The Order of the Star in the East

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**One Shilling**

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is rather like the golden rule: we know that other beings like ourselves are capable of suffering and pain; and secondly, because, as others cause the soul to receive a fresh invasion of the deadly karmic poison which corrupts and weigths it down, I will quote the Jain ethical criterion so.

The living world is afflicted, miserable, difficult to instruct, and without discrimination. In this world full of pain, suffering by their different acts, see the heightened ones causing great pain . . . He who injures these earth-bodies does not comprehend and renounce sinful acts.

(Āraṇava Śrīva i.i. 2.)

He does not kill movable or immovable beings, nor has him killed by another person, nor does he consent to another’s killing him. In this way he ceases to acquire gross karmas, controls himself and abstains from sins.

(Śrīva Kṛṣṇa-Gītā II.i. 5.)

The venerable one has declared that the cause of sins are the six classes of living beings.

As in my pain when I am knocked or struck with a stick . . . or menaced, beaten, burned, tormented or deprived of life, and as I feel every pain and agony, from death down to the palling out of an hair, in the same way, be sure of this, all kinds of living beings feel the same pain and agony as when they are ill-treated.

For this reason all sorts of living things should not be beaten, tortured, with violence, nor abused, nor tormented, nor deprived of life . . .

This constant, permanent, eternal true Law has been taught by wise men who comprehend all things.

(Ibid. 48-49.)

Too naïve to deserve attention perhaps?

We can put it into modern terms, in which it appears rational enough. Our deeds have both objective and subjective consequences for good or evil. Therefore we should choose the good and avoid the evil. Who can deny this?

(vii.) KARMA IN THE VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

The Vedanta was the Alpha and Omega of Indian philosophy, opening with the wonderful intuitive declarations of the early Upanishads, and closing more than a thousand years later with the commentaries of Sankara. For this reason I have reserved it to the last; also because its treatment of karma is unique. As is well known the Vedanta philosophers conceived of karma in two ways: the “lower knowledge” and the “higher knowledge.” The former is similar in character and content to the other Vedic systems in that it concedes reality to the universe; allows a transcendent god, Ishvara; teaches a strict ethic, transmigration and karma. The lower knowledge accommodates itself to normal, empirical experience and belief of the many. The higher knowledge, however, explains that the lower knowledge is true so far as the normal mind can appreciate truth, is insufficient when man reaches a higher form of consciousness to which the higher knowledge conducts him, but which it cannot of itself bestow. The intellectual processes of the higher knowledge are directed to expounding the unity of all life and the identity of the Atman, or innermost self of man with the Brahman or innermost self of the universe. These intellectual processes provide the conception of the ultimate truth but cannot give the perception, the vision itself. Brahma-viṣṇu or the awakening of Brahman-Atman in the Soul, demonstrates beyond all doubt the final truth. This “knowledge of the Self,” more than knowledge, is a matter of gracyous wisdom, as the Sāṅkhyakāra may say. It is a mystical experience which is explained as well as it can be by the dialectic of the higher knowledge. It is the peculiar and special form of Release or Liberation taught by the Vedantins, and part of its content, at least, is to show that the lower knowledge is no longer useful or true. The realisation of identity with Brahman, foreordained, so forcibly by empirical experience, dispenses of the lower knowledge altogether, wipes it out of memory. And with it accumulated karma departs.

According to Vedic philosophy generally, eventual release was possible as the result of the struggle against karma. The Vedanta release was of a different character; for it did not terminate a real transmigration or break a real bond of karma, but an apparent one: it did not bring about a union of man and God but it established in mystical consciousness the fact of their eternal identity. All the apparatus of life with its samsara, its suffering, its bondage, its karma, and its release turned out to be illusion.

(To be continued.)

Paths of Blessing

By NICOLAS ROERICH

(The world-famous Russian Artist)

III.

HOW are we to bring art into life? Where are these blessed paths? Perhaps they are inaccessibly difficult? Or they may require countless wealth? Or only spiritual giants may venture along these paths?

All assurances will be unconvincing. These doubts can be answered only by a page out of real life.

I shall take the portraits of four of my friends. They have all left us now. Only one of them was rich in money, the other three were rich only in the brightness of their spirits.

The rich collector was the Moscow merchant Tretiakoff. There was nothing in his family to dispose him towards art. Rather did that old merchant family look to the destiny of the beginner in art was

He went his way alone, only now and then looking to the advice of some friends. They have all left us now. Only one of them was rich in money, the other three were rich only in the brightness of their spirits.

The rich collector was the Moscow merchant Tretiakoff. There was nothing in his family to dispose him towards art. Rather did that old merchant family look to the destiny of the beginner in art was
it. If this was needed it had to be done. And art was not to suffer any loss.

Of course, it may be said that with Tretiakov's great wealth it was possible to collect on this vast scale. He was able to choose the best and could gather enough to represent the whole of the Russian school in his collection. It was true that his wealth made this scale possible, but the quality of the collection, his love of the work, and his living creative work, in itself of pictures and of men—all this proceeded not from the amount of his means, but from the countless riches of his spirit. Thus did one man, strong in spirit, do an infinitely important national work. And now, if the Government seek to have a new Tretiakov Gallery, it would find itself powerless, for it was the urge of the spirit that created that inimitable combination of beauty.

This is an instance of ideal creativeness within national limits.

1. The pure spiritual portrait. Here we have the same power of spiritual urge along with a mighty struggle with means. It was Count Golenishtcheff-Koutousoff, a well-known poet and worker in the sphere of culture and Chamberlain at the Imperial Court. In his case family traditions conduced to the development in him of the love of art. His historical knowledge was great, special deep poetic gifts were his.

His collection consisted of pictures of the old Dutch, Flemish and Italian schools. Its fundamental characteristic was not the names of conventional names but the truth shown in wonderful creations. The collector understood that the names of Rembrandt, Rubens, Van Dyke are purely conventional names, that only the lowest type of collector seeks in the dark for the so-called great names. And the task of the cultured collector is to distinguish among these forgotten names for truth's sake. If on an excellent picture attributed to Rembrandt we find the signature of Karel Fabricius, his pupil—is a fine picture any the worse for that? Or, again, could Van Dyke paint two thousand portraits in one year? Of course not, but he had up to two hundred pupils.

I know how grieved the Count would be to learn that one of his favourite pictures, a portrait painted by himself which now hangs in the Metropolitan Museum in New York under the name of Joachim Patinir.

In the name of truth, Count Golenishtcheff-Koutousoff sought to discover the real names of painters and remedied, as far as he could, the sins of mercenary human history. And what loving intimacy breathed from his choice collection. Every picture, too, had been obtained with difficulty, with privation. Every new member of the collection was greeted with the disapproval of numerous relations who grudged the money spent on it. And money was so scarce. His small Court salary was not enough to live on. And this collector departed this world surrounded by his collection. When he willed that his collection be dispersed to give new joy to new seeking souls.

Golenishtcheff-Koutousoff was the type of the refined collector, who, working and rejoicing in new beauty and truth, sends forth again to serve for the ennobling of the human spirit.

Now for the type of a young collector—an instinctive collector from his school-days. Instead of the joys natural to his age, the boy develops a love for works of art. From childhood, without possibility of personal artistic capacities, he is distinguished by education and developed taste. He is attracted by all that is beautiful. His spirit seeks to rise. What pleases him it was to pass the time with young Sleptsoff. While yet a pupil of the Imperial Lyceum, he began to collect pictures. His purchases were not chaotic, not accidental. He knew what he was doing. And all the money given by the boy by his mother for pleasures was spent on his noble pursuit. And if sometimes it was short of money, his enthusiasm for his general task never suffered from this.

And this general task was a fine one. The boy developed a love for certain very beautiful small portraits in one year? Of course not, but he had up to two hundred pupils. How he loved art, and how he was interested in the character of the art represented in it—the furniture, the embellishment of the walls and ceiling, the character of the lighting and the floor covering. From this we may gather that often the sketch is more valuable than the picture. And this collector departed this world surrounded by his collection. Every picture, too, had been obtained with difficulty, with privation. Every new member of the collection was greeted with the disapproval of numerous relations who grudged the money spent on it. And money was so scarce. His small Court salary was not enough to live on. And this collector departed this world surrounded by his collection. When he willed that his collection be dispersed to give new joy to new seeking souls.

Sleptsoff dreamt of handing over his collection for public use. More than that, he commanded that all his modest property, all that he had in daily use, be sold, and the proceeds applied to the purchase of more works of art which were to be added to his collection.

This is the type of an outwardly unnoticeable but deeply interested person for the culture of the future. His example drew the attention of many. And if you could see his letters written from the battlefield! His was a pure soul. Colonel Kratchkovsky left us during the late war.

I might show you many more characters, full of noble seeking in different spheres of art. But even these four types show the level of those cultural aspirations which are so necessary for humanity.

So do things happen; not in dreams, but in real life—simply as the original acts. And such pure labours are accompanied by a smile of joy. How near are the
seekings of art to the attainments of the
spirit.
It is time to understand, to note and
to apply to life these wondrous channels.
And when art has entered actively,
irresistibly and simply into all spiritual
developments of public life, then it will
be brought also into the whole of modern
life.
And it is through these channels
that the true paths of blessing will draw near to
every human heart.

Books of the Month

Nature as Healer—A Blavatsky Book—The
Outspoken Dean—Prohibition in America

By S. L. Bensusan

A YEAR ago Mr. Clement Jeffery
delivered a series of lectures on
Nature Cure at Mortimer
Hall, London, and a selection from these has now been pub-
lished under the title of “The Philosophy
of Nature Cure” (London, C. W. Daniel,
Ltd.). I have read the seven papers of
which the book is composed, not only
with considerable interest, but with a
certain limited conviction. It is possible
to set out very briefly and in general
terms, the author’s theories. He has a
profound disbelief in drugs; he holds that
proper diet, massage and osteopathy are
great contributory forces to good
health, and he is a believer in iridology,
that is to say, he holds that Nature writes
on the iris of the eye her own indications
of the state of the body. This belief has
a large following, and several popular
exponents on the far side of the Atlantic.
There are lengths to which the mere lay-
man cannot go in company with Mr.
Jeffery, and his theory that all acute
disease is a healing effort of Nature, is one
that will make some, at least of the
judicious, grieve; but whatever the
points of detail in which we may join
issue with the author, the fact remains
that he is pointing the way to a realm in
which long-forgotten truths may enrich
century with a very valuable harvest.
Gradually we are becoming aware of the
part that the mind can be trained to
play in controlling the organs of the body.
We all know that suggestion has a very
definite value, that faith can effect cures,
that many of the followers of Christian
Science are justified by personal experience
of the belief that is in them. The doctors
themselves admit that the Victorian age
over-dosed and over-dragged, and that we
are on the eve of great changes must be
apparent to all who study the slow pro-
gress of the new thought. Yet it is well
to remember that there are very grave
dangers associated with unlimited belief
in the unqualified practitioner. What is
wanted above all things, is a properly
mapped our course with a degree from
some body that stands above suspicion
to be won by all who wish to practise a
new art of healing or to put their novel
theories into practice. If this is not done,
we shall find quackery rampant, confusion
everywhere, and nothing but discredit for
all new ideas. This way reaction lies.
So far as I am able to see, the progress of
Occult Science and even the proper
development of Theosophy have been
hampered by the charlatan, the tendency
to turn the smallest extension of natural
faculties to commercial use, the temptation
to deceive for a profit. We have seen
these forces at work and are able in some
small measure to estimate the unfortunate
results. The new healing is, after all, just
as liable to be misused as is the revival
of an old Faith.

There is no novelty about these happen-
ings; we can go back nearly 150 years to
the great impostor, Dr. Graham, who
had his Temple of Health in Adelphi
Terrace, where Emma Lyon, who was
afterwards Lady Hamilton, and became
Nelson’s mistress, posed as the Goddess
of Health. Graham exhibited electrical
machines, globes and figures of dragons.
He charged one thousand pounds for an
Elixir of Life, and for fifty pounds a night
one might sleep in his magneto-electric
bed. Finally Graham became a religious
enthusiast, an opium eater and a lunatic,
but for all the quackery associated with
his teachings, Madame Blavatsky’s
book with an extract for every day of the
year. It is published by the Theosophical
Publishing House in London, and is issued
also in Italy and California. I think the
limitation of a quotation to each day will
not be observed by the reader. Few will
be satisfied to follow the calendar. I have
dipped very freely into it, and hope that
this book is no less than the first of a
series, because Madame Blavatsky had a
peculiar gift for getting at the heart of
things, and few inspired lines the thoughts that stimulate and
return. It would be possible to fill pages
with passages one would gladly learn by
heart. It is impossible not to feel that
Madame Blavatsky was a teacher in the
best sense of the term. The little quota-
tion book can be kept comfortably in the
pocket, where my copy lies at present; it
can be taken out at odd moments in
the train or in the study, and the reader
may be assured that he will find wise
counsel. The effort that went to its com-
position was worth while and has been
well made. Books of rare worth are now
no longer completely sealed books to
that section of the general public
which is anxious to extend its very
limited knowledge of occult thought.

I suppose most of us have tried at one
time or another to do justice to Madame
Blavatsky, and those who have brought
nothing more than an amateur’s faith to
the task have been baffled again and again.
I confess that the Secret Doctrine and
Isis Unveiled belong to heights that I am
unable to scale, but I have often felt
that there is much in Madame Blavatsky’s
teaching that would be helpful to the
world if it could be set out in a form that
would appeal to the intelligence of simple
folk. A very good beginning; on a small
scale, has been made by Wimilfed Harley,
who has compiled a Blavatsky quotation
book with an extract for every day of the
year. It is published by the Theosophical
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