
"Fools deride. Philosophers investigate."

Life and Action

The Great Work in America

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Careless Reading and Readers

By the T.K.



IN the effort of the Great School of Natural Science to inaugurate and carry forward a great Educational Movement such as this, it would seem not unreasonable to anticipate that a good many difficulties would be encountered on the way.

More especially would this seem inevitable since those of us upon whom the responsibility rests are but human beings with human limitations as to intelligence, knowledge, experience and ability; and are compelled to labor in the midst of imperfect facilities, with but a fraction of the necessary help, and in the face of the relentless hostility and bitter opposition of the most powerful and unscrupulous organization of men and material resources on earth.

It has occurred to me that much possible good might be accomplished in behalf of the Cause, if those we designate as "*Friends of the Work*" could but know with definite certainty something more of the various difficulties to be overcome in this voluntary and gratuitous Work of Education in which we are engaged.

[Page 61]

Life and Action

For, to know with certainty the exact nature of an obstacle in one's pathway, is the first and most important step toward its removal.

For illustration: Suppose you found it necessary to travel alone and on foot a long journey through a dense forest along a narrow path with which you were wholly unfamiliar. Suppose also that some Friend, who has been over the pathway, informs you that there are grave difficulties which you will have to meet on the way and overcome, and great dangers you will have to avoid if you hope to complete your journey alive.

When you ask him to tell you what they are he refuses to give you any information whatever, and you are compelled to go forward alone and unprepared.

But suppose, on the other hand, you prevail upon him to give you the benefit of his knowledge, and you therefrom learn that at a certain point is a deep and dangerous river which you must be prepared to cross; at another you must pass near the lair of a man-eating tiger which is more than likely to attack you; and that beyond this your path leads close beside a deep bed of quick-sand.

Knowing the nature and the general location of these various obstacles and dangers, you enter upon your journey with assurance and serenity, well knowing that you have prepared yourself for every emergency, and reduced the chances and probabilities of failure to the minimum.

With this line of suggestion and thought in mind, let us see how far we may be able to obtain a clear view of the pathway which leads "onward and upward into the light," and wherein our chief difficulties lie:—

1. As indicated in the literature of the School, thus far formulated for the purpose of this present Occidental Movement, this is but one of many definite and distinct efforts of the Great Friends to give their knowledge to the World in such manner

Life and Action

and form that it would accomplish the largest measure of permanent and constructive results.

2. In each preceding effort the purpose has always been to adopt a plan and a method of procedure that would be consistent with the time, the conditions, the environment, the civilization and the particular people to be reached; and that would accomplish the largest measure of permanent and constructive results.

3. In every such crystallized effort that has reached the magnitude and dignity of a definite, public "Movement", the Work of Extension has involved a distinct Educational Movement. And in every such effort of the School the Work of Education has been, more or less, an experiment.

4. This present and latest effort of the School was planned many years before its active inauguration. It was based upon the experiences of the past ages of effort, and as might readily be anticipated, every phase of the contemplated Movement was given the most careful, thoughtful and exhaustive consideration, and the methods of procedure to be followed were wrought out with the utmost exactness and detail.

The results of past efforts had demonstrated the vital importance of exact science as the only adequate and substantial basis and background of this modern Movement.

Never before had it been possible to invoke the aid of exact science nor the sustaining influence of scientific methods.

The phenomenal progress of physical science during the last century—yes, even the last half-century—has made possible many vital considerations which never before were available in a Work or a Movement of this nature.

As a result, today we have a scientific vocabulary for the first time in the history of this planet—so far as the records go—which is sufficiently facile and exact to sustain an Educational Movement along the lines and within the field of exact science.

In this philological aspect of its labors the great modern

Life and Action

School of Physical Science has given to the world a heritage of inestimable value, for which it is justly entitled to the profound and unfeigned gratitude and reverence of every intelligent student of nature.

In thus virtually *coining* an entire scientific vocabulary, it has presented to the Great School the one and only remaining instrument necessary to enable this School to present its message of "Glad Tidings and Great Joy" to the World in such manner that never again will it be lost, nor distorted through the unscrupulous efforts of designing "*Interpreters*".

Today, all over this great, progressive, Western World, men in every station and walk of life, are earnest, active and practical students of physical science.

In our colleges, universities and even our common public schools, all over the land, our young men and women are studying the language of exact science and becoming thoroughly familiar with many of the latest and most advanced discoveries in all the various fields of physical science.

Our great daily and Sunday newspapers and monthly magazines are speaking the language of modern, progressive, physical science to the millions of our "*unschooled*" students and thinkers in every city, village, hamlet and country school district in this great nation of ours. And thus, in a somewhat broad and liberal sense we are rearing a rising generation of "*scientist*".

In the realm of modern "*Medicine*" and in every branch of the many-sided problem of advanced "*Therapeutics*", including the subject of Dietetics and the study of the chemical purity of all kinds of foods, men and women in every station and walk of human life and society—from the college president and professor to the druggist and the grocer in their stores, and even the house-wife in her home and the cook in her kitchen—the findings and the language of physical science are already familiar and are daily becoming more and more widely and

Life and Action

generally understood and appreciated among all classes.

And all of this work of education among the masses is but preparing the way for the Great School to deliver its message of the *Higher Science* to the world under the best conditions possible

Best of all this work of preparation, the School of Physical Science has worked up in its pioneer researches and discovery until, in more lines than one, it has touched, from below, the sub-stratum of spiritual matter, and thus has entered—for the most part unwittingly as yet—upon the plane of the “*Higher Science*,” the Science of the Great School.

Without fully realizing that fact, as yet, the Great School of Modern Physical Science, has done the preliminary work of bridging the gulf between the world of Physical Nature, matter and life below and the world of Spiritual Nature, matter and life above.

The time is not far distant when all this will be known and fully recognized by both Schools; and when that time shall come, there will follow an intelligent modification and adjustment of methods which will enable the two Schools to join hands in a co-operative effort beyond that point.

In the meantime, however, we must pursue our separate lines and distinctive methods; and on the part of the Great School of Natural Science there will continue to prevail the same spirit of good will, sympathy and tolerance which has characterized its efforts throughout the past.

Turning now to the problems that confront the Great Friends in their efforts to carry forward this great Educational Movement in the heart and center of this representative¹ Western World—let it be remembered:

1. That the effort has been, and still is, to interest “*The Progressive Intelligence of the Age*.”

2. That to accomplish this result the appeal has been made in the language of modern and exact science.

Life and Action

3. That the methods employed are Educational and conform to the most rigid and exacting demands of our progressive Western civilization.

4. That as the foundation of the educational system inaugurated, a Series of Text-Books was formulated with the utmost exactness and simplicity, covering the fundamental principles of the "*Harmonic Philosophy of Life*" and the data of Natural Science upon which it is founded.

5. That all this has been analyzed, illustrated and elucidated in such manner as to bring the entire subject of both science and philosophy within the range of average English-speaking intelligence.

6. That absolutely "without money and without price" those who have studied the text-books carefully and have found themselves in unqualified sympathy and accord with the teachings and findings of the School therein contained, have received such additional instruction as the School has been in position to give to those who are able to prove themselves "duly and truly prepared, worthy and well qualified", and who have asked for it.

7. In all this work of instruction and education the effort is being made to educate Students to a point of knowledge and efficiency in the Work, beyond which they, in turn, later on shall become safe Instructors and Helpers in the Work of education and extension.

By this method it is the purpose and intent of the School that every Student who receives the gift of its instruction shall qualify, if possible, to give it again in the same way to others, who shall seek it and be able to prove their right to receive it.

8. But herein begins an almost endless chain of difficulties on the part of both the School and the Student.

EXACT KNOWLEDGE

It is my purpose, if possible, to define, analyze and elucidate

Life and Action

a few of the most vital and persistent of these difficulties, in the hope that a mere knowledge of their existence, together with a better understanding of their nature and importance, may suggest the proper and adequate remedies.

The first in order, as they occur to me, is a lack of exact knowledge and definite information on the part of the average Student, so absolutely necessary to make of him, or her, a safe and competent and reliable Instructor, in due course of time and personal effort.

To my constant surprise, almost amazement, I find from the questions that come to me from active and advanced Students all over the country, that they do not seem to have obtained more than the merest fraction of the knowledge, information and data contained in the three text-works of the "Harmonic Series"—specially formulated and published by the School for the benefit of Students, and as a definite and scientific Instruction to them.

From the information that comes to me, it would seem that the purpose and importance of these books are not yet sufficiently understood by our Students. For this reason the following explanation may be of value to our readers generally, but more especially to those among them who have either applied for instruction or who may hereafter contemplate doing so:

1. The three volumes of the "Harmonic Series" are "Text-Books" of the School.

2. They were formulated and published for the definite and specific purpose of laying the foundation for studentship in the School.

3. The intention of the School is that they are to point the way for Students to the door of the School, and constitute a definite Instruction therein.

4. It is the purpose of the School that every individual who desires to be admitted as a regular Student shall first

Life and Action

know definitely and in detail what these text-books contain.

Otherwise he would not know, nor would the School, whether he could accept their teachings and in good conscience serve as an Instructor for the School and become one of its accredited Representatives.

It is to determine these vital questions that every applicant for Studentship is required to answer these questions [among many others.]

"[a] Have you made a careful and complete reading and critical *study* of all three of the volumes of the Harmonic Series?"

"[b] Do you find yourself in full and unqualified sympathy and accord with all their teachings and findings?"

If he answers the former in the negative—as many do—he is informed that before he can go further he must make an exhaustive study of all three volumes, until he *knows* what they contain, and that nothing further can be done for him until he has completed that study.

For it is only after he has done this that he is in position to answer the next question intelligently and in good conscience.

Then, after making such a study, suppose he answers question [b] in the *negative*, and says that he is *not* in unqualified sympathy and accord with all the teachings and findings of the School contained in the text-books, what follows?

But one consistent course is possible, namely,—his application must be rejected.

For, if he is *not* in full and unqualified sympathy and accord with the fundamental principles set forth in the text-works, it would be impossible for him to become a consistent *Instructor* to pass the knowledge on to other Students, as he has received it.

Consistency is one of the fundamental prerequisites of a good Instructor; and the School demands this in return for its instruction which, in all cases, is "without fee or reward"—an absolute *gift*, involving the time, thought, consideration and

Life and Action

personal effort of one or more of its Instructors, covering from two to ten years.

With these preliminary requirements and safeguards in all instances, it would seem that no applicant for instruction would ever gain admittance as a Student who was not "duly and truly prepared, worthy and well qualified."

Especially would it seem impossible that any applicant could gain admittance and attain to the status of an accredited Student without knowing the text-books thoroughly from beginning to end. And yet, the evidences in my possession could hardly be made to support any other conclusion.

As illustrations, I want to refer, in this connection, to some of the questions that have come to me from various Students who gained admittance, as such, only after solemnly stating that they had carefully read and studied all three of the text-books, until they knew what they contained, and that they found themselves in full and unqualified sympathy and accord with all their teachings and findings.

These illustrations will not, in any instance, disclose the name nor the identity of my questioner; because their disclosure would serve only to embarrass the Student and cause him to feel that his questions are not welcome. For this would not be true, and the result would be the exact opposite of that which I desire to accomplish; for one of the fundamental prerequisites of a good Student is his willingness to ask for knowledge or information from any available source at command, and the ability to formulate an intelligent, exact and unambiguous question. I want every accredited Student to feel that it is not only his right but his *duty* to ask for knowledge and information whenever he is in need of it *and has exhausted other available sources* from which to obtain it.

But I must, at the same time, not make the invitation *too* hospitable or seductive, lest the "*other available sources*" be overlooked or ignored and those Students whose stock of pa-

Life and Action

tience, perseverance and industry is deficient be thereby encouraged to slovenly habits which would let them throw upon others [whose time is equally important] the burden of individual study and research which should be carried by every Student.

With this preliminary explanation clearly in mind, I am sure that each and every Student who finds his own question among the following illustrations will congratulate himself upon the fact that he thus has helped me to elucidate a difficult problem that will undoubtedly be of value to many others than himself.

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. "At a recent meeting of our Group of Students and Friends, I was asked to write and ask you if you would please tell us how to understand, or rather *reconcile*, the following statements:

[a] "*There is no Death.*" Vol. I, Chap. I, p. 5."

[b] "This is '*The Second Death.*' Vol. II, p. 329."

The simplest answer I could possibly give that would be clear and to the point, would be: "*Read the Books*".

Another complete answer would be: "*By the Context.*" But this would amount to the same thing; for a careful reading of the books would enable any Student to get the "context," the natural sequence of thought in which the seemingly contradictory statements appear; and that alone will make clear the fact that statement [a] in Vol. I, has definite, specific and sole reference to what we call "*Physical Death*;" while statement [b] in Vol. II, has equally definite, specific and exclusive reference to a purely *Spiritual* experience—the result of the "Destructive Principle of Nature" and its *seeming* effects upon Spiritual men and women who invoke it and follow it persistently.

The whole of Chapter 2, Vol. I, is devoted to an elucidation

[Page 70]

Life and Action

tion of statement [a]; and here is the very first sentence of the chapter:

"By death is here meant the extinction of the individual self-consciousness, personal identity and intelligent activity of a man when his physical body ceases its functions and activities."

Could any thing be stated more clearly and distinctly? It must, therefore, be clear that when the author of Vol. I, says: "THERE IS NO DEATH", she has reference to physical death and means to state that there is no "*extinction of the individual self-consciousness, personal identity and intelligent activity of a man when his physical body ceases its functions and activities.*"

In other words; what we call physical "*Death*" is, in truth, but a *transition*; and the intelligence continues to live on beyond that point.

Now, what is the author of Vol. II, talking about when he uses the expression "*The Second Death*"?

A *study of the book* and the "*context*" will disclose the fact that at page 334, last paragraph, he says; "What the scientific significance of this second or spiritual death may be, is as yet, *the great unsolved problem of Nature*".

At page 397, in the final chapter on "*The Genesis of Dogma*" under the "*Third Hypothesis*", he says:

"In Part II of this volume, Chapter IV, paragraphs 19 to 22, inclusive, under the head of '*Facts Demonstrated*', it is stated that man disappears from the lowest plane of his spiritual life by either one of two different processes,-----

"Under the opposite principle and process of destruction or devolution he also disappears in a manner which corresponds, in every essential particular, with the disappearance of the animal.

"It is also stated that in this second case he does not re-appear [at least in identical or distinguishable form], upon

[Page 71]

Life and Action

any of the higher planes of spiritual life which are distinctively related to this particular planet.

"The question of his destiny as an individual intelligence in this case is a matter of even more absorbing and vital interest to those who have undertaken its solution, than is the destiny of the animal.

"But here again Nature seems to hold a secret which defies the detective powers of the wisest intelligences of both planes of life. No satisfactory solution of the great problem has yet been wrought out."

A little further on it is stated that while Natural Science does not claim to *know* the meaning of this "*Second Death*", there are two distinct "*theories*" on the subject. "They are presented without comment for what they may be worth. No attempt has been made to prejudice the mind in favor of either of them.

"On the contrary, it is suggested that even those who have at command all the facts and all the data thus far accumulated bearing upon the subject *are still withholding judgment.*"

Having read the foregoing—all of which appears in Vol. II,—would it seem possible that any Student of the books could think there is anything that calls for a "reconciliation"?

It must be entirely clear that there is no discrepancy whatever in the two statements, when the "context" is taken into account.

And furthermore, *it is all in the books.* Any one who will *read* them cannot fail to find it.

It must be clear, therefore, that in this particular instance the fault is not with the books nor their authors, but with the Students who had not studied with sufficient care to get the full meaning and intent of the *text.*

2. Another illustration from the many is, in substance, somewhat as follows:

A group of seemingly intelligent women who have been
[Page 72]

Life and Action

reading and "studying" [?] the books for some two years or more [and who became accepted students on the strength of their understanding and acceptance of their teachings], have recently come forward with a series of questions as to just what Vol. I [Harmonics of Evolution] teaches concerning the "Law of Affinity"; whether an individual can have more than one "affinity"; whether the teachings of the book, if followed, would not lead to promiscuity and immorality, and so on.

For the author of that Vol. who spent three years in the writing of it [solely that she might make it so clear and so simple that none could misread it nor fail to get its exact meaning] to have such questions come to her from women who claim to have read and *studied* the book for many months,—is surely discouraging, or would be if one were inclined to permit it.

There is not a question asked by these studious ladies, but is fully and specifically answered *in the book*. It is *all there*, and in *bold, clear type*; and its teachings are in perfect alignment with the highest morality and the perfect integrity of the marriage relation and all its obligations.

Wherein then, is the difficulty? Simply and solely in the fact that these readers of the books are not "Students" in the true meaning of the term. They have done their work so imperfectly and indifferently as virtually not to have done it at all. And yet, I have no doubt they have thought they knew the Philosophy of Natural Science as set forth in the text-books, with definite certainty.

These two illustrations are taken from our files, at random, from among a large number. They are typical, and therefore sufficient to illustrate and elucidate the point I am trying to establish.

They are in line with our experiences from the date of the publication of Vol. I of the Harmonic Series to the present time. There can be but one interpretation of these experiences,

Life and Action

namely, that the average woman *reader* is *not* a "Student".

Furthermore, contact with the text-books does not *make* a Student of her. She goes right on as before, simply "scanning" the books instead of really *studying* them, and as a result, she gets but a fraction of their contents and that fraction is distorted and imperfect.

Sometime ago a "Friend of the Work" was explaining his method of reading and studying the books. He said his first reading was always with pencil in hand, and as he read he made a question-mark on the margin of the page, opposite each point concerning which he had any doubt, or concerning which he desired to ask any question. As a result, when he was through his first reading he usually found his book pages frescoed with many question-marks.

Then he began a second reading, and as he proceeded he erased every question-mark to which he had found a satisfactory answer. And so on, with a third, fourth, fifth and subsequent readings, until he had reduced his question-marks to the minimum, at which time only did he feel that he really *knew* what the book contained.

At the time he came to me he had read "*The Great Psychological Crime*" some fifteen times. When he completed his first reading the pages of the book, from beginning to end, were literally covered with "???". But when he finished a second careful reading he found that he had erased more than half of his interrogation marks. Then again and again he read it from cover to cover, and with each new reading some of the markings disappeared.

At the time he came to me— after all his careful readings and study—there remained just one big "?" which he had not been able to erase. He said the book itself had answered every one of his many questions but this one, and I fancied I observed a faint twinkle of triumph in his eyes as he told me

Life and Action

that he had not been able to find any answer, in the book, to his question.

I asked him to tell me just what was the question he had in mind; and, when he had stated it very carefully, I told him to open the book and turn to page [giving the number] and he would find the answer. He did as requested, and his face was an interesting psychological study when he found that the answer was indeed there, clear, concise and complete, and that he had actually read the *words* of it fifteen times without getting it into his consciousness.

This man is one of the best students I know. He has a keen intelligence and a good memory. He reads carefully and studies well what he reads. And yet, he tells me that, after having read "*The Great Work*" [Vol. III] some twenty times, he continues to find so much in it that seems to him "entirely new", that it is a source of constant amazement to him to observe how little of its contents he is able to get at any single reading of the book, and what an enormous percentage he fails to master.

I refer to the experiences of this particular student in the hope that they will inspire other students to adopt some of his methods and imbue them with the determination to *know* what the *text-books* contain, before asking questions that are already answered therein, or that are answered in "*Life and Action*".

Almost every day I am receiving letters from the best kind of people in all sections of the country, and many of them begin somewhat as follows:

"Dear Sir: I have just finished a hasty reading of Vol. III—'*The Great Work*' and I want more *Light*. I am applying to you for further instruction" etc.

Within the week a gentleman wrote me from the Pacific coast, just after finishing chapter III of "*The Great Work*", and asked to be admitted as a Student and to receive instruction.

These good people all mean to be courteous and consider-

Life and Action

ate and it would pain them deeply if they felt that they had failed in that regard.

It requires much thought and consideration on my part to get the facts before them in such manner as to avoid humiliating or otherwise hurting or offending them.

I gently call attention to the fact that "*The Great Work*," is *Vol. III* of the "*Harmonic Series*" and that all three volumes are *text-works* of the School, written and published for the distinct and definite purpose of constituting a "natural approach" to the door of the School; that their teachings constitute a profound Instruction which is the foundation of all other instructions; that until this foundation has been laid by the Student, and the Text-Books have been mastered, it is impossible to proceed with any other instruction that rests upon that foundation.

In conclusion—let me offer a few suggestions which I sincerely hope will prove of real value to all who read them, and who may hereafter desire to become identified with the School and its Work:

1. The three Text-Books in themselves constitute the *first Instruction* of every applicant who desires to gain admittance as an accredited Student.

2. Until he has mastered them and thereby gotten the benefits of his *first Instruction*, he is not prepared for any further Instruction which rests upon that foundation.

3. To accomplish the desired end in the shortest time and with the least effort, I recommend the following method of study, regardless of the number of times the individual may have read the books, viz,—

[a] Begin at the beginning and study with pencil and paper at hand.

[b] From every page and paragraph formulate into writing such questions as *you* would ask a Student if you were his Examiner and were trying to make him prove to you that

Life and Action

he had a detailed and an accurate knowledge of what the three books contain.

[c] After completing such a study, then lay aside the books, take your own list of questions and write out in your own language answers to as many of them as you can.

[d] Whenever you find a question to which you are unable to formulate a satisfactory answer, go back to the books and read up on the subject until you can answer your question correctly.

[e] To facilitate your reference to the books, I would suggest that as you are formulating your questions you note after each question the volume, page and paragraph where you can find the answer.

By the time you have completed such a study of the books as I have indicated, you should be able to pass the kind of examination which would satisfy any accredited Examiner that you have a thorough and accurate working knowledge of what the Text-Books contain.

And this is the character of knowledge which the School expects every Student to possess before asking for any Instruction other than that contained *in the Text-Books*.

For an applicant who has read but hastily a few chapters in one of the books [or who has read all of any one of them, or who may even have completed a rapid reading of all three books] to come asking for any further Instruction which calls for a gift of the time and labor of an Instructor covering many months and even years of effort—is no more reasonable nor consistent than it would be for a common-school graduate to apply for admittance to the Senior class of the Chicago University without examination, and without taking the work of the three preceding years of the regular college course—the Freshman, Sophomore and Junior years.

And yet, both Mrs. Huntley and myself are receiving urgent applications for Instruction almost every week, from earnest

Life and Action

men and women all over the country, who have only just glanced hastily through one or more of the books and obtained but a mere suggestion of what they contain.

Each of these letters of application demands a courteous response from us, and this involves a long and careful explanation as to the purpose of the books, the fact that they are Text-Works of the School, that they contain an "*Instruction*" which must be mastered before the applicant is ready for, or can be admitted to, any further Instruction based upon the contents of the three Text-Books.

The one thing most difficult to impress upon the consciousness of these "Stranger Friends" is the fact that the three books of the Harmonic Series are *Text-Works*, that they are "*Works of Instruction*" and contain an exact and a scientific *Instruction* which every applicant must *master* before it is possible to gain admittance to any other or further Instruction than that of the books themselves.

The importance of this subject to the educational work of this Movement is such that it will command further consideration in these columns, from time to time. We trust our readers will find the general theme of sufficient interest and value to follow us patiently and without prejudice.

In this connection, we will be glad to receive any suggestions our readers may deem of value; and will endeavor to answer any questions they may desire to have us consider in *Life and Action* insofar as time and space at command will permit.



"*Charity* is the established harmonic relation which man, as an Individual Intelligence, sustains to the Law of Personal Duties and Obligations to his fellow man."

John B. Gabusi.

Life and Action

The Meaning of Preparation

By J. D. Buck, M. D.



IN all Initiations, both ancient and modern, a great deal is said about "Preparation".

It is much like the "entrance examinations" in our high-schools and colleges. In order to take up a course of study at a given point, and follow it with any probability of success, one must have had a certain pre-

liminary training so as to be able to apprehend the nature of the problems to be presented and considered.

This is neither more nor less than the Masonic requirement of "proficiency in the preceding degree".

It is not a "catch-phrase", nor is the requirement actually fulfilled by verbal proficiency in rituals. We must add to such proficiency assimilation and actual growth. Here proficiency means realization, apprehension grown into possession.

The applicant, or candidate, for real Initiation, as in the School of Natural Science and all genuine Ancient Mysteries, is seeking neither favors nor honors. He is seeking intrinsically to *know*, in order that he may *become*. It is, from the first step, a renovation and a transfiguration within.

Real Education [*Educere*] is a *drawing-out* process; whereas, the genius of "education up to date" is almost exclusively a pouring-in process.

Individuals covet "knowledge" as they do fame and wealth; as something to be added to their present possessions, rather than some change to be wrought in themselves. And the fact is that they are in utter confusion as to what constitutes real possession.

Possession may be likened to food that has been assim-

Life and Action

lated and converted into the living tissues of the body. It is no longer "food". It is *our very selves*. Nor can we even thus possess and retain it, for it is there on a higher plane, for a higher function and a nobler use. It will disintegrate and fall back if not utilized, and it may be utilized and transformed into energy on a higher plane if wisely used.

The law is the same for the mind and the soul, as for the body. We *possess* nothing but *ourselves*, and *we* are continually changing. This is the paradox of all paradoxes.

The student in the School of Natural Science is, therefore, from first to last, studying *himself*. He is seeking enlightenment regarding his own nature, his faculties, capacities and powers, so that he may utilize them to the best possible advantage.

No teacher can do more than suggest *how* to transform ignorance of self into self-knowledge. The *work* must be done solely by the student himself.

Now the first question propounded in the preparation-room is not—"are you ready to be Initiated"? but—"are you ready to begin the work of transforming yourself?"

The process involves enlarged and enlarging capacities and continually increasing Knowledge. Why do you seek it, and what do you intend to do with it as attained?

No genuine transformation, with advancement to a higher plane, can possibly occur unless there is the right motive to inspire it.

If curiosity, pride of intellect, or desire for fame or notoriety, are the impelling motives, failure is certain to result. The faculties and capacities thus evoked will enable anyone to move upward to higher planes or continually to advance. It may, however, lead to degeneration or self-destruction.

Just where, or when, or how the break may come, perhaps only time and circumstance can determine; but certain it is that the longer it is delayed the harder the fall and the deeper the descent.

Life and Action

It is for this reason that no one is urged or even invited to "enter the path of discipleship", more than he is urged to "join the Masons". He must come of his own accord, and evince due preparation.

The stories told of Black Magicians in the middle ages and all through the past history of so-called "occultism" and "magic," are by no means fables, whatever the Sadducees of science may believe or declare.

Different motives and aims in life inspire different men; not on all planes of being, for the trend of one group is upward and that of the other downward, *inevitably*; for each is *self-impelled*. Each "goes to his own place," as inevitably as "the sparks fly upward" or the rock, unsupported, falls to the ground.

Life on the physical plane is probationary, and when the physical body is cast off each finds his own place by a law as apparently blind as that which makes water seek its level, or the needle seek the pole.

No man can change this law if he tries, and every Master knows better than to try. It would not only be useless, but inevitably involve him in the descent and degradation. His function is to point out and *obey* the law. His Mastership hinges on knowledge and obedience.

The Student, therefore, who is really "prepared", will be less concerned with what other people *think* of him than with what he *knows* of *himself*. He will therefore look his own soul squarely in the face and begin to "take account of stock". If he is ashamed of his motives, or does not care to improve and transform his life; if he finds himself "joined to his idols," let him go his own way; for he is only invoking disappointment and failure, and either duplicity or disgust, if he tries to "enter the Path".

The *tests* will come, continually; not from without, but from within. He cannot evade them, nor can he long conceal

Life and Action

his weakness and insincerity. He can harm the Work with people like himself, the insincere or superficial.

There was a great truth embodied in the old idea of "conviction of sin," "repentance," and "regeneration." Mingled as it was with fear, superstition and emotionalism, it did, nevertheless, often transform a life. Had the essence been better apprehended far greater and more lasting results would have been secured.

The motive, the intent and the aim will surely appear, soon or late, with every Student on the path of Initiation. Then comes the determination to transform and advance; and here is where assistance can be given. The right attitude is of the first importance.

Even an unconscious vein of vanity or of intellectual pride bars the way. It is not, as some of these might imagine, the surrender of one's own opinions to those of another. It is the testing of one's opinions to the last analysis in order to find the weakness or error and root it out when found. "Mine" and "thine", as to opinions and beliefs, disappear entirely before the great analysis as to what is true, beneficent and just.

Nor will the teacher dogmatize, argue, persuade or seek to indoctrinate. He will, at most, question and suggest, and leave the rest to ourselves. If we give him frank, courteous and confiding attention, he may tell us of facts demonstrated in his own experience, and say—"think it over, and see how it agrees with what, from analogy and such experience as you have had, you think it ought to be."

Thus the relation between teacher and student grows continually more intimate, cordial and confidential. It is one of mutual confidence; not determined by degrees in knowledge, but by the "*Spirit of the Work*". It is the only *real* Brotherhood known to man. Nothing but ourselves can weaken or destroy it. It is as a Light to the Soul, and a con-

Life and Action

tinual inspiration, and we resolve to become more and more worthy of it.

In the face of this Spirit of the Work, this Genius of Brotherhood, it requires no very high degree of intelligence to perceive how pride and insincerity are altogether aliens; and that unless they are removed, root and branch, they inevitably choke out the grain of truth and the hope of achievement.

But we are still in the "preparation-room." We are all involved by association, by duty and by obligation, with the world around us.

There are the custom and tradition of "renouncing the world" and fleeing to the groves, the caves, or the desert, there to pursue the search for the "Castalian Spring", or "the Way to Holiness".

It is not so much the avoidance of temptation—though one should be very sure of his strength before inviting it—as it is the power to meet it when it comes and still do our duty fearlessly.

This line of study and work is the only one in which self-advancement is in perfect harmony with our every duty and obligation to others. It is self-improvement *in order* that we may have more to give and be of more help to others. It is another paradox: *Seeking* self by the *surrender* of self, and at every step, a *larger self*. It is putting Nature's Impulse to higher evolution into the conscious intelligence of man, so that he becomes an intelligent co-worker with both God and Nature.

Can anyone imagine a greater honor, or a more glorious privilege; or, step by step, a greater reward?

The Candidate for Instruction must have a full share of intelligence in order to apprehend the character of the problems to be presented. In other words, he must have "worked up to them" himself. He must have a fair degree of educa-

Life and Action

tion in order to be able to formulate and express his own thoughts and feelings and to apprehend accurately the propositions presented.

No teacher of music who valued his time and reputation would accept as a pupil one who could not distinguish one tone or pitch from another; or who would not practice, or could not remember a lesson from one day to the next.

On the other hand, a pupil might have a "splendid ear for music" and yet be so careless, frivolous and indifferent as to be only wasting his own time and that of the teacher.

But music is but one department, one room—"the music room"—in the palace of the soul; and while the harmony that emanates from it may fill the whole house, if the "kitchen dishes" rattle and a loud political argument is going on in the parlor, the house is full of *noise*.

It is easy to see how and why the "whole house must be set in order".

We are still in the preparation-room, "getting ready to commence to begin"; and there is not a single principle or requirement here that is not basic and intrinsic in the building of character, in every trade, calling, or occupation in life that builds toward success.

It is not taught as an *art*, "for a consideration". It is ingrained as a habit, making man a new creature.

It is not the "revelation of secrets," as so many imagine. It is the unfolding of a new life within ourselves, with "an eye single" to *living* it until we forget that there was ever any other.

Any other application or use of the words "Regeneration" and "Redemption," would seem superficial or absurd. Certainly it is easy to see the meaning of being "worthy and well qualified," the moral or ethical requirement; and "duly and truly prepared", that is, an understanding of what is to be undertaken, and how, and why, and upon what terms and conditions.

We may next consider the question of secrecy. I have heard

Life and Action

clergymen say. "If I had the knowledge reputed to a Master I would shout it from the housetops." No such individual has the slightest conception of what such knowledge means or involves. Nor is he willing to take the least pains to find out; and yet he *thinks* he knows just what he would do with it if he had it. He has not the slightest idea of the conceit, ignorance and prejudice involved in his statement and position.

Some teachers of "Spiritual things" are the most unspiritual of men. Their "spirituality" seldom passes beyond mysticism coupled with superstition.

Now the relation of Teacher and Student in the real mysteries of life has always been that of mutual sympathy and unreserved confidence. The teacher is like a physician of the soul. In order accurately to measure needs and point out remedies he must know causes and conditions.

There is no greater folly than to consult a physician in the hope of relief, and yet try to deceive him. Such a thing is seldom witnessed, and it is equally rare to find a physician who will betray confidence, except in the rarest cases to protect the innocent.

To get rid of weaknesses of character and defects, or diseases of the soul, and not only restore harmony, but create a new life, is the greatest undertaking—the Greatest Work known to man.

The laws regarding the growth of the soul are unchanging, but the law to be applied in any given case, and how and why, is always an individual problem.

People have sought panaceas for sin as they have for disease, and the advertisement of these is "quackery," in the one case no less than in the other.

If the teacher were to receive and guard loyally the secrets of the life of the student, and yet the student disregarded or betrayed the confidence of the teacher, how long would the "mutual confidence" last?

Life and Action

But there is a far deeper meaning to this secret and mutual confidence.

With the great majority of persons the mask of flesh conceals the real character, though it is an open book to the real Master. It is written in the lines of the face, the expression of the eyes and mouth, the tones and inflections of the voice, the handwriting, the gait in walking; indeed, it is often so plain that it seems strange that anyone can fail to read it

Now the student starts on a novitiate that is to "run for all time" after first "setting his house in order"—[due preparation]. He becomes anxious to reach a point where and when he has nothing to conceal. Old things have passed away, and all things have become new, through "Living the Life" according to the Good Law.

He is heading toward a day when nothing *can* be concealed; when he will "see as he is seen" and "know as he is known;" when Love, Hate, Passion or Holiness, will emanate from his own spiritual body, as the colors of the rainbow emanate and "qualify" from the radiant light of the sun; and he—his soul— will, like the sun, shine "by reason of *standing in the midst.*"

This is his "Class-day," and his *honors*—"merits or demerits"—await him and he will "go to his own place." The masks and veils are all withdrawn. He *knows* that he can deceive no one, and would not be foolish enough to try.

These Principles and Laws have never been concealed except from the careless and indifferent, and the right and the duty of following them has been openly proclaimed.

Moreover, the perfect freedom of the individual judgment and conscience is openly proclaimed, and the individual assumes the full Responsibility of his acts.

But a School of genuine Instruction undertakes to facilitate this "Growth of the Soul." Instead of the student floundering blindly in doubt and uncertainty and being bewildered by con-

Life and Action

fusion he is given a *guide* who looks over his work, points out his errors and suggests how he may revise, correct and improve it.

This instruction is *necessarily* "from mouth to ear," personal, private and confidential. The basic *purpose* is not concealment, but to avoid misuse and prevent abuse of knowledge and the degradation of man.

These *real* Schools are not "professional", nor do they teach "arts and crafts". They are in every sense, and from first to last, Training Schools, or *Normal Schools*, and this they are *literally*.

Every student thus trained is, in his turn, to become a Teacher, and at last, a Master. It ought to be readily discerned that here is no favoritism, but actual merit and genuine Work and achievement.

Masters and such students are pioneers, advance guards in the upward and onward progress of the whole human race. They add to the evolutionary impulse of Nature latent in all Life, Chart, Compass, Topographical surveys, and a Light to guide those who come later. They reduce legend and folklore, parable and allegory, to postulates of exact science. They *seek* opportunity and measure accurately the lines of the least no less than of the greatest resistance. They do not *know* what a student can do, or will do, until he is *tried* and has undertaken to try for himself; more than one knows what is in a country that has never been explored, and whose soil the foot of man has never trod

Each human being is a distinct and separate personality differing from every other in the Universe. Hence our ancient brethren called man—a "*Microcosm*", or "little world".

Each of these has eventually to be adjusted to and with itself, then to its fellows, and finally to the Universal Intelligence and Universal Nature. This adjustment is a growth, a

Life and Action

becoming, an actual higher evolution. From plane to plane, "from height to height the spirit walks".

Can such a *secret* be revealed from without, more than that of a blade of grass, or that of the Central Sun?

The old Masters said—"nothing *can* be concealed from him who knows"; and Abbe Constant wrote—"The wicked *obey* the Law through Fear;—The wise *keep* the Law through knowledge".

Here then is no child's play, no "ten easy lessons in occultism"; but Preparation for the real Journey of Life. Is it *Worth While*? Each must answer for himself.

It would seem that for the first time in the history of man these Great Truths, this Great Work, are clothed in the garb, the language and the Theorems, of exact Science.

What the result may be it is doubtful if even the Masters themselves could accurately declare, because of the secret potencies and possibilities locked in the soul of each individual.

They might, indeed, call it to the winds, or "Shout it from the housetops", and receive no response. If there be no "listening ear" there can be no response to the "instructive tongue".

It is all "Giving and Receiving", and then—Giving again, and more abundantly. It is "without money and without price", because it is *priceless*. It is the "Crest Jewel of Wisdom". No man can steal it, or give it away. He must earn, create and wear it, or forever remain uncrowned.

It smiles at Death: "Declares" all at the Great Divide, and steps joyfully on the other shore, grateful beyond words.

He has paid his debt to Nature and for him death means a Great Reward.

Compared with the lusts of the flesh and the deceitfulness of riches, is it *Worth While* to *Prepare* really to *Live*?

Life and Action

Extracts from my Files

By the TK.



EAR FRIEND TK.:—

When convenient will you please tell me:

1. Why it is that throughout your philosophic writings, more particularly in "*The Great Work*"— you so often employ the terms, "*God or Nature*" in just that relation?

2. Do you believe that God is a Self-Conscious Spirit, Creator of all things, and Nature the manifestation or expression of Himself? The whole value of all your teaching depends on your belief upon this subject.

3. Just what do you mean, and to whom do you refer when you speak of "*The Ruler of this Planet*"?

4. To whom do you refer as "*The Father*"?

I do not seem to be able to get these terms clearly in mind, and I want to be definite and certain as to their exact meanings.

Thanking you for your kindness and patience in answering so clearly and carefully the many questions I have already asked you and hoping this latest list will receive the same careful and generous consideration, I remain,

Gratefully and Loyally

Mrs. Hunt.

Dear Friend:—

With sincere interest I have just finished a careful reading of your valued letter of the 29th ult., and in the midst of the multiplicity of demands upon both time and vitality in which I live, I find it an absolute physical impossibility to respond to your many questions in such manner as to be of any real satisfaction to either you or myself. I do not like to undertake

Life and Action

such a task by letter, even under favorable conditions, and if you could but know even a fraction of the difficulties in my way, you would acquit me of any thought of discourtesy, I am sure, even if I declined to attempt an answer at all, under the existing conditions.

But I am strongly impressed with the earnestness, sincerity, good faith, and intelligence of your inquiries, and am strongly impelled to respond, even though inadequately and most imperfectly. With that thought in mind, I trust you will follow me with patience and kindly forbearance:

1. With reference to the terms "*God or Nature*," and the manner in which they are employed in the books of the Harmonic Series.

I believe it will help you to understand the spirit and intent of the Work more fully if you will turn to page 35 of "*The Great Work*," and read carefully the last paragraph but one, and note carefully my promise therein that I will confine myself as closely as may be possible to the things which are within the range of my own personal experience [knowledge], the demonstrated facts of science, and the established truths of nature.

Now, under this pledge, if I had claimed, or professed, to know anything definitely about *God* [in the sense of the Great Universal Intelligence back of all the manifestations of Nature], I should have been false to my promise, and unworthy of your confidence; for it is a *fact* that I do not definitely *know* anything whatsoever about the Great First Cause of things, nor do I know anyone who *does* know.

Even the greatest and the wisest of the Great Friends, with whom I have come into personal acquaintance and fellowship on the Spiritual Planes of life, when asked for definite knowledge on the subject, say with the utmost frankness, simplicity and humility, "*We do not know*."

2. But, in order that I might not justly be accused of
[Page 90]

Life and Action

assuming knowledge which I do not possess, I have used again and again the terms "God or Nature," to indicate to the reader that I do not assume to know *which* is scientifically the correct term.

A careful search of the Scriptures [Bible], will disclose the fact that the term "God" is not *always* used to designate the Great Creative Intelligence, or First Cause. But in some instances it seems to have been employed to designate a Great Spiritual Intelligence whom the Jews seemed to regard as their particular "God," or "Ruler"—thus, by inference, rather suggesting the idea that there may be *other* "Gods" than the "God of the Jews".

In my writing of the MS. of "*The Great Work*," I was brought face to face with the fact that among religionists generally, and more especially among the ministry, the term "God" is used quite generally to designate the Great Universal Intelligence, the Great Creative Intelligence, responsible for all things whatsoever, in heaven and on earth, or elsewhere in the universe; while the physical scientist employs the term "*Nature*" to express his concept of all that he knows of a "Cosmic Intelligence."

In order that both classes might read my statements understandingly, and without prejudice, and free from the feeling that I was dogmatizing upon the subject, I employed *both* terms interchangeably, or in such manner that the contending disputants as to the Great First Cause, would not be able to accuse me of assuming a knowledge I do not possess.

I do not hesitate to say to you that *I do not know* whether there is a Great Intelligent Personality back of Nature or not. I see everywhere evidences in Nature of intelligent *design*, and I know that Nature *represents* intelligence. But *what* or *who* or *where* that Intelligence is, I do not *know*. Neither do I know anyone who seriously *claims* to know, when

Life and Action

called upon to answer the question from the basis of his own personal knowledge.

I do not know whether the Great Intelligence that is responsible for Nature is "*back of,*" or *in,* or *throughout,* or "*above*" Nature; or whether the Great Creative Intelligence and Nature [taken together] constitute *God*. I have some ideas and convictions on the subject; but since I do not *know*, these ideas and convictions would be of little or no value to you or anybody else who demands definite *knowledge* on the subject.

You ask if I believe God to be a Conscious, a Self-Conscious Spirit, Creator of all, and Nature as the manifestation or expression of Himself?

In the books of the Harmonic Series I have studiously avoided giving any expression of my own "*beliefs*" on this subject, because I recognize the fact that concerning ultimates, and other things we do not know, my own *beliefs* are of no greater value than those of my most obscure and humble reader.

If I should answer your question frankly, and tell you what I *believe*, you would be not a *whit* wiser as to the *realities* than you are today; for my *beliefs* are not necessarily *true*. Yours may be more nearly the truth than mine. Therefore, it seems to me that I would be assuming a heavy responsibility in putting forth my mere "*opinions and beliefs*" on so profound a subject, lest you or someone else might not always differentiate carefully and accurately between my *beliefs* and what science actually *knows*.

You say that you think the whole value of my "*teaching*" rests upon my *belief* on this subject. I am compelled to admit that I am entirely unable to follow your mental processes in this regard; for it does not seem to me that my *belief* can have anything whatsoever to do with the subject.

In what you designate as my "*teachings*" I have endeavored to confine myself as closely as possible to the findings of Natural

Life and Action

Science, quite independently of either my own beliefs or those of others.

But you are correct in that it is important to know just *why* I have used the terms "God or Nature." I have endeavored to give you my reasons for so doing, and I trust they will commend themselves to your sympathy and reason.

For the purposes of this School and Work, it does not seem to me to be a vital matter [at this time] whether "*God and Nature are one,*" or whether "*God is Creative Intelligence and Nature His Manifestation.*" Neither does it seem to me vital to the problem of "*Life Here and Hereafter,*" whether "*God is an Individual Intelligence,*" or is simply "*Universal Intelligence without Personality.*"

And why do I say this? Because these are problems which, as yet, are beyond the range of human intelligence, so far as we know; and the problem with which this School and Work are concerned most vitally, is that of "*Individual Life Here and Hereafter,*" and the evolutionary possibilities of man, in so far as we are able to ascertain them through the means and methods of Natural Science.

Your own view of the matter is identical with mine, in that "I do not think at *this stage* of our evolution we can comprehend God." Furthermore, I am convinced that we have several "rounds" of evolution ahead of us before we will be able to comprehend Him, Her, It or Them. And because of this fact, it seems to me that there are many vitally important things a long way "*this side of God,*" or our knowledge of God, with which we might occupy our time, thought and personal effort, to much more practical value. Does it not seem so to you?

Just as you have indicated, recognizing man as an Individual Intelligence, possessing Consciousness and Will, and assuming that he is a result of creation, it is but logical to assume that his Creator also possesses the same or equivalent attributes.

Life and Action

But you see, it seems to be impossible for us to approach *God*, or the Great Creative Intelligence, from any angle, without having to assume so many things that our conclusions are of little or no scientific value.

Answering your question concerning the "Ruler of this Planet," that term means exactly what it says. There is an Individual Intelligence, known to the Great Friends and Spiritual Masters of this School as "The Father." He is in human form, and upon Him rests the Spiritual Rule, or Government of this little planet we call "Earth." But He is *not* the "Great Universal Intelligence." And that is why I do not speak of Him as *God*.

You ask why it is that I do not speak of *God*, in the closing chapters of Vol. III. This would seem to answer itself, in the light of what I have already said. It is because I do not *Know* anything about "God the Great Creative Intelligence:" and in those chapters I have endeavored to confine myself as closely as possible to the "*Things I Know*."

All your *reasoning* on these subjects is interesting, and may be *correct*, so far as I know. But it does not seem to me to be within the limitations set for the subject-matter of my own MS.

I have also had in mind the writing of another MS., on the subject of "*What Science Knows Of The Spiritual World*" or to that effect. Science has demonstrated many things of the most transcendent interest and vital importance concerning the Spiritual Life of Man on this Planet. But when I come to write of these things, strange as it may seem to you, I shall *not* try to tell my readers anything about *God*.

So far as I know, *God*, the Great Universal Intelligence that is responsible for the existence of this little Earth and its inhabitants, both physical and spiritual, is beyond the knowledge of the wisest of this planet. Then why should I presume to

Life and Action

write of It, or tell my readers about It? You must see the absurdity of it all.

I want you to know that I appreciate your earnest letter of inquiry, and hope that in what I have said in reply, inadequate and hurried as it is, you will be able to obtain such information as will enable you to answer the questions for yourself.

Again thanking you for your friendship and confidence, and with greetings of good will and all good wishes, believe me,
Cordially and fraternally, TK.



Personal Effort

“Virtue never grew and matured into a permanent possession of any Soul, except as compensation for the strivings of that Soul for better things.

Knowledge and wisdom never thrust themselves gratuitously upon any man.

Sometime, somewhere, he has paid their full price in Personal Effort; and they have come to him only as compensation for the energy he has spent in his struggle upward into the Light of Truth.

There is no achievement, in the realm of the Soul, without Personal Effort.

Labor is the true measure of all Soul values. It might well be made the measure of all material exchange in the world of economics.

It is the only legitimate standard of value in the realm of sociology.”

—From “The Great Work.”

Life and Action

Does Life and Action stand for Economic Justice?



AM PUBLISHING the following letter from Malcolm H. McDowell, New Orleans, La., *not* because I accept all its statements as wholly correct from an economic standpoint; nor because I believe it offers anything like a full and complete solution of the great problem of "*Wealth and its Equitable Distri-*

bution.

Why, then, do I give it room in *Life and Action* where space is so limited that its limitations alone should make it so valuable? Here are some of my reasons:

1. Because I believe Mr. McDowell is an honest man.
2. Because I believe he *thinks* his letter presents a solution of the great problem of Economics.
3. Because I know the man personally, and I believe he is a real friend of those who need.
4. Because there is one remark contained in his letter which was either made inadvertently or else because he does not understand the position of this magazine on the subject of "industrial justice."

Here is his letter. Read it carefully. Read it with an open mind and without prejudice:

Editor of *Life and Action*:

Dear Sir: I have read with great interest the article by "TK" in the "November-December 1910" number, "*What Shall We do About Christmas Giving?*"

[Page 96]

Life and Action

The article not only interests me and commands my approval but it suggests some thoughts which I would like to express to you and to your readers if you think well of what I have to say.

"TK," after making clear his attitude about Christmas presents and the obligation they convey, etc., speaks of the poor and those who have no Christmas, and asks the students and Friends of the Work to remove his name from the list of "Friends to be remembered with Christmas gifts of material value," and spend the time and money which would be spent upon him, in making the children of some poor family have a happy Christmas. Now, dear Editor, please understand that I have no fault to find with that request. I think it beautiful, and am sure the readers of the magazine, *Life and Action*, will understand it and try to follow it, but here is my trouble: The request of "TK" to his friends shows plainly that he knows there are people, and plenty of them, who are too poor to give their children presents at Christmas, too poor in fact to give them the things necessary for comfort and decency.

"TK" also speaks of 40,000 garment-workers "the poorest paid and worst treated of all laborers", and says, whether the strike in which they are engaged succeeds or fails it must mean unspeakable deprivation to all concerned on the side of labor. No matter how it ends, he says, "I see a vista of over-due rentals, empty cupboards, insufficient clothing, etc."

Now let me digress a moment. I saw not long ago in a newspaper an account of an address given by my cousin, Mary McDowell, before a company of women, and among other things she said that employers should pay a *living* wage.

About a week ago an editorial in *The Chicago Tribune* spoke of the poor man without a friend and said this is the kind of man you can see in Malcolm McDowell's bread line on a cold night.

In the *Sunday Times-Democrat*, New Orleans, Jan. 24, 1909,

[Page 97]

Life and Action

Helen Pitkin speaks of the low wages paid to women and of an Association to compel a *living wage*.

Anyone who reads the newspapers can be edified by discussions as to whether Clergymen can afford to marry, and one delightfully frank employer of men in Chicago states that in his opinion working men should not marry, as they cannot afford to.

If you have had patience with me to this point permit me to put my own position to the readers of *Life and Action* in this way:

The poor who have no Christmas, the men who stand in the bread line, the women who work for less than a living wage, the garment-striking laborers, the Clergymen and working men who can not afford to marry or who should not take such a risk are all, whatever their difference may be in other respects, suffering from lack of wealth. Wealth is the term to express those things that go to minister to the wants and necessities of men, women and children. "TK" knows that to be poor is to lack wealth. My cousin Mary McDowell and Helen Pitkin, when they demand a living wage for women, know that the poor are suffering from lack of wealth. Malcolm McDowell, who, out of the kindness of his heart and great sympathy for those in need, hands out a cup of coffee and bread to the starving, knows that the poor need wealth. That man in Chicago who said the working men should not marry, also knows that to be poor is to lack wealth. They all agree that the poor need more wealth. They all want to help the poor in their need; that is shown by the beautiful spirit they display in their labor of love. But, Mr. Editor, I hear no suggestion as to how the poor can get more wealth, how the under-paid girls can get that living wage, how the garment workers can fill those empty cupboards. Think, Mr. Editor, think of a man, an employer of labor sitting in his office in Chicago and daring to say that working men cannot afford to marry.

Life and Action

Mr. Editor, the wealth of the world, all of it, is produced by *working men* laboring upon land. There is no other way to get wealth except by *applying labor to land*, and the man who produces the wealth does not get enough of it to be able to marry and support a family. The woman who clerks in the store cannot command wealth enough to live upon; the man who preaches "Glad Tidings" to the world cannot afford to marry, because he cannot get wealth enough.

Now, Mr. Editor, it seems to me and to many also who think as I do, that the *unjust conditions maintained by law* are making more paupers, more criminals, more needy than "Christmas Giving," "Bread Lines" and "Charity Associations" can ever help. While we sympathize with the kind hearts that are doing all they can to help the needy, we believe it is not only possible to do away with poverty and strikes and the resultant crime, but we want to know why such a magazine as *Life and Action* should not stand for industrial justice. We all know that God or Nature has provided the raw material out of which wealth is created by man's labor, and we all know that there is terrible suffering from lack of wealth.

If there is not enough raw material to provide wealth for all, then we might put the responsibility for the trouble on God or Nature. If there *has* been enough raw material provided, then the proper inquiry is, whose fault is it that more of it is not worked up into wealth by those who need it? Again, if there *is* enough wealth produced by men applying their labor to land, why is it so badly distributed?

We all agree that there are many who have scarcely anything in the way of wealth, thousands who have scarcely enough food, clothes, and fuel to keep them alive, and I think we all know that there are many who have more than they need. My own opinion is that the great mass of laborers do not get a just share of what they produce; and on the other hand there is a large class who do not work, or if they do, they get more

Life and Action

than they earn, and the system of taxation under which we live and die seems to be mainly responsible for these conditions.

Please follow me a minute and see if we cannot come to the same conclusion. Taxes come out of wealth. Wealth comes from applying labor to land. Wealth is divided into "Wages," "Interest" and "Rent."

WAGES is that part of wealth that men *who do the work* get.

INTEREST is that part of wealth that men who provide capital get.

RENT is that part of wealth that men get for allowing other men to use the land or raw material which God or Nature provided for the maintenance, comfort and happiness of all.

Those who see this thing as I do, want to put a stop to a few men owning the earth and making slaves of the rest; and if I might paraphrase St. Paul, I would say: "This present system of taxation under which we live, and which we ignorantly worship, it declare I unto you as being a child of the devil." When men come together into communities it is impossible that rent should not arise. A value attaches to land because of the presence of population, and the presence of population makes taxes or a public income necessary, so taxes should be taken out of rent.

The advantage which any given piece of land possesses is measured in the rent of that site or location and that advantage is conferred by the community. The fact that any particular piece of land is rentable is due to the presence of population; so if the community takes rent for taxes it takes only what it has produced co-operatively and automatically by virtue of its presence. The community in taking rent for taxes, takes nothing that the individual has produced; and if the rental value of the land were taken in taxes and all other taxes were removed, land would not be owned except by those who wanted it to use; men would not hold land idle; it would

Life and Action

not pay to do so. Idle land is responsible for idle men; idle men cannot, or ought not to expect to have wealth. Today, however, men who own valuable land can rot in idleness and still control vast wealth, while the underpaid working men and women perish for lack of the wealth produced by their labor. Now, Mr. Editor, I want to ask this; To be consistent must not men who believe in Morality as taught by the Great School, also believe in justice and in industrial conditions that are fair for all?

The almost universal idea among men seems to be that it is a desirable thing to get things fixed so one can live without work. The only way to do that is to live upon the work of others, and the method by which one can live upon the work of others with the least opprobrium attaching is to own the land that others need.

The great business of agriculture is the foundation of all wealth and employment, and the present system of taxation bears upon the farmer most severely in two ways; first, by making the things he uses more expensive, and next, by making it difficult for him and his children to secure land when needed. The indirect system of taxation make his supplies cost more and the custom of putting taxes on business and improvements, and letting vacant and half-used land go at a low rate encourages men to speculate in land and hold it idle until the labor of others and the growth of population make it valuable and that value is taken by the individual instead of going into the public pocket in the place of other taxes.

The value of land in the City of Chicago is immense and that value is due not alone to the people in Chicago but to the fact that Chicago is a great center of trade, a great distributing point, and every man who ships produce through that city, and every farmer in its district contributes to the value of the land in the city, and yet the people of Chicago allow individuals to pocket that value. We cannot settle the industrial injustice

Life and Action

until we start at the bottom. The natural relation that men bear to land, men have a natural right to the use of the earth.

No man should be permitted to assume the ownership of a piece of land unless he also assumed and discharged the obligation that goes with the use of land, and that is to pay the rental value of that piece of land to the people as a whole. Why? For this reason: Rent measures the difference between the value of any given piece of land and the poorest land in use. We can't all have the best piece of land, but we can equalize the opportunity by taking for public use the rent that will relieve labor from all other forms of taxation. We will then get free trade, free land, free men. We will do justly, which is practicing morality and we will save this civilization from the destruction that has overtaken those that have preceded us.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Malcolm H. McDowell.

The remark to which I have referred is as follows: "We want to know why such a magazine as *"Life and Action"* should not stand for industrial justice?"

If Friend McDowell were within speaking distance I would ask him whether by that remark he means to imply that *Life and Action* does not stand for "industrial justice."

It would seem so, at any rate, although I can scarcely believe he meant to convey such an idea; because there is nothing in its pages, from its first issue to the present, so far as I know, upon which to base any such conclusion.

We who are responsible for the establishment of *Life and Action* [and this includes the Great Friends who are responsible for the School of Natural Science] have endeavored to establish the fact that we stand for *justice* in all its different phases, aspects and departments, which, of course, includes "industrial justice".

Life and Action

It is true that the magazine has not dealt especially with economic or industrial problems. This, however, is solely because the field of its greatest usefulness has seemed to us to lie in other directions.

The industrial and economic problems are far more than sufficient, in themselves, to fill the pages of a magazine of this size indefinitely. And there are almost unlimited numbers of newspapers, periodicals, magazines and journals throughout the country wherein the industrial and economic problems are under constant discussion.

That field is already so effectually covered that there is no room for a magazine of this size.

The Great School, however, has its own solution of the industrial and economic problems. In this field, as in that of every other phase and field of Natural Science, it has reduced its findings to the basis of exact science. Furthermore, it has demonstrated their accuracy by actual experience.

Its conclusions, therefore, are not based upon, nor the results of, mere *beliefs*.

And when the foundation of Natural Science has been laid sufficiently broad and deep in this country, and a sufficient amount of educational work has been accomplished to constitute a substantial background, its purpose is to present its solution to the world and verify its scientific accuracy by a practical *demonstration*.

Until then we trust our Friends will not draw unwarranted nor unjust conclusions as to our position on the subject of economics, nor give to us a status inconsistent with our just deserts. —TK.

Why not a de Luxe copy of "The Great Work" for a Christmas Gift?

Life and Action

A Lesson



EAR SIR:—

I first want to thank you most sincerely for writing "*The Great Work*" which has been a very great help to me and has altered completely my outlook on life and death.

During this last month I have lost a great friend, and last week my Father passed away.

It was the first time I had seen death, and during the long vigil by his bedside, for two days and a half, I was so grateful that I had read your book. The end was wonderfully peaceful and beautiful.

Since then I have again read the last chapter in "*The Great Work*." I thought, perhaps, I might venture to ask you if you can, to set my mind at rest on a few points which trouble me just now:

1. You say that a good man who has "*Lived the Life*" faces the transition from earth without a pang. Surely the separation from those dear to me must always be painful, however strong one's faith is.

2. If many, many years elapse before we follow those who have passed away, how can we know them again and they us? If our souls have developed and grown very much in the interval, surely the recognition must be difficult. The thought that we may not know each other, is a very painful one.

3. You say that the work here may go on in the other sphere sometimes without any break. This seems to me very hard to understand, especially if one's work here is social, and among human beings.

I should be very grateful for any light you can give me on this point.

[Page 104]

Life and Action

I know that you have innumerable letters, and must ask you to forgive me for adding yet another.

Yours very truly,
Marian M.

Dear Friend:-

I do indeed have many letters, and most of them contain questions—sometimes as many as ten to fifteen. In one, not long ago, there were thirty-seven distinct questions.

But I never look upon it as a hardship to answer any questions which seem to be of real importance and inspired by worthy motives, provided I possess the requisite knowledge, and have the time at command. More especially is this true when I have reason to believe that my questioner has read the published literature of the Great School and, after diligent search, has failed to find a satisfactory answer.

In your case, my dear friend, I sympathize deeply and would esteem it both a privilege and a pleasure if I could be of real service, or even comfort.

Let me hasten, therefore, and see how far I may be able to answer your several problems:

1. I do not think you have quoted me correctly. You quote me as saying: "A good man who has *Lived the Life* faces the transition from earth without a pang," etc. I am tempted to ask you to give me the page and paragraph where you find any such statement. I do not believe you can find even the substance of such a statement.

Here is what I do say, and I quote it *verbatim*, beginning near the bottom of page 450 of "*The Great Work*":

"But what of the moral and upright man who has done his best to live a clean and righteous life? What does the transition mean to him?

"He may have no definite knowledge of what is involved in the process of physical dissolution. He may not know

Life and Action

that Morality is the foundation of Constructive Spirituality. He may not even have a definite belief or conviction that there is a life beyond the grave. He may be wholly in doubt as to the great problem of Immortality. It matters not. For if he has lived his life free from Envy, Jealousy, Fear, Anger, Lust, and other destructive and degrading appetites, passions, emotions and desires; if he has lived a clean and moral life; if he has dealt justly with his fellow man and kindly toward his dumb brothers and servants, of the animal kingdom; if he has lived as nearly as possible to the standard of his own highest ideals, and by the light of his own best knowledge, he has lived a life of co-operation with the Constructive Principle of Nature in his own Life and there is nothing that can deprive him of the benefits and rewards of such a life. Whether he has known it or not, he has been acquiring a status of Constructive Spirituality all the while. The natural results are inevitable. Nature does not deny him the legitimate fruits of his Personal Effort in line with the Constructive Principle.

"The transition of such a man is truly a triumph and a victory over the forces and conditions of nature which tend to the enslavement and oppression of the Soul after physical death. Even though for the time being it may be an unconscious triumph, nevertheless nature is consistent in that she has made her rewards as automatic and irrevocable as her penalties.

"The results of this Spirituality unconsciously acquired during physical life is that at death both the Physical Body and its Physical Magnetism fall away together leaving the Soul free to rise at once into the realm of Spiritual Nature."

The foregoing is all that is said of the good man, "the moral and upright man who has done his best to live a clean and righteous life." There is nothing in it about "facing the transition from earth without a pang."

If he were not only "good" but also "wise" as a *Master*,

Life and Action

and knew what awaited him in the life beyond *then* he might well face it "without a pang."

But I think it is safe to say, as a general rule, that the *good* men of earth who do *not know* what is awaiting them beyond physical death cling to earth with considerable tenacity, and approach death with reluctance, and oftentimes with many "pangs" of doubt and anxiety.

If they could only *know* that they were going to their rewards, many of them would go cheerfully, even gladly, save only for their regrets at separating from the loved ones of earth.

But to those on the other side of the "Valley" there is by no means so complete a separation as to those who are left behind in earthly conditions. For those beyond can come close enough to earth and earthly conditions to see and know something of the lives of their loved ones left behind.

2. And in this fact is the answer to your second question. While the changes of many years in the life beyond would, in some instances, make our recognition of our loved ones impossible; yet, the fact that they are able to keep sufficiently in touch with us to note our earthly changes, would enable them to know us even though we may not always recognize them in return.

3. I do not feel sure that I have gotten your meaning concerning the difficulties of resuming a work on the other side commenced here. Suppose a man like Lincoln passes over. Having been deeply engaged, heart and soul, in great questions of political importance, on this side, it is more than likely that he will engage in similar labors in that life. For there are men in the spiritual life and realms who devote much time and consideration to governmental problems.

Wherever there are men, women and children, there are sociological and political problems to be considered; and it is but natural that those who on earth have given deep study to such problems would find both interest and occupation in similar

Life and Action

lines of endeavor after they have passed on into the other life.

At any rate this is true, and I am unable to see any valid reason why it should not be so.

My suggestion is that you avail yourself of the first opportunity to read and study carefully the other two volumes of the Harmonic Series, and follow this with the volumes of the Supplemental Harmonic Series and the Harmonic Booklet Series. All of these are intended as "side lights" upon the great problem of Life, both here and in the hereafter.

And if you will but study the problem carefully, you will discover the interesting fact that the spiritual life is but an extension, as it were, of the physical.

The law of individual being is perfectly correlated in the two worlds, and there are no broken nor missing links in the great chain.

If you will get this great fundamental fact well established in your consciousness, it will help you to understand and appreciate the further and correlated fact that the Spirit Life and World are just as "natural" as are the physical.

Your difficulty lies in your unfamiliarity with the idea, concept and fact that the Spirit World is as truly a material world as this. The great difference is in the increased refinement and vibratory intensity of Spiritual matter. But it is matter nevertheless.

If this reply to your courteous inquiry only leads you to a further and more critical reading and study of the other books herein referred to I shall feel that I have at least pointed the way toward the further knowledge and data that will unravel many of the present mysteries which perplex you.

So mote it be.

The new Gift Edition of "The Dream Child" would make a most welcome Holiday Gift. Illustrated and beautifully bound.

Life and Action

The Struggle of a Soul



THE FOLLOWING LETTER comes from one of our readers in the native land of the Negro race. It is from a young man of twenty-two years, evidently a native of that country, who is laboring under the handicap of a very limited English education.

How strangely interesting it is that in every nook and corner of the earth, however remote from the centers of the most advanced and progressive civilization, wherever the human species is found, there is a common and universal interest in the great and ever-fascinating problem of human life and individual destiny.

We give a literal reprint of this letter, showing the spelling and construction of sentences, both of which reflect the struggle of an awakening Soul with its limitations and environment, seeking to express itself.

There is something profoundly pathetic, and yet sublimely inspiring in this call of a Soul for Light and for help.

Those who will read carefully between the lines cannot fail to observe the fact that this boy, even there in that far-away country, has been made the innocent victim of superstition, ignorance and the spirit of selfishness and greed. Evidently he has come in contact with some fakir or fraud who has told him of the supposed miraculous powers and virtues of certain mystic charms and talismans.

He is struggling to get an education, and has evidently gotten the idea that we may be able to send him a "pill" or a "medicine" of magical powers that will give him added mental powers and enable him to learn with less effort.

Life and Action

It is a privilege to be permitted to write to this innocent boy a long and careful letter explaining that there are no such "medicines" nor "pills" and that somebody has lied to him, deceived him, and told him false stories merely to get his money.

Here is his letter:

"From W. B. A., Berracoe, via. Winnebah,
to The Indo-American Magazine Company.

Dear Gentlemen: I beg most respectfully to inform you this letter to say that, dear friends, do not mind that, I have kept so long before I write you. But on account of some thing made me here, I have received the catalogue which contain the books as I want. Here is the book name, the great work, price eight shillings and four pence, and five pence register.

For try first, and then if make me good, then I begin to send many orders for your wonderful books which you mentioned in the catalogue. I hope you will send the great work quickly; as soon as you receive this order Because I want it very urgent, total amount eight shillings and nine pence. You may kindly try your best attention & send me a large catalogue contain the circulars, and also if can supply me any medicine for learn school lessons, let me have sample first, and state the price to me.

Dear friends I be lieve you that, the medicine which I ask, you got some in your part, medicine that, if any person, or, devil want to kill me and then if I use the medicine, the devil cannot kill me, that is the medicine I want. But if you can do this, try send me small catalogue and show me all the medicine names & prices, together with school medicine.

P.T.O.

Try to send me life and action every month, send twelve issues, magazine, suggestions, I hope you will send all I want. I beg remain dear friends, Yours faithfully, W.B.A.

I am a boy of standard three. Therefore I wish best
[Page 110]

Life and Action

medicine for learn school lessons. Here is my age twenty-two years now.

Please sir if you have power pills for learn school lessons let me know in your catalog together with the price."



True Altruism

True Altruism is that state or condition of the soul in which all of its energies and activities are centered upon the needs and requirements of our common humanity. It is that stage of development where the well-being and the advancement of others become the normal occupation of intelligence. It is that stage of experience where pleasure, recreation and entertainment are found in labor for others. It is that point of individual life beyond which our happiness consists in the transmission of the truths we have learned and the benefits we have enjoyed.

True Altruism is that state of being in which the intelligent soul increases its happiness through what it may bestow rather than through what it may gain. It is that state in which will and desire are concentrated upon giving instead of acquiring.

To the completed individual Altruism is a joy and a privilege. It is neither a duty nor a sacrifice.

Altruism thus interpreted, is the opposite pole of egoism. It means the substitution of "you" and "yours" for "I", "me" and "mine".

—Harmonics of Evolution.—p. 454

Life and Action

Questions and Correspondence

Answered by the TK.



QUESTION:

What meaning, import and significance does the Great School place upon Heredity? Since it is clearly set forth in the text-books of the School that each Individual Intelligence is responsible for its own conscious acts, it would seem to follow that

Heredity, in the sense it is ordinarily understood, namely:— the transmission of desires, tendencies, habits, etc., of the parents to their children, could not be possible. It would seem that all a parent could furnish would be the physical instrument or body, and an *environment* that would tend to cultivate in the child the habits and tendencies of the parent.

C. J. W.

ANSWER—

On a vividly remembered occasion in the course of my early instruction in the Great School, I asked my Instructor a similar question as to Astrological influences. The answer I received was, in substance, as follows:—

“Each planet exerts a magnetic influence upon every other planet—the Earth included. The degree of its influence at any given time depends upon its distance and volume.”

“The sum total of planetary influence at any given time upon the Earth is called the ‘Earth’s Astrological Setting’ at that time.”

“Now the astrological setting at the instant an infant
[Page 112]

Life and Action

breathes its first breath of life has an influence upon that child's life to the extent of giving it a general *tendency* which may or may not become perceptible in the course of its life."

"But remember, that each individual man or woman is always 'greater than his astrological setting.' Otherwise he could not be held accountable under the Law of 'Personal Responsibility'"

This answer, paraphrased, would apply with equal force to the influence of heredity.

There can be little doubt that there is a "Law of Heredity". This seems, at any rate, to be taken for granted quite generally.

But to whatever extent this may account for the general leanings of the individual in point of his tastes and desires; there is not the least doubt in the world that man in his individual nature is greater than the influence of heredity. That is to say, he has an inherent power which enables him to overcome the gravitative influence of heredity and determine his own destiny.

If this were not true, your suggestion as to his lack of responsibility would be true beyond all doubt.

The position of the Great School on the subject is, that even granting that Heredity, Astrology and Environment all exert an influence upon the individual; nevertheless, all of these combined are not sufficient to abrogate the Law of Personal Responsibility and Moral Accountability.

Man is not a "Creature of Heredity", nor of "Astrology" nor of "Environment", nor of all these combined.

Man is "Master of his own Destiny".

Heredity is but one of the elements to indicate to him the definite and special lines toward which to direct his personal effort.

The "Working Tools" with which Nature has invested and endowed him enable him to overcome the gravitative

Life and Action

influence of all adverse elements and conditions, and build his Temple of individual Character true to the lines of his own ideals.

But for this fact he would indeed be an irresponsible automaton, a helpless play-thing of Heredity and Environment.



QUESTION:--

On page 447 of "*The Great Work*", it is stated that a very large percentage of children, dying, pass quickly to the first Spiritual Sphere.

Question:—If a Soul came into physical life from its then habitation in the magnetic field, would such a one pass to the first Spiritual sphere, or return to its status before birth?

Question:—Would a child born to parents who were held in the the bonds of psychic subjection, and itself, during its short earthly life constantly envired by those subjective conditions, be deterred in its upward passage by reason of those influences?
C. J. W.

ANSWER:—

1. This is a purely individual problem, depending upon conditions both internal and external, not all of which can be determined in advance.

If it be granted that reincarnation is a fact of nature, it is only one of the links in the chain of evolutionary influences.

Your question would seem to be another way of approaching the problem of Heredity, etc. .

But there is something in the very essence of individual being which makes the individual master over all the devoluntary powers and influences that play upon him.

Life and Action

On this basis, it is clear that the level to which we rise upon the Spiritual planes of life is not determined by the level from which one enters physical life, but that from which he leaves it.

It is much more largely determined by the use he has made of his opportunity while here and the manner in which he has *Lived the Life*.

2. Temporarily a child which has had no time in which to overcome those conditions would be retarded in its evolutionary growth. But after it has been in the Spirit life until it has become self-reliant the problem becomes one of individual application again. And keeping in mind always the fundamental fact that every individual, in its essential nature, is Master of its Destiny, it is not difficult to understand that it is more a question of time and its use than we are wont to admit.



QUESTION;—

On page 185 of "*The Great Work*", TRUTH is defined as "the established relation which the facts of Nature sustain to each other and to the Individual Intelligence or Soul of Man."

In discussing this definition with a friend recently, he contended that Truth could have no existence except in Individual Consciousness. I maintained that Truth was Truth, irrespective of man's conception of it; that facts and their relations were real and existent, no matter what the Individual relations might be, or whether or not any Individual was conscious of their existence; that otherwise, nothing could exist as a fact of Nature, or have any relations with other facts, until some Individual discovered such fact, which seems to me to be an absurdity.

Life and Action

It would seem from this definition that Truth has a double aspect, [a] the relation which the facts of Nature sustain to each other; [b] the relation they sustain to the Individual Intelligence. In other words, Truth is both absolute and relative. Absolute Truth, the actual facts and their actual relations; relative Truth, the concept the Individual Intelligence has of those facts, which is Truth, or apparent Truth, to the Individual. For example, the earth is round, and revolves about the sun. Men once sincerely thought the earth flat, and circled daily by the sun, which was the commonly accepted view for centuries.

But man's opinion [his conception of relations of Nature's facts] in no wise modified or changed the real facts and their actual relations. When men grew wiser, the actual facts and their actual relations did not change, but man's conception, understanding and opinions of those facts [that is to say, his relations to those facts] did change. Therefore Truth itself is absolute and changeless; man's conception of those facts is changeable, each phase being Truth to the Individual for the time being.

Question;—What is the correct view?

C. J. W.

ANSWER—

Your view of the subject coincides with my own.

In this connection, let me tell you something that I am sure will be of special interest to you, and possibly others also.

It is this: I have just placed in the hands of the Manager of the Indo-American Book Co.—a manuscript of a public discussion between Prof. Heinrich Hensoldt, Ph. D. and myself. It was first published in *The Arena*, of Boston, during 1894-5, and therein this very subject, in at least one aspect, was at issue.

"*The Reality of Matter*"—a new book that will appear about the time this issue of *Life and Action* reaches you, contains a
[Page 116]

Life and Action

republication of that discussion, with some most interesting illustrations of the truth of the philosophy of a big, ugly, hungry bear.

This "Bear Story" of mine, [wherewith the bear takes issue with a "Hoary Philosopher of Hindoostan" on the subject of "The Reality of Matter" and *proves* the correctness of his philosophy to the entire satisfaction of the "Hoary Philosopher" who held that "*Matter is a Delusion*"] is held to be a most complete and unanswerable verification of the truth of your position.

When the book is out I trust you will do me the honor to read my "Bear Philosophy" therein contained, and tell me if it answers your question to your satisfaction.

If not, I think I shall have to turn my "Cartesian Bear" loose and *sic* him on *you*.

He is *most convincing* in the way he does things, and in the force with which he elucidates his philosophy of life.

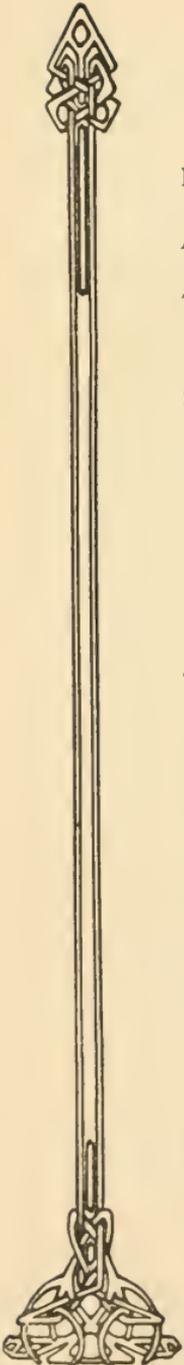
Death and Hope

Peace! peace! Raise not the dead, vain Memory!
Thou canst not bring me my Beloved, nor,
For all my yearning, to this spot restore
The life with which it thrilled of old, when She
Was by my side to watch yon sparkling sea
Laugh back at the blue heaven and lap the shore
With lingering waves, whose subtle music bore
No burden then of our mortality.

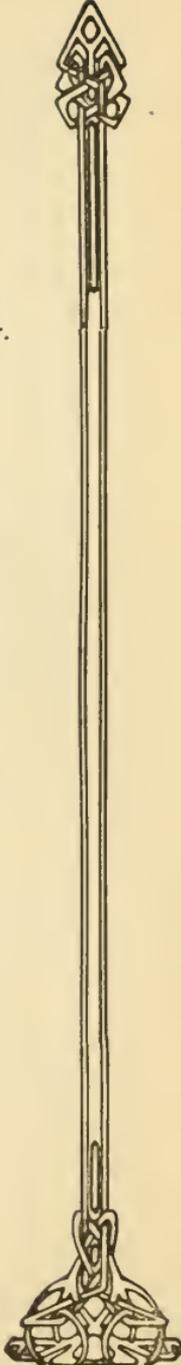
Rather I lift my lonely heart from hence
To thoughts of that far sphere within those skies
Where, wrapped in splendor from our human sense,
My lost saint hath her meed of Paradise:
And dream she, too, is longing—even there—
For that old love that once made earth so fair.

George Townshend.

[Page 117]



Beyond



It seemeth such a little way to me
Across to that strange country, Beyond;
And yet not strange, for it has grown to be
The home of those of whom I am so fond,
They make it seem familiar, and most dear,
As journeying friends bring distant countries near.

So close it lies, that when my sight is clear
I seem to see the gleaming of that strand;
I know I *feel* those who have gone from here
Come near enough to even touch my hand.
I often think but for our veiled eyes,
We would find Heaven right round about us lies.

I cannot make it seem a day to dread
When from this dear earth, I shall journey out,
To that still dearer country of the dead,
And join the lost ones, so long dreamed about.
I love this world, yet I shall love to go
And meet the friends who wait for me, I know.

I never stand above the bier and see
The seal of death set on some well-loved face,
But that I think—One more to welcome me
When I shall cross the intervening space
Between this land, and that one Over There:
One more to make the strange Beyond seem fair,
And so to me, there is no sting to death.

And so the grave has lost its victory.
It is but crossing, with suspended breath
And white, set face, a little strip of sea,
To find the loved ones on the other shore,
More beautiful, more precious than before.

—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.