

Mothers' Occult Digest

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PROJECT: Booklet being compiled: "Research in Healing" 2nd edition.

Children's Work: Cooperation with Order of the Round Table; distribution of booklet, "Happiness Through Helping," just completed.

A Theosophical Alphabet Book is being written and illustrated by Maria Salazar

Maternity: Chairman, Marie J. Hayes, Pittsburgh, Penna.

PROJECT: NATURAL CHILDBIRTH PROGRAM being organized, representatives being chosen from each State to give information and literature.

Publications: (Ojai, California): Sarah Jordan, Elizabeth Illig, Goldie Kabots, Helen Stevenson, Marie Aronson.

Meditation

By RONA MORRIS WORKMAN
(Dallas, Oregon)

O Divine Mother,
Close to me in the Silence I hear
 the silver chime of Thy anklets,
But I cannot find Thee.
Lonely, I call in the stillness,
Groping through the shadows of Maya,
Seeking Thee.
I feel Thy presence,
And catch the drifting fragrance of Thy hair;
Tender fingers sometimes touch my cheek,
And the soft whisper of a silken robe
Tells of Thy nearness,
Yet I cannot see Thee.
Mother, show me Thy face!
Still this throbbing hunger of my heart!

Editorial

THE GRAIL OF MOTHERHOOD

“Even more glorious than the sacred offices of King, Priest and Teacher is the priesthood of every woman without exception — priest of the Motherhood of God, and of the Love of God in mysterious exaltation. This Motherhood may be a Motherhood in pure Will, or it may be a Motherhood in pure Wisdom, or it may be a Motherhood in Creative Activity. Ever is it the heart of Life and the Holy Grail of all noble virtues. Hear the words of the mighty Lawgiver of the Aryan Race, Him whom Hindus call Lord Vaivasvata the Manu :

“Where women are honoured, the gods rejoice. Where they are not honoured, the family perishes. The teacher of the higher knowledge exceedeth ten teachers of the lower knowledge in the title to respect; the father exceedeth him a hundred times; but the mother exceedeth the father a thousand times in the weighty virtue of teacher, and in the right to reverence. The order of the house-holder supports all other orders, even as the air supports all living things, and the mother is the heart of the household.’”

(DR. GEORGE S. ARUNDALE, from *Gods in The Becoming*)

In this number of our MOTHERS' OCCULT DIGEST we honor Mother's Day, and the articles selected are offerings in homage to Her, Our Lady and through Her to Her reflection in the world — each human mother. Dr. Arundale describes woman as “an ever-living holy grail for all that has made life noble and beautiful in the past, that in her own pure living she may pour the fructifying waters of its greatness upon the present, and yield unsullied to those who shall come after her the holy cup of ideals and sacrifice”. Each one of us should this Mother's Day hold a mirror before her *inner* self and try to discover how we measure up to such noble sentiments.

It is such a pity that in Christianity only the Catholics stress the ever-present nearness of Our Lady. Theosophists have been likened to Catholics in this respect, whereas in reality, the “Virgin Myth” antedates Christianity and may be found in all the great religions. Naturally, the mother of every Savior has been revered down through the ages and their lives are similar.

Jesus was born of a human mother as other men are born, the strange doctrine of Immaculate Conception merely being an attempt to explain the story of the overshadowing of the Blessed Virgin by the Holy Ghost. (Strangely enough the religions preceding Christianity also have this same idea of Gods espousing virgins whose offspring became “Saviors”. However, to have been chosen as the mother of Jesus, Mary must have been a rare soul. Her sufferings are said to have carried Her far along the upward path, and She was permitted, we are told, to enter the Deva or Angel evolution when She had completed Her cycle of human births and the prayers of Her devotees through the centuries since She was the Jewish Madonna of Nazareth have greatly helped to elevate Our Lady to Her present post as Queen of the Angels.

Angelic Aid

If mothers could only realize that "nearer than hands and feet" is the World Mother, and that Her angel helpers are ever standing by to lift our burdens in various ways! The household drudge would find her lot far easier if she could feel the invisible hands of the household angels — the Lares and Penates of the Greeks — trying to lighten her burdens. The distraught mother nursing her sick child should know that wings of the healing angels are hovering over her. The anxious mother at her office desk could work with less strain could she but realize that guardian angels are really *true*, and her little ones are ever under their protecting gaze while she is away from home. There are also, awaiting mankind's call, the angels of power, angels of nature, the angels of music, and of beauty and art.

Reading such an article as Phoebe Payne's *A Glimpse of Our Lady* (at the birth of a child) should make a mother very humble when she realizes how such a vast angelic retinue accompanies even one little human babe from the Heaven World through the Gateway of Birth. The incoming soul is accorded equal tenderness from Angel hands, no matter what the stage of evolution.

Cooperation With Angels

Our theosophical Teachers have always urged closer cooperation with the angels, and the inspired books by Geoffrey Hodson (being clairvoyant researches as well as definite teachings given to him by certain angels) are most valuable in this respect. Mothers, especially, need this help, and the following quotations from Mr. Hodson's book, *The Coming of The Angels*, are offered with the hope that in our Group we may attain that conscious cooperation with the angels and may show the way to our sisters in the work-a-day world.

MURIEL LAUDER LEWIS, *Editor*

O Mother Divine touch our eyes that we may see Thee; touch our minds that we may know Thee; touch our hearts that we may love Thee; that we may ever joyfully serve Thee who art the radiance of all beauty, the wisdom of the ages, and the love of all life.

The Coming of the Angels

Guardian Angels

“The gentler type of guardian angels, rightly invoked, would surround the home with love, protection, and blessing. They appeal for more quietness, harmony, and spirituality in the home, saying that we have erected an almost impassable barrier of noise and materialism between our world and theirs. A brief prayer for divine and angelic guardianship of home, of children, of the aged and the sick, daily repeated, will secure those privileges and bestow upon the home an atmosphere of beauty and of peace. . . .”

Healing Angels

“The aid of the healing angels under the Archangel Raphael, who is their head, may be obtained by prayer for all who suffer. Hospitals and sick-rooms could be filled with healing angels and healing power, if man would but spiritualize the healing art and regularly invoke spiritual and angelic healing help for the sick. If human minds can but be opened to these facts, the angel beside the bed of pain might become a far greater and far more living reality, whether in the private home or in greater hospitals; and the whole work of healing and medical research might receive a tremendous impulse as the Archangel Raphael and his hosts descended amongst us and assisted both in the healing of disease and in medical research. The prayer, *‘May the healing power of the Lord Christ descend upon (Christian and surname), and may the holy angels encompass him’*, uttered with deep intent, will always prove an effective aid to the sick.”

Work in Groups

“Eliminate self, purify the soul; then call the angels to your aid in the name of pure and selfless love. No work that you may undertake will ever go unblest if, motivated by love, you call the angels to your side. There is no form of suffering which you cannot relieve, no evil which you cannot help to dissipate, no darkness into which you cannot bring light by the combined magic of pure and selfless love and the invocation of the angels to your aid.

“With this knowledge you may attack every evil in your midst, for before the power which it bestows all evil melts away. Seek the suffering with which your world is filled; shrink not from the pain, nor hesitate to call us to your side, however deep the anguish, however dark the sin and shame. Our united power and love will suffice to banish the pain and illuminate the darkness.

“Those who would answer to this call must organize themselves in bands and groups, and with concentrated thought and determined will

invoke the angels into their midst. Illumined by the love of God, and united by the will to serve, together we may labour to drive away all darkness, dispel all evil, heal all disease, destroy all ignorance, and bring the light of wisdom into the hearts and minds of men. We may purify the atmosphere of every town, that all the children who are born therein may come forth into a world of light.”

(From *The Coming of The Angels* by GEOFFREY HODSON)

A Centre In Switzerland

By HELMA KOOL

(Holland)

Undoubtedly our globe has several spots which are natural centres for some spiritual force or being, not only in the East but also in the West, in America and in Europe. A centre in nature is more likely than any “artificial” centre to be strongly connected with great spirits of nature and with Devas.

It seems that great lakes are especially attractive to the angels of Our Lady. Perhaps the reason for this may be found in connection with the fact that water is the most magnetic of the four elements and so an excellent channel for the transmitting and stepping down of higher influences down into our physical world. The angels of Our Lady are chiefly concerned with this work of transmitting nature’s finer forces, tapping them from the more hidden sources of spiritual healing and upliftment.

In Switzerland the lakes seem to be even more magnetic than in our flat countries, probably because of the huge rocks and glacier-mountains surrounding them, which seem to be directly linked with a certain mighty power of the Inner Government so that this country is like an island of peace and good-will amid the tossing waves of political and economic struggling Europe.

The lake of Geneva appeared to be so linked up with the Brotherhood by a vast host of angelic lieutenants, residing chiefly in the hidden recesses of Mt. Blanc’s snowy edifice. But it was especially the Lago Maggiore that appeared to be vividly related to Our Lady and to Her angel-chief St. Michael, to whom also this Huizen-Centre is so closely linked. Not only the transparent water of the lake and the mighty mountains of ancient rock all around it, but the sublime air gave the atmosphere some delightfully pure and radiant quality. Many little chapels and wayside sanctuaries are to be seen up the slopes, usually containing some image or painted vision of the Queen of Heaven appearing in a cave.

When staying in the neighbourhood of Locarno, the first night we paid

an astral visit to a sanctuary, the physical existence of which I was but faintly informed. The next morning, however, this sanctuary proved to be dedicated to the Madonna del Sasso, lying halfway up the hills on a high rock with a most wonderful view over the blue lake. During our astral excursion we were first taken into a "holy place", which looked more like a museum (as indeed the church of the Del Sasso does!) and it was very disturbing to see so many people walking and talking all around (astral tourists?) in a mood far from devotional. However, one very strong and steady stream of power and benediction was constantly pervading the sanctuary, and when we examined its origin more closely, we found that this incessant stream proceeded from the main altar on which was seen a small golden statue of St. Michael. He wore a tiny but most brilliant diamond between his brows and the force was being poured through this jewel. (I could not detect this statue in the physical plane church, only a golden tabernacle.)

Suddenly now, behind the altar with the golden statuette, a huge stern rock became visible, like an ancient pillar of strength; and this rock showed a giant face, dark and full of slumbering energy, and of mystery. It was the face of Brahma.

When we became aware of this mighty appearance of the Third Aspect of the Hindu Trimurti, and at the same time of the many catholic visitors kneeling before the altar and making their crosses before this hidden deity, we had to smile. What would these people think if they knew and could see what stood behind their idol!

The next morning, when sorting out and putting together the details and fragments of our nightly excursion, we were struck by the keynote underlying all. Is not St. Michael the chief-angel of all the vast hosts of devas, whom we may regard not only as the right hand of Our Lady, but even as Her immediate representative? In Brahma, the Third Aspect of the Trinity, may we not recognize the aspect of the Holy Ghost, or again that of the World mother? So in this sanctuary two mighty forces, distinct from each other, and yet in reality one and the same, were working in a wonderful team; that of the Cosmic World-mother (Isis) and that of our "human" Mother-of-all, Our Lady. In this way the Sanctuary of the Madonna del Sasso enshrines marvellous occult forces which are constantly being poured out in an unbroken flow of power, purity and peace over the neighbourhood.

Especially noteworthy was the element of power, of Shakti, in the atmosphere, and yet at the same time that quality of exquisite sweetness and holiness which made one long to kneel for hours in this stream of healing light. The intenseness of the stream was neither feminine nor masculine, but it contained the most precious elements of both aspects, wrought together indivisibly unto some altogether higher "substance of Light".

In this combination there was a wonderful play of the powers of the

Holy Ghost, Whose "Laboratory" is said (by C. W. Leadbeater in his studies on the Chakra's) to lie hidden deeply in the heart of our earth, where lies the secret source of Kundalini or the Serpent power, the glowing fire of the "underworld". This ancient rock-force was gathered in the highly magnetized golden Image of St. Michael and then poured forth through the sparkling diamond in his forehead (the seat of creative mind; again Brahma!).

From all this we may conclude how the work of Our Lady is neither specifically feminine nor masculine, and how in reality She can be neither woman nor man; for She verily is a Deva, the highest Deva or Shakti of all. . . .

(Reprinted from *St. Michael's News* of Huizen, Holland)

A Mother's Smile

By MARIA SALAZAR

(Cerrillos, New Mexico)

The merriest smile I've ever seen
Is in the eyes of a mother of ten.
It comes from inside somewhere
And never is quite gone —
Even when she is serious!
It is reflected in the eyes of
All her family.

One day she was standing
Beside me, watching
An upholstery demonstration
At our Extension Club,
Which she finds time to attend.
I was thinking of that, but mostly
Of her smile — and how it came
From within.

Quietly she raised her eyes to mine,
And without preamble, said,
"Sometimes things go wrong —
My husband is tired and cross
He makes angry speeches —
And I stand before him, my eyes
Lowered respectfully.

"When he pauses, I say, 'God bless me',
And at the end again, 'God bless me',
Aloud, and he hears,
And because he knows my heart
Pretty soon he looks at me
And laughs. That is all."

Motherhood and Health

By DORA KUNZ

(Port Chester, New York)

Healing has a great deal to do with the state of mind. Faith is, without doubt, also an important ingredient, but the ability to relax the emotions and mind is also a necessity. What is often a barrier between us and the natural flow of healing is that at a time of crisis we begin to worry about our troubles. When this happens, a block is formed in our emotions which stops the hygienic flow of energies through our bodies. Thus we become disorganized within ourselves.

Mothers have a heavy responsibility, as their attitude is often reflected in their children. Very few of us realize that mothers and their children are so closely bound together in their emotions. Personally, I believe that mothers affect their children more permanently and powerfully in the emotional world than in the physical. What we feel is as important as what we do, but that is hard to realize. A child will often absorb his mother's feelings without either being aware of this, and friction often results, because a child has a natural resistance,—a desire to protect himself from his mother's enveloping feelings.

These things have to be kept in mind especially during sickness. If a person is perfectly healthy, he has a certain rhythm, and through this, in his constant contact with others, there is a natural inflow and outward flow. In other words, when we contact other people, we take in a certain part of their feeling; but reflect most of it; thus we are not all day long upset by others. But when we are sick, the rhythm gets broken, which in turn breaks down our protection against others. In the case of a child, he is sometimes buffeted by his mother's feelings. Now if a mother could keep calm and relaxed when the child is ill, and make herself a channel for the healing power around us, she could be a great help in transmitting this to the child, especially because of the close relationship. But we must realize that the healing power must go through the network of our emotions and thus becomes colored by them. A relaxed state of mind is therefore of the utmost importance.

So many wish to undertake vital and magnetic healing when they are fundamentally unfit for it. A person who wishes to do this must be full of vitality and have a cheerful disposition, but many undertake this work who are in ill health, and as a result they often bring repercussions on themselves, and the good they do is doubtful. If we wish to do healing, we must be clear channels, and have an impersonal attitude. I think this is the best protection for ourselves as well as the patient. In the case of a mother, if she is calm and steady within herself and desires to be a clear channel for this healing power, she can help the child. Furthermore, in times of shock

and sorrow, mothers' adjustments and reactions will be reflected in their children.

We need constant practise in being steady within ourselves, as this means we are inwardly harmonized. We must look to that first, and not expect outside forces to use us when we are disorganized within. Also, mothers in the United States must realize that the burden of the mental and emotional health of our future generations rests to a great extent in their hands.

Some Effects of Smoking

By ALTON OCHSNER, M. D.

Smoking is so often a problem with children and adolescents — and women, unfortunately, that Dr. Ochsner, head of the Ochsner Clinic, New Orleans, was asked for a statement. Our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Gayle Aiken, have kindly permitted us to reprint this article in our DIGEST.—Editor

Contrary to popular belief and to most advertisements, smoking exerts a depressant effect upon the human body and is not a stimulant. In addition to being a severe depressant, smoking is habit forming and becomes an addiction almost as great as that of morphine.

The effects of smoking on the body vary considerably because most smokers inhale and all draw the smoke into the mouth. This produces a severe irritation of the mucous membrane of the mouth, the larynx, the trachea and bronchial tubes. The incidence of cancer of the lip, the tongue, the larynx and the lung are directly proportionate to the incidence of smoking. Although it requires many years' use of tobacco and the occurrence of cancer of the respiratory tract. In addition to causing cancer, smoking produces considerable irritation of the bronchial mucous membrane and is responsible for cough and chronic bronchitis.

Smoking increases the gastric acidity and is responsible for the precipitation and persistence of ulcers of the stomach and duodenum, in individuals who are subject to such conditions; in fact, it is impossible for a patient with an ulcer of the duodenum to get well as long as he continues to smoke. In addition to the effect on the secretion of the stomach, smoking increases the irritability of the intestinal tract. Whereas this is not of much importance to many individuals, those whose intestinal tract is abnormally sensitive are greatly affected by the use of tobacco.

Smoking produces a severe contraction of blood vessels and is largely

responsible for the increased incidence of heart disease (coronary thrombosis) in relatively young men. It is well known concerning persons who have diseases of the blood vessels, particularly the arteries involving the extremities, the legs and arms, that smoking is a precipitating factor and is responsible for persistence of symptoms in spite of other forms of treatment; in fact, a patient who has susceptible arteries will develop a gangrene of an extremity which will necessitate amputation if he continues to smoke.

Although smoking causes a spasm or contraction of the arteries, ultimate obliteration of the arteries can occur because of the changes that occur in the arteries which previously closed to clotting. Thus a vicious circle is set up in these individuals. Milk leg (thrombophlebitis) which is a condition affecting the vein is greatly aggravated by smoking and the persistent swelling which is so troublesome to these unfortunate individuals is aggravated by the use of tobacco.

Certain forms of blindness are precipitated by the use of tobacco, although this is relatively rare. This complication occurs sufficiently frequently that physicians are on the lookout for it.

(Courtesy *Child-Family Digest*, August, 1949)

Hidden Effects of Smoking

(As noted by an Observer with
Extended Vision)

“Just as the physical nerve-vibrations are deadened by the poison (nicotine), so are both astral (emotional) and mental undulations. For occult progress a man needs to have his vehicles as finely strung as possible, so that they may be ready at any moment to respond in sympathy to any kind of vibration. Therefore he does not want to have his thought-waves deadened and his astral body weighed down with foul and poisonous particles . . . no one who can see the effects on the higher vehicles of this disastrous custom can avoid the realisation that it does serious harm.

“Its effect in the astral world after death is a remarkable one. The man has so filled his astral body with poison that it has stiffened under its influence, and has become unable to work properly or to move freely. For a long period the man is as though paralysed — able to speak, yet debarred from movement, and almost entirely cut off from all higher influences. In process of time he emerges from this unpleasant predicament, when the part of his astral body which is affected by this poison has gradually worn away.”

— C. W. LEADBEATER in *The Hidden Side of Things*
“How We Influence Ourselves by Our Habits”

DO YOU KNOW THAT

Having a Baby can be Wonderful?

By LENORE SPENCER DAY
(Mobile, Alabama)

Having a baby can be really wonderful. That is if you prepare yourself as much for it as you would for learning to type or learning to cook. If you take a little time and forethought to do your job well, it may well be a high point in your life, a time when you may view the world from the mountain tops. It can be a glorious experience if you make it so. There are a few simple rules, but with them you can give birth to your child just as Nature intended that you should, with scarcely any pain, without fear, and perhaps fully conscious.

The theory of natural childbirth has been developed by an English obstetrician, Dr. Grantly Dick Read, who has spent all of his professional skill for many years in trying to find the causes for pain in normal childbirth so that they may be eradicated and almost every woman given a chance to have her children naturally. As a pioneer in this field his theories have been accepted by the American Medical Association (though they have been mistakenly associated by misinformed persons with hypnotism and brutally denying a woman any relief from pain if she has it). The truth is that through other doctors and hospitals his marvelous treatment of women in childbirth has brought happiness where there might have been misery, love where there might have been hate. Dr. Read's theories have been set forth in detail with full technical hypotheses in his book, *Childbirth Without Fear*.

Pain cannot be found in any other normal process of nature. A just and loving God would not have made the primary step in life painful only to woman when all other normal life is painless. Animals do not have pain when bearing their young; they have only some very hard work which they know by instinct just how to do. Somewhere along the way humans lost that knack, and now we have to learn it all over again. Women who have their babies naturally have very little pain; some describe the experience as the hardest work they have ever done, but well worth the effort.

Whether you know it or not, you have been collecting ideas about what having a baby must be like from the very first time you ever knew just how it came about. Perhaps your first thought about it was, "Does it hurt?" All through the years you have stored away all the stories that Aunt Fannie's niece and Cousin John's sister told you, and most of them were just about as enlightening as a murder mystery. In fact, the best and juiciest morsel which they claim is, "I nearly died!" Unless you were a very rare person

who had friends who really liked having a baby and had very "easy times" you got an overdose of "scare stories". As soon as you know you are going to have a baby, all of these stories start hemming you in and you expect tortures of the Inquisition from the very start.

The first thing to do is to remember all the stories about how easy it was, and throw all those old wives' tales into the ash can. Then settle down and get some positive, constructive ideas into your mind. In the first place, very, very few women ever die in childbirth. Modern medicine has made remarkable progress in eradicating the deaths from childbirth. If the mother has some disease which having a child would complicate, most doctors do not permit her to carry the child. If she is not able to have the child normally, a cesarean section may be performed. The miracle drugs, penicillin and sulfa, blood plasma and transfusions are available for any emergencies. Remember that stories and novels featuring a mother dying when her baby is born are playing up a slightly unusual occurrence. If it were not a little unusual, if it were the common thing, it would not be worth writing a novel about. Most of the deaths from childbirth occur in pathological cases which the doctor is well prepared for from his previous knowledge of the case. More deaths occur in cesarean section operations, because a cesarian section is a major operation. Many other deaths termed "childbirth" may have been illegal abortions which result in death. You are probably more likely to die in an automobile accident than in childbirth.

You must replace all of the ugly thoughts of fear with faith that you will have your baby in a normal, painless way. Do not fear pain, because if you have pain an anesthetic is ready. You must not fear anything. Do not even fear to fear. Supplant any thoughts you have which are fearful with positive thoughts that are happy.

Natural childbirth is based on the theory that when you are afraid, your body immediately reacts by tensing itself. When you have been very much afraid of something you can probably remember saying that you were "too scared to move", or "scared stiff". When you are afraid of having a baby your body reacts in just the same way. It becomes tense and rigid, and along with it are all the muscles of your body which must relax for the passage of the baby. Along with your clenched fist and screwed-up face all of the muscles of the uterus and cervix are tensed and tightened.

Nature is going to have her way whether you want her to or not, so it is better to want nature's way. Even though you have tightened those muscles which must relax to let the baby through, nature goes right on opening and the muscles which are pushing the baby down keep right on pushing. This produces laceration of the tissues which the baby is being pushed against, and strain on the muscles which nature is trying to open and you to close. All of this is what produces pain.

It is a never-ending cycle. You are afraid, your body is tensed and you have pain, the pain makes you more afraid and so on in a never-ending

cycle. You can change all this by eradicating the fear. If the fear is gone, there will be no tension and hence no pain.

The best help you can have in your war against fear is knowing exactly what sensations to expect and exactly what is going on. Then nothing can startle you into fright. You will be fully prepared.

Have your doctor explain to you the development of the baby, the changes which come about in your body and exactly what happens when the baby is born. Always follow his advice as strictly as you can for he has your best interests in mind.

After you know the basic fundamentals, you are ready to find out what actually happens in a natural birth. The labor, as the time from the very first contractions until the baby is born is called, is usually divided into three stages. The first stage consists of the opening of the womb, or uterus, the second encompasses the actual birth and the third the expelling of the placenta, or after-birth.

During the first stage all you will feel, if you have schooled yourself well and learned to relax, are tiny little jumps as if the baby were kicking, only they will be rhythmic. These are called contractions. Until the cervix is fully opened by these contractions of the muscles, the baby will not be pushed down. If you strain or try to "bear down" with any of the first contractions you will not do a bit of good, and may do a lot of harm. When you "bear down" you will push the baby against the half-opened cervix (or neck of the womb) which will result in tears and laceration. The only pain that could be felt now is caused by the immense stretching of the cervix at the very last of the first stage, and lasts only a few minutes just before the baby is ready to be born. This first stage is the longest, and is usually longer in a primipara, or a woman having her first child, than in a multipara, one who has had several. The important thing is to relax as completely as you can with each contraction, just "give in" to them. There is not anything to worry about, so don't let yourself get hysterical or afraid.

The second stage is the actual birth of the baby. After the cervix is fully opened so that there is no resistance to nature's plan the baby's head and body are pushed through. During this period there will be much harder contractions and you will feel compelled to bear down. After the cervix is fully dilated there is no danger in this. You will want to relax between contractions but during them you will work mighty hard. You may feel very dozey and sleepy between contractions. That is just nature's way of helping you conserve your strength and letting you rest in between.

At the end of the second stage you may feel a sensation of splitting. This is just a challenge to try harder to relax because you are really not going to split even though you think you are. If you can relax, the chances are that there will be few if any tears. If you need an anesthetic at any time it is always right there.

Usually as soon as your baby cries it produces a psychological effect

on you. The uterus goes right down into a hard lump which causes most of the bleeding to stop. The placenta is expelled in the last stage.

Certainly it might be easier not to know anything about it. You would not have to concentrate on relaxing and on what was going on. You would also miss the most thrilling moment a woman can experience. When you first hear your baby's cry you will feel like you never have before. You will feel positively elated, and no one will ever be able to talk you into "going to sleep" to have a baby. You will welcome your baby with open arms, and always remember that instead of anxious fearful moments and suffering, he brought you the most wonderful moment of your life. You will not have to learn to love him. You will love him from the moment he is born.

Doctor Read's first golden rule for natural childbirth is knowledge. The second, relaxation, is of equal importance. Not only must the muscles of your body be kept free from tension anywhere but they must be relaxed beyond normal, also. If you are going to have a natural birth without pain you must learn to relax.

The best time for you to start learning to relax is about the fourth month as soon as you have felt the quickening. If you are troubled with morning sickness or any other form of nervousness it is best to begin immediately, for if you can relax these symptoms of nervousness will disappear.

It is recommended that you take one-half to one hour for your relaxation. If you do not want to spend this long, just remember that it is the most important work you can do. Dr. Read believes that you need a half-hour rest in the middle of the day anyway.

Start by standing as straight as possible and breathing deeply for a few minutes. Then lie completely flat with only a low pillow under your head, arms and legs uncrossed. Get as comfortable as you can, then breathe six or eight relaxed breaths as if you were very exhausted. Try to feel heavy all over, just like you are falling through the bed. Try to go limp all over.

Concentrate on your face, head, neck, shoulders, arms, chest, back, tummy, legs, and feet. Go over each part slowly in your mind and try to recognize any tensions. Close your eyes and before you know it you will be asleep, even if you are a confirmed insomnia sufferer. Do not let anything startle you. Just "give in". When you have had a good rest, stretch yourself. That is all there is to it, but do not ever be satisfied with your results. Keep trying harder to relax more completely and you will be sure of perfection when the grand test comes.

If you have an innate fear of doctors, hospitals, and nurses try to get over it. Visit the hospital if possible, and remember the doctors and nurses take care of women like you day after day, just like you wash dishes and make up beds. They have a fine background of personal experience besides years of studying. They know what they are doing even if you don't, and

they are doing what is best for you; so when you see someone in a white uniform coming and are wheeled into a white room with shiny things sitting around, take your fears out from under your hat and throw them away.

You will find that you will recover more quickly because you have not lost as much strength by being able to rest and relax better than most both during and after the baby is born. You will be less likely to have complications, and will not have as much anesthetic to overcome.

If you succeed in un-educating yourself about having a baby and learn to relax well, you can make it the most rewarding experience you have ever had. Instead of being spiteful you will feel that it has been a great privilege and a remarkable achievement. You will be able to prove that having a baby can be really wonderful.

This account is based upon my own personal experience. I have proved to my satisfaction that everything which I have stated is true. Not one thing which I have said could possibly do you any harm if you practiced it, and will most likely do you much good even if you are completely unconscious when your baby is born. I hope that if I have given you anything that I will have given you faith, and dispelled your fears.

ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT NATURAL CHILDBIRTH!

An Old Egyptian Marriage Contract

Imhotep says to Tahatre: I have made you my wife. To the children that you may bear me shall belong all that is mine and that I may acquire. The children that you may bear me shall be mine, and I shall not be able to take anything in the world away from them to give it to another son of mine or to any man in the world. I give you so many measures of wine, silver and oil, to secure your food and drink every year. You shall be assured of your food and drink, which will be due from me every month and every year; and I will give it you in whatever place you will. Should I turn you out, I will give you 50 staters of silver. Should I take another wife beside you, I will give you 100 staters of silver. And my father says: Take the marriage-contract from the hand of my son, in order that he may conform with every word in it; I agree therewith.

The contract is attested by sixteen witnesses. 231 B. C.

— Marriage Contract, Cairo Museum No. 2506B
(From the papers of the late Mary Neff)

A Glimpse of Our Lady

By PHOEBE PAYNE

There are some of us who feel specially drawn to the work of Our Lady, and who, consciously or unconsciously, weave the thought of Her into their daily life. To me in this life She has always been a vitally real Presence, persisting in spite of the Puritanical background of my childhood, and I know that there are many others who have this same consciousness.

It so happened that one day I was visiting a friend in a maternity home where the resident doctor is specially linked with the work of Our Lady, and an opportunity occurred of observing something of the birth of an infant from an adjoining room.

To record in simple language, without apparent exaggeration or distortion, any observation of the angel-world is very difficult, since we only possess terms fitting the phenomena of the physical plane. At the best, any attempt at description can but give an indication in halting fashion of that which is inexpressible.

The first strong impression gathered was that of a certain circumscribed area of entire peace and protection into which nothing could penetrate, and within which the physical stress of the mother and the necessary movements of the doctor and nurses produced no sense of disturbance. It was an area of curiously subdued, soft, effulgent light, and seemed to be created by the angels attendant upon the birth of the child. Within this space the brilliant colouring of the angels flashed and shone in alternating hues, creating an exquisite effect of mingling colour and sound, which sometimes formed itself into rhythmic patterns, sometimes into billowing clouds of glorious colouring.

As far as one could tell, the angels spoke and worked in terms of consciousness rather than through any more concrete medium of expression. A ceremony seemed to be going on, in which the angels attendant upon the doctor, the incarnating ego, and the presiding angel were the chief celebrants. They appeared to be enacting a definite ritual, simple and yet profoundly mystical, which culminated, after the actual birth, in the giving of the infant into the charge of another angel, apparently its guardian angel, who up to this point had been quietly waiting upon one side.

The doctor was closely overshadowed by a healing angel, who worked through his intuition, helping to keep his mental and emotional bodies steady, and so ensure the clear transmission of a vital current from the angel to the mother. Passing from the aura of this angel to that of the doctor were numberless fine threads of golden light, each thread alive with healing power. As the thread passed through the doctor's aura, it lost a little of its own characteristics, picking up from him instead some other elements. Then, passing on to the mother, it appeared to give her the special

type of vitality that was required, the whole process being one of a mingling of auras.

The angel attendant on the doctor appeared as a beautiful being, somewhere between six and seven feet in height, clothed chiefly in mauve hues, at some moments almost translucent, at others deepening to a swiftly changing sheen of all imaginable greens, mauves and purples. His hair was like golden flame, and his eyes of intense blue, serene and steadfast. He had beautiful hands through which an iridescent stream of magnetism seemed to ebb and flow in accordance with his thought and emotion, sometimes pouring out in a flood that enveloped both doctor and mother, and, of course, the child, sometimes flowing as fine, tapering emanations from his finger-tips, colourless but flame-like.

His method of work seemed to be that of weaving different currents at various levels, and manipulating them by the power of thought into any form that he chose. At one moment these forces seemed to shape themselves into a cocoon enfolding the mother and child, and gradually becoming absorbed by them; at another moment, there appeared a weaving of delicately coloured threads like the finest lace-work around the child alone, or again, the angel sent forth a cloud of colour directed towards the doctor, wrapping him from head to foot. Through it all one was conscious of an ordered sequence which rose to a point of culmination at the actual moment of birth, and then as gradually receded until the angels' task was accomplished.

When the doctor had finished his work at the end of the birth, and was holding the newly-born child, he was still enshrouded in a glowing, golden aura, which he retained for some time afterwards, and which gradually diminished. It was quite clear that a doctor who has definitely consecrated his life to the service of humanity, and, with a more definite dedication still, to the service of the Universal Mother, is invested with a peculiar power of channelling spiritual forces, and of consciously using them upon such occasions. Many doctors have their attendant angels, but not so surely linked as this particular one.

The nurses did not seem to be called upon to make any special contribution, beyond the fact that, as their attention and interest were concentrated upon their work, so they automatically provided a certain quota of etheric material which was used as required by the angels. The quiet confidence and sure technique of the nurse in charge served to stabilise this etheric matter, enabling it to be used as a medium for conveying to the physical level some of the subtler elements that would otherwise have been too fine to secure the necessary result.

One interesting point noticed was that the incarnating ego gave an impression of bewilderment and stress, such as is shown by a person recovering from an anaesthetic. A feeling of suffocation, of darkness and density

seemed to envelop him, accompanied at the same time by a paradoxical sense of illumination and exhilaration.

As the moment of birth drew near, there became more clearly visible a large ovoid aura of unimaginable beauty, filled with flashing colours so transient and ethereal that the whole structure seemed to be a shimmering film, shot with a thousand hues, of which the infant body formed the nucleus. This intensifying of the aura was accompanied by a terrific sense of pressure, which culminated, as the child drew its first breath, in a superb release of darting colours. Simultaneously there appeared a lightning flash of white light, possibly Monadic, striking into the heart and brain of the little physical body. As this died away, it left revealed in both heart and head a tiny, flickering flame, which remained steadily glowing. It was as though a beautiful bubble had burst, leaving behind it a very much smaller ovoid of pale, colourless light, surrounding the physical body, but as yet not seeming to respond to it in any perceptible degree.

The angel presiding over the whole ceremony was an angel of wonderful dignity and power, with a sacerdotal authority which was felt to be linked with the innermost heart of the World Mother. Through this radiant figure poured a flood of sympathy and understanding towards the mother, at the same time conferring a benediction upon her sublime function of womanhood, and uniting the highest aspects of her consciousness with a sense of the presence of the great Lady Mother.

In some deeply mystical way this angel seemed to be the direct representative of Our Lady, transmuting Her influence to the degree in which it could be received by the soul of the mother. He appeared to be the tabernacle in which the celebration of a mystery took place, acting as the link with higher spiritual realms than could be contacted by the egos of those present. It was as though the actual body of the angel were the vehicle containing this living presence, and, like the chalice of the Holy Grail, during the celebration of the mystery, his body became translucent and glowing with spiritual light and power defying description.

The angel himself was a glorious being, some eight or ten feet in height, with a body like molten gold, gleaming through enveloping draperies of dazzling azure blue. His form and his garments blended into ever-shifting effects of wreathing, diaphanous flame, which changed with every vibration of his thought and emotion, sometimes dying into faintest ethereal colouring, sometimes deepening into the richest shades of flashing sapphire blue, and clouds of gold, coruscating with multi-coloured star-shaped flecks. His body was at times like limpid water rippling beneath the sunlight, at other moments, quivering with a thousand rays of dazzling golden fire, but always wondrously serene and majestic. His head was a blend of a masculine Grecian type with a feminine softness and beauty. If one could combine a perfect Greek head with that of a Madonna, one would gain some faint semblance of the head of the angel. His eyes were unfathomable pools of

deep violet light. His hair, waving back in copper-coloured masses, seemed to fling forth shafts of red-gold light from among its thick waves. His hands and feet were like transparent alabaster, veined with gold and glowing with a tender wild-rose flush. Upon his breast lay a scintillating star of white light, and this remained radiantly white throughout the whole ceremony, only varying in splendour according to the length of its radiations. At the moment when the child drew its first breath these white rays seemed to shoot out in long shafts and enfold for a second both mother and child. This expansion of the star appeared to convey from a higher level some kind of spiritual force which confirmed in the higher consciousness of the mother her qualification of motherhood.

At this moment the angel was overshadowed by another Being greater than he, thus receiving an influx of power which for an instant transformed him into a pillar of white light. Enshrined within this pillar was a faint indication of a glorious Form, so transcendently beautiful and gracious, so fraught with supreme understanding and tenderness, that words only conceal the beauty of the vision. The change took place in an instantaneous flash, and the queenly Presence, veiled within the pillar of flame, bore a subtle suggestion of omniscience, altering its form too quickly to be recorded more clearly by the physical brain.

This radiant Being brought with Her a sense of supreme peace, which suffused the whole atmosphere, enfolding the mother and baby as in a filmy aura of protection, woven out of a myriad gossamer threads of white light. Within the passing of a few minutes this enveloping aura had become absorbed by the auras of the mother and child.

With the descent of this Power, the waiting guardian angel had folded his arms upon his breast and bent his head in deepest obeisance and adoration, and the moment of consummation left him blessed and entrusted with the care of the newly incarnated ego.

The presiding angel now appeared as a cascade of intensely electric-blue light shot with gleams of gold, vibrating at a tremendous speed, and charged with energy which pulsated out for a considerable distance, pervading the whole house, and spreading through the surrounding grounds. In some inscrutable fashion he became more remote, not fading away, or disappearing in any sense, but curiously removed, as though he were too highly charged to be able to retain his former position and state of being. And as this sense of detachment increased, the guardian angel advanced to the foreground and began to take care of the mother and baby.

After a lapse of time, as the mother was made comfortable and left resting, the vague remoteness engulfing the great angel seemed finally to swallow him up, and he was lost to sight.

The guardian angel was of another order altogether, appearing rather as a glorified human form, clothed in simple white draperies, more opaque than those mentioned before, with beautiful colours silting into them, as

though emerging from the body itself and radiating out through the clothing. He was about six feet in height, dark-haired and dark-eyed, with clear-cut features and pale creamy complexion, beautiful bare arms, and strong, capable hands.

His particular task of the moment seemed to be that of steadying the ego of the newly-born babe, and of helping to adjust the little nebulous aura that was lying so loosely about it, showing as a small pearly-grey mass, inchoate and rapidly shifting in wisps of colourless light. The angel, with skilful manipulation and long magnetic passes, drew the tiny aura into shape, at the same time building about the little body a film of protection, like an iridescent soap-bubble, which served to break the impact of such disturbance as noise or movement. And as the baby slept, the guardian remained, statuesque, holding in some subtle way the egoic life and consciousness at the true level of adjustment.

The mother, exhausted and spent, but inwardly at peace and happy at having passed through her ordeal, was being cared for by another angel not noticed before, though probably he had been in attendance on her the whole time. He appeared to be a member of the same order as the guardian angel, and was busy ministering to the depleted etheric body of the mother, replenishing and adjusting it magnetically, and more especially weaving magnetic bands of etheric material about the frayed and weary tissues of the physical body, steadying the heart and easing the strain of the cerebro-spinal system. His work was extremely interesting in so far as he coaxed and adjusted the etheric body back into position and gradually induced the mother to drop into a deep sleep.

(From *The Liberal Catholic*, March, 1930)

Maternity News

By MARIE J. HAYES

(Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania)

Now that Natural Childbirth is becoming more and more talked about, with leading articles on the subject appearing in the most popular women's magazines, one member has wondered just how much space we should now devote to this subject in a theosophical digest such as ours. When *Life* features on its cover a "madonna and babe" after a "Read delivery", it might appear that our pioneer work is over! However, nothing is more occult, to my way of thinking than Motherhood, especially post-natal and neo-natal period. Theosophy has taught that the child is born with characteristics brought over from past lives. . . . Now, psychologists are admitting this too.

For example, Dr. Edward Glover, Director of the London Clinic of Psychoanalysis, has said: "... For we have every reason to assume that within a week or so of birth infants manifest in a primitive form all the various types of response which form the basis of adult characterology". He also says that psychiatrists will never be able to comprehend properly the psychoses of adults until they fully accept and comprehend the fact that psychotic mechanisms are but caricatures of infantile phases of mental organization."

Also, Dr. Merrell P. Middlemore, in her book, *The Nursing Couple*, attempts to make a qualified, systematic study of the psychic "suckling situation" between the mother and child. She feels that the nursing act should become almost a ritual. The room should be quiet, the mother's attitude one of participation in a ritual full of meaning for the *emotional development of the infant*. She also warns against the mother *projecting upon the infant her own real or fancied disabilities, attitudes of anxiety or fear*. She says that the timid and nervous mother cannot bring about the wholesome, protective and emotionally secure attitude which the child should learn to adopt. Where can we find anything more occult than that? Wholly in accord with Theosophy.

Our members should be kept informed of the progress of infant psychology and how it is becoming more and more synthesized with Theosophy. Wouldn't this knowledge given to women even before they are pregnant even help them to attract some of these advanced egos of the New Race who are patiently waiting for suitable bodies? They would be thinking along these lines from the moment of conception. I know for me the period of pregnancy was a continuous sacrament. I felt closer to the Spirit than at any other time, and received wonderful inspiration during that period.

New Maternity Committee Head

One of our newest group members — a girl not yet out of her teens — has been doing some very fine work for mothers down in Alabama before she ever heard of our group. She is Lenore Spencer Day of Mobile. She had her baby the Read way and is so enthusiastic that she has been writing to all the hospitals in her city as well as many doctors, urging them to investigate Dr. Read's system. She has been sending copies of the article she has written for this issue of our Digest to every expectant mother she has heard of. In fact, she seems to be just the person we have been waiting for to lead our State Agents.

Expectant Mothers' Club

Along with the work of our Network of State Agents, we plan to organize an Expectant Mothers' Club. Through this channel, we could share each other's joys and expectations. Expectant mothers who wish to join our club or anyone desiring information regarding the work we are doing to further the teaching of Natural Motherhood, may write to Mrs. Lenore S. Day, 1159 Gayle Street, Mobile, Alabama.

Our blessings go to four of our members who have recently furnished vehicles for incoming souls:

Mrs. Verna Lytle, 620 East 12th Street, Casper, Wyoming

Mrs. Annabel McCracken, 695 Ludlow, Elgin, Illinois

Mrs. Edith Hamaker, 115 South Friends Avenue, Whittier, California, whose new son was a "Read baby"

Mrs. Mitsi Presnall, a Japanese lady of Koloa, Hawaii, who had her baby "by the Read method with no complications, doctor and nurse co-operating to the full extent" as her husband, Ralph Presnall, has written us.

A Realization

By REGINA WARD
(Chicago, Ill.)

I have just recently come to a fuller realization of what being a mother actually means, and in quite an unusual way, I think. It was through a dream I had. I dreamed that I was lying in bed next to my two-year-old daughter, which I was, and suddenly it occurred to me that I was going to die. Within a fraction of a second I thought of my daughter and said to myself, "Poor Darina . . ." and then I thought, "Oh, well, too bad, but I'm ready." Immediately I dissolved — or so it seemed, and I was conscious that I was really in bed. I was curious as to whether my hand would move if I tried to move it. But I didn't care. If I were dead, what did it matter? And then I remembered my daughter and I thought what it would mean to her to be without a "mother" all her life. I remembered scenes in my childhood when certain children were almost branded by the fact that they had no "mother". And before I moved my hand to see if I were alive, I made a resolution that if I were, I would try to dissolve myself into a picture which I had in my mind of the ideal mother. All this time I didn't really care if I were alive or not. And that fact also had made me think. I did hope that Darina would not cry — I actually didn't want her to feel deprived. She was so complete in herself and so wonderful. And I wanted to put my arms around her and comfort her. So with this in mind I turned to her, and the covers moved. Then I got up and knew I was alive. Still I wasn't glad or even sad. I was actually unemotional about the whole thing. Looking back, it seems hard to realize that it was as I remember it.

Now, with my responsibility of motherhood there is no shadow of a thought of dying — I want to *live*.

But this experience did show me why we shouldn't grieve for those who have passed on. They must go through agony watching a loved one grieve, when all the time they want to say, "I'm not dead — I'm here. *Please* don't be sorry — I'm not!"

"My Problem Is This"

Edited by THEA HEHR
(Santa Monica, California)

This has been a very heartening period for our newly-launched department ("Your department" would be a much more accurate phrase, for it belongs to all of you dear friends, and you are its sources of life and helpfulness!) Letters are coming from many parts of the United States, from Canada, and Australia, with comments and answers, and with wonderful messages of enthusiasm. Your letters reflect so splendidly the spirit we hope will always rule in this, our "Invisible Forum": that of warm friendliness, of sharing the lessons of our life's experience, of speaking the word of encouragement, and of asking freely, as one does of trusted friends! It is impossible to use all the letters sent in, but you may be sure each letter is filed, and will be used as space permits. One valued correspondent remarked, "If *you* do not do all the answering?" (to questions given) I found this an important comment, for perhaps many readers have the same idea: that the department is simply a one-ring circus in which the "editor" plays battle-dore and shuttlecock with her own ideas. (Such things *have* happened, you know!) As a partial answer I have asked the writers of letters quoted in this issue whether I might use their names. In future will you please state, when writing, whether your name may be used, or whether you prefer that it be withheld?

Three new questions have been sent in by readers.

1. "What about the intentional changing of our apparent Karma? Once in my life, and once in Cleo's we have had a situation that we wanted changed at any cost. In each case, our thought was turned so forcefully upon the problem that the external environment was actually and definitely changed, and under rather amazing circumstances, too. In one case the channel used was fervent, perhaps selfish, prayer. In the other it was repeated affirmation as to the desired condition. Then there are cases of healing and cures, whether 'miraculous', as at Lourdes, or with the aid of a 'wonder drug' — Now, what about the Karma that seemed so slowly to be working itself out in any of these cases? Is it still due? Will it come again? The ideas of others on this will be stimulating. I note that Mr. Hodson feels that illness is very definitely Karma at work, and that we should learn some lesson from it. The same would apply to every undesirable circumstance. What, then, if we change it?"
— JOHN L. d'AQUIN (Baton Rouge, La.)

2. "I have been thinking for some time that an interesting discussion could be built on the subject of competitive games for children; are they right or wrong? I hope to see some information along this line."

— WILMA J. SHADE (Marietta, Ohio)

(N. B. — Some of us mothers who have sons badly hurt at football would like, I am sure, to include modern inter-collegiate sports in Mrs. Shade's answers. — T. H.

3. "Can you tell me anything about the location of an organization called 'The White Brotherhood', said to have its headquarters in California?"

— MRS. E. K. (Australia)

Please send me your answers to these as soon as possible, and also any questions you would like to have discussed.

Following are extracts from letters answering the questions of previous issues. Numerous comments of appreciation have been received for the wonderful letter of practical help and counsel given the parents of the mongoloid child by our editor-in-chief, Muriel Lewis, in the Winter Number. The letter quoted now gives interesting possibilities of the reason for such incarnations:

An Answer to Mrs. W. S. Concerning Her Mongoloid Child

"In my experience, Mongoloids usually come as the result of spiritual ambition. We are warned to 'Kill out ambition'. This is especially dangerous for the occult student as the thought form rises from the physical, to the astral, and thence to the mental or spiritual planes.

"A number of cases which I have observed are the result of parents who wished to attract great souls, ostensibly so as to give them a choice environment in which to evolve. Actually, if the parents probe deeply within, they will find that they are secretly craving to be the progenitors of a great teacher so as to be able to bask in reflected glory, and indirectly to acquire merit.

"In my opinion, each child should be conceived 'in spirit' first, and with due preparation, but the prayer should be: 'O mighty Lords of Karma, send to my bosom the one to whom I may render the greatest service!'

"Again, the child may be an old Fourth Root Race friend who, after many ages is at last in incarnation at the same time as yourself, and able to be reunited with you, her loved one. In defiance of evolutionary law, some entities make great transitions because of love, even though they are not yet ready.

"Would you thrust aside the hands held out so lovingly to you?

"Also, it may be an unknown aspirant who because of extraordinary service to some Master in the past, is being offered a chance for rapid progress due to Karmic ties with Him (more than likely, your own beloved Master). Viewed in this light what service would you not perform as a sacrifice on that altar?

"So lift up your heart, knowing that unalterably, so-called evil Karma is merely a call to greater service and attainment: for as hard as the battle may be, so much greater, perforce, the citation at the end of the campaign. Rejoice and laugh, for the sake of the other members of your family to whom you owe happiness, for the sake of the suffering but largely unconscious cause of the distress, and for the progress of your own imperishable soul.

"The rock which has caused your house to topple, *through love*, will become the bridge of ascent to the heights!"

— ELSIE L. RUTLEDGE (*Ojai, Calif.*)

You will remember that the question was asked as to whether *a Theosophist could consistently continue to attend an orthodox church, and be active therein*. So far all the replies strongly favor the affirmative. Below are quotations from two letters:

"Regarding church and Theosophy (or any other esoteric teaching): If one 'stays clear' of a church the moment he becomes aware of a greater light, he is restraining its radiation from others as it *could* go forth through him. In addition, it might afford his developing greater character — an understanding tolerance thru the use of wise and gentle discrimination and tact. Why seek to follow (go after) the light when it is within you? We run from our responsibilities when we seek separation from others because they have not an awareness equal to our own. We are in the place we are for a purpose. Yet this can be interpreted various ways and does not mean only that we should stay there to teach others, or even that evolution will propel us into a different place. It may be because those who seek the higher awareness segregate into closed groups for the most part — that more of the higher teachings are not distributed among all people. Many do not even know there are such teachings, so how could they be expected to inquire into them?"

— MRS. WILMA SHADE (*Ohio*)

"My wife and I are members of the local (theosophical) lodge and have been for more than two years. Yet we maintain our affiliation with the First Methodist Church here — It is not a matter of competition, you see. Theosophy is to us a pearl of great price. Why, then, the church? Several reasons: Theosophy should be *lived* — lived in relation with other people. The class we attend is made up of fine people, some of whom are ripe for Theosophical ideas. Instead of hiding our light behind a basket, we try, with extreme caution (more harm than good would be done by 'pushing') to represent a liberal group within the church. Not that our influence is at all noticeable in a church of thirty five hundred; but now and then an idea is thrown out, or a book is loaned, to someone who seems interested. Who can guess what the results may be?" — JOHN D'AQUIN (*Baton Rouge, La.*)

The question — or rather the cry of despair: "*Why are we living?*" has brought inspiring answers. Three are quoted from — the last from Australia.

"In answer to the question, 'Why are we living?' I am reminded of a very advanced and intellectual class which I had in the East who took me roundly to task for permitting a God who taught us through *suffering*. Not being in His confidence, I had always simply tried to accept His dictum on the one hand, and to learn the Laws with which He rules on the other hand, with such adroitness and intelligence as I could muster.

"We are told, times without number, that an incarnation is a day in school, but I say that it is also a game. So let us play it as the kids play ball, 'for blood', — *but with all the detachment we can achieve.*

"We are all swept relentlessly along like so many microphytes in a brook, and our resistance serves merely to crush us further and cause greater pain.

"Since the microcosm is powerless against the macrocosm, the only recourse of the former is to study carefully and observe natural law and to follow the rules of the game: often with a broken heart; with weak and tottering footsteps; but to serve and treat another with loving kindness when the going is roughest (there is great healing and blessing in this); and to throw the whole nature with the greatest elan into the thickest of the fight, — and all his without attachment.

"The loneliness and the lack of understanding friends constitute two of the greatest causes of suffering shortly before the great initiations begin. Long before that, however, there come long periods when no aspect of body or emotions offers any pleasure. Being human, this brings great pain, but being innately divine, let us retreat more and more deeply into the stronghold of mind and Spirit. And now observe a paradox: as we retreat within, let us continue to advance without in service, and, — with a smile on our faces!" — ELSIE L. RUTLEDGE (*Ojai, Calif.*)

" . . . Twenty years ago, when I was 39, my life reached the dead-end of all I was capable of bearing, both emotionally and mentally, and spiritually — life had beaten me almost. I just managed not to commit the sin of self-destruction, and I kept marching, fulfilling my duties with leaden feet."

(The writer tells how at a lodge meeting the discussion turned on how to conduct ourselves under all circumstances. She, herself, said her way was to "set her teeth and endure somehow". Upon hearing this, a member answered (a wonderful ego who was at present in a hopelessly racked and crippled body):

"My dear, when you 'set your teeth' you set up resistance to whatever is happening and send out force to meet it — and that increases the trouble, doubles it, and it comes back to you. Let me tell you how to use the Law of True Non-Resistance". So I listened, and he explained how you set to work quietly to allow all hurts to pass you by, to deliberately return love and gentleness for the harshest unkindness until you have purged, by daily practise, all sparking material out of yourself, so that nothing could make a spark of anger or resentment. He told me the first three months would be the worst, because 'your defences are down and the new aura is not sufficiently built to protect you' — but 'if you will stick it out, your feet will be on the path to peace, understanding and love'.

"So, because it worked for me, and does work, because it has filled my life with Peace, Love and Joyousness, and steadfastly answers all my questions as to 'Why', big or small, I share it with you as my dear old friend shared it with me".

— MRS. E. K. (*Australia*)