

REINCARNATION

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AMERICA AND EASTERN EUROPE

The morning's newspaper brings two contrasting tales—one of overflowing American granaries, the other of European wars continuing.

Read for yourself the harrowing story of famine and half-famine; of low birth-rate; of infant mortality; of softening of the bones; of dropsy; of blood disease; of epidemics due to filth.

The *Kansas City Star*, published where rural wealth is growing steadily year by year by satisfying increments, presents a jolly cartoon entitled "The West Should Worry!" It shows a fat farmer dancing in a wide circle, hand in hand with his overfed ox, the pig, the cock, the sheep, etc. The sides of the barn are bent outward by an over-filling of farm products, while bursting bags of food burden the farm-yard. The picture is overdrawn in the quizzical good humor of thankfulness to Nature.

It is only when we see the two pictures side

by side that we find fault. Man's inhumanity to man improperly allots territories in Eastern Europe, interferes with the normal movement of raw materials and the re-establishment of that commerce that means life or death to whole peoples and puts weakened nations at the mercy of their hereditary enemies.

The least we can do for our brethren of Eastern Europe is to give them part of our bread. *And we believe the American people want to do it.* But they lack leadership and channels for transmission of food and clothing.

We are going to help in the organization of a committee that will help to bring this about. We want you to join us.

W. V-H.

KARMA

Life is the heart of the rose,
Years are its petals sweet,
The root or the seed are the links that lead
To roses unborn in a distant morn

Where a soul and a rose shall meet.

Karma's the root or seed,
Karma's the record sheet,—
The love or the hate that through ages wait
To blast or to flower in a life's brief hour
When a soul and its future meet.

Life is a glorious rose,
Lives are its petals sweet,
Karma's the band that with loving hand
Unites in a whole, life's vast rose-scroll
Where ages and aeons meet.

Edith C. Gray.

THE RULES OF THE GAME

Karma is a law which works with the scientific precision of every other law of nature. To understand it makes one able to use it, if one will, just as an understanding and application of the laws governing aeronautics will enable one, with proper care and instruction, to navigate the air.

The law of karma is: we reap what we sow. This is the general law, as expressed in all religions; but there are certain definite rules which bring very accurate results. These are: thought makes character; desire makes opportunity; and action makes environment.

These are the rules of the game, simply expressed, but most far-reaching in significance.

Thought is the most important, because it makes character, and therefore governs all of our decisions and choices, and hence the karma we are making; for thought must precede and permeate both desire and action. Our character, made by thought, is what we carry into other lives; it is the enduring part of us.

How does thought make character? It creates; our thoughts really make living entities that, if strong enough, go out and do our bidding and live a certain length of time according to the will-power we have put into them. The phrase *thought creates* is no idle word, no catch-phrase. These thoughts are likely to have the strongest effect upon their creator. We, therefore, are surrounded by an atmosphere of these entities of our own making, and when we want to think in new

directions we have to hew a way through our armor of undesirable thoughts.

Constantly reacting on us, our character is made by the thoughts we allow within the sacred precincts of our mind.

Fortunately we have,—and here is the practical part for our daily living,—a most powerful instrument to use in the control of these swarming thoughts. It is the *Will*, that which most closely unites the humanity in us with our divinity. We can *will* what we shall allow to enter our thought world; we can deliberately build up a quality that is lacking, such as love, serenity, strength, and these thoughts will attract to themselves similar thoughts, while undesirable ones may be allowed to die of malnutrition. So we may build our character daily by our thought, giving the mental nature so much of good to do that the evil will die from lack of nourishment.

Desire makes opportunity. Here is another rule of the game. What we constantly desire, we shall one day have; we may not want it when it comes, but if we have desired persistently, we shall have it. What does desire do? It is usually mingled with some thought, and we know that thought creates. Desire depends on memory and imagination: we remember a pleasure or a pain, repeat it in imagination, and thus create a desire to repeat or to avoid it. So omnipotent is man within a given sphere that he may draw to himself the opportunity for the fulfilment of his desires; but the responsibility entailed is very great, so great as to be almost staggering. These desires, when the hour of their maturity arrives, may prove shackles to bind us to an environment

most distasteful to us, or one which we have outgrown in many respects; but we must recall that it is we ourselves who have forged those chains, and not another. When, life after life, we reach out our hand and take what we have desired, and find it falling to ashes under our touch, we begin to feel we should not desire any personal thing. If our desires be for things which may be moulded into character, for the real things, for what will bring us greater usefulness, if, in other words, we call them aspirations, they may be most helpful and will result in larger opportunities for service in the world. But unless we have worked, and worked hard along the line of our desire, we shall not be able to use the opportunity when it comes.

Here is our practical lesson; we must control our desires, must definitely determine what we want to be and to do in the future, and then work toward this ideal; for with all our desires, we never get what we have not earned. If we want to be a great mathematician, a musician, a philosopher, all the desire in the world will not make us that, unless we fill our aura with it, use our present brain capacity, work, study, listen, employing every opportunity now given to us by our karma of past lives; for neglected opportunities this time will make it harder for us in our next incarnations. A short time ago Dr. Van Hook called to our attention that we should make up our minds what we want to be, and should work toward it; not a limited objective for the next incarnation only, but for the future when we shall have great powers. We should look far ahead, and begin to aim toward a great ideal;

we should work, not for our little, successive, isolated lives, but rather for the whole cycle, for Life itself.

Desires make the emotional or desire body, to contact the emotional world; they also largely influence the place of rebirth. Desires frustrated in this incarnation gather about them a mass of cumulative energy which the returning soul brings with it for their fulfilment next time.

Action makes environment. Good actions bring us pleasant surrounding, easy circumstances, tangible physical results of some kind. Our friends and enemies are the result of past actions. If we have made poor use of our time, we are limited and conditioned by brain capacity, or by the lack of inspiring associates. Actions have the largest effect on the place of our rebirth and our circumstances. Actions make a karmic tie that binds us to other people, so in some future life we must contact them and pay our debt.

Thoughts, desires and actions have a marked effect upon ourselves, but also upon others; the karmic reaction is very great.

These, then, are the three most important "rules of the game," as we have playfully termed them. We have only touched upon them to give a general understanding to the one who has not heard of them before. They will liberally repay every moment spent in earnest study and practice, and they give a strong clew as to the method of changing our karma.

Edith C. Gray.

*PHASES OF KARMA
ESPECIALLY UNFORTUNATE*

Those acts which are productive of karmic effects that are of especially undesirable character are such as unfavorably affect the spiritual progress of others and especially those activities which interfere with the orderly and prompt progress of spiritual movements. These unfortunate phases of action seem to produce disturbances great in proportion to the lowly or the exalted character and spiritual status of the plan or of the individual attacked.

Men should not be frightened by threats of karmic return. Yet it does seem not inappropriate to warn against attacks on sacred personages, rituals, ceremonies, etc. Who knows through what period of time such an offender might wait before great opportunities lost should recur?

Men are given great opportunities for the world's sake. If they do not accept them the Lords of Karma may give them new opportunities only after they have proved, in many trials successfully passed, that they can be depended upon to obey the law of sacrifice.

W. V.-H.



REINCARNATION AND LITERARY MEN

Viewed in the light of reincarnation, we must conclude that the great novelists in past lives have been interested and thoughtful students of human nature. They must have developed by this thoughtful interest the deep vision which penetrates beyond the mask of word and deed to the causes which lie beyond them. They must have reached the point where they recognised in the life-dramas which were enacted before their observant eyes the consistent working of an inviolable law. Otherwise how could they possess the innate understanding of the law of karma which they display, even in their earlier writings, when years and experience in their present life could not logically account for such understanding? Lafcadio Hearn aptly remarks, "A Shakespeare would always remain incomprehensible on the one-life theory. Taine attempted to explain him by the phrase, 'a perfect imagination' and this phrase reached far into the truth. But what is the meaning of a perfect imagination? Enormous multiplicity of soul-life—countless past existences revived in one. Nothing else can explain it."

George Eliot is a notable example of innate insight into the law of karma or consequence. In her novels this insight is revealed in the development of character and plot, in opinions expressed by her imaginary men and women, as well as in reflections *in propria persona*. She sees clearly the intimate relation between the desire and the deed, and the inevitable reaction of deed upon character. She is deeply conscious of the truth so well stated by Emerson, "the soul

contains the event that shall befall it; for the event is only the actualization of its thoughts, and a man's fortunes are the fruit of his character."

Take as an example the story of *Adam Bede*, to which the foregoing remarks justly apply. In our early acquaintance with the characters in this book we are made aware that within their own natures dwell the qualities that shall determine the line of action they will pursue. We are shown that in the weak, kindly egotism of Arthur Donnithorne lives the seed of his wrong-doing, and also of his eventual repentance. In Hetty's vanity and selfishness lives the seed of her fall. And we feel that such self-reliant virtue as Adam's cannot but stand erect under the most disastrous storms and emerge into serenity. There is, too, the touch of hardness which must be softened by suffering. And Dinah's purity and selfless love can attract no sorrow save the sympathetic sorrow aroused by the misfortunes of others.

" 'A man can never do anything at variance with his own nature,' says Mr. Irwine, who plays the part of Chorus to the main action. 'He carries within him the germ of his most exceptional actions; and if we wise people make eminent fools of ourselves on any particular occasions, we must endure the legitimate conclusion that we carry a few grains of folly in our ounce of wisdom.' " He also expounds the law of consequence. "Consequences are unpitying. Our deeds carry their terrible consequences. . . consequences that are hardly ever confined to ourselves.' " Adam Bede, too, recognizes this law. " 'I've been pretty clear,' said Adam, 'ever since I could cast up a

sum, as you can never do what's wrong without breeding sin and trouble more than you can ever see. It's like a bit of bad workmanship; you never see th'end o' th' mischief it 'ill do.'"

Strong words are these, too, on the reaction of acts upon character: "Our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds. . . There is a terrible coercion in our deeds which may turn the honest man into a deceiver, and then reconcile him to the change."

Not only directly in words do we find the convictions of the author regarding karmic law and thought-power set forth, but constantly revealed in the unfolding and denouement of the story. Here we find active the poetic justice which the spirit of man so instinctively craves and which the law of karma so completely satisfies. Good ever brings good, evil brings evil. There is no palliation of wrong-doing, no attempt to evade the stern logic of "As a man soweth so also shall he reap."

Those who read with inner senses awake and alert will discover that the writers of great literature are true (though it may be unconscious) teachers of the doctrine of karma, so far as it can be taught without taking into consideration its sister doctrine of reincarnation.

Helen G. Crawford.

LIFE'S TANGLES

There are many inexplicable problems that present themselves at various stages of our pathway through life. We are before dead walls as it were, through which there appears no gateway, the beaten track cannot be discovered, and we are apparently left to unravel the knotted and tangled skeins of life's warp and woof as best we can.

The inequalities, the apparent injustices, the unfair advantages that confront all students of human nature, compel us to stop and ask ourselves whether there is a satisfactory answer to all these ceaseless questionings, a comprehensive solution to what is truly the "Riddle of Life."

Orthodoxy fails utterly to explain adequately the why and the wherefore of endless queries. Why is it that one should be born of ideal parent-hood, cherished by love, surrounded by all that is pure, elevating and beautiful, while another is conceived and born into vice and immorality, the germs of crime and debauchery being taken in with his mother's milk? Why should one have a healthy body, growing up into a perfect type of superb manhood, full of vigorous activity, while another is deformed and crippled, or endures a life-time of the most acute suffering possible? Why is one talented, intellectual, a genius, while another is born an imbecile or an idiot? Why should one spend weeks or even months upon a death-bed, in which to prepare for his future state, while another is hurled ruthlessly without a moment's warning from time into eternity? The Eternal Why! One

could fill many pages with such queries, one could attempt, though unsuccessfully, to supply the answers, but to the man who thinks deeply, the man of intellect and keen penetration, the ordinary, orthodox explanations are vague and pitifully inadequate.

God could not be a God of Love and view with indifference and calmness the great throb and bitter cry of humanity's woe and travail. There would be no unerring Divine Justice meted out from a God Omnipotent and Omniscient, were there no logical reason for the seeming disparities of human nature, and it is an insult to man's reasoning powers, to his God-given intellect, to tell him to have faith and believe that God knows best, and "to trust Him where we cannot trace."

Is it any wonder that so many of our brightest scholars, our most advanced scientists, our great thinkers and profoundest philosophers, have rejected orthodox views entirely, and for the want of something more solid upon which to pin their faith, have become materialists and agnostics?

As it is, however, the pendulum of man's intellect, swinging on the one hand, from the narrow creeds and blind tenets of orthodoxy to the extreme of gross materialism, on the other, has at last reached its mid-point and is evenly balanced between these pairs of opposites, and has found a logical, comprehensive and cohesive basis from which to formulate a rational deduction that can be satisfactorily applied to all of life's hitherto unsolvable problems.

This great fundamental principle whereby men have been enabled to regain their mental equilibrium is the Law of Karma, more easily under-

stood as the universal Law of Cause and Effect.

When this fact, this great truth, taught for thousands of years in the East, and implicitly believed by half of the world's population to-day, is accepted by the majority of mankind, as it is now by ever increasing numbers in the West, then will there be understood the reason for all apparently conflicting forces of human life.

With a thorough understanding of the Law, we know that every individual has earned the right to his present environment, that in lives of the past he has built for himself the body he now uses in this life, and whether it is healthy and strong, or crippled and weak, he himself has made the conditions calling for such. If he is surrounded by wealth, culture and refinement, he has earned the right to them in past lives; if he is the offspring of vice, impurity, crime or disease, it is the environment best suited to the actions of his previous existences upon earth.

A knowledge of the Law enables one to explain the remarkable child prodigies of whom one frequently hears: why a child of four or five can produce masterpieces that trained musicians with many years of study cannot attempt. In the world of art and letters, in dramatic circles, child prodigies are present, and often found under a physical environment totally at variance with their marvelous abilities.

Is there any explanation to this fact other than Reincarnation? That the genius has been brought over from past lives, that the longings and aspirations after these higher things in a past life are the cause of the great skill and ability displayed early in this life, is an absolute fact.

Heredity can never explain fully these things. We have indisputable proof of this. Where are the descendants of our immortal poets, our artists, our orators and our authors? How true it is that "genius is sterile"! If talent were a question of heritage, where are the hereditary descendants of our Shakespeares, our Beethovens, our Michael Angelos? Genius is not handed down from father to son; rather is it an isolated possession, usually showing itself in the one out of many children, with temperament and intellect distinct from others.

To one who acknowledges the Law and who abides by its rules and works with it, is given a key that will unlock the gate of life's mysteries. The tangled web of destiny is unraveled and made smooth by its enlightenment. Suffering, sorrow, poverty, crime, all arrange themselves in order and rational relation to the individual; just as the blocks of a child's puzzle can be ordered from chaos and disorder to a set pattern. Chaos is reduced to order; the tangled paths become smooth and plain; the blackness of despair and pessimism is changed to hopefulness, when reincarnation is taken as a basic fact in Nature.

There is no heartache, no disappointment, no trouble but may be turned into gladness by the healing balm of these great truths. All the vicissitudes of life will be accepted uncomplainingly, even cheerfully, and the bitter, bitter cry of humanity's travail, though it well-nigh breaks the heart with its weight of sorrow and pain, will be understood and accounted for, and the eternal question of life's problems will be solved.

Esther S. Stevens.

WHERE ARE THE HEARTS OF MEN?

In the love of the family, of the brother, of Man, of God, lies the heart of Man. If you would find the heart of one whom you would bring to a knowledge of the true meaning of life, find where the man has placed his affection and address him there.

How torn are the hearts of men to-day! The war has caused the death of so many—there are so few homes into which loss and grief have not come. May not sweetness come out of bitterness and some consolation flow out of recrimination?

This is a wonderful moment in which to discover the true and pure springs of human action. Now would be the moment in which we should show to men the causes of sorrow and the way of the ceasing of sorrow.

Let us find the griefs of men; let us try to wipe human tears away and to stay their flow at their fountain-head, at the heart, in the mind.

No man really dies; our loved ones have left us but for a sojourn and we will meet again, although we are not much separated even now. We live under a beneficent God Who is a loving Father to us. Truly He leadeth us in the paths of righteousness, for His name's sake! And our deathless souls are self-conscious! We know ourselves within! We never die and our hearts can be satisfied.

Surely the message of this truth must reach the hearts of men, it will soothe, it will point the way—as of old!

W. V-H.

SACRIFICE

I believe it was Bernard Shaw who said: "If we begin by sacrificing ourselves to those we love we shall end in hating those to whom we have sacrificed."

We are continually being confronted with examples of this in everyday life: the eldest daughter, whose duty it has been to keep house for her father, a widower, and younger sisters, one day finds that her task is not a labour of love but just LABOUR; her younger sisters only appreciate her services in the light that she enables them to marry without any worry as to what their father will do without them; the father, too, is so used to the daily sacrifice on the part of the eldest daughter that he takes it entirely for granted and even begins to imagine he has done her a favour by allowing her to manage his house instead of spending her days up town.

Another case: the young bride, who in the first joys of uniting with another being, gladly gave up all the comforts of her father's luxurious house to live, in a cheap suburb, with the man she loved, begins to rebel against the continual struggle to make both ends meet on her husband's insufficient income and sometimes in the depth of her heart and sometimes aloud, reproaches him for having taken her from the idle luxuries and expensive comforts she was brought up to.

In both these examples a sacrifice has been made, willingly in the first instance, because it was thought that LOVE for another person was sufficient amply to repay the sacrifice made. And in both cases the service demanded was too much

for the person's mental strength to cope with, and the feeling of despair and hatred, not so much against the individual as the whole of humanity, creeps in just because it is consoling, in a way, to hate someone or something and because the only things in life worth living for—cosmic truths—are unknown.

This is where reincarnation and a knowledge of cosmic things is of inestimable value as a source of comfort and of help. The drawback is, however, that it is to the beings ignorant of these things that most of the sorrows come. And it is the duty of every reincarnationist to do his utmost to spread the truth and to help these people to understand why their sacrifice is necessary and to gain happiness from the knowledge.

Try to show them, in the first place, that the pleasures they are giving up are only transitory, not eternal, not creative, like the power of LOVE; that they did not know of certain petty things twelve months ago which seem so important to-day and that the desire for them will cease to exist twelve months hence and the desire will probably be centered on something else equally transitory. Show them the principles of reincarnation; show them that every action of theirs is the result of a good or bad action in the past and in turn will produce good or evil in the time to come.

Suggest to them that by serving the people they are serving to-day they are probably repaying, with the aid of karma, some great service or sacrifice which these same people made to them in a previous incarnation.

Teach them of karma; show them the eternal

working of cause and effect; show them the highest thing in life is *service*, but show that, instead of being wasted sacrifice it is not really sacrifice at all but that the result will be something repaid to them a thousandfold.

It is well for me to write this and for you to read it; we who are students of karma and see things so clearly and sit, in the comfort of philosophical thought and the contentment of mind which comes with knowledge; we can see the folly of despairing of the result of sacrifice; we can sympathise with the victims and feel sorry for them in their ignorance;—*but this is not enough.*

We must take them by the hand and show them all we see ourselves, in simplest language because some of them are such young egos, while others will be surrounded with a protecting armour of prejudice and will refuse at first to see the light.

But help; help them all: they who are all around you, everywhere, every day, and by showing them that their sorrows are their joys, that both are transitory and only given them for one purpose—to help their evolution—you will have done a great and a spiritual thing.

Give them your knowledge: the more you give the greater will be your reward, the more will be given you in return, to help you to help them.

Go out and teach; you need not seek far; you need not go to the next state; you need not go to the next block even; you will find those who need your aid most are often nearest to you. So near are they that you just didn't see them.

Go out and teach—RIGHT NOW!

A. Wilfrid Hulbert.

OUR KARMIC LIMITATIONS

Most men are circumscribed by the limitations in narrow bounds within which they must live. Most of us must work in the vast organization of society for the means with which to exist and so may not devote our activity to the things nearest to our hearts.

Or, if we are free to direct our energies where we will, we lack knowledge or skill to accomplish our purposes to our satisfaction.

What shall be the attitude of the man who understands his undying nature with its powers of growth and unfolding, toward his status in life and his various powers? Shall such a man accept his status in life with meekness or shall he boldly make war with fate and try to break his bonds of limitations? The answer touches contentment and the resolve of high emprise; it concerns small, slothful ease in narrowness of life and the will to find broader, fuller fields of life activity. To tempt Fate; to challenge the Gods; to acquire new powers—these are the thoughts that haunt the man who sees the possibilities of life.

Small philosophers have ever recognized and preached contentment within narrow bounds. That lesser life does not attract the attention of the karmic deities; the man that lives content may exist for many years without great suffering or violent change.

But a larger philosophy dictates a broader policy. For when one realizes that he is deathless, that the world needs men of high development and of great powers to deal with the problems

of life he knows that he ought not to stand still. The truest happiness lies in useful action.

The rushing current of evolution grows smoother as the stream widens toward the sea. We may trust providence to preserve us within, even though outer circumstances are wrecked for us.

It would seem that we should be happy and grateful in attitude toward the things of to-day but cherish thoughts and designs for the future that will be worthy of the coming glory in which each of us should claim his share. Within a single life-time changes may not be so striking as we may wish to see, but with a change of bodies comes the new opportunity of the Gods to respond to demand and sooner or later your aspiration will be satisfied. This way of breaking bonds make momentarily pain and grief but it swiftly brings the power to do good, throughout all ages.

W. V-H.



PARENTS! YOUR CHILDREN IN DANGER!

The above is the title of a handbill issued by a German Peace Society in Munich. We in England need the same warning.

The manifesto warns parents against the play of the spirit of revenge; it suggests that to be solicitous about the education of children will be of no avail if they are never to reap the fruits of it, and there is no point in saving money for children if their lives are not to be secure.

"You wish to educate them in humanity and kindness. How can you do that when the idea of murdering by machines poisons their fancy?"

It is clear that Germany is fully alive to the enormous importance of cultivating a new spirit in the young people, and we have received from Marburg a strongly-worded appeal from Ernst Krotoschin on behalf of fellowship between the young people of all lands in the cause of peace and good will.

The writer urges that it is not enough for one land to isolate itself in its thinking and that the ruin of civilization, morality, humanity and religion involves humanity as a whole.

He believes that youth, having passed through the bitter pathway of war, may be led onwards to brotherhood and union.

He urges that practical steps should be taken in education in pacifism, and does not seem so terrified as many here are of advocating the destruction of war toys, war picture books, chauvinistic writings, and hate-inducing pictures. He wants them cleared out from house, nursery, kindergarten and school. In their place he de-

sires that there should be intensive education in the fundamentals of understanding of foreign peoples and foreign culture, and that school books should be re-written in a pacifist spirit. He pleads that truth in the High School should prevail, that the international as against the national spirit should rule, and that the letting loose of the chauvinistic spirit is unworthy of High School method.

Therefore he cries, "Up and bravely onward to action in this work. It involves daring, a hazardous enterprise of radical conversion and renewing of the innermost spring of life."

The writer hopes that his message may fall on good ground and meet the eyes of some other lands interested in this vital matter.

I am writing to him, giving particulars of the "Explorer" Guild, and Wilfred Wellock will doubtless on his return put us in touch with the various movements amongst the youth of the continent.

Meanwhile, I would again urge that Crusaders should feel a far stronger passion for bringing English children out of the danger zone of militarism and imperialism.

I hear that at Manchester an "Explorer" Guild is going strong, and that already they have secured a German child as a member!

We now have five Guilds, but we ought to have five hundred!

Theodora W. Wilson, in "The Crusader."

BREAKING THE CHAIN

If action and reaction are equal in the spiritual as in the physical world, how is the chain of causation to be broken? For instance, if a murderer has to be murdered, his murder will set up a fresh cause to produce new effects, and so on, *ad infinitum*.

The law that a man reaps as he sows means that each cause produces its appropriate effect on its own plane. A murder is an emotional act of hate or dislike expressed by a physical act, and willed by a clouded intellect. The results on the murderer in another incarnation would probably be: (a) *physically*, a violent and unwelcome end of life; (b) an unbalanced desire body, in which likes and dislikes alternated viciously; and (c) a mental body with a dulled grasp of the distinction between right and wrong. Such an undesirable personality, if in incarnation with those whom he had previously wronged, would doubtless murder again, unless previous suffering had taught him something. It does not follow, however, that in his next incarnation the three evils mentioned need all be present in equal intensity. His astral or desire body may have balancing qualities latent, developed in a previous existence, and these may be strengthened. His mental or intellectual body may in the same way have some undeveloped past tendencies which can be brought over to modify or illumine his darkness. Or there may be something in the environment of his later incarnations to direct him aright. So, while a murderer's succeeding lives are unsatisfactory and dangerous, it by no means follows

that he either attempts murder, murders, or is murdered. With the temptation there is always provided the way of escape.

Charles Spurgeon Medhurst.

How is the chain of causation to be broken? That is the great question of human life. In it is contained the secret of the liberation of the human ego from the necessity of reincarnation.

We know only too well that actions tend to become habits and habits in turn tend to become fixed. In the Buddhist *Jatakas* or stories of the rebirths of the Lord Buddha, the events of the time are simply repetitions of similar events in the past lives of the people concerned. This steady tendency for actions to repeat themselves is a serious matter and those who try to live the spiritual life should make strong effort to break the chain of cause and effect before it has become stronger than steel and before habits have become fixed.

But, on the other hand, there is much of hope. The very law which forges bonds, also breaks them. Negative karma, reactions which hinder the man from making steady progress, can not be increased by a man without limit. The accumulation of evil karma finally crashes down upon the man and works itself out and disappears. It is this self-corrective characteristic of "bad" karma which enables the man to break the chain. Evil is limited by its very nature and it is self-destructive.

While a number of murders, committed by two men alternately, one upon the other, undoubtedly makes a strong chain of cause and effect, the

repeatedly recurring painful consequences finally cause the men to recognise in their very hearts that murder is wrong, and the voice of conscience becomes stronger after each murder until it will enable the ego to control the personality and prevent it from continuing the sequence of cause and effect indefinitely.

The undeveloped ego would need to experience very much of the painful karma of reactions caused by the murders in order to learn the important lesson that murder is wrong, and to gain the power of control which would enable him to restrain his evil habit. A more advanced ego, one who has achieved a certain measure of control over the personality, will be able to break the chain of cause and effect much more easily, for he can throw his spiritual energies into the struggle between lower tendencies and the promptings of conscience, on the side of the good and thus greatly intensify the progressive forces which will act upon him to restrain him from wrong-doing.

One or the other of the two enemies who have murdered one another will finally lose his personal interest in the matter. He will not willingly become the agent of the law of karma. He may then still be made, by the law of karma, the means of causing death to his former enemy, but will not enter into the act with his personality, and thus no further personal karma is caused.

C. S.

FAILURES

There was once a Master Builder who built a great ship. He did it by directing the labor of thousands of men who worked out the details as he designed them. He had built other great ships before and each had been an improvement over the preceding one because his craftsmen became more familiar with the work expected of them and, too, the Master Builder himself gained increasing powers to conceive more wonderful designs and to direct and instruct his workmen in their labors.

The building of a great ship requires many artisans having much diversity of skill and each man chose his piece of work, or was assigned to it by the Master, according to his fitness for that part. So they worked happily and harmoniously together—at the keel, the decks, the masts—each striving to build a perfect part, so that the completed whole would be worthy of the Designer. The vessel must have strength, beauty, grace. Even the cradle that outlined the huge form of the vessel was wrought with extra care.

As the ship neared completion, some of the workers were aloft in the rigging and they enjoyed the bright sunlight and the cool breezes; others toiled below at the keel and rudder; and there were still others who looked to the preparation for the launching, so that when the moment came the ways would be ready and all would be smooth and light for the sailing.

There was no jealousy or inharmony among the men, no thought of high or low in the ranks, for they looked to the Master for approval and

all servers were alike in his eyes, even those who stood by "the ways" and awaited the time of the launching.

At the last ceremony when the ship was loosed from its cradle, all joined in a worshipful moment and each craved a blessing from the Great Builder with feelings of love and devotion.

In this way the workers completed their vessel and the mighty ship glided away.

Thus closed the labors of many under the guidance of One, and thus passed onward the product of his genius, leaving behind a blessing that robbed parting of its accustomed grief.

The Master has sailed with his craftsmen, his chosen workers. The shoremen who served at the launching still gather about the ship's cradle and recall with joy the eventful parting, and as the breeze comes drifting in from the sea it brings to them again the benediction of the Master.

The craftsmen who sailed with the goodly ship will touch other shores and these will bring to them old memories of their home land and the dear brothers there who gave them "Godspeed." Oh, those of the crew who happen to be on land helping in the launching when the ship slides down the well-greased ways need not be called "failures", or those left behind!

William G. Merritt.

KARMA AS A PRACTICAL AID TO LIVING

The comprehension of karma is a practical aid to living; it is practical beyond all things, for this comprehension helps us to take hold of our present environment, to analyse, to deduce, to find where we need to make our corrections, whether in the world of thought, of feeling or of action.

Knowledge of karma is an *aid* to living, truly an aid; it is not able to solve all of the problems, for at this stage of evolution we cannot know all of the past and all of the future, all the causes and all the effects. Could we do so, it would perhaps be an entire solution to all our perplexities, and we should not be compelled, as at present, blindly to work out the problems for ourselves; thus we should miss all the valuable training in intuition, for we should see the reasons that had produced the surroundings. However, we are allowed to understand much of it, and it helps us to live with a better grace.

To live! In this word we have the crux of the whole matter, for living is our problem to-day. Each moment, each second, we have to live; whether we have a physical body or not, we have to live; we came into the world to live in a certain way, and when we take off our physical body we shall live in another way, a continuation of the method we have begun right here.

How are we living? What are our thoughts, our feelings, our emotions, our actions? Why are we so living? Why do we think, feel and act in these ways? Let us examine life as we find it individually before us to-day, and see how a know-

ledge of the law of karma can help us to live it more gloriously.

We find ourselves in the midst of a definite series of thoughts, desires and actions. Why? It is like going into a "movie" in the middle of the performance. We question, why does that man hurry down the street? What is said in that conversation? Why do those two seem to love so intensely and then to hate? It is all the result of what went on in the play before we entered the room. We do not understand, but if we stay long enough, it will be clear to us. Life, too, is like this; we blame an unjust Providence, or wail that our fate is unmerited, when we simply have not seen in this incarnation the first part of the play, or do not remember and understand it.

For every event in life is the result of a past cause. Not one thing happens that we have not ourselves made inevitable by our past, not in this life alone, but in those innumerable lives that we have lived during the centuries gone by. For karma is perfect justice. Karma is exact, unerring, yet loving, kind, beneficent. Karma never punishes; it teaches, leads, guides, is never cruel. Karma is a law, like gravitation; therefore it is universal. It applies not only to great world periods, to dynasties, to nations, but to individuals, to the details of life. Our problem is to understand it, as we would understand steam or electricity, in order to make it of use.

The general law is, we reap what we sow. But there are certain rules which we need to know; very simple rules they are, and easily memorized, but they will help us to win the game of life.

They are: thought makes *character*; desire makes *opportunity*; action makes *environment*.

We recognize that every thing about us is related to these three, for analysing, all is physical, emotional or mental,—thought, desire or action. Most people think their actions are all-important, and that they may think a thing as much as they wish, as long as they do not do it. We know that is putting the cart before the horse, for they would never *act* had they not previously thought. What they actually do, is the result of all their piled-up thoughts of the past. Since this is the key to the whole situation, and will take too much space for this article, we hope to treat it more in detail later; for with a working knowledge of these rules, we may actually change many of our present surroundings, we may model our character for the remainder of this life and for our future lives, and thus we may deliberately fashion for ourselves those opportunities that will most promote our own evolution and that of the world in our next incarnation.

Those who wish quickly to inform themselves of further details of these rules may do so by reading Mrs. Annie Besant's *A Study in Karma*.

Of course, in the same breath that we utter the wondrous things that may be accomplished by a knowledge of karma, we hasten to say that the ideal is, not to work for results of a personal nature, however high they may be, but to work for the good of humanity. The story of this is told in that Indian classic, the *Bhagavad Gita*, where we are urged to work "having abandoned desire," for "action is better than inaction," and "inaction in a deed of mercy is action in a deadly

sin." It might be called the text-book of Karma Yoga. Time spent in the careful study of this book, with subsequent meditation upon it, will surely lay up a store of "good karma," for it is rich in gems of thought that will prove a practical aid to living.

There is another way in which karma itself actually helps us. Of course a knowledge of karma helps us, but there is a way in which, when we understand and work with the law, our karma is balanced for us, in a marvelous manner. It might be compared to a debt between two men. Each owes the other a sum; the total of each is determined, the amount balanced, and only the difference is paid. So with our karma: instead of needing to live through the mass of it, a balance is made, and we are allowed after the good is balanced against the evil, to have the remainder of the debt of evil brought quickly to us for settlement. That hastens our evolution so that we may be free to serve in helping to forward the evolution of humanity, of our brothers.

So when we know about karma, we have the aid of those Greater Ones who have gone before us, and Who wait, more eager than we, to help us. But it is for us to work, every hour, every moment, to make the preparation so that we, being free from personal hindrances, may in turn help to bear the heavy karma of the world.

Edith C. Gray.

THE LEGION'S GROWING WORK

After several years' delay the *Legion's* home is being completed. The vault for the storing of records and books too valuable to be left to the risk of fire has been finished, so that trucks can be rolled into it, at the close of the day's work, without a jar.

Fresh paint is being applied and a new heating apparatus is being installed.

But best of all for the future is the fresh enthusiasm of members in many parts of the world and the addition to our resident staff of several who can give all their time to the work. Miss Edith C. Gray, formerly of Washington, D.C., has been with us for a year.

Miss Pauline Trueblood of Austin, Texas, and Lieut. I. I. Nelson, also of Austin, have recently come to us. ^c We are anticipating the early advent of another enthusiastic worker from New York, who can give at least part of his time to our work. Miss Trueblood has purchased a comfortable home not far from headquarters.

May the *Legion's* work be worthy of the manifold blessings which it has enjoyed!

FIELD NOTES

Miss L. Guttmann, Königspl. 21 b, Düsseldorf, Germany, has begun *Legion* activities and hopes to resume friendly relations with workers in America and other countries.

Some of the friends of the *Legion* who visited Chicago during July and attended lectures in the Fine Arts Building were: Mrs. Eldred, of Birmingham; Miss Schofield, of Brooklyn; Mrs. Hays, Denver; Messrs. Suffern and Zweers, New York; Misses Eaton and Schenck, Pittsburgh; Mrs. Hamilton, Pueblo; Mrs. Hart, Springfield, Mass.; Mr. H. Herold and Mrs. Schwenker, St. Louis.