began imitating and absorbing the vices of men. The supremely significant fact that the pioneer women had striven for knowledge, justice, peace, temperance, purity and health for themselves and society was overlooked by many who followed them. An unsocial sense of exaggerated independence took the place of the sense of interdependence which had inspired the first crusaders.

The evil effects are now being reaped and slowly, dimly recognized. To quote again from the survey of the Woman's Movement in England, *The Pilgrimage of Perseverance*, Ethel M. Wood writes:

The only remedy is to return to the simple faith that puts spiritual values first, and considers the importance of Man as a human individual greater than that of Man as an economic unit. . . . The problem for women's organizations now is surely how to arouse the woman voter to the realization of her inescapable responsibility, to educate her for full participation in the wider aspects of women's concerns and to help her to translate her deep-rooted absorption in her "ain folk" into the wider concern for the whole human family without which there can be no security for the home unit.

She closes her book with these words:

The appalling dangers that confront "humanity half crushed by its own progress and its mechanisms" can only be met by moral revitalization. "To deal creatively with the future is no longer to be viewed solely as an opportunity, it has become stark necessity." This task is so tremendous that all must give of their best if it is to be achieved, and woman, life-giver and life-preserver, has a noble chance to work again hand in hand with man to bring peace on earth through good-will toward men.

Further articles by outstanding Western women, many of them based on statistics, reveal the following significant facts in spite of much seeming evidence to the contrary:

(1) Women by and large care most and first about their families and homes and this is proved by the choices women themselves make.

(2) In no sphere of work not beyond her physically, is woman inferior to man, but her approach and methods of work are different.

(3) The present economic and industrial civilization is destructive to the family, to home-making and to child-care. Terrifying proofs of this are seen on all sides.

(4) Women must realize the necessity for them to divide their time between family and civic duties. Social concern and the sense of *Moral Values* must be developed.

(5) Women must work to substitute law for war, non-violence for violence.

(6) It is the happy, well-balanced home that is so supremely valuable to society and which alone can train children for responsible citizenship.

All this proves that the West should revalue the phrase: "Woman's sphere is in the home" — not as going back to the limited sphere from which rightly by self-effort she emancipated herself — but by widening the home influence to the community. Eastern women should begin from here, learning from the mistakes of their sisters in the West and not falling into the same ones!

Psychologically speaking, it is being glimpsed that it has been woman's passivity and apathy on the one hand and man's aggressiveness, lust and greed on the other that have caused unbalance in society. It has been said that "the treatment of women is the acid test of a nation's civilization"; clearly history and tradition show that the decay and fall of civilizations and nations have ever gone side by side with the degradation of women. Mrs. Margaret P. Burton of Cambridge University (England) and Yale University (U.S.A.) writes:

The trends of modern psychology, psychiatry, and sociology seem to indicate that woman has emotional as well as physical characteristics inherent in her nature, and that the race suffers when she is denied by society or by her own inhibitions the full development of her powers.

Indian women have not had to fight for political power since their country gained its independence. The adult franchise granted under the Indian Constitution applies to women as it does to men, because Indian culture and tradition, at least in theory, have regarded woman as the equal of man in her usefulness to society and to the State. The ancient Indian lawgiver, Manu, declared:

Where women are honoured, there verily the Devas rejoice;
where they are not honoured, there indeed all rites are fruitless.
(*Manava Dharma Shastra*, iii. 56)

During the Vedic Period women enjoyed every opportunity for cultural development and the greatest liberty of thought and of action. Many learned women achieved fame in ancient India. The mediaeval period (500 B.C.—1,000 A.D.) saw great changes for the worse in woman's social status; educational opportunities for women became restricted, though many of the educated women still distinguished themselves in ethics and philosophy. But, from the end of the 12th century, women's status declined. Their ignorance, the prevalence of child marriage, the evils of widowhood, including the iniquitous custom of *Suttee*, now, like child marriage, happily abolished, spelled the degradation of womanhood for centuries, in superstition and slavery to custom.

A new era dawned for Indian women about a hundred years ago with the success of Raja Rammohan Roy's efforts to abolish *Suttee* and reform child marriage laws. Slowly but steadily Indian women came to realize that the impact of Western civilization was making it necessary for them to make radical changes in their lives and customs and to come together to work for their own needs and education.

Gandhiji believed in women's power for good and pointed out to them the path of achievement. He wrote:

To call women the weaker sex is libel, it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then, indeed, is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then, woman is immeasurably man's superior. . . . Woman is more fitted than man to make explorations and take bolder action in *ahimsa*. For the courage of self-sacrifice, woman is any day superior to man. . . . Women do not know what influence for good they can exert over their husbands. They wield it unconsciously no doubt, but that is not enough. They must have that consciousness, and the consciousness will give them the strength and show them the way. . . . Where there is a non-violent atmosphere, where

there is the constant teaching of *ahimsa*, woman will not regard herself as a dependent, weak or helpless. She is not really helpless when she is really pure. Her purity makes her conscious of her strength.

Indian women are confronted with tests and trials and a choice: They must abandon narrow conservatism, communal exclusiveness and the dogmatism of creedal and ritualistic practices without becoming irreligious or disregarding the existence of the invisible and spiritual, without, in other words, falling into the materialistic blindness and hypocrisy of the West. They must not ape the vices of men, not even condone them; but express their womanliness at its best, which never requires an excuse. Neither modern science nor political or social ideologies and programmes can guide in this, *but the programme of Gandhiji can* — and in this many women in India have affirmed their faith.

A movement upon which women should thoroughly inform themselves is one unfortunately supported today — family planning by artificial means. Gandhiji was unalterably opposed to this immoral proceeding, as all spiritual teachers must be; he wrote:

Birth-control and all its tender or vulgar accompaniments have contributed in America to countless irritations and disputes, divorces and worse. But the America we know, through books of a realist reformer like Upton Sinclair, would seem to be different from the America that Mrs. Sanger claims to know.... Birth-control by contraceptives no doubt regulates to a certain extent the number of new-comers, and enables persons of moderate means to keep the wolf from the door. But the moral harm it does to the individual and society is incalculable.... It is being said that restraint and abstinence are wrong, and free satisfaction of the sex appetite and free love is the most natural thing. There was never a more ruinous superstition.

Indian tradition has ever regarded marriage as a stage in spiritual unfoldment; a discipline which, when passed, leads to spiritual development. But, added to this, statistics and research, both medical and social, present grave dilemmas and warnings resulting from experience with artificial methods of birth-control, found dangerous to society and *especially to women*. Their use encourages promiscuity and most disastrous results are inevitable when the young take to it. To spread such knowledge and use leads to far greater evil to humanity than more children than can properly be looked after physically. It cuts at the roots of moral and mental development, and moral and mental depravity

is far worse than physical debility. Happiness is not to be bought or gained by mechanical means. Contraceptives used for sex gratification in or out of marriage only lead to ruination. Let educated women study the subject fully and not blindly lead their more ignorant sisters to disaster.

The women of India will have to take a fearless stand also for peace and against militarism. Gandhiji adds his statement on women and militarism:

Answer for yourselves what your great soldiers and generals would do, if their wives and daughters and mothers refused to countenance their participation in any shape or form in militarism.... It is degrading both for man and woman, that woman should be called upon or induced to forsake the hearth and shoulder the rifle for the protection of that hearth. It is a reversion to barbarity and the beginning of the end.

There are limitations to what organizations can accomplish. They are good for forming public opinion, for passing resolutions, for encouraging group effort, but in the last analysis the problem of India's depressed womanhood in villages and slums will never be solved until their educated sisters *act*. Women in India must be helped to free themselves from the tyranny of superstition and of customs not justifiable from any point of view.

It is being seen that individual women need knowledge, for knowledge is the one sure cure for passivity, blind belief and indiscriminate following. Women's passivity (a particular feminine weakness) was repeatedly warned against by H. P. Blavatsky; and she shows how it has been taken advantage of by vested interests and by the priests of orthodox religions in all ages and climes and how, through this, women have been oppressed, exploited and enslaved over and over again. Writing on Western history in her magazine *Lucifer* (1890) under the title "Progress and Culture" she said:

... "our civilization" [and] "our freedom" ... were won in spite of the most terrible opposition by the Church during long centuries, and in the face of her repeated and loud anathemas against civilization and freedom and the defenders of both.... Withal, it is emotional woman who, even at this hour of progress, remains as ever the chief supporter of the Church! ... Real culture is spiritual. It proceeds from within outwards, and unless a person is naturally noble-minded and strives to progress on the spiritual be-

fore he does so on the physical or outward plane, such culture and civilization will be no better than whitened sepulchres full of dead men's bones and decay. And how can there be true spiritual and intellectual culture when dogmatic creeds are the State religion and enforced under the penalty of the opprobrium of large communities of "believers"! No dogmatic creed can be progressive. Unless a dogma is the expression of a universal and proven fact in nature it is no better than mental and intellectual slavery.

And she points out that the tendency of the great mass of women has always been to keep things as they are, to be "believers" and to support any established religion, no matter what — Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist or Brahmin — as well as existing conditions and customs, without investigation, simply because they are there. But now, out of the depths of bitter suffering, women are questioning.

The phrase "the Woman's Movement" implies women going from one place or condition to another: a progress creating a path. From where to where are women moving? The noble pioneers were moving very definitely on the path of self-sacrifice, from ignorance to knowledge; from slavery to freedom; from injustice to justice; from impurity to purity; from sickness to health — and drawing with them others from the wretchedness of darkness to a beneficent light. How were so few able to accomplish this? *They were altruists*; and the knowledge that is won from altruistic search and service is of a supernal quality; it nourishes and sustains. The path of progress, for women as for men, is the path of duties, not of rights.

Between ignorance and Wisdom lies the path of learning; women are on this path; humanity is on this path. On this path knowledge is acquired step by step and dangers are encountered — and Enemy No. 1 is *partial knowledge*, if we stop at that. It should be seen by now that a little knowledge is more easily exploited than ignorance. The awful success of modern advertising and propaganda has certainly proved this!

Have we not suffered enough? Can we not see that Peace is not to be had by preparing for war? That moral values are lost through selfish, cruel, sensuous living? That Justice is not established by exploitation, by so-called "protectorates" or totalitarian governments, however named? That health is not gained by injecting disease and filth into our bodies? That wealth is not obtained by robbing Nature and our fellowmen? That freedom will never be reached by making the citizen the slave of the State; or spiritual salvation by observing rituals and ceremonies or sell-

ing one's Soul to a priest-ridden religion? To understand all this and realize its truth requires only simple logic and common sense, if we will but think things through.

Gandhiji showed people how to live in terms of Truth and Non-violence; Theosophy does the same and explains that Truth includes three things: all possible knowledge of *Facts* but also *Moral Values* and the *Spiritual Principles* which are at the base of these as they are the foundation of natural law. Women must make constant use of these three factors of Truth in evaluating moves and directing the course of the Women's Movement. They must be thorough or they will not be able to do that which they might to help the world at this crucial hour.

It is true that those who demand all the available facts, who seek and will act only in terms of moral values and high principles, will always be in the minority. But history proclaims that it is such minorities, and even single individuals, who have moved majorities to better ways.

To protect, to preserve, to maintain or restore order and harmony is natural to woman. As Olive Schreiner wrote in *Woman and Labour*: "There is a living thing, it will die if it is not cared for,' says the average woman . . . instinctively." Succour and sustenance are woman's natural contributions to human life, and it is vitally important that she make them generously and intelligently at this time. But she cannot do so without knowledge of the above-described three factors of Truth.

At every step and on every problem that confronts women today, there is guidance in the writings of the greatest of the pioneer women, who was the student and faithful expounder of that accumulated wisdom of the ages, which she gave out under the name of Theosophy. If the clear warnings of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, given in connection with her setting forth of those facts, moral values and spiritual principles, had but been adequately studied and acted upon, the world would have been spared the two recent great wars and we should not find ourselves in the present wide-spread chaos. Many, not understanding her and her great mission, have belittled her and ignored or misunderstood her work, but the Theosophical principles which she expounded are echoed in countless pieces of advice given by Gandhiji, who has recorded in his Autobiography the significant impression which her *Key to Theosophy* made upon him. And in that work of hers and in her other writings there are the necessary knowledge, wisdom and directions for altruistic service for all who want them.

ON FOSTERING NOBLE MINDS

IN HIS VERY INSTRUCTIVE, almost inspiring, essay "On the Sublime," Longinus refers to "a certain philosopher" who bemoans the absence of freedom which has the power to foster noble minds; he complains that in the age in which they live they are "schooled from childhood in an equitable slavery"; he adds that they never drink from "the fairest and most fertile source of literature, which is freedom"; and so on.

In a noble passage, Longinus answers him thus:

It is easy, my good friend, and it is characteristic of human nature always to find fault with things as they are at the moment. But consider. Perhaps it is not the world's peace that corrupts great natures but much rather this endless warfare which besets our hearts, yes, and the passions that garrison our lives in these days and make utter havoc of them. It is the love of money, that insatiable sickness from which we all now suffer, and the love of pleasure that enslave us, or rather, one might say, sink our lives, soul and all, into the depths; for love of gold is a withering sickness, and love of pleasure utterly ignoble. Indeed, I cannot discover on consideration how, if we value boundless wealth, or to speak more truly, make a god of it, we can possibly keep our natures free from its evil parasites. In close company with vast and unconscionable Wealth there follows, "step for step," as they say, Extravagance: and no sooner has the one opened the gates of cities or houses, than the other comes and makes a home there too. And when they have spent some time in our lives, philosophers tell us, they build a nest there and promptly set about begetting children; these are Swagger and Conceit and Luxury, no bastards but their true-born issue. And if these offspring of Wealth are allowed to grow to maturity, they soon breed in our hearts inexorable tyrants, Insolence and Disorder and Shamelessness. This must inevitably happen, and men no longer then look upwards nor take any further thought for their good name. And what is the end of this process? Step by step the ruin of their lives is completed, their greatness of soul wastes away from inanition and is no longer their ideal, since they value that part of them which is mortal and consumes away, and neglect the development of their immortal souls. A man who has been bribed for his verdict can no longer give an unbiased and sound judgment on what is just and fair, for the corrupt judge inevitably regards his own interest as fair and just. And seeing that the whole life of each one of us is now governed wholly by bribery and by hunting after

other people's deaths and laying traps for legacies, and we have sold our souls for profit at any price, slaves that we are to our luxury, can we then expect in such a pestilential ruin of our lives that there is left a single free and unbribed judge of the things that are great and last to all eternity? Are we not all corrupted by our passion for gain? Nay, for such as we are, perhaps it is better to have a master than to be free. Were we given complete liberty we should behave like released prisoners, and our greed for our neighbours' possessions would swamp the world in a deluge of evils. "In fact," I said, "what spends the spirit of the present generation is the apathy in which all but a few of us pass our lives, only exerting ourselves or showing any enterprise for the sake of getting praise or pleasure out of it, never from the honourable and admirable motive of doing good to the world."

The lesson implicit in this passage can be applied to the mass of our intelligentsia. The truth which Longinus brings out is this: the endless warfare waged by our passions against our Soul is a corrupting force; pursuing lucre for selfish ends, we neglect the care of our immortal Souls. Choosing pleasures, now of one sense, then of another, we entangle ourselves till pure reason degenerates into sophistry, judgments become perverted and the divine in us is smothered almost to extinction. The mighty magic of *Prakriti* glammers us so that we value its dictates as intimations of *Purusha*. And as if the fight which our own weaknesses and our personal Karma provides were not sufficient to yield the essence of experience, some fall prey to the insidious temptation of going to the gutter, by becoming drug-addicts, drunkards and debauchees. These are the real causes of degradation, and our civilization and culture suffer more from these than from the political, economic and social unrest of our times.

The three gates of hell mentioned in the *Gita* — of lust, of wrath, of greed — are open not only for the *hoi polloi*, but more so for the men of learning. Passing down the gateways of *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha* is highly injurious to the mental and psychic health of human beings and to the real creative faculty. Let us turn to Longinus for guidance on this point. He states: "It is impossible that those whose thoughts and habits all their lives long are petty and servile should flash out anything wonderful, worthy of immortal life." This is possible only to those "men of spirit," as he calls them, who guard the purity of their minds and the sincerity of their hearts.

"Men of spirit," who control their minds and direct them towards

the Soul, instead of letting them run to objects of sense, are rare among us. Longinus quotes Plato's *Republic*:

Those who have then no experience of wisdom or of goodness, living always amid banquets and other such festivities, are seemingly carried downwards and there they wander all their lives. They have never yet raised their eyes to the truth, never been carried upwards, never tasted true, abiding pleasure. They are like so many cattle; stooping downwards, with their eyes always bent on the earth and on their dinner tables, they feed and fatten and breed, and so greedy are they for these enjoyments that they kick and butt with hooves and horns of iron and kill each other for insatiate desire.

And commenting upon this passage, Longinus points to the path of emulation which we can tread:

What and what manner of road is this? Zealous imitation of the great historians and poets of the past. That is the aim, dear friend, and we must hold to it with all our might. For many are carried away by the inspiration of another, just as the story runs that the Pythian priestess on approaching the tripod where there is, they say, "a rift in the earth upbreathing steam divine," becomes thereby impregnated with the divine power and is at once inspired to utter oracles; so, too, from the natural genius of those old writers there flows into the hearts of their admirers as it were an emanation from the mouth of holiness. Inspired by this, even those who are not easily moved by the divine afflatus share the enthusiasm of these others' grandeur.

The born genius is a rarity; but all of us are on our way to becoming geniuses — that is, if we only will to become so. H. P. Blavatsky expounds the truth about genius and geniuses in an able essay reprinted in pamphlet form (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No 13*) in which she says:

Adds our philosophy — the cultivation of certain aptitudes throughout a long series of past incarnations must finally culminate in some one life, in a blooming forth as *genius*, in one or another direction.

In the process of Reincarnation, ever guided by the Law of Karma, every human Soul must attain the state of the genius, provided he aspires ever onward, never loses sight, even when in the depths of matter, of that guiding star, the Divine Soul and Mind, his true Self. Though almost omniscient in its essence and nature, that Spiritual Soul still

requires the aid of the brain and body to transmit and give expression to the light of that real Inner Man. Explains H. P. Blavatsky:

Physical man is the musical instrument, and the Ego, the performing artist. The potentiality of perfect melody of sound is in the former—the instrument—and no skill of the latter can awaken a faultless harmony out of a broken or badly-made instrument. This harmony depends on the fidelity of transmission, by word or act, to the objective plane, of the unspoken divine thought in the very depths of man's subjective or inner nature. Physical man may—to follow our simile—be a priceless Stradivarius, or a cheap and cracked fiddle, or again a mediocrity between the two, in the hands of the Paganini who ensouls him.

As most of us are not true geniuses, but are on the way to becoming such, it behoves us to make clean and clear our instruments so that in the progress of time we may be “moved by the divine afflatus” of which Longinus speaks. Meantime, one of the very methods of cleansing the mind is that of keeping close company of the *real* Geniuses (not the artificial ones) and of learning from their work. Emulation and imitation are not worthless; like the foetus which nourishes itself by osmosis in the mother's womb, the growing genius fosters himself surrounded by the living examples of the true Men of Spirit.

Let us all aspire to become Men of Spirit. Near at hand are the ways and means to attain if we but take the first step—reject the false notion that in and through sensuality the Soul can acquire Wisdom Divine and unfold the power to pass on the Light.

WE TEACH boys to be such men as we are. We do not teach them to aspire to be all they can.

—MARK VAN DOREN

THE BREADWINNER

BHARATA was young, and, for the first time, had recently become a father. This brought great joy to himself and his wife, but, unfortunately, it did not bring a deepened sense of responsibility. The youthful couple had always been gay, so far as their limited means allowed, and so far as entertainment could be found in the country town where they dwelt. They had been rather inclined in the past to fritter away their leisure, for Bharata's daily toil was hard and out of working hours he felt entitled to amuse himself. Padma, for her part, had many girl-friends with whom she liked to sit around and gossip. Now, however, she was the one who presently began to take the duties of parenthood more seriously, devoting herself so much to her child that Bharata began to feel a little neglected and was the more ready in consequence to spend his leisure with some idle fellows.

This is the sort of situation in which relatives usually hesitate to interfere lest they rub the young people the wrong way and get told to mind their own business. But one who saw it with regret was Bharata's former Schoolmaster, and, as things did not improve, he resolved to speak to his ex-pupil, trusting that one who had been a good sensible boy in class would not resent a word of advice from so old a friend.

Bharata listened respectfully and made no excuses. Or, to be precise, he made but one. "My work," he said frankly, "is so dull that a quiet stay-at-home evening on top of it is just too much for me."

"In a sense it *may* be dull," agreed the Schoolmaster, "but think, my dear boy, what it is in reality. Is it not the means of support for your wife and child? Young as you are, Bharata, you are the breadwinner."

"The breadwinner!" said Bharata thoughtfully. Somehow, the idea pleased him.

"A most honourable title, my son," said the Schoolmaster. "You will live up to it, I know." And with a kindly pat on Bharata's shoulder he went his way.

In the days that followed, the term "Breadwinner" continued to sound pleasantly in Bharata's ears, and gradually a kind of vision began to come to him at intervals, especially when his work was at its most monotonous. Great fields of grain would spread before him, ripe and wholesome, full of the sun's energy, and from these, he would think, comes the bread that sustains our life, and that is what this tedious

task is earning for my dear ones.

But even so there was something unsatisfied in him. He was happier, yet had still a vague sense of want. At last he hit on a clue to it. It had to do with the Schoolmaster! So, one evening, he went to see him.

"You used," he said hesitantly, "to read to us sometimes from a little book. I forget its name, but it had a yellow cover. It wasn't a real lesson book."

"Was it not?" said the Schoolmaster, smiling. "Was this it?" And from a drawer he took a copy of *The Voice of the Silence*.

Bharata nodded eagerly. "I remember," he said, gazing at it, "I could always read the title on the cover from the bench where I was sitting."

"Do you want to read more?" asked the Schoolmaster.

"If you would be good enough to lend it to me for just this one evening. I will take great care of it and you shall have it back tomorrow morning. I will hand it in on my way to work."

"Willingly!" said the Schoolmaster. "But if you want to, keep it longer."

So Bharata took it home and at the first opportunity sat down with it and turned the pages, and presently he managed to find the words that had come dimly back to his memory.

Few in number, they were but the broken part of a sentence. He counted them — eight. "*If thou would'st eat the bread of Wisdom...*" Why should he have remembered them, wondered he? Then his eye travelled back and he saw some others that went before. "*The wheel of the Good Law moves swiftly on. It grinds by night and day. The worthless husks it drives from out the golden grain, the refuse from the flour.*"

Ah, he thought, that was it! It linked up with those cornfields that had filled his mind's eye lately. That was how bread was made — by grinding till the chaff fell away and only the good grain was left to make the flour. Bharata nodded. He could see the sense of that. But further down the page there was a word that puzzled him. "*If thou would'st eat the bread of Wisdom,*" he read aloud, "*thy flour thou hast to knead with Amrita's clear waters.*" Amrita! What was that? He closed the book with a little sigh. It had been written for scholars, of course. He couldn't expect to understand it.

Bharata, however, was a youth who liked to find out when something baffled him. If there was a hitch in a machine, he took it to pieces;

if a friend seemed evasive, Bharata poked and probed till he explained himself. So, when he stopped at the Schoolmaster's door next morning to return the book and the latter inquired kindly if he had got what he wanted from it, Bharata did not fail to ask the meaning of the mysterious word, *Amrita*. "I expect," he added ruefully, "you explained it when you read to us long ago. But you know it was in at one ear and out at the other with us boys."

"Not altogether, I think," said the Schoolmaster gently, taking the book and finding the passage, "or you would not have remembered it and wanted to go back upon it and understand it these six years later. *Amrita!*" He lingered on the word, looking down at it attentively through his spectacles. "You did not notice the foot-note, then, at the bottom of the page, in small print. It gives the meaning there — Immortality."

"I'm afraid I didn't," admitted Bharata. "I'm no great reader, and that's the truth. But I like the bit about the bread of Wisdom. It seems to link up with what you called me the other day — the Breadwinner."

"And do you know why it does so?" asked the Schoolmaster.

Bharata shook his head and looked expectant.

The Schoolmaster continued to study the page thoughtfully for a minute or two, then transferred his earnest gaze to the bright young face of his former pupil.

"The reason is this, Bharata. The true Breadwinner is within you. It is that part of you which travels on from birth to birth. When you reap in the field of life, the worthless husks must be sifted out from the golden grain. This is the process we call *experience*, and you know the common phrase — learning from experience. But experience alone cannot feed the inner Breadwinner. Only when we arrive by means of it at 'true knowledge,' knowledge, my son, of the Eternal Verities, does the Breadwinner receive his rightful nourishment, the Bread of Wisdom. This," pursued the Schoolmaster, tapping the page of the open book, while his wrinkled face grew almost as bright as the one before him, "this is to knead the flour, meaning our everyday thoughts and actions, with the clear waters of *Amrita*, or Immortality. And this you can achieve, if you will let your old friend point the moral to you (as I once heard you say he invariably did, even if the subject in hand was only spelling!), by faithful performance of your *Dharma* as Breadwinner for your loved ones, always going about it with such mindfulness as can turn it also into sustenance for the true Breadwinner within."

TEA TABLE TALK

[This reprint from *The Path* for September 1891 is part of a series which appeared in that magazine over the pseudonym "Julius" — for Julia Campbell VerPlanck, better known as Jasper Niemand, to whom many of the *Letters That Have Helped Me* were addressed. In these "Tea Table Talks," Mr. Judge's identity was concealed under a variety of disguises, "X" being one of them.—EDS.]

THE PROFESSOR SAT, cigar in hand, watching the upward curl of its blue smoke-filament, his eyes darkened by the intensity of his thought. I knew he had just seen X, an "advanced" theosophist of the occult wing, and I lay in wait for any information which might percolate through upon my humble self. Presently the Professor remarked, dreamily, and as if speaking from cloudland:

"We have had many a crisis, but assuredly this was the greatest."

"To what do you refer, Professor?"

"To the departure of H.P.B. from her physical body. It might have been supposed, in advance, that this sudden taking-off would result to our disadvantage. But the fact is, disasters work upon the T.S. in inverse proportion. The greater the (apparent) disaster, the greater the resultant good. The stronger the blow, too, the stronger our reaction. All attacks, all so-called exposures and losses have merely cleared away the impediments of weak and uncertain followers. The apparent loss of our leader did not, for one instant even, paralyse the activities of the working staff in India, England, or America. Now, day by day, we have evidence of growth in every direction. The Press is opening its jealously-guarded doors. The Practical Work of the Theosophic Leagues has won public sympathy for us. Everywhere there is a sudden outburst of energy and new life. X spoke of it today."

"What had he to say of it?"

"We were talking about H.P.B. and he said that, so far as he understood, she (the Adept) expended an immense amount of energy—*vis viva*, you know—in holding together a body whose every molecule tended to disruption. In effect, just think of the cohesive force thus employed, of the immense friction in brain-centres already worn by disease! X says they were so impaired that senility must soon have resulted, so that it seemed to *her*(?) better to let that body go to pieces as soon as a good opportunity should occur."

“That last phrase is very suggestive.”

“It is. And he believes that H.P.B. will be for some time occupied in training a new instrument, and one not so young as to be useless at the present cyclic crisis. He does not pretend to speak with authority, but certain sayings of hers — and perhaps what I might call *post-mortem* facts — bear him out. Certainly she left everything in order. All things were planned out, and evidence was abundantly had to the effect that she knew her departure was near. Moreover, X said that, looking upon her as an Adept, whose chief work was done outside of the objective body, it was reasonable to suppose that she is now enabled to use, upon higher (or inner) planes of being, the power previously expended in the maintenance of that body.”

“Did he think that the present theosophic increase should be attributed to that fact?”

“Only in part. You see, he believes her attention to be largely engaged with the new instrument. But, from his point of view, her co-adjutors and associates would naturally lend a helping hand in her absence, especially if the T.S., as a body, called down their help.”

“What do you mean by calling down help?”

“I mean that the united impulse of a large body of truth seekers — more especially if they work for Humanity — attracts the help needed for its spiritual efforts. Imagine it as a great stream of energy going out into space and returning freighted with all that it had attracted to itself — all similars — on its passage. That in itself would be a source of power. Again, the increase is largely due to what H.P.B. foresaw. Theosophists are now able to stand alone, are all the gainers by being left to do so. (Take the words ‘*alone*’ and ‘*left*’ in a relative sense, please.) In the same way an infant is benefited when left to learn to walk, even at the cost of its tumbles; it is the course of normal, healthy growth in every department of Nature.”

“All that sounds rational enough.”

“My dear Sir! Nothing is more rational, more sane than Theosophy. It is like the fairy wand which was used upon the ten billion feathers of ten thousand different kinds; all the facts of life fly out into well ordered heaps.”

“Just fancy how the public would receive that statement!”

“The public is well described by Carlyle’s estimate of population: so many ‘*millions — mostly fools.*’ Yet tell me what truth, what inven-

tion, has not been rejected by their scorn. Let us not be trite. All the truths of Theosophy, all the axioms of occultism are, if I may so put it, the apotheosis of common sense. When you see a lack of that — beware! You may be sure that their knowledge is defective, erratic, ill-digested; every psychic, every seer, every hearer to the contrary. What are their gifts if not supplemented by an understanding of the thing heard or seen? ‘My son, get knowledge; but, above all, get understanding.’ That power to interpret must be supplied. How?”

“I cannot possibly say. Did you not ask X?”

“I did. His answer was: ‘*By study of the Ethics.*’ The *Bhagavad-Gita* shows the way. In this science, he declared, spirit and nature, or the pure and the true, or ethics and law, are one and the same thing. The inner man may be looked upon as a congeries of powers. Every power is ‘the opener of the Door’ to the plane from which it springs in Nature. A power of the lower astral, or psycho-physiological, plane opens the door to that plane alone. It does so partly through action and interaction in the cells and molecules of the body. It acts upon its corresponding principle in every cell.”

“Can’t you enlarge upon that, Professor?”

“Suppose I were able to induce in the optic nerve that vibratory ratio which enables it to perceive the yellow colour. How do I do it? I act as Nature does. She presents a given numerical vibration to the nerves, and forthwith they telegraph to the brain the sense impression of yellow. Which do you call the real thing in itself; the sense impression? or the vibratory ratio? I induce (if I can!) that same ratio in the nervous fluid, and the brain again registers yellow. Soon, if I were to continue this action, that nerve aura of the inner man would be in synchronous action and interaction with a whole plane of Being — call it the lower plane of the yellow ray, and all the things of that plane which are related to that vibration are perceived. Those parts of specific things which are not in relation to the vibration are not seen, and thus partial knowledge arises. It is literally true that you see that which you are.”

“I begin to understand.”

“Again, note that every plane has its active and its passive aspects; its principles; its sub-divisions and theirs. It is only the higher plane forces that open the upper doors. What determines this difference in power?”

“Ah! That must be the *crux*.”

“Thought determines it. Motive determines it, for motive determines the quality of Thought. Through motive, Thought becomes contractive or expansive. It is well known that Thought affects the assimilative processes of the body. It has always been a recognized factor in therapeutics. The introduction of the higher, more spiritualized vibrations into the *secret* brain centres not only opens them to the influence of higher spheres, but also it influences the selective action of the whole sphere. As the body exhales and inhales air, so the inner nervous body dilates and contracts with the motion of the etheric or astral Medium. Its vibration is quickened by the action of Thought, and this more rapid vibration prevents the entrance of the grosser particles of etheric substance, causing also a draught upon the infinitely finer currents of that World-Soul. In this way the higher intelligence of every atom is opened, ‘wooded from out the bud like leaves upon the branch.’ Keely gives us a hint of one method in which this is done.”

“You mean by his discovery that the production of the chord of any given mass ruptures the molecular association of that mass and liberates finer energies, which energies are infinitely more dynamic?”

“Precisely so. The lesson can be carried still further. You say he produces the chord of a given mass, a chord which represents the vibratory total of that mass. So, too, we must use that force which is harmonious to the plane which we desire to enter. It’s easy to talk about it, but who amongst us can do it? And when the psychic does it fortuitously, he sees only partial results, only that which he is fitted to see, and no more. This is why it is so often said: ‘A man must live what he knows.’ Until he has lived it, he cannot know it; he must *be* that higher vibration; he himself must become that ‘lost Word.’ By long training in the production of forces within himself — forces which must be absolutely pure if they are to reveal the pure — the student may approximate an understanding of what he sees. Otherwise, psychic experiences are a great disadvantage. They pre-empt thought; they detain the mind, as thorns upon the bushes detain the sheep. This is why *The Voice of the Silence* advises the student to flee from that ‘Hall of Learning’ where, under every flower, the astral serpent coils.”

“Then it is well to be able to show these things by the light of common sense.”

“Certainly, if you wish to benefit the sensible. I always go to Nature for an explanation of occultism.”

“In that case, drawing a parallel, we may say that the so-called death

of Madame Blavatsky brought theosophic minds to a common focus; that was, the determination to continue her work. This unity of effort on higher lines induced a great volume of energy, all pouring into and from a common centre."

"Yes — and results of this action are now seen in a twofold manner. Firstly; in the increased activity we spoke of. Secondly; in the partial unclosing of the doors into higher planes."

"How do you infer that?"

"From what X went on to tell me. It appears that the Leaders of the Society have made themselves objectively felt. Say, for example, in the way of letters. It is affirmed that some such have been received, and that their burden is '*Work.*' In one, a labourer is told to '*not ask for detailed commands, for H.P.B. has the PATH hewed out. FOLLOW in WORK and leave us to manage results.*' Again, work is referred to thus: '*You go on with other work in a field as wide as humanity.*' The worker here referred to had been previously working in purely ethical ways. Another student is told: '*Be careful then so to act that your life shall not hurt the Society, now having so few.... Make no profession a lie. Remember your responsibility and your oath.*' The burden of all such letters is devotion to and work for the present organization, as a duly-created centre through which work is to be done."

"It must be very encouraging to receive such letters."

"Precisely my remark to X, who gave me one of his sudden shrewd looks, and then said quickly, 'My dear boy, when a plant is mildewed, devoured, broken, growing awry, the head gardener or some one of his authorized assistants comes to its aid, or some few especial plants, doing especial service in the garden, may receive especial stimulus, such as would injure others. But when a plant is following all the natural laws of growth, it requires no re-adjustment; it does not hear from the gardener, who knows it is doing well. In the East, the Guru or Teacher is called the Re-adjuster. And He may communicate with some sub-centre already established, which sub-centre is to give out the help thus extended to those working in the same line.'"

"Then those workers who do not hear in some specific manner may still feel that they are seen and are doing well?"

"That is what X said; also that with closer relations to The Lodge comes also a greater, a terrible responsibility."

"It often seems to me hard to know just how to work."

“That is so. The best advice I ever found was: 1st, Use your predominant gifts to the best advantage. 2nd, Do not impede your fellow in so using his. 3rd, Follow the methods of Nature. Find a current or a nucleus, and work in it. No matter whether it seems perfect to you or not. Leave results to the Law. But if no nucleus is found, become yourself a centre. The Divine will enter and work through you.”

Our talk ended here, and I soon found myself in a waking dream, wherein I strove to become a centre of life and energy. I did not wait for perfect conditions, nor for ideal leaders and helpers. It seemed as if I plunged all at once, aflame with will, into the universal field, and began to move and to work. I attracted other atoms, and through an aggregate the Divine soon acted. It was then that I realized the folly of thinking, “I am too weak. I am too poor. I do not know enough.” This is looking for results. This is omitting the Divine Powers, the Leaders of the World. All we need to do is to ground ourselves in the chief teachings, and then to get to work on the thing nearest to us. The work is ours; the results are in the Great Brahm.

—JULIUS

ACCORDING to H.P.B., there are certain persons on this earth, living and working as ordinary human beings and members of society, whose informing divine part is so immeasurably high in development that they as such high beings have a definite status and function in the “supersensuous regions.” We should say — assuming the correctness of the author’s statement — that she herself was such a case, and that “H.P.B.,” whether hourly in the day or at night when all around was still, had a “status and function” in other spheres where she consciously carried on the work of that high station, whatever it was. There were many events in her daily life known to those who were intimate with her that this hint may ravel, or at least shed much light upon. And in one of her letters this sentence appears — in substance — “The difference between you and me is that you are not conscious except at day, while I am conscious day and night, and have much to do and to endure in both of these existences from which you, being thus half-conscious, are happily saved.” In the Hindu books and teachings there is a reference to this when they speak of high *gnanees* — that is, persons full of knowledge and spiritual power — being attracted to this earth by certain acts and at certain times in the history of nation, race, or city.

—W. Q. JUDGE

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

For more than 1,000 rare animal breeds, the future is grim. They are faced with extinction — some imminently, some within a decade or so. The reasons for this are many. Legal hunting and illicit killing by poachers are one major cause; man's growing need for more arable land, which in turn diminishes the habitat of the earth's wildlife, is another. Pesticides take their toll; so do zoos, the pet trade and the demands of scientific research. (*Newsweek*, February 24)

The mounting toll has intensified the debate over how — or whether — endangered species can be protected and preserved. Some of the friends of the animals take a moral stand; others stress the scientific and ecological value of wildlife. As Richard Van Gelder, a mammalogist at New York's American Museum of Natural History, puts it: "By exterminating species, we're destroying a source of knowledge, because animals have millions of years of experience in how to cope with the environment." Van Gelder cites the case of bats, which for aeons have possessed a sonar system both smaller and far more accurate than any built by man. *Newsweek* adds: "Much recent scientific experience suggests that many animals may hold the key to man's understanding of his environment and himself." But as the debate quickens, so does the carnage — and the destruction knows no barriers of geography or ideology. Says *Newsweek*:

These days, a new note has been sounded in the debate over the fate of the earth's wildlife. The questions go more or less like this: Why should wildlife really be a matter of such great concern? Why should nations faced with mass starvation among their human populations set aside money, land and resources to save their native wild animals? Will it really matter if a few hundred, or even a few thousand, species of wildlife disappear? Who really needs the crocodile, the king cobra or the banded krait?

The response of most scientists remains the fundamental argument that by exterminating any species, man risks eventual harm to himself. The proposition is straightforward enough: *animals and man are inextricably linked in a complex ecological relationship* [Italics ours]. If that relationship is disturbed by removing one species from it, the unforeseen consequences may be serious. Right now, the precise effect of any particular extinction is impossible to forecast. "We do not know enough about the part each animal plays," explains Hong Kong conservationist Michael

Webster. "Only after the large mammals are gone will we be able to find out the vital link they filled, and then it will probably be too late."

But while the over-all effect of the extinction of species remains debatable, there are plenty of examples of what happens when man interferes with the wildlife ecology — and the after-effects of wildlife destruction have already been observed worldwide. In the 1950s, during a major agricultural campaign, the Chinese Communists declared war on the country's sparrows, which were eating alarming amounts of rice and seed. Only after countless birds had been slaughtered did the Chinese realize that the birds ate insects as well as seeds; the destruction of crops by the rampaging insects caused far more damage than the birds could possibly have done. . . .

Wildlife destruction can also be hazardous to human health, as a number of communities in Brazil and Argentina have learned. When villagers destroyed such predators as jungle cats and owls — by illegal hunting and the use of pesticides — their dwellings were inundated by hordes of disease-carrying rats. This example, indeed, casts doubt upon man's ability to survive to the bitter end of an environmental purge. "I firmly believe that man will not be the last species to survive in the ecosystem," warns wildlife biologist Keith Schreiner of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Of equal concern is the fact that scientific knowledge of the numbers, distribution and behaviour of most forms of wildlife is in its infancy. "We really know incredibly little about most of our animals," says the Museum of Natural History's Van Gelder. "We're only just beginning to learn." Even with adequate financing, the learning process is likely to be a long one.

According to theosophical philosophy, man holds a key position in the vast scheme of universal evolution and is intimately related to every known or secret department of Nature — from atom to solar system, from infusoria, to insect, to animal, and beyond. The extent of this relationship is just beginning to be realized and the idea of a working partnership throughout the whole is being looked into by the progressive among the men of science. But we need to know more as to what is intended by Nature in the infinite types of intelligence that are found to people the globe, and what benefits might accrue to both man and beast through widespread practice of the idea of *universal* brotherhood. We constantly get back to the idea that man himself will benefit from having regard for other species.

To British scientist James Lovelock, a fellow of the Royal Society, the earth's thick atmosphere, as revealed by some satellite photographs of the planet, looks "like the shell of a snail — a part of a living organism." "Out of that homely intuition," says *Newsweek* for March 10, "Lovelock has fashioned an arresting theory of the relationship between living things and the world around them":

Conventional scientific wisdom holds that the earth's environment conditions life, determining which species thrive and which die out. Lovelock's "Gaia hypothesis," named after the earth goddess of the ancient Greeks, stands this notion on its head: living things, Lovelock suggests, to a great degree control the environment in such a way as to ensure their survival. "It appeared to me," Lovelock wrote recently in *New Scientist*, a British weekly, "that the biosphere [all forms of life] was able to control at least the temperature of the earth's surface and the composition of the atmosphere." From this perception, Lovelock went on to suggest that living matter, the air, the oceans, the land are parts of a gigantic system — "Gaia" — which seems to "exhibit the behaviour of a single organism — even a living creature."

Lovelock speculates that life on earth began to shape its own surroundings about 3.5 million years ago by building the atmosphere into a defence mechanism against the twin threats that the earth would be covered with glaciers or scorched by the sun. In effect, the biosphere has continually adjusted the chemical composition of the atmosphere in order to keep the temperature of the earth's surface within the limits that will sustain life....

To a great extent, the Gaia theory is an elaboration of the general ecological notion of close relationships between living things and their environment. But Lovelock has carried the idea of earth as an organism further than most. "In man," he says, "Gaia has the equivalent of a central nervous system. We disturb and eliminate at our peril. Let us make peace with Gaia on her terms and return to peaceful coexistence with our fellow creatures." Gaia, it seems, has become middle-aged — as planets go — and now looks to man to preserve her into ripe old age.

That all forms of life are closely interrelated and go to form a gigantic whole is no new idea. It was certainly known to the ancients, and it is gratifying to find present-day scientists rediscovering this old, old truth.

Today, astrophysicists believe not only that sentient life exists throughout the universe, but that signals from outer space are already falling on the earth. The scientists are of the opinion that it is possible to develop the means both for sorting out these signals and for transmitting return signals, with a view to providing information of substantial value to life on earth.

Commenting on this, Norman Cousins suggests in an editorial entitled "Have We Anything to Learn from Other Planets?" (*Saturday Review*, January 11) that it would be beneficial to know whether extra-terrestrial civilizations have been able to solve problems such as those which continue to bedevil us on this planet — especially abstract problems like the values of life and the way people treat one another:

If other galaxies have civilizations that are unmarked by brutality and violence, it would be useful to know how this came about. The inhumanity of humans to one another continues to be the most serious problem on earth. Overt slavery has been abolished, but exploitation of large numbers of humans by their fellow creatures seemingly knows no end. It would be useful to know whether other sentient creatures have been able to develop a philosophy of living that sees life as the highest value. Also, whether they have been able to retain their sensitivity and respond compassionately to the lives around them.

Next, have other civilizations been able to organize for the widest good? Organizations on earth tend to be tribal. Despite the fact that all earth-dwellers share the same habitat and are dependent on the same conditions for their existence, most of their organizations are directed against one another. There is no organization of the whole that is acting adequately in behalf of the human interest. The human species is intelligent in limited matters, but its efforts to organize for world peace are puny and incompetent.

Are there places in the universe where intelligent creatures are primed psychologically and philosophically more for peace than for war? Places where war has been eradicated and where the emphasis given to a decent existence has a clear priority over the emphasis given to instruments of mass annihilation?

Are there places in the universe where the development of the creative potentiality of the individual is a basic function of society? Where social justice does not have to be fought for every inch of the way but is a source of pride to those who administer it?

Are there places where people have created communities that

are not gross alterations of nature? Places where people are not pressed upon one another in tiny cells, inviting squalor and disintegration?

Are there places where people are strong enough to manifest kindness and are brave enough to make known their trust? Places where people have no difficulty in finding precise words to convey their intent?

Are there places where sentient creatures can nourish themselves adequately without having to kill and devour other species for food?

Are there places where intelligent creatures communicate without ultimatums, where compassion and conscience are more readily summoned than temper?

In short, if there are places in the universe where people make genuine sense of their existence as a species and where they comprehend the delicate connection between the individual and collective existence, all the treasures on earth would be a small price to pay for the clues. We have everything in — and outside — the world to learn.

Do we have to turn to extra-terrestrial life to learn all this? The bases of our modern civilization are to such a degree rotten to the core that our spiritual memory is effaced and we are apt to forget that mankind has known a better time, a more glorious civilization in ages gone by. "The mythical traditions of almost all nations place at the beginning of human history a time of happiness and perfection, a 'golden age' which has no features of savagery or barbarism, but many of civilization and refinement" (*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 722). For, "it is with the advent of the divine Dynasties that the first civilizations were started" (*Ibid.*, II. 318). These divine Teachers and Instructors "became, from the first awakening of human consciousness, the guides of early Humanity. It is through these 'Sons of God' that infant humanity got its first notions of all the arts and sciences, as well as of spiritual knowledge; and it is they who have laid the first foundation-stone of those ancient civilizations that puzzle so sorely our modern generation of students and scholars" (*Ibid.*, I. 208). The ideas implanted then, having been set in motion by those who knew all the laws, remain as *inherent ideas* to this day. Our modern civilization, however, is so obsessed with the notion that man has evolved from animal savagery to the present "enlightened" era that only by a complete reorientation of our thinking can those inherent ideas help to solve the problems that assail us today.
