

THE INITIATE IN THE NEW WORLD

A Sequel to "The Initiate"

BY
HIS PUPIL

ROUTLEDGE & KEGAN PAUL

London and Henley

First published 1927

By Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd

39 Store Street

London WC1E 7DD and

Broadway House, Newtown Road

Henley-on-Thames, Oxon RG9 1En

Reprinted 1932, 1938, 1951, 1956 and 1971

Reprinted and first published as a paperback 1977

Printed in Great Britain by

Lowe & Brydone Printers Limited, Thetford, Norfolk

ISBN 0 7100 7077 2 (c)

ISBN 0 7100 8571 0 (p)

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	4
I. THE RE-MEETING	6
II. MORALITY AND SUPERMORALITY	10
III. MISS BRIND AND MISS DELAFIELD	18
IV. THE ORIENTALS AND THE MOTOR DRIVE	23
V. MISS DELAFIELD AND MISS BRIND	27
VI. PROGRESS	32
VII. LOVE AND INSPIRATION	38
VIII. EGOTISM	43
IX. THE ARKWRIGHTS	49
X. THEOSOPHISTS	54
XI. THE EPISODE IN THE CHURCHYARD	58
XII. QUESTIONS ON MARRIAGE	63
XIII. MYSTIFICATION	67
XIV. EXCERPTS FROM A LECTURE	72
XV. PERMANENT LOVE-CONSCIOUSNESS	74
XVI. THE REVELATION	77
XVII. CONSEQUENCES	83
XVIII. ADAPTATION	86
XIX. THE INTERVIEW	90
XX. THE INVISIBLE CAUSES OF WAR	95
XXI. THE DECISION	98
XXII. SEX	102
XXIII. THE RATIONALE OF CLARE'S TEST	105
XXIV. THE TYRANNY OF VIEWPOINTS	109
XXV. THE DYAN CHOCHAN AND THE BOOK	116
XXVI. MUSIC AND "MIRACLES"	118
EPILOGUE	124

INTRODUCTION

THE reception accorded to *The Initiate* has been at once gratifying, instructive and curious. No less than three different people have claimed to be its author, and confided this intelligence to one of my friends “in the know” who, which considerable amusement, passed it on to me without, I may add, divulging their names; neither did he inform them of the identity of the real author. The dishonesty of these claimants is not without its element of flattery, and they need not fear that, by way of retaliation, I shall betray them by ceasing to preserve my anonymity in this second *Initiate* book I am about to send on its hazardous career. On the contrary, I am grateful to them for thus assisting me to maintain my literary disguise.

But apart from engendering this amusing species of dishonesty, *The Initiate* has been responsible for results less curious and more gratifying, if, at the same time productive of certain embarrassments for its author. For I have received, via my publishers, letters in which the writers ask me either for “the favour of an interview,” or to obtain messages for them from my Master. In some cases they have even specified what sort of message they want or do not want, several having declared that they would by no means be satisfied with advice or admonitions of a “goody-goody” nature. Some of these correspondents I have replied to as best I could, others I have deemed it wise to treat with silence knowing that one day they will come to learn that masters cannot be dictated to in the manner implied, and that the only message a Master could be expected to send would be the one most suited to their *spiritual* requirements. As to granting interviews and so divulging my identity, I have taken the precaution of consulting my Master before acceding to such requests; and only in a very few instances has he advised me to do so. It would appear that these message-and-interview seekers do not realize the difficulties with which I am faced. Although I fully gave my readers to understand in the concluding chapter of *The Initiate* that my Master had gone to reside in another part of the world and had left me no address, some of those readers seem to have assumed that I am in the enviable position of being able to go and see him whenever I wish, or of ringing him up on the telephone, or a telephone, material of psychic. But the truth is otherwise, as a perusal of the first chapter and the epilogue of this book will show. For one thing my Master now lives thousands of miles away from my home, and for another I am at present entirely dependent on *his* wishes for any communication between us. He knows perfectly all that is in my consciousness, and hence is fully aware of my needs and of what letters and requests I receive. Thus when he feels that a particular individual can be spiritually helped by an interview with me or a judiciously worded letter declining such, he establishes that communication by means of which I am enabled to ask which

course to adopt. In some difficult cases he has even dictated the letter to me; in others he has advised me to remind my correspondents of the occult truth that *when the pupil is ready, the Master will be forthcoming*, and that although they may not know it, they are already being watched and guided.

* * * * *

A few words of explanation are necessary regarding the text of this sequel to *The Initiate*. The talks which I have termed lectures were not delivered in the order in which they appear in the narrative, my reasons for altering that order being solely ones of expediency and obedience to the demands of literary form. Only a few of the many "talks" at which I was present have been included, and such parts of these deleted, as were only intended for initiates of that particular school which my Master represents. Although I wrote this book several years ago, my Master told me that the time was then not ripe for its publication. This delay has proved fortunate in one sense, for otherwise the Epilogue could not have been included. Should I state that my Master seldom if ever employed theosophical nomenclature, but confined himself to the Sanscrit terminology. Even for the word Master he usually substituted *Guru*. As, however, many theosophical words are now much in vogue and I wish to avoid the addition of a glossary, I have translated most of *his* more technical terms into the more current theosophical ones.

I may add in conclusion that while writing the present volume, I received a message of approval and encouragement from one of the Himalayan Masters, who expressed himself as much pleased that *The Initiate* should be followed by this sequel. May it prove worthy of so exalted a blessing.

Since the publication of the first edition, my Master has pointed out certain errors due to faulty memory on my part, and also certain passages which have created a false impression. This new edition has therefore been carefully revised.

CHAPTER I
THE RE - MEETING

SOME twelve years had passed since I last saw my Master (known by the name of Justin Moreward Haig). In his farewell letter to me he had written: "In future another kind of work is allotted to me, and you and I will not be able to meet in the flesh for some time to come, though whenever you need my help I shall be aware of it and shall answer to your call." And certainly he kept his word, though my own faculties are such that I was not always able to reap the full advantage of his promise. There came in fact a time when it seemed as if I were losing those few faculties I had slowly come to possess. The reason for this has since been made known to me, but at the time I was, to say the least, puzzled. To lose the vision of one's Master is indeed a tragedy to those who are in a position to realize what a Master really means to one's entire life. Nevertheless I will do myself the justice of saying that the loss in itself of my meager faculties failed to trouble me, for he had often impressed on me that the desire for psychic powers proved a stumbling - block on the path to Spiritual Consciousness; unless desired for totally selfless purposes, so I had never had never made any special effort to develop them. Indeed, although a spiritist friend, suggested that I should "sit for development" in a little circle she had formed, I was unwilling to comply, and argued that if my Master intended me to "see," my powers, such as they were, would be re - awakened in due course.

And then one day I received a type - written envelope with a United States' postage stamp. This caused me no surprise, as I possess one or two acquaintances in America from whom I occasionally get letters. But my astonishment was considerable- I will not mention my other feelings- when on opening that envelope I discovered the following:-

Dated 1920

My son,

Now that this incommensurable and blood - thirsty piece of childishness (to which mankind gives the pseudo - dignified name of war!) has reached its end I would suggest that you make the necessary arrangements to come over here, at least for a period of a few months, and to come as soon as possible. I have a proposal to make to you which concerns your evolution and without which I hardly think it feasible for you to progress much further in this particular incarnation. Although for these few latter years you have not been fully aware of me, I on my part have watched and followed *you* in your inner life, and may tell you without reserve that you have to thank your own *faith* for making possible what I now suggest. True, there may be difficulties in your way,

but I ask you only to retain that faith which so far has stood you in good stead, decide to take the voyage, and I promise you assistance will be forthcoming.

My friend, I send you my blessings and await your answer. May you choose wisely, for that is the hope of

Yours always,

J. M. H.

P>S.- Excuse type written letter- but time is at a premium in this country.

NO comment is necessary. There were difficulties to be overcome; financial ones which at the time seemed insurmountable; and yet circumstances so arranged themselves that something in the nature of a windfall occurred. To me the Master's word is law, and having in the exuberance of my feelings read and re-read his letter several times, two hours had not passed before I had replied to him. *How* I was to come, exactly when I could come, I was unable to see, but come I would- thus I wrote to him. And within three weeks I was on an Atlantic liner, and what is more, with a larger balance to my credit in the bank than I had had for some years.

I sailed into Boston harbour on a wonderfully crisp sunny autumn morning; and after all the stories that my fellow-passengers had told me, did not look forward to my encounter with the formidable custom-house officials. But almost the moment I disembarked, a buoyant clear-skinned young man accosted me. "Pleased to meet you, Mr. Broadbent."

Puzzled, I shook hand with him, and was about to ask to whom I had the pleasure of speaking, when he enlightened me.

"My name is Arkwright," he said. "I am a *Chela* of Master J. M. H., and have come to offer you any assistance I can. The master expects you for lunch at one o'clock. In the meantime I'll see you through all this business," pointing to the piles of luggage, "and then take you to your hotel."

"It is extremely good of you to come and meet me," I said warmly, "to tell the truth I was feeling a bit at sixes and sevens. You know how it is when one arrives in a strange place."

"I guess I do," he answered. "Pardon me," and he darted off to some official he had caught sight of, said a few words to him, then returned.

"Now," he assured me, "we shall soon be through; it's only a matter of waiting till they bring your boxes off the boat."

"Tell me," I asked, while we were waiting, "how did you manage to recognize me? There is nothing the least distinctive about my appearance."

"Ask me another," was his unelucidating reply, made with a twinkle, "or ask Master. Maybe he'll tell you- or maybe he won't."

I laughed. There was something distinctly humorous about this young American with his matter of fact manner. I wondered how advanced he might be, and what line of occultism appealed to him most, and-

"Your trunk, I believe," he said, indicating a porter crossing the gangway with my property, on which my name was painted.

After that it was all plain sailing. His "friend," the official, made so few difficulties that I suspected some strings had been pulled, but thought it best to ask no questions.

Within less than half an hour, our taxi stopped before a hotel in B- Street where a room had been engaged for me. Here I unpacked a few of my belongings while my light - hearted companion regaled me with his conversation. Then we set out- to keep my momentous appointment.

My re - meeting with a Master was one of those great moments in life to which my descriptive powers fail to do justice. I had expected much from the long - awaited reunion, but I received even more. The feeling of love and welcome which he managed to convey to me without any great exuberance of words or actions moved me so deeply that, joyful though my emotions were, I was almost relieved when he, realizing my embarrassment, dispelled it by adopting a more matter - of - fact tone.

“You stood the test well,” he said, “and I am pleased with you.”

“Test?” I repeated.

“My son- in an age when psychic powers are rare and hence so greatly desired, it is laudable to view them, or rather their loss, with such philosophic indifference. A child weeps more bitterly over the loss of a new toy than over the loss of an old one.”

And then I understood.

In the pause which ensued, I observed my surroundings more closely. J.M.H. was living in a tastefully furnished house in one of those old English - looking squares of Boston. Why a solitary man should require so spacious a residence surprised me at the time; but the reason became apparent in the course of our conversation.

“Not much changed,” he resumed, scrutinizing me, “a few more lines, perhaps- ”

“Needless to say *you* had not changed at all- except that your hair seems a bit more luxuriant.”

He laughed. “All the same, you *will* find me changed when you get to know me in my *American* edition.”

“What may that mean?”

“Merely the process of adaptation.”

“I am not *very* much the wiser yet,” I smiled. External manner suited to one country are not suited to another. I must not only adapt my methods to the nationality and the temperament of my pupils, but I must even adapt *myself*. Externally I am not the same man I was in London. Another type of work has been allotted to me, as I wrote to you twelve years ago when I said good - bye.”

“It seems curious at first,” I commented, “but merely, I suppose, because such an idea never occurred to me before.”

“It is absolutely necessary,” he emphasized, “and you must not be surprised or disappointed if I say and do things over here which seem at variance with what you knew of me over yonder in Europe. So I give you this little warning at the outset- it is always well to be prepared.”

For the remainder of that interview he talked to me of matters concerning my own evolution, which I do not wish to set down here. But of one thing I may write, since it will be dealt with later on in its proper place.

There was a particular course of action which my Master desired me to pursue. “You have not come all this distance,” he said, “merely to be near and receive tuition at my hands. There is something very definite that I wish you to do, as I hinted in my letter. It

will mean a great sacrifice on your part- but it is worth it. What I have in view for you, I will tell you when the time is ripe; but that is not yet. In the meanwhile you will meet most of my pupils. They congregated here every Wednesday evening, when I talk to them. We wish that the spirit of love and brotherhood should exist amongst us all, and by this means we hope to encourage it. After the talk, questions may be asked; we have conversation, refreshments and smokes. With regard to the latter, we are not fanatical ascetics. with a few exceptions, everyone here has perfect freedom in such matters. We don't believe in interfering with people's comparatively harmless idiosyncrasies- only the taking of alcohol is prohibited. No wine or spirits are served; against their use I strongly advise my *chelas*. So now you know how things stand. And as today is Wednesday, we shall expect you at 8:30."

As it was evident that M.H. was busy, I took my leave, and spent the rest of the day exploring Boston, with a feeling of exhilaration, and a brain busy with many thoughts. What was it that M.H. wished me to do, and which would entail such a sacrifice? A multitude of conjectures presented themselves, but the one which he came later to know was the right one, was not among them.

With regard to that change in himself to which the Master had alluded, so far I had been unable to perceive it. He was dressed in the same faultless taste as when in London, and the crease down his trousers denoted, if not the same, at any rate an equally painstaking and efficient valet. But of course it was early in the day to form opinions- I had only seen him for a short time. What the future had in store, I could not say, but that it held for me a much intensified interest in life, I was certain.

When I returned to the Master's house that evening, I found there some thirty people chatting before settling down for the discourse. M.H. himself moved among them, talking first to one and then to the other; but on seeing me by the door he came forward and introduced me to a young woman and her neighbour.

"This is just to give a start in," he smiled as he pronounced our names," but the rule here is that everybody talks to everybody else. What's the good of all being One unless we behave like it?" he added with humour.

I had, however, little time to profit by my new acquaintanceship, as M.H., going to a chair placed upon a diminutive platform at one end of the room, gave the sign that the talk was about to begin.

CHAPTER II MORALITY AND SUPERMORALITY

“As most of you know by now, much of the teaching I give you on these evenings is of that nature which may be passed on to those outside our particular Order. To suppose that we Masters exist merely to instruct a few disciples how to develop their psychic centers”- (M.H. used the word Chakrams)- “is to suppose a fallacy. Indeed, with the majority of you, I discourage such development as an obstacle to the goal rather than a means of attainment. What we do exist for is principally to guide mankind at large and to give forth such moral, spiritual, and ethical ideas as may be required at a particular time. How is this achieved? Through our *chela*,[?] who moving in the world and using their discretion, spread such portions of our teaching as they seem wise and as opportunity offers. Thus we help our disciples, and in return our disciples help us. If they are writers, some of that teaching is set forth in their books; if they are poets, it appears in their poetry; if they are musicians, the spirit of it echoes forth from their music. When I look round in this little community, I see members of various professions, all of whom help me to the best of their ability- at least,” he added, looking mischievous, “I hope so! It is to them I also look for help in bringing new seep to the fold, so to say, not only by discreetly spreading our teachings, but by persuading the incredulous of the mere fact of our existence. Of course, no doubt sensation mongers would much prefer that we miraculously appeared before our prospective pupils and said: ‘I’m your Guru- come and be my disciple.’ But such is not our policy and never will be. Unless the pupils were clairvoyant and thus could see us without our having to materialize ourselves, it would merely involve a waste of force, and incidentally prove us guilty of ‘showing off.’ One of our rules is never to do things in an extraordinary way, when they can be done in an ordinary way. What we do after the disciple and the Master have become closely linked is another matter.”

M.H. lit a cigar.

“To - night I am going to speak of practically the greatest obstacle to occult Wisdom” - he used the term Yog Vidya- “spiritual attainment and mystical progress. That obstacle is Conventionality in whatever form it may take, be it in relation to morals or religion. The New Testament writers portrayed the Pharisees as its most typical adherents, and Jesus is reported to have said that the harlots were nearer the kingdom of Heaven than these Pharisees- which, allowing for Oriental hyperbole, is in accordance with fact. If we look at the mental bodies of very conventional people we find their outlines hard and rigid, and the bodies themselves small and as it were under - nourished. When we try to impress those bodies with our teaching our thoughts

[?] Disciples- students- pupils

cannot penetrate the barrier of that hard surface; and sometimes the only way we can endeavour to break down that barring surface is by music of a modern and rather discordant nature. That is where some modern composers are doing good work.

“From what seeds does this weed of conventionality grow? From mental laziness, fear- of what others will think; vanity- or the capacity to be hurt by what they will say; and superstition- or the false notion that what the majority think must be right. Conventionality in its relation to religion need not detain us; what I would discuss this evening is its relation to morals. As you know, conventional morality exists and is to a greater or lesser degree practiced by the masses; but for the student who is on or about to tread the Path something much more elastic and elevated is required. That something we may christen with the name of Super - morality. Whereas the latter is founded on unselfishness and obtains its criterion from unselfishness, the former all too often, though purporting to be based on unselfishness, is the result of and the excuse for selfishness instead. Thus there are many reasons why people choose to be moral- but there can be only one reason why people choose to be supermoral. A man may be moral because, as I implied, he fears the aspersions cast upon him by his neighbours- that man is governed by vanity combined with cowardice. Another man may be moral because it suits his convenience- that is to say because he gets something to his advantage from so - being. But a man cannot be supermoral for any such reasons; on the contrary, what he will reap as far as the world is concerned is likely to be nothing but kicks and calumny. And this because to the individual in the street the supermoralist will often appear as an immoralist; for to the indiscriminating extremes look alike, just as the most dazzling light may be as blinding as the desest darkness.”

Here the Master got up from his chair, stepped for a while as he talked.

“What, then, is the distinguishing feature between morality and supermorality? It is selflessness of motive. The former comes from the brain, the latter from the heart; the former is dependent on rules and conventions, the latter is entirely dependent on the demands of circumstances. Take such a simple example as deception. Are any of you so innocent as to suppose that even I, whom you are pleased to call your Master, would not and do not deceive you when I think it is for your own good? Yet there are those who would hold up their hands in horror at such an idea. ‘A Master deceive or tell a lie - unthinkable, impossible!’ They little realize that in one sense a Master needs to act- which is but a form of deceiving- the greater part of every day. Imagine an Initiate who has acquired that unconditional ever - permanent Love - Consciousness (which, as you know, is a concomitant of Adeptship) behaving in a manner consistent with that inner consciousness? Do you imagine we Initiates dare show the love we feel for everyone? Why, we should probably soon find ourselves in the lunatic asylum, and have to waste our so - called miraculous powers in trying to get out again!”

A ripple of laughter went through the little assembly.

It is all very well for those much - talked of Mahatmas who live the lives of hermits in the fastnesses of the Himalayas: they can behave as they like ... at least they could, if they really did live as hermits- but as a matter of fact many of them do not spend the whole day in ecstatic contemplation. That might be very pleasant for them-

having reached the end of their journey- but how about the poor creatures who are still struggling along the road? Just because we have learnt to do a certain thing- yes, and perhaps taken years, even centuries in the learning of it, does that mean that we must be continually doing that thing, firstly because of the pleasure it gives us, and secondly in order to show others that we can do it? No. the supermoralist realizes that when he has acquired a virtue or a faculty, be it truthfulness or ecstatic trance- what matter- then is the time to hide it or indulge in it sparingly, or both, as circumstances dictate. A Swami I once met told me that in a previous incarnation I had been a great orator. Maybe that is true, may be not; but suppose it were true, and I still possessed great oratorical faculties, would it be fitting for me to arouse your emotions with great orations instead of merely talking to you as I do? If the latter method suffices why employ the former? By so doing shouldn't I only be reminding you that I could do something which you can't do? Most people, when they acquire a particular virtue, are inclined to flaunt it in the faces of those who have not yet acquired it. They argue that it is so good for these poor virtueless persons- little dreaming that vanity is the cause of their thought. How would you like it if you were starving and one of your friends came up to you with a large slice of cake in his hand, and proceeded to eat it before your eyes? . . . Would that be a kind action? Or let us say a friend of yours had recently lost every cent he possessed, would you just stand in front of him and jingle the coins in your pocket for his benefit? Yet thousands of highly moral and religious people do this very thing with their virtues. Ah yes, there a fine lot of virtue - exhibitions in the world, and you needn't pay any entrance - free to look at them. But what do all these virtue - exhibitions really imply? Simply that one man or woman wants to lord it over another. 'A virtue is virtue,' they argue, 'therefore the oftener it comes into the limelight the better'- and then they'll probably quote scripture to themselves to substantiate their argument." The Master paused and then continued with an altered inflection:

"But are there never times when we should show our virtues? Well, of course there are, but all depends on why, how, and where we show them. There are also times when we should show our vices- even vices we don't possess. Recently a chela came to me and asked how he could cure a friend who had started the drink habit. And I gave him some advice which entailed breaking our rules. How did he proceed in accordance with that advice? He went and got drunk several times in company with his friend. One night before either he or his friend were too drunk to be completely fuddled, he threw his glass on the floor and said: 'look here, why on earth do we drink this damned filthy stuff? It tastes rotten, gives us a putrid headache, and isn't worth it. I'm going to chuck it, why don't you chuck it too?' And that man did 'chuck it.' His friend's action had such a strong suggestive value, combined with a little occult assistance I rendered, that he was cured. From a conventional - moral standpoint my disciple broke our rules, deceived his friend, and made a beast of himself, as the phrase goes; but from a supermoral stand point, he acted like a heroic Samaritan. Thus what you need to make people realize is that there is no absolutely permanent moral truth- and please do not confound moral truths with spiritual truths; the latter are permanent, but the former are dependent on a variety of changing things. For instance the morals of Thibet are not the morals of New York. If here in the States a woman married not merely Mr. X. but all

his brothers as well, she would be looked upon as a sink of depravity. If, on the contrary, in Thibet she refused to marry all those brothers, she would be looked upon as something equally reprehensible. And it is no use merely arguing that the Thibetans are barbarians and the New Yorkers are not- that isn't the reason. The reason is simply that in Thibet there are not enough women to go round. What's more, if this fantastic war had lasted much longer, there might not have been enough men to go round in this country, and so then a man would not only have had to marry his sweetheart, but all her sisters as well. You laugh, and rightly so, for everything has its humorous side; but your less enlightened compatriots wouldn't laugh at such an unprecedented state of affairs. They'd say it was intensely and disgustingly immoral. Yet let us be honest and courageous enough to look facts in the face. Is it more evil to go out and kill hundreds of innocent individuals because nations have got themselves into a mess through refusing to love their neighbours, or is it more evil to marry several women to save the population from the result of that mess? Let moralists answer me that. Personally I hold no two opinions on the subject. But I'll tell you why moralists would think they disagree with me. It's because for centuries that type of killing on a gigantic scale has been regarded as something grandiose and heroic. Why a thing which is evil on a small scale should be justifiable when augmented to a colossal scale is a question you mustn't ask a logician; but I'll tell you the cause of that inconsistency- it lies in the one word convention, or tradition if you prefer it."

"And so you must realize that we who are trying to tread the path of Wisdom cannot take the same view of morals as the world at large takes; that we require something more elevated, more elastic, more spiritual; that in view of the fact that morals not only change with place and nation and climate, but also with the times themselves, we require a criterion different from mere moral tradition, of what is right and wrong. And if some people are not disposed to believe that morals change with the times, then let them look into the book held most sacred by all the peoples of the West, and read how at one time the idea of Justice was 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' Or look further back still and read of King Solomon, said to be the wisest- which surely also implies the most moral man who ever lived. But tell me this: how would the bulk of fastidious Americans with their legislation against this, that and the other, regard a man who had seven hundred wives and two hundred concubines? Would they consider him the wisest man on this whole continent? I should like to know how even he could find the time to cultivate wisdom, under the stress of such extensive erotic obligations." Loud laughter greeted this but the Master continued unmoved: "And by the way, since we have touched on the subject of legislation, I may point out that no supermoralist ever interferes with the liberty of other people- only moralists do that. By all means let men make as many laws as they like if it amuses them, but let them make them for themselves, and not for others. What business have we to go poking our fingers into other people's pies? Do you think that by forcing our fellows to do this or that, we are furthering their evolution? Are you furthering the evolution of a prize - fighter by tying up his hands? No. there is only one way to further the evolution of your fellows, and that is by persuading them- not by forcing them, mind you- to alter their motives; for motives is everything, actions are secondary. If you can teach people to think with their

hearts as well as with their brains, you'll have done some good."

This ended the discourse for the evening, but the Master resumed his seat.

"Anybody want to ask any questions?" he said.

"How would you define a spiritual truth?" the girl next to me enquired. "You said we mustn't mix up spiritual truths with moral truths."

"When the Yogi maintains All is Brahman," came the answer, "he is uttering a spiritual truth. Or when we say there is only one Self- that is a spiritual truth. Such truths are permanent, unchanging; moral truths are relative, and hence subject to change. Any more questions?"

No one responded, so the Master stepped down from the little platform, and the company got up from their chairs. There was a buzz of conversation, and a movement towards the long table at the side of the room on which were spread light refreshments. I was offered sandwiches by an exceedingly pretty girl who, in the most natural manner in the world "made friends" with me, telling me first of all "how very glad they were to have me amongst them, and that she hoped I had come to stay, etc., etc." A few others followed suit and said very much the same thing, their object obviously being to make me feel "at home," in which they certainly succeeded.

Most of the pupils I took to be under forty - five, but a few of them were over that age, and one I took to be verging on sixty. I was especially struck by their healthy clean - blooded appearance, although none could be described as "beefy" or particularly muscular.

The spirit of bonhomie was particularly evident amongst them, and I may here remark that during the several months I spent with them, not once did I encounter anything approaching malicious gossip.

After about half an hour's conversation, the little gathering showed signs of thinning out. One of two of the guests shook hand with M.H. before going home, but the majority, I noticed, just took "French leave" or shouted a "Good - night to you all." As I was in hopes of making an appointment with M.H. for the following day, I lingered behind and exchanged a few words with him.

"Well, this is how we do things here," he said genially, "hope you made some friends?"

I told him everybody had been very nice to me.

"There are one or two I'd like you to meet in a more intimate way. Let me see, now," he reflected, "tomorrow's Thursday- Viola Brind is coming at five, and bringing along a friend who may become a pupil. Yes, that will do. Turn up at five o'clock too, you'll find tea going. Afterwards when the others have gone we can have a chat."

We said good - night to each other.

As I passed through the hall, I encountered a Hindoo next to whom I had sat; he was collecting his belongings.

"Going my way?" I asked.

"Which is your way?"

"Towards B - Street."

He told me he was going that way, and I suggested we should walk along together. He was a powerfully built man with the most beautifully cut features I had ever seen,

and I wondered as we walked if he were very advanced. Talkative he certainly was not, yet his silence gave no impression of unfriendliness.

“You have been long with the Master?” I asked.

“Yes,” he replied, suppressing the beginnings of the kind of smile that is apt to appear when children ask a naïve question.

“Then I suppose you’ve gone very far?”

This time he did not suppress his smile. “All things are relative,” he answered noncommittally.

I am not inquisitive by nature, but if information concerning my Master is anywhere within reach, I grab at it like a hungry boy at an apple; so I persisted. “Do they all practice Yoga here?”

“What do you understand by Yoga?”

“Why, posture, breathing - exercises, meditation.”

“No, not all,” he looked at me benignly and asked: “Can the elephant suck honey like the bee, or the mongoose carry a rider like the horse?”

I supposed not, and was inwardly amused at his smiles. “Then what methods does M.H. employ?”

“Those which are best suited to each disciple; and they are as many and varied as the temperaments and occupations of the disciples themselves.”

And that was all I got from him, as we had already reached his apartments, or whatever they were. To my regret I never saw him again. I learned afterwards that he had sailed for India the very next day.

But that first night I was to run across yet another of the pupils. I found him sitting in the lounge of my hotel, reading the paper. He was a musician who was touring in the United States, and put in an appearance at M.H.’s whenever he got the chance.

“Seen each other already once tonight,” he said, nodding cheerfully, “have a seat and a talk before turning in?”

“By all means,” I answered, realizing at a glance that he would be more communicative than my Hindoo friend.

“Where did you meet M.H.?” I enquired without any preamble.

“In London, through a friend of mine. And you?”

“Also in London.”

“Then you’ve known him quite a time?”

I nodded assent. “Who was that very impressive - looking Hindoo? I walked a bit of the way with him.”

“Oh, that’s Yogi-” he mentioned a long Sanscrit name; “he’s a wonderful fellow.”

“He certainly carries a wonderful atmosphere about with him,” I agreed, “struck me as very advanced.”

“Yes, he is, but you’ll find out in time that some of the people who may not strike you as very advanced, are the most advanced of all. That Yogi, by the way, was a hermit in the Jungle for ten years and never spoke a word for three, so I’m told.”

“Yet M.H. is his Guru instead of one of the Indian Masters- that seems curious.”

“You’ll come up against a lot of curious things here. I’ve long given up trying to solve riddles. Still, this one is easy enough, I think. Do you suppose this is the first life

in which you have met M.H.?”

“No.”

“Well, then, since the link between Guru and Chela is the strongest in the world, I persists life after life, doesn’t it?”

I agreed.

“Now, do you really think that because in this incarnation M.H. was born in England and his Chela in India, it can make any difference?”

“No, of course not, now you put it that way.”

“Besides,” he went on, “M.H. was in India for years and years.”

“Good God, then how old can he be?” I exclaimed.

“Oh, about a hundred,” he replied with impish carelessness; then, correcting himself: “No, as a matter of fact only about two of the Chelas know, and they won’t let on.” He hummed a tune and drummed with his fingers on the arm of his chair. I offered him a cigarette.

“No use to me, thanks,” he said. “I don’t smoke.”

“What- not allowed to?”

“There’s no allowed here- in that connection- I’m advised not: it aggravates an obscure and obstinate complaint I’ve got.”

“Can’t M.H. cure it for you?”

“You mean won’t . . . When I’ve learnt to ignore it and work as efficiently as if I hadn’t got it, he’ll put me on to the cure. He says- well, you know how he says these things- ‘My son, it is a greater achievement to do good work in spite of a sick body, than to cure the body itself.’”

“I thought that Buddha said that perfect health was necessary to attain salvation.”

“Perhaps he did, and I daresay in our final incarnation we shall have splendid health. I don’t know you,” he added humorously, “but I’ve got a long way to go before then.”

“Good Lord, me . . .” I exclaimed, “all the same, you know, Ramakrishna was a pretty big saint, and he died of cancer.”

“Yes, because he used to take on other people’s Karma. But even he wasn’t a Master.”

“How do you know that?”

“M.H told me. He said he was nearing Adeptship but hadn’t reached it yet.”

“Does Master expect his Chelas to study philosophical books for a certain time every day, as they do in some esoteric schools?” I asked after a pause.

The musician burst out laughing. “We are not learning the occult alphabet; most of us have done all that before we came here. I used to read for about three or four hours a day before I met M.H.- not as a duty, but because I liked it. When you’ve extracted all the knowledge you can out of books, then the Master appears. He says the people who write the books only know up to a point. Why, the sort of rules that are laid down in the books are quite unsuited to certain people, and even do harm. I’ve read, somewhere, for instance, that unless you meditate for half an hour a day, you can’t lead the spiritual life. I’m told not to meditate more than five minutes, because that sort of concentration needs too much force, and M.H. says all the force I have must go into my work.”

“I’m learning a lot tonight,” I remarked, meaning it sincerely, “it’s a piece of good

luck I ran across you.”

He laughed again. “There’s no such thing as luck. He told me to hang about here tonight- considering we are staying at the same hotel. We’re encouraged to talk and discuss things among ourselves, and especially when anyone new turns up. Of course,” he added parenthetically, “we all may have our individual secrets, but if we don’t know how to hold our tongues about those, so much the worse for us. He told us one day that sometimes we might learn far more by talking among ourselves than by listening to him. I take that with a large pinch of salt- you know how modest he is- but I’ve found some truth in it all the same.”

“Well, I hope we shall often meet for more talks.”

“I hope so too- I only wish to God I wasn’t off again the day after tomorrow for two or three months- I’d stick around here for ever if I got the chance. Still, as he says these journeys are on his work, I have to console myself with that. After all- ”he broke off with a gesture.

We sat talking for another two hours, and would not have gone to bed even then, if the hotel - servants hadn’t come and glared at us for wasting the light.

CHAPTER III
MISS BRIND AND MISS DELAFIELD

WHEN I arrived at the Master's house the following afternoon I was shown into a little study on the ground floor, where I found him seated at his desk before a number of type - written letters which he was evidently in the act of singing. It was a cosy room lined with hundreds of books, mostly on occult subjects, as I afterwards discovered.

"Punctual to the minute," he said genially as he got up from his chair and greeted me. "Well, how have you been amusing yourself? Seen much of Boston yet?"

I told him I'd spent most of the day writing letters to England announcing my safe arrival.

"How else should you arrive?" he said with one of his twinkles, "you don't suppose we'd ask you to come over here and then let you get shipwrecked on the way, do you?"

"I don't," I laughed, "but my mother and friends can't be expected to know that, now can they?"

"Well, perhaps not," he conceded.

The servant announced: "Miss Brind, Miss Delafield."

M.H. shook hands with them both, introduced us and offered them chairs. I recognized Miss Brind as one of the pupils I had seen the previous evening but Miss Delafield was new to me. The former was a small but well - proportioned blonde, with what would be described as a clever face rather than a good - looking one. The latter - well, at my age I am not easily set a - flame, but I do not exaggerate when I say that she was so startlingly beautiful that I was completely bowled over.

"So this is your friend," M.H. said cheerily to Miss Brind, but looking at Miss Delafield. "I understand you are interested in our work."

"I am more than interested," she smiled.

"May I ask your age?"

"Thirty," was the unhesitating answer.

"Have you been or are you a member of any occult society- theosophical, for instance?"

"No, never."

"Your have read a lot of books on the subject?"

"Yes, a good many."

"What, for example?"

"Swami Vivekananda's. My mother used to know him."

"Ah, I see. And has anybody helped you at all?"

"My mother and Viola - Miss Brind."

M.H. gazed at her intently for a moment. "What is your object in studying these

things?" he asked in a casual tone.

Miss Delafield look puzzled. "My object ...? Well, really, I don't quite know; there seem to be such a lot. It makes you look at life differently, and it's so thrilling. Besides, it's so useful to help other people with."

M.H. seemed pleased, and glanced at her approvingly. "When did you begin studying this kind of philosophy?" he asked.

"Three years ago."

"H'm, that's not very long, is it?" he said kindly.

"No, perhaps it isn't."

"Your see it doesn't give you much chance to know whether it's merely a phase or not. You might tire of it."

Miss Delafield looked a trifle disconcerted, and my sympathy went out to her. "I don't think it's very likely," she said, "but of course you can judge of that better than I can."

"What makes you think that?"

"I am not totally ignorant about Masters," she gave him a knowing little smile.

He laughed. "I shouldn't take too much for granted if I were you."

"But I don't think I am."

"Well, the long and the short of it is you want a teacher," he said in a business - like tone.

"Yes, but the point is not do I want the teacher but does he want me. I mean," she hastily corrected, "does he think I'm- I'm likely to be a worthy pupil?"

The Master leant forward and patted her hand. "That's all right. Miss Brind hasn't left us quite in the dark about you"- Miss Delafield shot a grateful glance at her friend - "The thing is, will you be able to put up with our ways? We call a spade a spade here; if you're at all squeamish..."

"Oh, I'm used to that," she said laughing, "I've got three brothers."

"Very well then, we'll expect you at our Wednesday evening classes. And now for tea," he added, pressing the bell.

Miss Delafield tried to express her gratitude, but the Master waved it aside. "I have a certain amount of time at my disposal," he explained, "and I'm glad to give some of it to those need it."

The servant brought in tea and placed it in front of Miss Brind who proceeded to do the honours.

"By the way," said M.H., "our friend here has come over from England to be with us for a time; if either of you can introduce him to some of your acquaintances I shall be grateful."

They said they would be only too glad.

"There are some of the University people he might care to know," he suggested, "Mr. Broadbent is a poet."

Immediately they appeared interested; Americans are incorrigible hero worshippers.

"I write poetry," I said laughing, "but I don't know that that constitutes being a poet."

The Master went to one of the shelves and brought out two volumes of my poetry, which he handed to the ladies.

“Really...” I protested “and such old stuff too!”

“But I’ve read these,” declared Miss Delafield with surprised enthusiasm, “I’ve admired your poems for a long time. Fancy meeting you like this- I am glad to know you!”

“I’d no idea my work had penetrated so far,” I said, pleased to have found a bond of sympathy with this beautiful girl.

“If ever Master admires a thing,” Miss Brind threw in, “it always goes.”

M.H. looked on amused. “That’s one of your superstitions, my child.”

“Oh, no, it isn’t,” she retorted with a laugh. “There are very few of us,” turning to me, “who don’t know your poems. Master often quotes them and says there’s a lot of occult wisdom in them.”

“He pays them a compliment,” I said, and meant it in a very real sense. What greater compliment could I wish for my work than the approval of a Master?

“I’ve still to hear him pay a compliment,” she maintained, looking at him quizzically. “Now do you pay compliments?”

He made a non-committal gesture. “Well, perhaps not very often. Depends what you mean by the word compliment.” He took the two books and put them back in the shelves. Then he pulled out a third one, and held it up for me to look at. “You see we are quite up to date! This man, like many writers,” he came and stood with his back to the fireplace, “possesses the laudable quality of being unusually modest. He wrote a history of a friend of his in which he figured to a considerable extent, but never once mentioned that he himself wrote poetry.”

Miss Delafield gave me an admiring look.

“Why on earth should I?” I exclaimed, “I was writing about my friend, not myself.” M.H. and I exchanged glances.

“Mayn’t we know the name of the book?” asked Miss Brind.

“For heaven’s sake let’s change the conversation,” I said, laughing to hide my confusion, for I was uncertain whether M.H. would like even his pupils to know of *The Initiate*. “All this talk about my own wretched productions is most embarrassing.”

Fortunately a knock at the door rescued me.

“Come in,” said the Master.

It was Arkwright with a note which he handed to M.H. He shook hands with us while the latter, after excusing himself, read it. It was, I gathered, very brief, for in less than a minute he said: “Say yes, eleven o’clock,” waved his hand, and Arkwright went out immediately.

Miss Brind glanced at her watch and then significantly her friend. They both got up to go.

“Will you lunch with me at my club on Saturday?” Miss Brind asked while Miss Delafield was saying good-bye to M.H.

I told her I would be delighted, and she gave me the address.

“And with me to-morrow at my home,” from Miss Delafield, “my mother and I would be so happy.”

Again I said I would be delighted.

“That’ll be lovely. I am sure you will enjoy my mother,” she added- the first

American idiom I had noticed.

"I'm sure I shall," I agreed, bowing.

M.H. opened the door for them.

"You must excuse my holding you up as a paragon of modesty," he laughingly confided to me when they had gone, "but I'm up against a national weakness here- it's in the blood; ingrained lack of modesty. Even the best of them are not quite free from it."

"Oh, if that was the reason- "

"There is a subtle connection between hero - worship and conceit, though one wouldn't suppose it. If you think another man very wonderful for what he can do, you're apt to think the same of yourself if you can do likewise. Have a cigar?"

"That's a very ingenious psychological reflection," I said, accepting the cigar, "it certainly never struck me before. But, I say really- you nearly landed me in difficulties about that book!"

"How so?" he took a cigar himself.

"You don't want people to know it's about you, do you?"

"People and pupils are somewhat different. Most of my pupils have learnt discretion."

"But what about new ones?"

"Miss Delafield?"

I nodded.

"I can see."

I laughed at my own foolishness. "By George, she is beautiful!" I exclaimed.

M.H. raised his eyebrows knowingly. "Lost your hear, eh?"

"Very nearly."

"One day, if you carry out the program I have in view for you, I hope and think you will lose it permanently."

"What may that mean?"

"Permanent Love - consciousness."

"What- love everybody?"

"Certainly."

"Do you mean to say there's a chance for me to get that?"

"If--you carry out my program."

I was conscious of a thrill. "But you haven't said what that program is!"

He shook his head. "Patience, my son." He put his hand for a moment on mine.

"I thought only Masters could have permanent Love - Consciousness?"

"Not correct. You can have Love - Consciousness for several lives before you reach Masterhood. This life, say you reach it at fifty; the next earlier; the next earlier still, till you're finally born with it. In that life you'll reach Masterhood. But of course there is no absolute rule as to time. Why set limitations? Do your utmost, and you progress all the quicker." He paused for a moment. "But it's not only Love - Consciousness I've got in view for you- there are your poems."

"My poems...?"

"You are a far greater poet than you imagine."

“It’s nice to hear it from you,” I said, “but, as a matter of fact, I’ve infernally dissatisfied with my work of late.”

“That is merely because you are subconsciously aware that something much bigger is coming through later on- if, as I say, you carry out my program.”

“But of course I shall carry out your program.”

“I hope and think so,” he said again.

There was another knock at the door. M.H. went out and spoke to somebody in the hall. “In a few minutes,” he said round the door, as he closed it and came back into the room.

“You have another appointment?” I asked.

He nodded.

I got up from my chair. “When can I see you again?”

“Tomorrow there is a talk on Mantrams at 8:30. Always keep Wednesday and Friday evenings free- those are the two days for the classes. But wait a minute- there’s to -morrow morning. I’ve got to drive out to a little place in the vicinity here. If you care to come for the run- ?”

“I’d love it.”

“Well, call for me at, say 11:30. There are two Orientals coming at 11 to pay their respects to me.” He smiled ironically. “I shall have had quite enough of their respects in half an hour, so just walk in and that will be the most charitable hint we can give them to get up and go.”

I laughed, but asked, slightly apprehensive: “I suppose we can be back by 1:1 all right? I’m lunching with Miss Delafield.”

“Ah, that’s very important,” he teased me, “don’t worry, I’ll drop you at the door. By the way- got anything to read? If not,” with a wave of his arm towards the shelves, “help yourself. Au revoir.” He went out briskly.

CHAPTER IV THE ORIENTALS AND THE MOTOR - DRIVE

I imagined the two Orientals whom I found next morning conversing with M.H. to be Mongolians. After greetings had been exchanged they did not shake hands with me they resumed their conversation with the Master in what I assumed was not Hindoostani. Certainly I did not understand a word of it. But the circumstance led me to wonder how many languages my Master could speak. I knew he was conversant with Italian, French, German, and Sanscrit, not to mention English, but that he added current Oriental languages to his list was new to me. Whatever this particular language was, it was evident that he spoke it very fluently, for he was the principal talker in that somewhat unusual interview.

It must have been about five minutes after my arrival that the two Oriental gentlemen showed signs of moving. Then an unexpected thing happened; they prostrated themselves at my Master's feet. And at that moment I got a glimpse of him - from yet another angle. As he looked down at their prostrate figures, he glanced at me out of the corner of his eye for a second, and winked! The action was so irresistibly humorous that I had the greatest difficulty not to burst out laughing. As it was, I had to resort to blowing my nose in order to hide the twitching of my mouth.

"You nearly did for me," I said when the visitors had left.

He raised his eyebrows.

"That wink...."

"Oh, that!" he laughed. "Have a smoke?"

I accepted a cigar.

"The motor is at the door, so well be off now, I think. Got a warm coat with you?"

I told him I had.

The drive was exhilarating. M.H. took the wheel himself, and we dashed through the crisp autumn air at a speed which in England would have endangered our licence. But the Master proved himself a splendid chauffeur, and after we had got away from the noise of the busier streets, kept up a lively conversation at the same time.

"How did you like Miss Brind?" he asked.

"She seems a very pleasant sort of creature," I answered without great enthusiasm.

"She's a highly evolved soul," he assured me, "I should like you to cultivate her."

"Certainly, if you wish it."

"You can help each other."

"It'll be more a question of her helping me, I think. She's probably much more advanced than I am."

“That is a matter I can judge better than you.”

I was silent- but grateful for what I took to be an expression of approval.

“To tell you the truth,” I admitted after a pause, “I found her friend so astonishingly beautiful that she rather put Miss Brind in the shade.”

He smiled enigmatically.

“You don’t think she’s beautiful?”

“You see, I’m a little less dependent on faces and figures for the spectacle of beauty than- well the majority of people. If one can see all the subtler bodies as well as the physical, the latter loses some of its significance.”

We whizzed round a corner and had had to pull up sharp to avoid a cart, and I couldn’t help wondering why Masters didn’t make use of their psychic vision on all occasions. If a Master can see into the future, I argued, surely he can see round a corner. I put to him what was in my mind.

“You forget,” was his answer, “that only those who have no more Karma to work off can take the initiation for Masterhood. Accidents, so - called, in which a person gets killed or hurt are purely matters of Karma, so why should I use psychic vision when it isn’t necessary? If we can get across a river by the bridge, why walk on the water like St. Peter?”

“Are you ever stumped?” I asked, realizing that he had an answer for everything.

“Ever is a big word. There is an answer to most questions, but it’s not always wise to give it. Sometimes we can teach people far more by keeping back the truth than by telling it. If you tell a conceited man that he’s potentially divine, it’s true, but it’s likely to make him more conceited still; so you’ll certainly not be teaching him modesty in that way. Even with my chelas, I have to be very careful until they are far advanced. That’s why you’ll hear me say very little over here about astral bodies and the astral plane. Level - headedness and good sound common sense are what I try to instill into my pupils before I encourage them to peep into the hidden realms. A thorough grounding in philosophy is the first thing to be acquired- otherwise one’s up against hysteria and imagination of a wrong type, and all the other evils we know so well. I know of women who come down to breakfast every morning with the story of some wonderful vision they’ve had in the night, in which some wonderful vision they’ve had in the night, in which some supposed ‘Master’ has appeared and given them ‘teaching’ was, it turns out to be sheer nonsense or some moral platitude. Well, well- it is fortunate we gurus have a sense of humour.”

We pulled up at a large house standing in a garden overlooking the river.

“Here we are,” he said, getting out of the car. “I shan’t be more than a quarter of an hour. Please wait out here.”

As he disappeared into the house I wondered who lived there. Was it a pupil, and if so why did M.H. have to go to him instead of his coming to M.H.? Still I determined to ask no questions. After all what business was it of mine? If he wanted to tell me, he would do so, if not-

Then suddenly my thoughts turned to what lay before me- my luncheon engagement. Miss Delafield- what a euphonious name! Had she an equally euphonious Christian name? Would she attract me as much at our second meeting as at our first? But was it

our first? I felt as if I had known her in a previous life. The secret of my sudden feeling for her could not arise solely from her beauty. I had known so many beautiful women, yet not one of them had really touched my heart. Supposing I felt passionately in love, what would M.H. say? I did not for a moment doubt his tolerance and understanding, but would it be quite "playing the game" to start a love - affair with one of his chelas, especially at my age? He might make allowances for young people, but for a man approaching fifty...! As to marriage- for one thing, I hated the idea; for another I looked upon it as an obstacle, having read in one of the theosophical books that occultists ought not to have learnt that love seldom lasts. Illusions on that score I had none. There were also what I took to be my Master's views on the subject. I could not imagine that he wanted me to marry- he had never hinted at such a possibility. If it had been his intention that I should do so, surely he would have told me in England while I was still young enough. There was for instance Gertrude Wilton. In the episode connected with her he had assisted me by pacifying an irate and selfish father, and in this manner had smoothed the way for me, but as to my marrying Gertrude- he had taken for granted that I did not wish to marry her.

All these thoughts had passed through my mind as I stood leaning on a railing idly watching the river, and listening to the gentle flow of the water against the banks. I had in fact been so engrossed that I had not heard M.H. come out of the house, and his voice telling me he was ready startled me.

"That comes of playing with fire without having a fireman handy," he observed, getting into the car.

I glanced at him enquiringly.

"A man got himself into such a deep trance," he explained as we started off, "that I had to go and get him out of it. A chela of mine asked me to go; the doctors were stumped. They'd have put the man under the earth in a day or two. However, please keep your mouth shut; those people in here think I'm merely a heart - specialist. I suppose they'll be writing to know what my fee is next," he laughed.

"But do they know your address?"

"They'll try and get at me through my chela."

"And what'll you do about it?"

"Accept it and give it to a charity, I guess."

"Why, you've caught a bit of American," I exclaimed.

"Caught it- no. Adopted it. The saying is trite, but in Rome do as Rome does. You can get much nearer to people's hearts if you adopt their own ways. I've heard it said over here that our English seems rather affected to the American ear. A little superior, in fact. Well, that'll never do. Anything that savours of putting on airs is to be tabooed in my sort of situation."

"You really are a splendid actor," I said, and evoked a laugh at my enthusiasm; "if you didn't look quite unaltered and hadn't the same voice I could hardly believe you were the same person. Apart from any Americanisms you don't seem to talk the same language."

"One must go with the times. If I talked as people did when I was a boy the effect would be stilted. I'm not quite so young as I look, you know."

Again I wondered what his age might be, but refrained from asking.

“What, after all, do externals matter?” he continued, “externals are changing every moment of our lives, yet some people are so afraid of changing.”

“It’s a curious thing,” I observed irrelevantly, “but somebody once told me that all Adepts were pretty much alike.”

“In consciousness- yes; but not in externals. Each Adept will have his own little characteristics and mannerisms, as well as the characteristics of his race and nationality. Look at some of these Indian Swamis who have still a fair way to go before they reach Adeptship- externally they are as calm as tortoises; they’ll sit for hours in a chair without moving. But that astonishing calm lies in the race, not in the individual. It is a species of oriental indolence and not necessarily mind - concentration. Why, I know an Adept who sometimes fidgets with his watch - chain and dangles his legs over the side of a chair and behaves almost like a schoolboy. And why not? Only vain people are always thinking of their dignity- unless it happens to be a racial characteristic, as with the Arabs. A woman once said to me, talking of that very man: ‘I’m sure he can’t be an Adept- no Adept would ever do anything in bad taste.’

“‘No,’ I remarked casually, ‘except when in the company of those who are obsessed with the idea of good taste, and cannot be cured except by the hardening system!’ “

I laughed, and then we both relapsed into silence as we got back into the town, the noise of the traffic making conversation difficult. But with one of his whimsical smiles: “These little ‘flutters’ are sometimes useful to poets- they assist inspiration.”

I could have embraced him. With that one sentence he had set my mind at ease.

CHAPTER V MISS DELAFIELD AND MISS BRIND

IF I were writing this book about myself I should have no compunction in relating the details of that little luncheon party, but since my sole object is to portray the personality and philosophy of my Master in what he himself humorously described as his American edition, I must omit the non - essentials. As he has permitted me to include some of his discourses in this volume it is necessary that I should economise in space, and metaphorically use the blue pencil on all portions which have little relation to himself.

Therefore suffice it to say that the impression created upon me the previous day by Clare Delafield was only enhanced when I came to know her better. In addition to her quite extraordinary beauty, she had a quick intelligence and a broadness of outlook which made me realize at once that despite the difference in our ages I could entertain feelings for her other than those inspired by romantic admiration. She possessed- at least I imagined so- the prerequisites to real companionship. We talked mostly of Yoga philosophy, and it was evident to me that as well as having studied deeply, she had brought a good deal of independent thought to bear on the subject, as also on the one or two other subjects we discussed. Her love of poetry, for instance, was absolutely genuine, and she won my heart by immediately hitting on what I myself considered to be the best lines in my own work. Altogether, there appeared to be a distinct bond of sympathy between us, and one which my intuition, together with a few external signs- trifling to onlookers but significant to me- told me she was as fully aware of as I was myself. The fact that I should have entered Miss Delafield's house for the first time at one fifteen and not left it till six - thirty, can hardly be considered without its significance either, especially as I am not one of those inconvenient people who never seem to release when it is time to take their departure. I had made several attempts- albeit quite against my inclination- to end my visit, but had been met with: "Why must you go? It would be just lovely of you to stay on." So each time I only too gladly gave in and did stay on. Moreover Mrs. Delafield herself gave me a plausible excuse to do so. Almost immediately after lunch she had expressed her regret, but she "was obliged to attend a tiresome committee - meeting," and hoped I would not dream of leaving until she came back. And fortunately for me she did not come back till nearly five o'clock, during which time I enjoyed an uninterrupted tête-à-tête with her daughter. When at last I did get up to go, I was told to regard Nr. - Hudson Street as "open house," and to visit its two inmates- there was no Mr. Delafield- as often as I felt inclined; the oftener the better. In addition "If I cared to have Clare show me some of

the country in the motor," as her mother expressed herself, "she would be so happy." In fact "anything they could do for me, a lonely bachelor in a strange town, I need tell them," and so on and so forth.

Thus, when I eventually walked back to my hotel, it was with the agreeable feeling expressed in the phrase "to have fallen on one's feet." I had not only met with the warmest hospitality and with every prospect of its continuance, but had received that hospitality from at any rate one who had already awakened sentiments within me of a most romantic nature. In a word, Clare Delafield, even though I had only known her in this life- one day, had already coloured my consciousness, and I was aware of an inner exhilaration which, as the Master had implied, might impel me once again to express myself in verse. To me creative sterility spelt a state of mind which only writers can realize. To be barren of ideas is to be only alive, and for this reason I heartily endorse the statement- though who made it I have forgotten- that there are only two vital things in life; one is work and the other is love. If we can have the two together, then the height of joy is ours.

That evening I attended the talk on Mantrams and the following day had lunch with Miss Brind at her club, as had been previously arranged.

Although she did not attract me, and would not even have attracted me if my sentiments had not been centred elsewhere, I realized immediately that we could become very good friends. She was witty and vivacious as well as highly intelligent and well-read. In addition I discovered that she possessed natural psychic faculties of a no mean order, and that she wrote mystical books. Although I had not taken much notice of her at our first meeting, I remember having got the impression that she was not an American, and this proved to be correct. She was English, had been born in London, had lived there the greater part of her life, and would return there in the course of a few months. She had come over to the States at the suggestion of her Master. In fact, over our luncheon she told me a most romantic story.

Already in her childhood- she was now thirty - three- she had seen clairvoyantly the figure of M.H. who used to appear at her bedside. Her parents to whom she spoke of this, had laughed at her and considered her fanciful, but the attempts to convince her that the vision she saw was purely imaginary, had no effect whatever. "She had seen what she had seen," and their ignorance could not convince her knowledge. And it was not only the Master she could see in this way: she saw other beings, people who had died, figures she then thought to be angels, and, when she was taken into the country, fairies and elementals and other nature spirits. Moreover this clairvoyance seemed so natural to her, that she was with difficulty persuaded that other people were not endowed with the same sight. The skeptical laughter of her parents was painful to her, and would have continued to be so, had not M.H. one day when he appeared before her, suggested that she should take no notice of it. Henceforward she did not speak to her parents of what she saw, so they eventually came to think she had grown out of "all that foolishness," as they expressed it. In her eighteenth years, however, much to her surprise she discovered that her father had all of a sudden become intensely interested in spiritism. One of his friends had introduced him to the subject, and from a scoffing sceptic had transformed him into an almost fanatical enthusiast. This transformation

prompted his daughter once more to confide in him and let him know that she still possessed the faculties which in former years he had so ruthlessly derided. The result was that he now began to look upon her as something phenomenal and wonderful, and so deep a comradeship was engendered between them that he was prepared to give her every opportunity to further her own development.

It was then that a romantic incident occurred.

“One evening,” she told me, “my father took me to a little gathering of kindred spirits at a Mrs. Bartholomew’s. There were about twenty people there to meet a man who had, I believe you call it X - ray sight. He could tell you how much money you had in your pockets, even if you didn’t know it yourself, and things like that.”

“I think I know the man,” I said, “I met him myself some years ago,” I mentioned his name.

“That’s the man. I was talking to a little group of people in a corner, when suddenly I felt as if somebody with a wonderful aura had come into the room. I’ve always been able to see auras,” she interpolated. “And then a moment afterwards I saw standing in the middle of the room talking to Mrs. Bartholomew- well, you can guess who, Master M.H. I never felt such a thrill in my life. There at last in the flesh was the man I’d seen ever since I was a child.”

“And the,” I asked, tensely eager, “did he come up and speak to you?”

“No, he had a long talk with the X - ray sight man.”

“What did you do?”

“Just stayed where I was.” She laughed, “far too nervous to try and get myself introduced.”

“But of course you met him eventually?”

“Oh, yes. Not long afterwards Mrs. Bartholomew beckoned to me, introduced us and I told him was a very psychic young lady.”

“Did he say anything when he saw you?”

“He looked, and smiled- you know that smile of his- but he didn’t say anything about having seen me before.”

“DO go on,” I urged, “this is intensely interesting. “He must have said something?”

“He did, but I wasn’t to me; he sort of talked to us both together- Mrs. Bartholomew, I mean.”

“D’you know, you remind me of Madame Blavatsky,” I suddenly observed.

She was taken aback. “I hope you don’t mean in looks,” half laughing, “nobody could call me fat.”

“NO, no, I don’t mean that, of course, but usedn’t she to see her Master like that, and then didn’t she meet him one day in the flesh?”

“I’m afraid I don’t know much about Madame Blavatsky.”

“Well, it’s of no consequence,” I said, “I want to hear more about you and M.H. What happened next?”

“Mrs. Bartholomew, I think, took him off to introduce him to somebody else and after a bit I strolled into an anteroom and began to look at the books. She had a lot of occult books there. Nobody was in the room.”

Viola then went on to tell me that he had presently come after her and taken her hand

for a moment, and said: "Well, my child, we meet at last." Afterwards he walked back to the door of her house with her, telling her a number of things about her own development. It was the greatest experience of her life- that walk back through Kensington Gardens where they rested underneath a tree facing the Round Pond, and he said "imperishable things." From that day onward, she had seen a good deal of him, and he had made friends with her father to facilitate matters, though he never took the father as an actual pupil.

"Did you find M.H. very different in those days?" I asked when she had finished.

"Only in some ways. Haven't you noticed he's different when you get him alone from what he is when we're all together? He hides his extraordinary love in front of his pupils en masse, but they all say that sometimes when he's got you to himself that sort of mask disappears. And if anyone's in trouble his compassion is simply wonderful- I've seen it, so I know..." After a pause: "And how the man works! D'you know he has only four hours' sleep every night, sometimes less."

"I didn't know it, but I'm not surprised at anything to do with him!"

"The curious thing is he never seems to get tired I've often seen him sit down to a three hours' game of chess with Mr. Galais after one of the Friday night lectures."

"Which is Mr. Galais?"

"That elderly man- he's a little bald."

I nodded, recognizing him from the description, then observed: "I never knew M.H. played chess. I suppose he's a splendid player?"

She looked at me knowingly. "Rather depends with whom he's playing."

I raised my eyebrows.

"He has a little habit," she explained, "of just managing to win or just managing to lose- with whomever he's playing."

We had come to the end of our lunch, and moved into the lounge for coffee and smokes. She lit a cigarette herself and rang for cigars for me.

"By the way," I asked when comfortably settled in an armchair, "your psychic faculties- "

"Yes, what about them?"

"I thought M.H. didn't encourage that sort of thing over here."

"Neither he does as a general rule. Some of us have them all the same, but we don't proclaim it from the housetops."

"You mean you're asked not to?"

"Oh no, not that, but I know he's more pleased if we don't. he says one has to do careful not to be 'governed by vanity,' as he expresses it." She paused for a moment, then; "Perhaps you wonder why I've told you about them."

"Oh, I don't know about that."

"Shall I tell you why I have told you?"

I nodded assent.

"He suggested it himself."

"That was very nice of him," I replied, but wondered why he should have done so. "I've certainly been intensely interested in all you've told me. Just now and then, you know, I wish I could see again."

“Doesn’t make you much happier really,” she said with a shrug, “it’s the feeling side of Yoga philosophy that gives the true happiness.”

“Yes. This wonderful Bliss - Consciousness M.H. talks of - I should love to have that! Permanently, I mean, for one has had touches of it.”

“Yes, if one could always have that.” She echoed regretfully.

We then turned to other subjects, and she told me a propos of Master’s suggestion that I should be introduced to various people in Boston, that she and Miss Delafield had been putting their heads together, and the latter had suggested a tea for me at her house. Would the following Friday suit me? I naturally replied it would, having so far no engagements. She - Miss Delafield - had further suggested that I might prefer to live in a club instead of the expensive hotel at which I was staying; if so she could arrange to get me put up for the Arts’ Club.

“Really,” I said, “its very good of you both to have busied yourselves with my domestic welfare. I should very much prefer a club. These American hotels are ruinous with the present rate of exchange.”

After which took my leave.

Miss Brind had interested me - far more than I had ever expected. To begin with I am always interested when I meet people with psychic faculties. Apart from that, I discovered something very likeable about her. With all her talents there was not a trace of self - consciousness or conceit in her character. She had told me her experiences with a perfect simplicity of manner which I admired. That she was a highly evolved soul I had no doubt, and would have taken her for one, even if M.H. had not told me. But that I, as he had also told me, could help her, seemed most unlikely. In what manner and along what lines? Conjecture as I might I could get no nearer to any solution. I felt that she interested me much more than I interested her. I had not said one word of any importance during the whole time we were together. I had played the role of a good listener, and that was all.

And then an idea suddenly struck me. She wrote mystical books - had I perhaps to help her in some literary way? To help her to clothe her thoughts in more poetical form, or something of that kind? It might be so; I would ask M.H. the next time I saw him.

CHAPTER VI PROGRESS

WHEN I got back to my hotel I found a telephone message from the Delafields asking me to dine with them that night. The message informed me that dinner was at 8 o'clock, but if I felt inclined, they begged me to come earlier; Miss Delafield, at any rate, would be at home after 6:30. But although I should have like to enjoy every available moment of her society, I made a compromise and put in an appearance nearly an hour's uninterrupted tete - a - tete, and I became more and more enmeshed in her extraordinary attractiveness.

I had had very little experience of American women before I met Clare Delafield, and hence could not tell whether the frankness of her nature was peculiar to herself or was a national characteristic. For certainly few English girls would have permitted themselves to put into words how much they liked a man- on such short acquaintance - as this American girl did. Yet she by no means gave the impression of a flirt, but simply of a heart that was generous with its affections, its admirations, and its enthusiasms.

"The very moment I saw you," she said- to give an example of her candour- "I knew we had met before and been ever such friends."

"You really felt that?" I answered, daring to take her hand which she did not withdraw, "I felt it too."

"Now that's just lovely," she exclaimed, using what was evidently a habitual phrase of hers. "But I felt it even before I met you, now I come to think of it."

I looked at her enquiringly.

"When I read your poems," she explained. "Ever since then I have longed to meet you- again."

"Well, now that we have re - met," I said, looking tenderly at her, "I hope we shall see a lot of one another."

"I'm sure we shall," she replied with feeling.

We relapsed into silence for a while and both stared meditatively into the fire. But before Mrs. Delafield came in, we had already taken one step towards realizing our hope- we had arranged to go for a long motor - run the following day, and have lunch in the country together.

* * * * *

It turned out to be a superb Sunday morning, and Clare called for me at eleven o'clock. We did not return before evening, and even then I was not allowed to go back to my hotel; she insisted on taking me home to supper.

That day I longed to confess my feelings, but before I dared to do so I felt it

absolutely essential to find out, in as diplomatic a manner as possible, her views on marriage. Supposing she entertained hopes in that direction- what then? It is true I was nearly twenty years her senior, yet I hardly looked a day over forty. That being so, I inclined to the idea that the difference in our ages would not of necessity strike her as an obstacle- if she had any matrimonial intentions. But although it proved to be a difficult piece of conversational maneuvering, I accomplished it in the end, and made the comforting discovery that she was as chary of entering the bonds of matrimony as I was myself. Firstly she and her Mamma, as she called her- with the accent on the first syllable- were “all in all” to each other, and she felt that to marry and leave her would be extremely selfish; secondly she informed me that none of her three brothers were happily married, and, therefore, she had very good reasons for not regarding the conjugal state as an enviable one.

The ground was therefore cleared after these avowals on her part; nevertheless I restrained myself and postponed the moment when I should actually tell her what I felt for her. Not that I imagined she was unaware of this- I had that day given her many signs- but I thought that any undue haste on my part to bring matters to a climax would be inartistic. It was enough that we had made headway towards what prospected to be a very absorbing and inspiring romance; and one moreover which, as I came later on to know, bore a highly occult significance. Indeed it is for that reason only that I include it in this book, for it has an indirect bearing on him who was now a Master to us both.

The tea which Clare and her mother gave “in my honour” was one of those unsatisfactory American functions at which one shakes hands with a number of people, and nothing much further happens- at least not in proportion to the outlay, if I can so express myself. There must have been fifty people present, including many professors from the University, yet at the end of it all I saw no prospect of making a single friend as the result. But as it turned out later, I was not altogether correct in my surmise, as in the course of time I was invited to a good many dinners, to which Claire was also invited.

Of the Masters I had seen nothing since the Friday on which we had taken the drive together. He had on the following day gone to New York, but was to return on Wednesday for the lecture. When, however, we arrived at his house that evening one of the chelas announced that a telephone message had been received saying that he would be late. We therefore had to amuse ourselves for nearly three quarters of an hour with general conversation before he put in an appearance. But as Claire was now enrolled among the pupils and had come to attend her first lecture, the time by no means hung heavy on my hands. My only regret was that a shorter lecture was likely to be the result of the delay.

When M.H. finally arrived he apologized for keeping us waiting, but said he had been detained; after which he stepped on to the little platform and began the discourse I have headed ‘The Philosophy of Humour.’

THE PHILOSOPHY OF HUMOUR.

“In some of the books on Yoga mention is made of the seven austerities, and one of

these austerities is cheerfulness. It may seem strange to the uninitiated that such a thing as cheerfulness can be regarded as an austerity, so I think we might employ ourselves to advantage this evening by looking into the matter a little more closely.

Now continuous cheerfulness has unquestionably to do with the will; that is to say, it can be induced if we only take the trouble to make the necessary effort. I notice, however, that many students of occultism, far from taking that trouble, exert themselves to produce exactly the opposite effect, and for reasons best known to themselves 'pull the long face,' as it is called, and dress in garments remotely suggesting 'sack - cloth and ashes.' These good people are labouring under some pietistic delusion that what you women call dowdiness has some connection with spirituality, whereas in truth it is but vanity in disguise. Such people of course are merely taking themselves too seriously; they think that because they chance to know a little about Karma, Masters, Reincarnation and Immortality, they must contrive to let their poor ordinary fellows see that there is some difference between themselves and these poor ordinary fellows. But that difference, if paraded at all, should be one of joy and not of sorrow. Oh, I assure you," he added, "we Masters are not at all flattered to think that people must go into mourning because they have heard of our existence and all that we stand for."

This was greeted with loud laughter.

"It reminds me of the child I once heard of who asked his mother if clergymen wore black because they were always thinking about death... Perhaps that really is the reason only they don't know it."

M.H. lit a cigar and puffed at it meditatively for a few moments. Then he proceeded:

"Now hand in hand with cheerfulness goes another very useful quality - that is a sense of humour that we are prevented from falling into the error I've just mentioned; I mean this tendency to take ourselves too seriously. We ought in fact to be able to see a humorous side to everything. I don't care what it is, though by that I don't imply that we should have no self - control and should burst out laughing on all occasions. If we could see the humorous side of everything, whether we show it outwardly or not, I can assure you that we would not act in the foolish way we so often do. It happens, as you know, to be a curious irony of fate that the very people who are lacking in this humoristic sense are the very ones who prove so irresistibly humorous to others. They are much like drunkards who, not being able to see their own actions, usually behave in a way which makes everybody else laugh. I often think if these long - face - pulling persons could see themselves as we Masters can see them they too might be induced to laugh with us - which would be their salvation.

Not long ago I had my eye on a prospective pupil who had recently taken up the Higher Occultism with most laudable and unusual zest. She had previously been a happy, light - hearted creature full of gaiety and humour, sane in mind and healthy in body, and on that account was especially popular among her friends. Well, as I said, she took up occultism and the first result was that she changed completely. She lost all her light - heartedness, lost her interest in her friends, began to neglect her appearance, ceased to be witty and amusing - in short she became a most zealous member of the 'Long - faced League.'"

A ripple of laughter went through the assembly.

“Finally I contrived that she should be brought to me. She arrived one day, trembling with nervousness, as if she imagined I was an acrimonious tribal chief, little short of Jehovah himself. Of course the first thing I did was to make a joke- just to relieve the intensity of the atmosphere! Why you should laugh before you know what the joke was,” he interpolated in repose to the renewed ripple, “I can’t think... However you certainly never will know that joke, as I’ve forgotten it myself. All the same, good or bad, its effect was startling- my visitor nearly fainted. A Master make a joke! This was something quite unheard - of in her occult philosophy! She had been taught to believe that Masters were glorified prigs- and she was actually disappointed to discover they were not. Well, in the end I sent her away with the injunction not to read one occult book for six months, but to confine herself entirely to Bernard Shaw, Chesterton, and any other witty and sparkling writers she could find. As to seeing me again, of this made no mention, but I told a Chela to drop her the hint that the ways of Masters, though often mysterious, were not as unreasonable as she might suppose. Let her exercise patience and faith and await events. Fortunately- though after a good deal of soul - disturbance, resulting from her disillusionment - her faith, which was considerable, triumphed, and in a year’s time I saw her again and she became a pupil. Since then, she has learnt to acquire, or better said, to re - acquire, the divine quality of cheerfulness.”

The Master paused for a moment.

“But apart from the inconsistency of it all, you must see what harm this long - face - pulling policy can do to the cause of occultism. Remember, you do not tread the Path solely for your own benefit- you tread it for the benefit of all. Yet what inducement, I should like to know, do you offer others to study occultism, if the only perceptible effect it has on you is to make you a morose, crankish, and entirely undesirable member of society? How would you treat a man who came to you and said: ‘I’ve got hold of a most wonderful philosophy and I want you to study it too- it possesses the incomparable faculty of making one thoroughly miserable?’

“And now to the next point. What use can we make of humour in connection with the overcoming of our unworthy desires and weaknesses? If we only take the trouble to reflect, we can do much along this line, both for ourselves and for others. A Chela once wrote a book in which he very eloquently showed that all human weaknesses, jealousy, pride, anger and so forth were simply childish; and that is absolutely true. (I strongly advise you to read that book; it is called ‘The Way of the Childish’[?] by Shri Advaitacharya). But we can go a step further and say that all human weaknesses are ridiculous; for that is equally true. You have, however, to learn the art of seeing them as such, instead of being swept up in the delusion that they’re necessary and even dignified. To give a very simple example; there’s a type of person, generally a woman, whom one describes as touchy; she is always getting offended over this or that triviality. You meet her one day and she greets you with a long face or puts on a haughty air and you can’t make out what is the matter with her. And then after quite a long time you discover that you hadn’t called on her when she thought you ought to

[?] Kegan Paul. London.

have, or you had been guilty of some equally trifling sin of omission. And all the time she has been taking a vast amount of trouble to keep up a grievance against you and pull that face whenever she thinks of you or happens to meet you in the street; perhaps she even cuts you altogether for a while. But what lies at the root of the whole matter? A lack of the humoristic sense, of course. This good woman cannot realize that she is simply being ridiculous; she imagines she is standing on her dignity or teaching you a wonderful lesson in this roundabout way. That she is merely teaching you that she herself is a very foolish person, never occurs to her.

So there you have one example of what I mean. Contrive to awaken a useful sense of humour in a woman like that and you may cure her. After all she is only suffering from an illusion. And it's the same in connection with every sort of weakness, if we are only prepared to carry our analysis far enough- for it is a question of analysis. Take up one of your weaknesses and really dissect it; try to see its why and wherefore, and if you are fearless and honest enough to get down to bed rock you'll discover the whole matter is merely foolishness. Say you are in love with someone, and you are always wanting to embrace them and touch them and are unhappy unless you're doing this continually; you may even weep because you can't be forever indulging yourself in this way, for your desire is so strong. Well, now, analyze that desire and see what it really amounts to. Here are you in this world with its thousands of enjoyments and its thousands of beautiful things, the sky, the sea, sunshine, flowers and singing birds, its artistic beauties in the shape of pictures, music, poetry, books and architecture; its human beauties in the shape of millions of delight if you only adopted the right attitude towards them. Yet in the face of these wonderful things what are you doing? You're sighing and moaning just because you can't touch a few inches or a few feet of ordinary common or garden human skin. It may even be rough and hairy but that doesn't affect you, because it just happens to belong to one particular person out of all the millions in the universe. Now I ask you, don't you think you're being ridiculous? Aren't you making a great fuss about very little? Why should your whole happiness depend on putting your two inches of mouth against another person's two inches of mouth? Surely your sense of proportion must have evaporated. You laugh- but I'm expressing it in this crude form on purpose. We're trying to see the matter entirely denuded of all glamour. As long as you only roses and perfumes you'll not get to the bedrock of actuality. But sweep all these away and get down to hard dry facts and then see how you stand. that is the way to recover your sense of proportion, and to re-awaken your sanity and sense of humour. It's just the latter which acts as the balance wheel of our characters. Do you supposed a lunatic could imagine himself to be Jesus Christ or the King of England if he hadn't lost his sense of humour together with his sense of actuality? One would supposed he need only look down at his own legs to see that he's thinking nonsense. Did Jesus Christ ever wear a pair of trousers? I suppose I really oughtn't to ask such a question," the Master interpolated with one of his characteristic smiles, "some people would think it irreverent, but that's because, as Bernard Shaw very aptly puts it, they don't regard Jesus Christ as a reality; if they did they might be induced to apply His teachings a good deal more than they normally do.

We must cultivate our sense of humour together with an uninterrupted cheerfulness

of mind; otherwise we shall not acquire wisdom. God has given this power to all of us if we only choose to use it. Potentially it's there, but you must bring it into manifestation. If you had three legs instead of two what would be the good of them if you didn't learn how to use them? Practice is ever everything; you practice to acquire facility in this, that and the other art; but not one of these will repay you to the extent that the practice of joyousness will repay you. Tell yourselves repeatedly: 'All is joy.' Fall asleep with that phrase in your mind last thing at night, and let it be your first waking thought in the morning. Then one day it will begin to work subconsciously, and you'll retain that joy as a permanent consciousness. Has it ever occurred to you to ask yourselves why some of you find it so difficult to be unselfish? It is solely because you have not properly caught hold of this feeling of joy. You dislike doing a quantity of unselfish things because they bore and worry. But if you were always conscious of joy do you suppose anything in the universe could bore you? Therefore seek ye first the kingdom of joy- which is an attribute of God- and all things shall be added unto you- even unselfishness!"

CHAPTER VII LOVE AND INSPIRATION

AFTER the discourse that evening I walked home with Clare. "Well, what do you think of it all?" I asked her when we had got outside.

"Wonderful, but not in the least what I expected. My! He's so cunningly humorous, I never associated philosophy and religion with humour before."

"Or calling a spade a spade," I added.

"No, that's something new to me, too."

"You weren't shocked?" I threw in tentatively.

"Not a little bit," she said with conviction, "still, I can't quite look at love in the way he does, can you?"

"You mean the few inches of human skin?"

"M'm..." with a nod.

"He doesn't look at it like that himself. I've heard him talk very differently."

"Then why did he say that?"

"As far as I can gather- merely from what I know of him, of course- because he wants us to see things from every point of view. But I've heard him say that some people can evolve more quickly through falling in love than through any other means."

She suddenly looked at me with joy in her eyes, as a child looks when you tell it a treat is in store. "You've really heard him say that?" she said.

"Yes, really."

"What a relief!" she sighed humorously. "There are some ideals I wouldn't have shattered for anything."

"I don't think you need be afraid," I soothed her, "you've no idea how understanding he is. Do you know what he said to me the day I had lunch with you?"

"Tell me."

"That romances were necessary to poets, because they assist inspiration."

"How lovely of him! But... do you have so many, then?"

"Depends what you call many; it's quite time since I had one- until- "

"Until what?"

"Until I came over here."

"You mean- you've gotten one now?" she asked hurriedly.

"I should like to have one, but- well, it takes two to make a romance, doesn't it?"

She was silent, looking as if she did not know what to say; so I took her arm and insinuated my hand into hers. "Tell me," I asked, laughing, "are you really a little dense, or only pretending to be?"

She put her head on one side and glanced at me with a playful expression. "Perhaps a little of both," she answered; then after a pause: "There are some things a woman like to hear- said..."

"Then I'll say them," I replied; and did so!

* * * * *

I had, before seeing Clare home, made an appointment to lunch with M.H. the following day. Viola Brind had also been invited, but I was to be at his house half an hour before lunch-time, so as to have a private chat before she arrived. I found him with Arkwright, but the latter, after saying a few pleasantries, took his departure.

"Well," said M.H. genially, "you look extra happy this morning."

"I am," I answered, laughing.

"Things been going well with you in Boston?"

"Extremely well; so well that I had quite a bad night."

"Sounds paradoxical."

"When one's thoughts are unusually pleasant one hardly likes to leave them and sink into unconsciousness.

"Oh, I see."

"I wonder you ever sleep at all."

"Why shouldn't I?"

"For the same reason, only more so. If I had your perpetual feeling of bliss, I'm sure I should never want to lose it by going to sleep."

He smiled indulgently at me. "But I don't lose it; I merely lose consciousness of my body."

"Fool!" I exclaimed, tapping my forehead, "when will I fully grasp this idea of the unconditional?"

"You'll grasp it one day, if- "

"I carry out your program," I finished, guessing what was in his mind.

He nodded assent, but immediately changed the conversation. "You have seen Viola Brind?"

"I had a most interesting lunch with her. She told me all about her meeting with you."

"Ah, she did, did she?" with one of his whimsical expressions, "so you're getting along well together?"

"Oh, I think so- quite. She certainly seems a most unusual girl."

"She is."

"Tell me," I said, suddenly remembering the question I had intended to ask him, "is it with her books you thought perhaps I could help her?"

"Well, yes- partly," the answer did not sound very convincing, so I was still mystified; and as again he changed the conversation I felt he did not wish me to pursue the subject. "And Miss Delafield, you have see her?" he asked.

"I've more than seen her, I've fallen in love with her," I said, feeling a trifle embarrassed, "I hope you don't think that at my age- - "

"It's *infra dig*," he supplied with a twinkle, "on the contrary, it shown that the heart's still young. If we tread the Path, my son, it's necessary to retain this youthfulness of heart. Besides what avail to censure any of our pupils for falling in love, however old?"

The Karma that is to be must be.”

“All the same,” he continued earnestly, “they should use discrimination and not allow their romances to lure them from their work or from the project their Masters may have in view for them. In your case remember that your artistic activities must always come first, for these are for the world’s sake. You write to teach humanity, and to give to humanity higher and nobler ideals. Never forget that. And especially do not forget it whilst in the throes of a romance, but let the extra love and joy which in such circumstances you feel, act as inspiration. And as I write this, my memory harks back to a fragment of one of J. M. H.’s talks to us all, dealing with how the karma of even an unconventional love - affair can in certain circumstances be made to yield its lesson- especially to the woman. And I cite it here because it explains still further why J.M.H. never actually interfered with the course of our romance.

He had said in the talk referred to: Most women when they love are not prepared to give something for nothing. They are not prepared to sink their pride without asking for anything in return: they usually hope to possess the man himself in marriage, at any rate ultimately, if not at once. But think how you can elevate a woman if you can bring her to give love to a man not for her own sake but for the world’s sake; that through her giving he may receive inspiration, and through that inspiration Humanity may be richer. Don’t you see that in this way you can further that woman’s spiritual development almost more than by any other method- I mean through the great renunciation you will thus be teaching her? And supposing the uncharitable and short - sighted world does cast aspersions upon her, and calls her harsh but unmerited names- is it not worth it? For if this happens, she will also learn heroism and indifference to the calumny of the conventional - minded. But to return from my digression. Although J.M.H. naturally did not suggest that I should actually ask for Clare’s or any other woman’s love for the purpose of enhancing literary inspiration, he did proceed to remind me that only those who understand the nature of woman to the very core, can fully appreciate the joy she experiences when told by the man she loves that she inspires him to greater work.

There was a knock at the door and Viola Brind entered. She was fashionably dressed in a manner which showed off her elegant little figure to advantage, and at that moment I felt I like her in a friendly brotherly sort of way even more than I had done hitherto.

“Well, Viola,” said M.H. giving her an affectionate pat on the shoulder, “we’re going to have a cosy little lunch a trios. Hope you’re hungry? Swami Vivekananda used to say the first sign of true religion is a good sound appetite. If the heart is at peace the appetite is good.”

She laughed by way of answer and then shook hands with me.

M.H. went into the hall and we heard him shouting in Italian: “Alberto, is lunch ready?”

“Si, Signor,” came the response; then he reappeared and asked us to come into the dining - room.

The master’s lunches were an achievement of daintiness and lavishness combined. The variety of fruits spread out on the table provided a most picturesque sight. There were large bunches of grapes, oranges, apples, bananas, pomegranates and grape - fruit, together with nuts of various sorts. First we were served with oeufs à la crème, then

with a cooked nut - food accompanied by an assortment of vegetables. After that appeared a most delicious chocolate cake covered with whipped cream, followed by cheese and biscuits with celery. Finally we attacked the large variety of fruits.

During this meal M.H. entertained us with anecdotes interspersed with bits of wisdom; he also commented on international politics and the occult meaning of revolutions; on the strange trend of modern painting, and on many other topics of the day. And all this with at times an almost child - like charm of manner, and witticisms which evoked many outbursts of laughter from Viola Brind and myself. This lunch - party in fact was one of the most enjoyable hours I had spent for many years; and as we got up from the table I felt more than ever struck by the extraordinary variety of powers which my Master possessed, and the rapidity with which he could change from one mood- I might almost say from one personality- to another. When I thought back to all that he had said to me but a short while before, and how especially at that moment I had felt him to be well - nigh patriarchal in his wisdom, I could hardly believe him to be the same person.

To quote an instance of this, as we sat over our coffee and cigars I said to him: "What I don't understand about people who have clairvoyant faculties, and so I suppose know everything already, is that they ever need to ask questions."

They both laughed, and Viola said to M.H., "I leave you to explain that."

"Lazy creature," he teased her, "I'm always left to do all the work."

Nevertheless he told me what I wanted to know in the most natural way. "People with clairvoyant faculties are as human as anybody else. After all, because they may know a good many things about you, it would be rather dull if they sat there like deaf - mutes and never gave the impression that they took an atom of interest in any of your doings. It's your feelings they're considering when they ask questions. Suppose Viola and I had gone to a concert last night and you'd met her early this morning and she'd said: 'M.H. and I did enjoy that concert,' that wouldn't prevent you from saying the next time you saw me: 'Well, how was the concert?' - now would it? After all, as long as we live in this world, we must adapt ourselves at any rate to most of its customs. It may not matter to me personally whether I'm talking or keeping silent or even breaking stones in the road, but it may matter very considerably to my acquaintances. Besides, although you who are initiated may understand my peculiar ways, there are a great many who would be highly astonished if, on meeting them, I proceeded to tell them everything about themselves, instead of to ask them. It's all very well for a character in a story - book like Sherlock Holmes- but in real life one mustn't do these things. It wouldn't be ethical to show off like that."

"What I admire so enormously in you," I said, "is that you're always willing to explain yourself instead of making a mystery of things."

"There is no mystery," he declared, "it's not we who make the mystery about ourselves, it's other people. Some persons have a mania for mystery - making, and we are their unfortunate victims. Because a thing is hidden, it is not of necessity mysterious. X - rays are hidden, but that doesn't make them secret and occult. Altogether the word occult is not a happy one, but since it has come into use, it's very difficult to get rid of now. Of course there are certain things we can't tell to every Tom,

Dick, and Harry because they'd misuse their powers and hurt themselves and others. Look how people injured themselves when they first started using the X - rays; but X - rays are comparatively harmless beside some of the so - called occult forces. We must keep them secret from the world at large because we dare not take the responsibility of revealing them. But that's all there is to it. You can't- "

We were interrupted by Alberto who came to say that the motor was at the door.

"By the way," said M.H., getting up from his chair, "if it's a nice day on Sunday week we might take a run into the country. What do you say? Next Sunday I'm not free, but the following one- "

we said we'd be delighted.

"And now I'm afraid I must go."

I walked with Viola Brind as far as her door, and then went to have tea with Clare- and with a clear conscience....

Chapter VIII

Egotism

By the following Saturday I had moved into the Art's Club and as it was permitted to invite ladies, I asked Viola Brind to dine with me that evening. The result was a marked degree of progress towards that friendship which the Master desired should exist between us, though we were both still ignorant as to what its motive might be. She confessed that he had told her to cultivate me, and I gathered had done so in almost the same words as he had told me to cultivate her- namely with the idea of mutual help; but she too had been left in the dark as to the nature of that help.

"I can understand that you with your extraordinary poetic talents," she said, "could help me, but how I could help you- I really can't think."

"The very same thing I thought about you," I laughed. "With your psychic powers you can help me; but although I might be able to give you a literary hint here and there - it would be so slight as to be almost negligible."

"Master says your modesty is phenomenal," she teased me.

"I think we'd better change the subject!" I laughed, and proceeded to talk about the lecture of the previous Wednesday and its allusion to human love. From that I was able to glide into the subject of my own romantic feelings for Clare. Not that I especially wanted to confide in Viola Brind at that moment, but I knew that nothing cements friendship so quickly as an exchange of confidences. And my confession did result in an exchange; after listening to me sympathetically for a while she then made a romantic confession of her own. She told me that for some years she had been in love with a man over in England. This man had selfishly played with her feelings- because, I take it, they flattered his vanity- and at the same time had conducted a number of other affairs about which he quite unblushingly took Viola into his confidence. She on her part had accepted these confidences and nobly sympathized with the man, the reason, as she expressed it, being that she preferred to have his friendship than nothing at all.

"One thing at any rate I learnt," she told me, "and that was to overcome jealousy."

She was still in the throes of this unfortunate affair when M.H. wrote to her telling her to come to America. She found it a terrible wrench- leaving this man- but the prospect of being with her Master outweighed all other consideration she might eventually come to forget; and her own father who knew of her unhappiness and its cause was only too ready to assist her in the process. When she told him of the Master's letter and the project it contained he furnished the money and packed her off to Boston without delay.

Naturally after she had related all this I asked if the separation had had the desired effect.

“Partially, yes,” was her answer. “I still love the man, but I’m no longer unhappy. Master has taught me how to get over my unhappiness. There is a way, you know. There are even several ways as far as that goes- it’s a question of finding the particular one best suited to your own temperament. Not that you need one,” she added with a smile, “but you never know. As M.H. so often reminds us ‘it’s best to make hay while the sun shines.’”

As I saw her into her taxi I said with an affectionate little pressure of her hand, and asked, “We are friends, aren’t we?”

“Excellent ones,” she answered.

* * * *

During the following days I saw nothing of M.H.; he was too busy to give me an appointment, but on the Wednesday I of course attended the evening lecture. I had had an early dinner with Clare and her mother, and so had escorted the former to the Master’s house.

As M.H. was about to step on to the little platform to give his discourse he casually took up a book which one of the students had left on the table with cigars and a carafe of water placed by the Master’s chair.

“Aha- ‘The Egoist’ by Meredith,” he observed, turning over a few pages. “Well, there are plenty of those walking about... ‘Rogue in Porcelain’ - I remember the thing; I read it just after it came out. Once I had a short philosophical conversation with Meredith. He had a very fine type of mind, and incidentally a very fine face.”

He put the book back on the table and sat down.

“I think we might do worse than take up the subject of egotism this evening,” he said, “and see how it looks under the philosophical microscope, and what lies at the root of it. It’s not a happy characteristic in its acute form, because it implies a limitation of consciousness instead of an expansion; but I don’t intend to deal with it in its acute form- that would be rather too obvious to need discussing- but in its subtler form, the form we call egotism in contradistinction to ordinary undisguised selfishness. Now to begin with, what do we really mean by egotism? Not ordinary hit - you - the - eye sort of conceit- but something a little less crude than that. It is more the taking - of - oneself - and - one’s - work - too - seriously attitude which, I think, partly arises from an insufficient all - round sense of humour. Persons troubled with this complaint seem utterly unable to get away from the subject of their work; they are like a certain type of amateur - or even professional - pianist who can’t keep from the piano, and must always be strumming even if nobody wants to listen. And mind you- for let us be fair - it is not only artists who are afflicted in this way. I have known writers on mystical subjects, theosophists, occultists, politicians, social workers, scientists- it matters not - who all exhibit this characteristic; they are not conscious of it, but their acquaintances are, and in consequence soon begin to get bored with them. ‘Always the same old subject!’ these acquaintances think, ‘if only to God they’d shut up just for once in a while or talk about something else!’ And it is not only their acquaintances who think like this but also those who read their works if they be writers, as in the case of some mystics I have just mentioned. However elevated the subject, this egotism peeps through between the lines. These writers seem to be obsessed by the word ‘sacredness’

- the sacredness of what they're writing about and particularly of their own mission. They would think it unseemly to make a joke about that mission, so they write and talk with bated breath, and metaphorically, if not actually, fold their hands and look up to heaven with a rapt expression of countenance. There is one woman I know who has got so much into the habit of this that even in ordinary conversation she talks as if she were saying her prayers. She's a fine soul and one of our pupils, but she'll have to acquire a good deal more sense of humour before she can hope to reach Adeptship.

"And now, what is the explanation of it all? Well- it is a stage; a stage on the journey most souls have to travel; it is a milestone on the road of concentration. Let us examine this statement a little more closely. When concentration has not been perfectly mastered, you find you can concentrate on certain things but not on others. Some people find it easier to concentrate on the tip of their nose than on an abstract idea, and vice versa. But note this- only when you are able to concentrate on anything you wish, have you fully mastered concentration. There is a restricted type of concentration such as when you sit down for five minutes and practice holding the thoughts to one idea, and there is, as it were, an unrestricted type; and by that I mean when an idea or cause is ever - present at the back of your minds for years in succession. You get a temporary form of this when you are in love. You do not sit down and deliberately concentrate on your beloved, yet you are thinking of him or her practically all the time. And that is good in its way; as you know, I never discourage any of you from falling in love, just because I do realize, among many other things, how good it is from a concentrational point of view. This is however by the way. What we are at present concerned with is this concentration on some cause or idea which not only may last a life - time, but which colours almost every moment of that life as well. Look at your own selves; the higher philosophy, Occultism or the Science of Yoga- the name doesn't matter- is so incessantly in your minds that it permeates all your activities, all your emotions and all your thoughts. And that is concentration of a very powerful kind, yet it is not perfect concentration. And why? Because if you cannot switch it off when circumstances demand that you should do so, you have not learnt complete mastery over the mind. For there is such a thing as concentration minus wisdom. I once knew a man who had such perfect concentration that if you shot off a pistol in his presence, he never stirred. This man was not an occultist; he was a Professor, and took no interest in occult matters. But he would nevertheless sit in front of the fire and go off into such a state of abstraction that nothing could rouse him but a thorough good shaking. And yet astonishing and laudable as his concentrative faculties were, he had not complete control of his mind; one day he appeared at a dinner - party in his dress coat and a khaki - coloured pair of trousers- he had concentrated his mind on the upper portion of his body, but had left his legs to take care of themselves.

"There are again people who are so concentrated on their own thoughts that when in a train they'll pass the station at which they ought to get out. That is another form of injudicious concentration, or incomplete mastery over the mind. If you can't help becoming concentrated whenever you think at all, that is not a blessing but rather a curse. The ideal state is when a man can say: 'I've a quarter of an hour before I get to my station; for exactly that space of time I will concentrate, and not a moment longer.'

“Such then are the pitfalls of restricted concentration, but of the larger concentration permeating a life - time Egotism is the pitfall.

“Now we have exhibited the disease, but what is the remedy? Are we to throw cold water on our enthusiasms and think less of the Cause, whatever it may be? No, for that would be a step backwards instead of forwards. We must temper our enthusiasm with wisdom, and for one thing learn the very valuable lesson that seriousness and humour are not enemies but the very closest of allies. Let us take a very trite example: I am obliged to travel to Chicago; I therefore buy the necessary ticket and proceed on my way. It stands to reason that it take that journey seriously, otherwise instead of making for the station at the proper time, I should be dawdling about, or doing things calculated to make me miss that train. But having once got comfortably settled in my seat, am I to talk of nothing except that I am in the train; that I am on my way to Chicago; and am I to pull a long face and not make a single joke about trains, traveling, or even Chicago itself, or the reason I have for going there? Surely that wouldn't be the behaviour of a reasonable being. Besides what else might it not denote? A highly disturbed state of the nervous system. It is quite right to take a thing seriously, but it is not wisdom to be too serious in the taking of it, paradoxical though the statement may sound.

“Still, this paradox is just what you must learn in connection, or any all - important cause you may have at heart. But there is another and even greater lesson you need to learn ere you can reach the goal. Our philosophy has taught you there is only one Life, one Consciousness. That being so, that One life permeates everything and consequently every one of your little selves. Thus you are dependent on that One Life for every atom of energy you possess and hence for all your actions. Very well then; say you creates a work of art; are you as Mr. Or Miss X. creating that work of art, or is the One Life, Brahman, or God creating it through you? Therein lies the whole crux of the matter, and that is just what you forget. Suppose for instance you write a book, but a friend gives you all the ideas for that book, are you going to take the full credit to yourself and leave his name out altogether? If you're a mean, ungrateful sort of creature, yes- but surely not otherwise. Can you with honesty say you've written that book at all? Oh, I grant your hand has written it, but what is that? And so you see that egotism arises from Maya- the illusion that it is 'I' who perform actions, 'I' who produce ideas, 'I' who invent plots, when all the time it is God Who does these things through you. Whence do you take the energy to live at all? From the All - Life. Whence do you take the substance to build your body? From the All - Substance. Whence do you take the air you breath? From the one common stock of air. Whence do you take your ideas? From the One Mind- and so it goes on. And you don't even ask for those ideas; you just take them and call them yours, or at any rate behave as if you called them yours; and that is egotism.

“But perhaps you'll object and say: 'This is all a quibble; whether I admit or deny your assertion, it can't make any real difference.' But my answer to that is 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating.' Admit my assertion and manifest its truth in your lives, and you are lovable, admirable human beings; deny my assertion and fail to manifest its truth, and you are unlovable, unadmirable, egotistical bores. Oh, I'm willing to go

with you this far and concede that it's not so much the Truth itself that matters but the effect of the realization of that Truth upon yourselves. Once you have succeeded in banishing Maya in the shape of egotism from your characters, there is no necessity to be muttering the truth to yourselves at every step you take. A man mistakes a piece of rope for a snake, then realizes it is only a rope after all; that doesn't mean to say that for the rest of his life, whenever he chances upon a bit of rope, he has to repeat to himself: 'This is not a snake, this is not a snake!' Once realize the truth, 'and the truth shall make you free.' This being the case, you will find there are a number of great men, be they artists or others, who are 'born modest.' They are old souls and have learnt the lesson in a previous life. It does not matter whether they remember how they learnt it - can you even remember exactly how, when and where you learnt your alphabets? - the important fact is that the lesson has been learnt."

The Master lit a cigar, reflected for a moment, then proceeded:

"There is a form of egotism which is so insidious as to appear to be its own antithesis, and it is one we must, for that reason, specially guard against. It is usually connected with love- I don't mean necessarily sex - love, but affection of a more or less intense kind. As with all egotism, it involves selfishness and vanity, but both of these are very effectually disguised, and unless we penetrate deep, will not be perceptible at all. Let me give an example: a woman has a friend, say of the same sex, whom she idolizes. She spends her time doing everything she can think of for that friend, from giving her chocolates and flowers, making her pretty underclothes, running endless messages, darning her stockings, to - well, helping her to wash her hair. Some of those who look on at these manifestations exclaim: 'Dear me, what devotion! How touching! How beautiful! Such love - such unselfishness!' But is it such unselfishness? When this ultra - devoted girl hears of somebody else giving her friend chocolates or what not, is she quite happy, does she feel quite at ease? She has an uncomfortable sensation which she cannot define, but which upsets her equilibrium and takes some of the sunshine out of her life. Somehow she feels that other people's chocolate oughtn't to taste quite as sweet as her chocolates; that other people's message - running oughtn't to be so effectual as her message - running; that other people's shampoo - powders oughtn't to be as cleansing and sweet - smelling as her shampoo - powders, and so forth. Then let us suppose an invisible somebody argues with her: 'But don't you want your friend to be happy?' She answers passionately: 'Why, the whole day long I'm doing nothing else but trying to make her happy- I'd even die for her happiness.' Then says the voice: 'If that's the case, why are you upset when she is happy?' Silence- no reply.

"What is the explanation? All that unselfishness is only pseudo - unselfishness- it is disguised egotism. As long as this ultra - devoted girl can herself be the giver of happiness to her friend all is joy, but as soon as anybody else gives that happiness misery is the result. Just as vanity is really the cause of jealousy, so in this case is vanity also the cause of jealousy, so in this case is vanity also the cause of wanting to be the sole giver. And needless to say wherever there is vanity there is egotism, since the latter is an attribute of the former. You have heard it said that blessed is he who gives cheerfully: but sometimes it would be more fitting to say blessed is he who cheerfully allows others to give. What should it matter to us how happiness comes to

those we love? The chief thing is that they are happy. There's a lot of this pseudo - unselfishness and pseudo - selfish love in the world; you see it in various kinds of relationships, between mothers and sons, mothers and daughters, wives and husbands, and more than often between sweethearts. There is a certain species of demonstrative lover who shows it up to perfection. He is ready to die for you, as he says, twenty times a day, but when he is not- theoretically- dying for you he can't live much he adores you, and how it is impossible for him to live without you even for a moment, let alone a lifetime. Oh, I assure you his intentions are honourable with a vengeance; he is out either for marriage or suicide. Truly he's a marvelous lover; never have you felt so loved and so needed by anybody in the world before. The love - language that pours from his lips sends you into the seventh heaven; you hear that everything about you is absolute perfection- everything. It's wonderful to find a being who really appreciates you, wonderful to be wanted like that."

The Master paused, then altered his inflection. "Well, and granted it is wonderful, so are the first dreams of the opium - eater- ecstatic, glorious; but how about the drawbacks which come later? You begin to find that to be so intensely wanted is not entirely honied sweetness after all. You begin to find yourself inconveniently tied; when you want to go for a walk your husband prefers to stay at home and make love to you. When he has to go on a business - journey to an unattractive place he insists on taking you with him, even though the train tires you. When you want to ask some friend for the evening he prefers to be alone with you. Eventually you find that neither your body nor your soul are your own any more, and come to the horrifying conclusion that this once immaculate pattern of all lovers is a most selfish and impossible husband. And unfortunately you are fight. Was he really loving you all that time? No- he was loving himself- what you could give him- his enjoyment. He was solely concerned with what he could get, and all his fine phrases were nothing but selfish pleadings in disguise. If you had thwarted him he would have been ready to die- not for you, but because of you. The blow to his vanity, combined with the frustration of his desires, would have been too much for him, so he would have sought peace in suicide. He is the egoist par excellence who would far prefer not to be than not to have. And there are thousands like him, with minor variations. What does that seemingly poetic phrase 'to die of a broken heart' really mean? To die of selfishness; the heart simply goes to pieces under the strain of incessant wanting what it can't have...

"I have now said enough to show you how insidious are selfishness and egotism, and how the later, like a worm, may wriggle itself into all the holes and crevices of our characters, only to peep out its head in places we least expect. Guard against that reptile; he is not beautiful; he is a disfiguring parasite to be destroyed by the purifying antiseptic of Wisdom."

CHAPTER IX

The Arkwrights

A day or two later I went to tea at the Arkwrights'- for there was a Mrs. Arkwright, though I have not mentioned her hitherto. She was not a Chela and never appeared at our gatherings, but she knew M.H. personally none the less.

When I entered her drawing - room that afternoon I found Arkwright just saying good - bye to a pretty but unrefined - looking woman who, I thought, rather too markedly gave me the "glad eye" as she passed out.

"Is it indiscreet to ask who that is?" I enquired when she had gone.

"Prostitute," returned Arkwright briefly.

I raised my eyebrows. "Reform?"

"Hardly."

"What's the ideas then?"

"Oh- got talking one night, so thought I'd ask her to blow in sometime and see us."

"Us?... Then your wife doesn't object?"

"Object? Not she. They enjoy each other."

"Splendid!" I cried, "there are jolly few people like you two...M.H. knows?"

"Yep."

"What does he say?"

"Approves, of course; ran up against her himself one day in this very room and talked a bit of mild philosophy to her."

"Wish I'd been there. How did she take it?"

"She was tickled to death."

"Didn't ask her to chuck her job?"

"You wouldn't expect him to act like a Salvation Army tambourine - clapper, would you?"

"Well, no..." I laughed.

"Besides, it wouldn't be the least good in this case."

"I dare say not- But I still don't quite get the idea."

"See here, Broadbent," he began, fiddling with one of my coat - buttons, "why d'you suppose one of the great Indian Mahatmas lets a lot of primitive Thibetan peasants hang around his house just to get perhaps nothing more than a smile?"

"But does he?" I was doubtful.

"Yes, he does... Well, God knows I'm no Master, nor anywhere near being one, but don't you think even you and I, just because we're linked up with our Master and with all he stands for, must give out something that's going to help people like that prostitute, even if they don't know it?"

"You mean that just being within one's aura must have an effect?"

“Why, of course... She thinks she only comes here for sympathy, and all that— and she gets it; but she gets something else she doesn’t know of, and which may not show up in this incarnation at all. We’re influencing her ego or her soul, whichever you like to call it, even if we don’t talk to call it, even if we don’t talk one word of our philosophy.”

“Then you don’t believe in this occultist talk about contamination and the dangers of keeping bad company?” teased him.

“Gee, it makes me tired!” he exploded, nearly pulling off my button. “Are you never going to help some poor devil in a slum, because you may get a bit of dirt on your pants by sitting on his floor? Gosh, I’d go to bed with that woman if I thought any good’d come of it!”

I had to laugh at his splendid downrightness. “What would M.H. say to that?” I queried.

“Never asked him, but I can guess. I know he often wants us to do sheer waste of time, and then when we’ve done them, he tells us the reason . . . You know Herbert?”

“The musician - *chela* ?”

Arkwright nodded. “When Herbert went to Chicago for a month, M.H. specified the very boarding - house he was to stay at—a poor kind of place, and Herbert’s a rich man—and he was told to ply to a lot of unmusical people nearly every evening, or whenever they asked him, even though they couldn’t really understand the sort of music he played. There were old ginks in that boarding - house with auras as foul as dung - heaps. What price contamination there?”

“Yes, but could he do any good?” I questioned.

My friend,” said a gentle and familiar voice behind me, “the vibrations of good music are beneficial at all times, but when set in motion by one who is consciously doing the Master’s work, they are doubly so.”

I turned round to encounter M.H.’s smile, and wondered how long he had been in the room. Then Wilson, another Chela, arrived.

“Excuse me,” he groaned, sinking into the first handy chair, “But I’m drained out.”

“What’s the trouble?” asked M.H. cheerfully.

“My wife- hysterics- for two hours. This is the third attack in two days I’ve had to cope with.”

M.H. put his hand on Wilson’s for a moment, and his voice was full of tenderness and sympathy as he said: “my son, a very trying wife affords a golden opportunity for progress to the soul advanced enough to profit by it. You are advanced enough, so take comfort.”

Wilson looked at him gratefully.

“You are learning your lesson, and when it has been learnt to the full, there will be no more hysterics.”

“Devilish sorry for you, old man,” murmured Arkwright, “had a bit of a bad time myself with Ella over this new kid of ours: she wanted a boy, and it’s a girl. Queer how some women get disgruntled over a thing like that.”

“The sexual instinct in an insidious form,” said M.H.

“Is that so?” Arkwright asked.

M.H. nodded. "But you needn't tell your wife," he smiled, "just yet."

"And that reminds me, what's got the girl?" exclaimed Arkwright, suddenly jumping up and going out of the room; we heard him calling: "Honey!" in the passage.

"It's all very well," Wilson remarked, "but there are a great many fathers who are every bit as keen on having sons as Ella Arkwright seems to be."

"That's often vanity," said M.H. "when a man is afraid his family will die out, that means he's proud of it. How much better to be an old soul in a young family than a young soul in an old family!"

Arkwright came back into the room bringing his wife with him. She carried a baby in her arms.

"So sorry..." she lamented without a trace of affectation, "You will forgive me- And I can't even shake hands. Here's the baby..." she added, showing it to M.H. We others politely crowded round to look. "But you needn't admire it and act silly," she assured us, "I just want his blessing on it, though it is a girl!"

M.H. laughed quietly and stroked the child's forehead with the tips of his fingers. "And you have it..." he assured her in return.

"Teach me not to mind its being a girl..." she coaxed with vivacious naïveté, heeding my presence as little as if we had known each other since childhood instead of having only met at that moment.

"We Gurus are not omnipotent," he reminded her, "and you are asking much. But perhaps I can give you an idea that may help you to teach yourself. It is not a new idea but a very ancient one. Let us leave your own case aside for a moment. We will suppose some other woman has a baby; she loves that baby and imagines she loves it simply because it is a baby. It grows into a child, and although it is a baby. It grows into a child, and although it is no longer a baby she loves it nevertheless and imagines she is loving it for its childishness. It then becomes a youth, and although it's no longer a baby or even a child she still loves it and imagines she is loving it because of its youthfulness. Finally it becomes a man and she has probably become an old woman, but although ever so many years have passed since it was a baby her love is as great as ever. And then at last she realizes that the reason for her love couldn't have been its babyhood or childhood or youth at all; every one of these changing states has disappeared. Then what is the secret of her love? She loves it for itself- the soul which has no sex, and of which sex is merely a changing manifestation." He paused and looked at her kindly. "And now do you see what I mean?"

She put her head against Arkwright's shoulder and answered: "Yes, I think perhaps just a little ... but please what have I got to do about it?"

We all laughed at the quaintness of her. "You have to exercise the will to love- or, better said, the imagination to love," was the Master's reply.

"The trouble with you, Honey," said Arkwright caressing her, "is that you're a bit too advanced to act like the ordinary mother and slobber over your baby like a cow over its calf, and you- "

"What's that you're saying, Honey?" she interrupted.

"I was saying," (he winked at us) "that you just fall between two stools. You're beyond the animal - instinct stage, which makes mothers and animals proud to bursting

when they've produced a kid, and- er- well, you haven't quite reached the other stage yet that M.H. talked about."

"I expect you'd have felt just the same," Wilson put in sympathetically, "if it had been a boy."

"Why, surely!" Arkwright exclaimed, "only she doesn't realize it."

"And I've forgotten about the tea!" she exclaimed going off at a tangent; and with the baby still in her arms, hurried away.

* * * * *

Half an hour later I was sitting beside M.H. in his motor.

"I think that Arkwright girl's a real sport," I remarked, "Arkwright told me about their prostitute friend."

"Yes, Ella has a beautiful nature," he agreed cordially.

I was inquisitive enough to ask why she never came to the talks.

"She is not exactly an accepted chela," was the answer.

"I should have thought anyone as tolerant- " I began, then stopped when I saw his look of mild amusement.

"If all the tolerant people in America had to be accommodated with seats in my house..."

I laughed.

"Still, there are other reasons," he conceded, "Arkwright is a poor man; that girl fulfils the duties of wife, mother, nurse and servant. She is progressing quicker in that unassuming way than by the more spectacular method of joining the Order. Besides, Arkwright can pass on as much of the teaching as I feel justified in giving her at present."

"And yet she seems to regard you as her Master," I objected.

"You are mistaken. She doesn't know consciously what a Master means, as you understand the term, and she mustn't be told."

I looked at him in astonishment.

"There are scores of mystical and occult societies all over America," he explained, "societies run by Sufis, by Vendantins, by Theosophists, and many other heterodox persons. She looks upon me as the Head of some occult order, that's all- and having a nature rich in love and faith, she regards me in much the same light as a devout Roman Catholic regards her father - confessor. And by the way, those many heterodox orders are very useful to me- they ward off the curiosity - mongers. People who hear of us at all, say vaguely: 'Oh, yes, those theosophical people who've started a branch of their own...'"

"But isn't it awkward," I asked, returning to the subject of the Arkwrights, "when the husband's a chela and the wife isn't?"

"Awkwardness may teach many things," was the reply, "he learns discretion and she learns to overcome curiosity."

And I wondered at that moment if M.H. did not think I was being unduly curious...

Later on I discovered that he had not told me everything. The more I saw of Ella Arkwright herself, the more evident it became to me that she suffered from the defects which were the concomitants of their very engaging virtues. That effervescent naïve

candour of her s was coupled with an indiscretion which would have proved very inconvenient to a Master. To entrust her with some of the teachings M.H. imparted, would have been to incur the danger of their eventually getting into wrong hands.

CHAPTER X THEOSOPHISTS

“WILL you come in for our meal?” M.H. asked when we arrived at his door. “I shall be busy for about half an hour with my secretary, or rather my chela who acts as secretary, but after that I’m free for a while. You can always find a book to pass the time.”

I was of course glad to do as he suggested.

M.H. had two chelas living in the house with him: a young Singhalese and the secretary - chela just mentioned, a man named Heddon. After the meal was over (I noticed M.H. hardly ate anything himself), and we were smoking excellent cigars, I asked, in the course of conversation, what his views were concerning the future of the Theosophical Society.

“That depends to a large extent on the behaviour of Theosophists,” he answered with one of his graver smiles. “Though the Society does not exactly come under my surveillance, I am interested in its career, and it has already done and may continue to do very good work. Unfortunately I see in some of the Theosophists themselves faults both serious and trifling, but the trifling ones occasionally have as far - reaching adverse results as the serious ones.”

“What sort of faults?” Heddon enquired. He appeared to know very little about the Society and its doings.

“Well- for instance, I think it’s sad to see members of a Society which professes Brotherhood engaged in civil warfare with words- which is only one degree better than waging it with blows. From the very beginning the Society has at fairly close intervals been preoccupied with quarrelling in one form or another, and what should best be ignored or tolerantly forgiven, becomes augmented into a scandal, so that members leave their Lodges in a body by way of protest, their chests expanded in an exhibition of what they take to be righteous indignation.”

“The bellows of convection.” Murred the Singhalese drily.

M.H. nodded. “In an occult journal I’ve read acrimonious letters relating to the ordination of bishops and whether it was justified or not, and latterly there has arisen a movement which, on the assumption that Madame Blavatsky said the last word on occult wisdom, condemns all new teaching as a sign of disloyalty to her memory.”

“Why, I thought,” was my comment, “that even while she was still alive the Masters pointed out that as yet they had only ‘lifted a corner of the veil,’ and admitted that with all her qualities she wasn’t entirely reliable in some respects.”

“So they did,” replied M.H.

“And what is the root - cause of all these - shall we say blemishes on the Theosophical escutcheon?” in the calm soft voice of the Singhalese. “Lack of control; control of temper, control of emotion, and control of the tongue.”

“And its effect,” said M.H. taking him up, “the alienation of those who might join the Society and reap the benefits for which it was founded.”

“Deaf people cannot hear loud noises,” remarked the Singhalese in his measured way, “but they can often hear soft whispers.”

M.H., seeing my puzzled expression, looked at me with a twinkle, then at his chela. “You mustn’t expect two poor matter - of - fact Occidentals always to understand your profound similes without elucidation,” he teased him.

The Singhalese smiled in a manner that endeared him to me at once - it was so utterly devoid of superiority. “Our Theosophical friends are deaf,” he explained, “because although they can hear the soft whispers from the astral planes, they cannot hear the loud voice of Reason telling them that intolerance can never be compatible with the spirit of Brotherhood.”

“I now understand,” said I, bowing.

“And those minor faults you spoke of ?” Heddon asked M.H.

“They are trifles, I admit, and I hope and think we Brothers are the last to be intolerant. But - to show you what I mean - when I sometimes focus my consciousness on a theosophical gathering, I see far too many peculiar, vague, sloppy, absent - minded and unpractical dreamers who perhaps ask: ‘And what can I do for the Masters...?’ and who, when told, are unwilling to comply because the very thing the Masters want them to do isn’t spectacular enough to appeal to them.” He smiled indulgently. “I remember not so very long ago trying again and again to impress upon the consciousness of a certain woman that she must cease to deny her husband his conjugal rights, and thus cease to set in the selfish manner she was then doing. But I could make no headway whatever, because she was so obsessed by high - falutin’ ideas of so - called purity that she was deaf to the promptings of my still, small voice trying to speak to her ego,. Neither Theosophy nor any other form of occultism,” he continued after a pause, “should be used as a pretext for conjugal selfishness. It must never render women (or men) neglectful of their duties, nor render them vague and unpractical. After all, the practical lesson which Theosophy has to teach is that of Control. Selfishness in any form, lack of common sense and all kindred weaknesses are symptoms of uncontrol. Whenever possible I like my chelas to teach Theosophists to be a credit to and an advertisement for their Society, not the reverse, as some of them are. Merely to believe in the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation, for instance, may prove a consolation to them personally, but how will it benefit others who as yet do not believe in these doctrines? Besides, these two doctrines are not absolute essentials; they are but two of the many facets of the great Diamond of Truth.” M.H. rose from his chair and began pacing up and down.

“Even what is true, when over - emphasised, may assume the proportions of a dogma,” I suggested.

“Certainly,” he replied. “I find, for instance, that a lot of members of the Theosophical Society lay far too much stress on Karma, as they understand the word.

In young and unevolved souls it is often productive of valetudinarianism. The would-be interesting man or woman- usually woman- says: 'I am ill- it is my Karma- I must bear it...' And she feels quite proud of the fact, or what she considers to be the fact. But if we probe into her subconsciousness we find it is not her 'Karma'- " he again smiled indulgently- "but her vanity which lies at the root of the trouble, and which prompts the desire to draw attention to herself. As you know, in this circle here we employ the word Karma in its more literal sense- as the Law of Cause and Effect in relation to all actions, and not merely to those of past incarnations. We say, for example, if a man gets drunk one night that the splitting headache with which he wakes up next morning is his Karma!"

We had to laugh at this.

"And why?" continued M.H., ignoring our amusement, "because it is the effect of a cause- in other words, that man is paying up, not for the sins of a previous night. If Karma is merely understood in the restricted sense in which the more narrow - minded Theosophists understand it, those evils arise- valetudinarianism and others- which we try to avoid here. So you'll benefit them by teaching them that the results of Karma are nothing whatever to be proud of, and that the sooner they cease to give the doctrine such undue prominence, the better." He stopped to re - light his cigar. "Altogether I am sorry to see an attitude of dogmatism among Theosophical members - some of them go so far as to think that they as Theosophists have the exclusive right to attention from the Masters. They'd doubtless get a shock if you told them that there is many an atheist and even a harlot more receptive to the teachings of the Masters than they are. This dogmatic type of Theosophist is the exact opposite to the vague woolly - minded type- which at least usually has a good deal of love in its make - up- and is, spiritually speaking, worse off because imbued with a quite unconscious conventionalism. The mental bodies of such people are hard and unyielding; because they have embraced an unconventional religion, they think themselves correspondingly unconventional. But they're mistaken; within the confines of their Theosophical outlook, they're nearly as narrow and sectarian as the most bigoted of Christians."

"They should beware of Theosophical Pharisaism," the Singhalese observed, "for although the Masters' love shines upon them as the great orb of day, the windows of their minds and hearts may be too small to give it entrance."

"Thank you, my son," said M.H. with quiet humour. Then, becoming more serious: "The Theosophical Society stands at a very critical moment of its career. It may continue to grow in membership, but unfortunately the size of a Society is not necessarily what counts, but the quality of it. If the Society is to remain a great force for good in the world, and I fervently hope it will do so, then for one thing its members must uproot cowardice. There have been cowards who have run away at the moment of danger, and instead of giving a hand at the pumps, have deserted the ship. It doesn't matter whether the danger has appeared in the form of a scandal, having for its basis some kink in the nervous system of one of its members, or whether dissensions have arisen around opinions and pronouncements about the World Teacher. If Brotherhood means anything at all, it means standing by one another not only in moments of safety

but also in danger. To my mind the future of the Theosophical Society depends before all else on the moral heroism of its members.”

CHAPTER XI THE EPISODE IN THE CHURCHYARD

THE Sunday on which M.H. had promised to take us into the country turned out a gorgeous day. We were to start at 10 o'clock and he was to call for me at my club, and then pick up Viola Brind afterwards. Punctual to the minute he appeared at my door and we set out immediately; but instead of making direct for Viola's house, he turned off in another direction.

"Hullo," I said, "isn't Miss Brind coming after all, or have you forgotten about her?"

"She's coming all right," he answered with a mysterious smile, "but I've got to pick up somebody else first."

"Another of our circle?"

He nodded, but didn't give me any further information.

Only when we drew up in front of Clare's door did I get my answer.

"A pleasant little surprise for you," he said, "I phoned Clare Delafield to come with us."

We had a most exhilarating run. Viola sat in front with M.H., so I had Clare to myself in the back of the car. All the same he did not ignore us completely, but from time to time turned half round to us and either commented on the scenery or shouted the names of the villages through which we passed. We had been driving for about two hours and a half when we arrived at a picturesque little place where it was decided that we should get out and have lunch. We drew up in front of a small hotel, but as it was still early for the midday meal, M.H. suggested we should take a stroll and look round the village. There was an old church surrounded by a churchyard a few paces from the hotel, and towards this we wandered. As we entered the gate, a few lingerers from morning service were taking to one another prior to going home; but they soon dispersed, and the churchyard was left empty save for one young girl whom I noticed standing a little way off among the graves. We sauntered about, looking at the various monuments and their inscriptions, till finally we came quite close up to this girl. Then I saw that she was laying flowers on a new grave. She looked so sorrowful that I felt I would have given anything to be able to comfort her. But what could I say that might have any effect? Also, I was far too diffident to talk to a stranger. I was thinking these thoughts when, chancing to look towards M.H., who was a few feet in front, I noticed that he was gazing intently at the girl. The next moment he went up to her and laid a hand on her shoulder.

"My child," he said with a great depth of tenderness, "don't grieve for your father like this. He's not down there in that grave, he's standing beside you and telling you he

has never left you.”

She evidently did not grasp his full meaning for she clutched his hand and exclaimed: “You knew my father?”

“No, my child.”

“Then- I- I don’t understand- I’ve never seen you before. How - how could you know?” She hastily withdrew her hand.

“Because I see his spirit here now and can hear him saying: ‘Tell her not to go under like that, I’m her Dad- help her to understand I’ve never left her.’”

She turned away and hung her head, as if utterly at a loss what to think or say, but she did not weep.

M.H. put his arm round her shoulder and drew her towards him. “Come, my child,” he said very gently, “I’m here to comfort you; won’t you listen?”

She felt for his hand, clutched it once more and gave a little nod, but seemed unable to speak. I looked at Viola and Clare and saw their eyes were full of tears.

“Listen,” the Master said in a low voice, “some of us can see those whom people wrongly call the dead, for there are no dead really. I know this may be hard to believe but it’s true. Shall I tell you what your father is like to help you to understand?”

She did not answer but made an almost imperceptible gesture of assent.

“He is still young, only about thirty - eight- clean - shaven, tall, and has such a ...”

She suddenly began to sob.

“There, there, my child,” he soothed her, “don’t do that. I understand- but don’t cry.” He stroked her hand and waited for a few moments. “Do you know what I was just going to say?” he asked encouragingly. “It was that your father would be perfectly happy where he is if what you are feeling didn’t hurt him so much. Won’t you try not to be unhappy for his sake?”

“It’s- so hard...” she sobbed.

“I know, my dear, I know- but think what it means to him to see you so miserable, and when he tries to comfort you to find that you can’t hear his voice! Wouldn’t you feel badly if that happened to you?”

She nodded again.

“You were more pals than father and daughter. Isn’t that so?” He spoke now in a more conversational voice that gave the impression that he wanted to divert her attention. “But if it weren’t possible for some of us to see those who have left their bodies how could I know all this? It wouldn’t be possible, would it? So you see although we think our loved ones die and go far away, or fade out of existence altogether they don’t really; they’re with us all the time, only we’re not all able to perceive them and hear what they say.

She ceased to sob.

“You are a lovely man,” she said with an inflection which caused Clare to put her handkerchief to her eyes.

M.H. smiled. “That’s better,” he said cheerfully. “And now, my child, your father wants me to give you a message. Oh- and your mother’s here too. You hardly remember her, do you? She died when you were so young.”

The girl looked almost happy in her amazement.

“Well, now, I’ll repeat word for word what I hear your father say: ‘Tell- my- little- one- I- am- not- down- there- but- am- right- here- on- the- spot- with- Mamma- tell- her- I- don’t- want- her- come- to- this- place- any- more- it- makes- her- feel- badly- because- she- suffers- Ask- her- to- pay- attention- to- what- Mrs. - Hodge- says- she- can- help- her- also- I- should- be- very- grateful- if- the- small - fair- young- lady- with- you- will- extend- her- friendship- to- my- little- one- I - have- gotten- her- thoughts- and- know- she- can- see- us- Mamma- and- I- send - more- love- than- we- can- put- in- towards- and- implore- our- little- one- of- the- love- of- Mike- not- to- grieve- And- now- I- thank- you- sir- for- the- service- you- have- rendered- us- we- are- more- than- in- debted- to- you- Tell- the- little- one- this- is- a- damn- fine- place- but- we- are- always- around- always- you- understand- though- I- guess- it- sounds- a- bit- queer- to- her- but- your- friend- will- make- her- understand- one- of- these- days- Please- persuade- her- to- go- back- home- now- and- once- more- thank- you.’ That’s the message, my child, so you see everything’s not so dreadful after all, is it? And my friend here will give you more messages some time; she’ll arrange for you to come and see her in Boston. You often run over to Boston, don’t you?”

The girl smiled and said she did, and Viola who had moved to her side, asked her name and address and gave her own.

“So now,” said M.H., patting her shoulder, “I would get along home to your sister, if I were you. And just think of your father as having gone on a splendid holiday- for that’s all it really is. And don’t forget, you will hear from him again, we’ll see to that all right. Good - bye, my child,” he held out his hand, “God bless you.”

She took his hand and lifted it to her lips. “God bless you,” she said, “I- I can’t tell you all you’ve done for me. I shall never forget this to- to the end of my life.”

She turned to Viola. “And thank you,” she extended her hand, but instead of taking it, Viola put her arms round her and kissed her.

“And will you come and see me too?” Clare said huskily.

We watched her as she made her way out of the churchyard. I had such a pronounced lump in my throat that I could not have spoken without disgracing myself. It was, I believe, just because M.H. realized what we were all feeling, that in his quite normal and cheerful voice he said: “It’s good to know that three people are the happier as the result of this excursion. But,” glancing at his watch, “it’s after one o’clock; we’d better be moving lunch - wards.”

Clare’s eyes were still rather red when we sat down to luncheon.

“Upset you a bit. Eh?” said M.H. with one of his most affectionately encouraging smiles. “Let’s think of something else, then.”

She gave him a look of gratitude. “Feeling sorry for people is painful.”

“I confess I find it painful too,” I said, “what about you, Miss Brind?”

“I think it’s horribly painful.”

“Compassion takes people in various ways,” M.H. mused, “it’s largely a matter of temperament- until, of course, one gets beyond the dictates of temperament.

“You mean when one’s reached Bliss - consciousness?” I said.

He nodded. “Compassion acts as a means of making us feel love for the time being.

That's why it can be a very pleasant if instead of identifying our minds with our love-sensation, we get swept up in the sufferings of the person towards whom we are feeling compassionate."

"But isn't it very difficult not to get swept up?" Clare asked.

"That depends on the stage of our evolution. In any case it's a pity to get bowled over, as it hinders our capacity to help. A doctor wouldn't be much good if he fainted or wept at the sight of an accident, would he?"

"That's true enough," I agreed.

"It sounds a hard thing to say," M.H. continued, "but a certain type of compassion contains an element of selfishness and cowardice. How is it, for instance, that when you hear of a terrible railway accident in India or somewhere very far away, you're hardly even interested, but when you hear of a similar accident in Boston you're dreadfully upset, and can't get the thing out of your heads for days? It's because you unconsciously think you might have been in that accident- or might have lost a friend in it."

"What you say there has always stuck me as curious," Viola remarked, "but I never thought of that explanation."

"I think it's the true one all the same. Or put it another way," the Master elaborated, "when a child breaks one of its toys and sets up ear-splitting cries, you don't immediately feel inclined to start crying too. You smile and pet the child and hug it a little, and there the matter ends. Because you as a grown-up person know perfectly well that the breaking of a toy couldn't upset you like that- which simply means that you're not afraid of such a thing happening to yourselves."

"That's a very ingenious argument," I exclaimed. "But distinctly unflattering to one's vanity."

M.H. laughed. "You shouldn't have any," he teased me.

"Ah, if one were rid of that- " I returned.

"Still," he continued, "the real compassion which contains no element of selfishness or cowardice is a beautiful and quite painless emotion; it is even a joyful emotion, because it's the outcome of pure love, and pure love is always joyful."

"Yet Christ is said to have wept," I observed.

"You mustn't believe everything you read in the Bible. That story about Jesus weeping when He hears that Lazarus is dead, doesn't bear looking into. Why should He weep if He knew it was possible to bring he wasn't dead- put which interpretation you like upon it?"

"Mightn't He have wept out of pity for the others- I mean Mary and Martha?" I hazarded.

M.H. shook his head. "It won't work, my friend; such a manifestation of compassion would have been weakness. What would you think of a doctor who, although he realized perfectly that his patient could be saved, nevertheless burst into tears when told by the relatives that that patient was ill? Surely that would be the best way to frighten them out of their lives."

We all had to laugh at this.

"I must say to waste time in weeping instead of immediately getting to work to

remove the cause of such weeping would be very queer behaviour- and certainly not the behaviour of an Adept. No, I think we'll have to fall back on the 'tears of joy' theory, as Shri Parananda does in his Eastern exposition of the Gospels; two excellent books, by the way, which I strongly advise you to read."

The conversation was interrupted by the Negro waiter who wanted to hand the next course, but M.H. had been so busy talking that he had forgotten to eat. So he hastily finished what was on his plate.

"Last time I was here," he said, affably addressing the waiter, "we had the best waffles I've ever tasted for a long time."

The waiter beamed, showing a row of ivory white teeth. "Guess you won't be disappointed with to - day's lot either," he said.

"Well, I hope not. By the way, I notice none of you are very upset at the tears of the little boy at the next table," he added quizzically to us.

We glanced in the direction where a paterfamilias in company with his wife and the little by, was urging the latter to finish up a far too large helping of meat and potatoes.

"And I notice you don't go and play the good Samaritan this time," I teased back.

"Wouldn't do," he laughed, "they'd only resent it. You can't make parents understand," he went on in an undertone, "that it's a great mistake to make children eat when they've no appetite or have eaten enough. Nature's got to get rid of all that excess of food somehow and sometime. However that's no reason why we shouldn't have some more waffles. Samuel!" he called.

The waiter appeared.

"More waffles, please."

It was dark before we reached Boston again where I was to complete the day by dining with Clare.

"See you Wednesday," said M.H. as he deposited us in front of her house.

CHAPTER XII QUESTIONS ON MARRIAGE

THERE were two evenings a month on which instead of listening to a set discourse from M.H, the chelas were encouraged to ask questions on any subject that occurred to them. He made a rule, however, that when once a subject was introduced all questions must bear relation to it- this policy being adopted, as he had once explained, in order to ensure consecutiveness of thought.

One of the chelas, a Frenchman, who, I was told, had acquired extraordinary physical control- he could hold his breath for a prodigious length of time, stop his heart, and perform other remarkable Yogic feats- put the question, with a strong foreign accent: "Say, Master, do you consider marriage compatible with spiritual advancement?"

"That's a very foolish question from you," M.H. replied, the stern inflection of his voice immediately quelling a ripple of subdued amusement. "Have you been here all these years to such poor purpose that you don't know the answer without asking me?"

"Then why do the Indian books on Yoga tell that it is not?" the Frenchman persisted, though he looked uncomfortable after the rebuke.

"I should have thought you might have known that too," M.H. answered regretfully. "How often must I hammer it into your consciousness that you are too lopsided, and that one day you will have to go back and learn all that you have to go back and learn all that you have missed. Answer him!" he ordered the Singhalese who was sitting in the front row.

"The Indian books you speak of," replied the chela in his usual dispassionate manner, "were written by Yogis for aspiring Yogis. Their teachings are only suitable to European conditions when subjected to a process of selection and adaptation. That is what the Gurus are for. As to marriage, it brings bondage to fools and spiritual progress to wise men; it is a playground with many dangers for children and a school for the enlightened. It is that fertile ground on which may be grown the beautiful flowers of a hundred virtues, or the noisome weeds of a hundred vices."

"Do you consider," one of the women - chelas asked M.H., "that people are beginning to understand the spiritual value of marriage?"

"In Europe and America," every trace of sternness had disappeared from his voice, "alas, very few people indeed understand its true value. And at present the whole attitude towards matrimony is a disastrous one, which, instead of leading to contentment and spiritual progress, leads to the divorce - court. So long as jealousy is regarded as a reputable passion, and romantic infatuation is considered the chief *raison d'être* for entering wedlock, how can we expect it to be otherwise?" He paused,

waiting for a further question.

“Do you mean to say,” demanded a novelist sitting beside me, “that romantic love is never a secure foundation for marriage?”

“Wise men,” M.H. replied, “are chary of bringing the word never into any argument. Romantic infatuation is very seldom a secure foundation for marriage- except in nobles,” he added, twinkling.

There was a laugh in which the novelist joined.

“And yet in countries where the laws are easy,” M.H. resumed, “when people who have married for pleasure on the strength of an infatuation, find themselves unsuited to one another, instead of trying to learn the lesson their egos (higher selves) wish them to learn, they shirk it and, like cowards, run away- to the divorce courts. Because it is too much trouble to adapt themselves, and conquer the dislike and irritation they feel towards each other once the glamour has worn off, they seek the easiest way out of the dilemma. Rather than obey the dictates of the higher self, they listen to the voice of the lower self which says: ‘You thought you loved this man or woman- you’ve been cheated- so make an end of it and separate for ever.’”

“But how are you going to prevent people marrying because they’re in love?” I asked.

“By gradually setting before them a higher ideal. It will take a long time, but what of that? Teach them to marry neither for passion, pleasure, nor, as goes without saying, for material advantage.”

“What do you mean by passion?” somebody inquired, “the purely physical?”

“You do well to ask that question,” he answered, “because the word is often employed in a far too arbitrary sense. Will anybody oblige?”

“I should say there are three forms of passion,” I hazarded, “one, the purely physical; one, though rare, the purely sentimental; and one, the sentimental - physical.”

M.H. nodded.

“And it strikes me,” said a very American voice, “that what our friend calls the sentimental and the sentimental - physical give the knock - out blow to a man’s judgment a daft sight sooner than any sheer unvarnished lust I was ever ashamed of in the days of my youth!”

M.H. broke into a hearty laugh. “We are getting along,” he observed, “any more confessions forthcoming?”

“Every romantic affair I’ve ever had,” said another man, “has ended in smoke, so I wouldn’t give a damn for one of them. But I can imagine having a very deep and lasting friendship for several women, with any one of whom one could pass a very pleasant night- and it’s one of those women I’d marry if I wanted to marry at all.”

“Or if I wanted you to marry,” M.H. corrected, “which is more important.”

“Or you- a sure thing!”

“So you see, though our friend has expressed it in a manner perhaps a little shocking to a Victorian old maid, he has implied that companionship marriage is the only marriage likely to endure.”

“That’s all very well,” said Viola, “but if you tell people to marry simply for friendship, they think you mean a Platonic marriage.”

“For what have you a tongue, my child, but to tell people what you do mean?”

“Then you don’t approve of Platonic marriages?” I inferred.

“If two people who are mentally sympathetic but physically antipathetic wish to marry, that hardly concerns a Guru in his- shall I say official capacity... But except in very rare instances, I do not advise enforced Platonism. These Platonic marriages which occur nowadays between people belonging to various mystical and occult societies, are symptomatic of a false conception of so - called purity. These good people are trying to progress too fast; and because they are attempting to run with their spiritual feet before they can walk, they are engendering nervous complaints and other evils. The women become hysterical and often suffer from uterine troubles which cloud their judgment and hinder their general activities; and the men suffer from irritability, neurasthenia, and such complaints as occur when there is no Guru handy to teach them how to avoid these results. They say to themselves: ‘We are making ourselves purer vehicles for the Masters to work through...’ and the books that they read, full of beautiful sentiments, uphold them in their belief. Some of these well - meaning but misguided people have been monks, nuns or ascetics of a sort in their last lives. Yet why do you suppose in this life they have been born into the noise and turmoil of a European or American civilization? It is in order to learn a different lesson - to learn the particular lesson this civilisation- such as it is- has to teach. But if they merely try to repeat their last lesson, so to say, in a different environment, they are wasting their incarnation. I will tell you a little piece of occult news.- Not so long ago a great Yogi lived in India; so much revered was he, that when he was expected in the big towns, the buildings were decorated with flags and the streets with festoons. That - Yogi died, and is now reincarnated as a little girl in England. What a ‘come - down,’ the unenlightened will say! But no. The ego of that Yogi has still something to learn, and he can only learn it in a female body and in the western world, even though he is nearing Masterhood. And what’s more, if this soul carries out the programme the Gurus have planned, that erstwhile Yogi may marry and have children.

“And so what I’d impress upon you is to help people to learn the lesson their particular environment has to teach. If they are married, they should fulfill all the obligations of marriage, so that they may come to cultivate those virtues which marriage can educe. It is you who must begin to reach mankind the Super - morals of marriage.’

He paused, and a rather shy voice from a pupil who had only recently entered our order asked: “And please, what are the super - morals of marriage?”

“Tell him,” said M.H. kindly to the Singhalese.

“Conjugal super - morality is conjugal unselfishness pursued to its logical conclusion,” came the answer.

“Give him a practical example,” said M.H.

“If a woman desires a child and her husband is impotent or sterile, he should permit her to have a child by another man, if she so wishes.”

“Good!” said M.H., and the new chela’s face was a study.

“But,” objected the Frenchman, “if that woman is married with a ‘usband ‘oo is sterile, it is ‘er Karma!”

“Someone answer him!” M.H. ordered sharply.

The Singhalese again volunteered: “If a woman is drowning in a river, and two men are standing on the bank, one who can swim and one who cannot, shall the man who cannot swim pinion the other man and say: ‘Leave her to drown, it is her bad Karma?’”

“Precisely,” said M.H., “how can he know that it’s not her bad Karma merely to get a fright or a ducking or to spoil her newest dress?”

All the women laughed.

“Besides,” he continued, “what about the good Karma the other man would make by rescuing her? No- let us teach husbands and wives to leave the workings of Karma to the Lords of Karma. The duty of all super - moralists is to act in accordance with the highest principles of unselfishness, and leave the consequences in Higher Hands. It is these principles, and these only, which can save the marriage - state from the chaotic condition into which it has fallen. Marriage as it is at present exacts too much from human nature on the one hand, and too little on the other. In countries like Italy and Spain it allows a man to behave like a saint. This despotism is hidden under a fig - leaf on which are the words preserving my honour, but it is despotism all the same, and the matrix of brutality, cruelty, and even murder. Preserving my honour means in plainer words preserving my vanity and my selfishness- hence all the tragedies that ensue.”

“Then do you consider conjugal fidelity so unimportant,” the new chela asked, “that its breach ought not to be punished?”

“Fidelity, my son,” was the gentle rejoinder, “is a virtue to be always admired but never exacted.”

“But- ” somebody was about to interrupt.

“One moment, my son, I’ve not finished. There is a form of fidelity which is far more important than sexual fidelity; that is the fidelity of mind and soul. To violate this involves much more serious consequences, because physical links are broken with the death of the body, whereas mental and spiritual links persist into future lives.”

“I gather,” said a man named Galais, the oldest of the chelas in point of years, “that you think the sexual fidelity which ordinary marriage teaches is not of great value, because it is largely the result of fear- I mean of a scandal or a divorce. What sort of lesson would that type of marriage teach in which fidelity was never exacted?”

“Many lessons, my son, but I will only mention one. It’s easy enough to be gentle, kind and affectionate to our wives as long as we’re in love with them, but it’s not so easy when we’re in love with somebody else. The man who, although he may be in love with another woman, can still be just the same kind, affectionate husband to his wife, has learnt to behave in accordance with that higher fidelity which is one of the lessons Free Marriage has to teach.”

After that we broke up for the evening, but as I walked home with one of the chelas I asked: “Why was M.H. so down on the Frenchman?”

“Because although he’s a damn fine nature he just won’t absorb the philosophical side of the teaching. And he’s got rather a thick hide too- gentle handling makes as little impression on it as a straw on a donkey’s back.”

I laughed.

“But don’t get home with the idea,” he continued, “that Master don’t love him as

much as any of us.”

“How long has he been in the States?” I asked.

“About fifteen years.”

“Then why hasn’t he learnt better English?”

“You can search me- for the same reason he hasn’t learnt philosophy, I guess!”

CHAPTER XIII MYSTIFICATION

ALTHOUGH I saw the Master at the Friday evening lecture I had no private conversation with him. We merely exchanged a few words in the presence of the others; he was going away the following morning and would be absent until Wednesday; but in the interim he hinted that it would please him if I saw a little more of Viola Brind.

Was this hint intended to imply that hitherto I had not cultivated her to the extent he could have wished- or what? I was becoming more and more mystified. Why always Viola Brind? I even grew conscious of a little imp of the perverse which seemed to whisper: “You don’t honestly like that girl, although you think you do. She’s not the type that really appeals to you, so why not be quite frank about it? If you hadn’t been told to cultivate her you’d never have done so of your own accord, and you know it!” And I confess that much as I disliked this idea, contrary as it was to my Master’s wishes, I could not help feeling at times that it was true, though at other times I shook it off and told myself it was absurd and nothing but imagination. Of course I liked the girl - why shouldn’t I? There was nothing in her to dislike. Hadn’t I been aware that we’d got on splendidly the last time we dined together- then why all of a sudden these misgivings? Surely he wasn’t asking much of me- just to become friends with a clever

and unusually gifted girl- if I couldn't accomplish that, I must indeed be a poor fool!

In any case, misgivings or not - I asked Viola to dine with me the very next day and she accepted. Nevertheless when she came I was, to my regret, aware of a slight feeling of hostility towards her. I could not pretend to account for it, but there it was. Just at that moment that second and lower self had evidently got the upper hand. And this was all the more strange, because by nature I am an expansive and affectionate person who seldom feels antagonistic to anybody. In fact my large heart has proved an inconvenience rather than otherwise- for when I meet people who appeal to me, I am apt to indulge in rather more demonstrativeness than is usually considered the correct thing.

Of course I quite made up my mind that I would on no account let Viola notice any change in my attitude towards her, but I did not altogether succeed, for we had been seated only few minutes when she said reflectively: "Somehow you're not quite yourself to - night."

I was taken aback for a moment. "Do you know," I rejoined, "that phrase can be more literally true than is generally supposed. I don't altogether feel myself. Still, I hoped you wouldn't notice it..."

"Why? Does it matter- my noticing it?"

I tried to laugh it off. "Oh, it's not of great importance, but, to tell the truth, I'm a little ashamed of it- it makes me feel awkward."

"I shouldn't worry about it."

"Do you know what it's like not to feel quite yourself?"

"Don't I just!"

I immediately became interested. "Tell me- you've got psychic powers- have you any idea why, without apparent rhyme or reason, one gets- it's bit difficult to put into words- well, the feeling that one part of oneself is suddenly trying to prevent another part from doing a particular thing- say something quite easy- something one really wants to do?"

"It's hard to tell unless one knows the sort of thing."

"Yes, I suppose it is," I conceded, not wishing to commit myself any further."

"Can't you give me an instance?" she asked.

"It's not very easy- "

"You see, it might be something trivial- something that any psycho - analyst could explain- but it might also be something much more formidable; I mean the 'Blacks'?"

"What do you mean by the 'Blacks'?"

"Don't you know?"- surprised - "the so - called Brothers of the Left Hand Path. The ones who work against the Divine Will instead of with It."

"Oh, those... Of course I know who they are, but I didn't recognize them under that name." Then suddenly I had an impulse to tell her the truth, but was checked by the waitress handing the next course.

"Look here," I said, when she was out of earshot, "we are excellent friends, aren't we?"

"I'm sure I hope so," she smiled.

"Then if I ask you something rather peculiar- you'll understand?"

“Why, of course.”

“Do you think the Blacks, as you call them, might have reasons for wanting to smash up our friendship?” I said slowly.

“It’s quite possible- one can never tell what they’re up to. But why do you ask?”

“Because something has happened.”

“Really- in what way?”

“I hardly like to tell you- but I’m going to tell you the same.” I hesitated for a moment, trying to find words that would not seem too crude. “I have a feeling,” I said at last, “as if something were trying to stop me liking you- quite so much.”

She gave a curious little laugh. “That’s very peculiar,” she said, “I have had the same feeling too.”

“You mean that?”

“I mean it- the Blacks are obviously trying to get at both of us.”

“But for heaven’s sake why?” I exclaimed, “what’s the object of it?”

“Ah, goodness only knows! But I can tell you this much; there’s probably something deeper in the whole matter than we know of. When Master particularly wishes a thing, it’s worth their while to try and stop it.”

“You think it’s as important as all that?”

“I suppose it must be.”

We were again interrupted by the waitress.

“I’m not usually an inquisitive person,” I said when the waitress had withdrawn, “but upon my soul, I wish I knew what it all meant. Master gave me a hint on Friday to try and see more of you.”

“He said pretty much the same to me.

I was more and more mystified.

“Do you know if he often does this sort of thing- I mean, is he often so keen that two people should- well- be special friends?”

“I’ve never heard so before, but then one doesn’t hear everything.” She paused for a moment. “I’m up against another mystery- talking of mysteries.”

I looked at her questioningly.

“Master says one of these days he may be putting me a test I shan’t altogether like.”

“What sort of a test?” I asked, intensely interested.

“That’s just what I don’t know. He dropped the hint so that I should be prepared. All he said was that it’ll be something in the nature of a sacrifice.”

“Good Lord!” I exclaimed.

“Why do you look so surprised?”

“Because- but let’s go into the other room. It’s usually empty and we can talk better there over our coffee.”

“You were going to tell me something,” she said when the coffee and smokes had been brought, and she had lit a cigarette.

“Do you happen to know why I came over here?” I asked.

“To be near Master, I suppose.”

“That’s one reason, but there’s another. He told me he had something in view which would mean making a sacrifice on my part. Don’t you think it’s rather peculiar that he

should say exactly the same thing to both of us?"

She gave a shrug. "Everybody who's with M.H. has to make sacrifices sooner or later; I don't think it necessarily has to do with you and me together."

"No, I quite admit I don't see how it can. First of all I can't imagine that anything in the way of work we had to do in conjunction could mean such a great sacrifice, secondly- I've forgotten what I wanted to say, now!"

She laughed, then after a while mused: "Of course there might be some work he wanted us to do together which was something unpleasant and meant a good deal of self - sacrifice for both of us; but I really can't imagine what sort of work it could be."

"And that might also be the reason why the Blacks are trying to get at us," I suggested.

"Quite possible."

I was silent for a few moments, trying to rack my brains for other solutions, but arrived at none. Suddenly I said: "You're clairvoyant, can't you see into the future a bit?"

She shook her head. "I can never see anything to do with myself- clairvoyants never can, at my stage. Besides- "

"Besides what?"

"If M.H. intended us to know now, he'd have told us."

I felt I had been disloyal to my Master, and censured myself. "You're quite right," I said, "we'd better give up all this speculating and wait and see what happens. In the meantime we've got to prevent these Blacks from doing any damage. This talk has done me good. When you first came this evening I felt awkward, and I'll admit it- a bit hostile- but now I'm all right again."

"Well, that's something to the good, at any rate."

After that we talked on other subjects. We also arranged to meet for tea on the Monday. And as that same evening we were to dine with Clare and her mother, and afterwards go to a theatre, we both felt the Master would not consider that his wishes had been disregarded.

As for Clare and myself, we contrived to see each other nearly every day, and most of our interviews were undisturbed by the presence of a third. Clare had her own little studio, as she called it, and her very accommodating mother showed no surprise that we should spend so much time in each other's company. There was no deception about the matter; Mrs. Delafield knew that our feelings for each other were of the nature of romance- Clare had told her so- and she had accepted the situation on the assumption that her daughter was old enough to think and act for herself. That in so doing she not only called forth my admiration but also my gratitude, goes without saying.

I was now passionately in love with Clare, and I knew that my love was reciprocated. It is said that a man of my age is apt to get the "divine disease" very badly, and I felt this to be true. Moreover it seemed to me this would be my last romance- the last flicker of the romantic fire before I reached that unconditional Love - Consciousness which M.H. had promised me if- if what? For that was the mystery I still came no nearer to solving. Rather had it seemed to deepen after my conversation with Viola. In any case- should I be able to fulfill his conditions? I did not see how it were possible

ever to fall in love again. As M.H. had said "I should lose my heart permanently." But to bring logic to bear on that metaphor, a thing once lost forever cannot be lost a second time! Still, I might of course be wrong. When this permanent Love - Consciousness did arrive, so to say, it might be so different from what I expected that many a possibility could arise which I had not foreseen. There also came the startling thought; suppose the sacrifice I was called upon to make should be so great that I could not face it? It was unlikely; but one can never be absolutely certain of anything- except the Absolute Itself... Still- I banished that doubt almost as soon as it entered my head; I utterly refused to entertain it. Had I not once or twice tasted Unconditional Love - and - Bliss - Consciousness, and ever since then known it to be "the pearl of great price" for which one would sell everything else- yes, even the prospect of future romances?

Whether it was in answer to my speculations that M.H. treated the whole subject of Love in his discourses of the two following Wednesdays, I cannot say. I was at this period never able to gauge to what extent he was conscious of my unspoken thoughts and feelings. All the same he did choose that subject, and as nothing momentous happened to me in the intervening week I am placing these two discourses in successive chapters.

CHAPTER XIV EXCEPTS FROM A LECTURE

THE lecture the Wednesday evening was on "Maya and its relation to love;" but as much of it was of too intimate a nature to be suitable for publication, I can only give such portions as I consider advisable.

M.H. pointed out to begin with that much of what is termed Love is purely Maya—that is to say, Illusion. And yet Illusion is not an adequate translation of Maya, because this word does not mean non-existent or illusory like the objects in a dream, but a condition in which things appear to be as they are not, or in which things appear to be as they are not, or in which we see things as they are not. Thus, much of what is taken for love is Maya, because it is fraught with illusions and engenders illusions in ourselves. "The unenlightened and the sentimental," he explained, "think love will last for ever, but it doesn't— and that is Maya; they think their loved ones age other than they prove to be— and that is Maya." And he went on to show us that a comprehension of this idea is very important, as one of the greatest aids to spiritual progress consists in the attempt to free ourselves from the thralldom of Maya.

"When we can see all things as they are, instead of as we desire them to be, then we shall have no more disappointments and few more sorrows.

"We find much of this thralldom of Maya in relation to marriage. The man who thinks he wants to live with a woman for a life - time and finds he doesn't want to live with her for a month is under the thralldom of Maya. The man who thinks a woman will be faithful to him till death, and finds she commits adultery with the first handsome soldier, is under the thralldom of Maya. And so on and so forth. We must endeavour to free ourselves from this thralldom, otherwise we shall never gain wisdom or come to know peace.'

He furthermore maintained that we see much of this Maya - element in the prevalent attitude towards sexuality. To give an example: "The man who shoots or divorces his wife because she has had sexual intercourse with another man shows at once that he attaches a prodigious importance to sexual intercourse itself; on the other hand, the man who forgives his wife, or, better hand, the man who forgives his wife, or, better still, does not even feel there is anything to forgive, attaches little importance to sexual intercourse itself, and therefore proves himself to be not only a more evolved and enlightened soul but a more chaste one as well. Such a man no longer sees either sexuality or marriage through the veils of Maya."

M.H. next spoke of the prevalent misconceptions regarding chastity, purity, and complete abstinence. "The chaste man," he explained, "is not to our way of thinking here, the man who practices complete sexual continence, but, as its true light. As

nobody should be called a gourmand who enjoys his dinner when hungry, yet otherwise attaches little importance to eating, so nobody should be called unchaste who enjoys the sexual act when the body demands it, but otherwise is not preoccupied with sexuality itself. With regard to purity- what we mean by the word is not prudery but the exact opposite. Purity is the power to see the beautiful in all things and all functions of life, and to glorify all actions by the spirit of selfishness. He who has learnt to be unselfish in every act of his sexual life, is pure....” Here followed some instructions which could only prove elevating to mankind, but which prudish conventions do not allow me to publish....”

“...If only the pure in heart, in the sense of the sexually abstinent, could see God, then every old lady and old gentleman who had outgrown all their passions- or never had any- might be in that enviable position. Why should God create in men and women a function by means of which they were to be debarred from seeing Him? Maya again- even texts the unwary interpret through the veils of Illusion.”

The Master then passed on to the wrong attitude towards love and passion adopted by some students and teachers of mystical or occult philosophy. “You have no right,” he declared, “to expect unadvanced souls to behave like advanced ones. Though the example is trite, the child in the Kindergarten cannot be expected to know or learn the lessons of the Sixth Form. Nor much you expect even advanced souls to behave like perfect souls- there are only about three hundred perfect souls in this world- for even advanced souls may not be equally evolved in all directions; there is a little chip out of the crystal somewhere. There is also the type of body to be considered, in which an advanced soul finds itself during a particular incarnation. Take for instance the creative artist; very often the finest creative artists appear by their behaviour in the domain of sexual morals to be unadvanced souls. And yet they are not- they are merely born with a type of body which is exceedingly difficult to operate and control. When, say, a musician is composing a music - drama or a symphony, tremendous forces from Beings perceptible to clairvoyants are playing around and through that man, and the result is a stirring - up of his entire emotional nature. Again- you have to realize that every form of control entails the expenditure of force, and if we consider that nearly all the force which the creative artist has at his disposal must go into his work, there is very little over by means of which to control his sex - nature. But even so, the love - affairs of a great artist, looked at from the standpoint of the Masters- who can see- are not quite the same as are those of the ordinary man. Their very transience, which the strict moralist condemns, is symptomatic not of a vacillating soul, but of a soul one - pointed that even love in its erotic sense makes no lasting impression on it. It is only an evolved soul who can fall in love with ten women and not wish to marry any one of them. The great artist knows, be it consciously or sub - consciously, that his love - affairs are only Maya- and as soon as anyone realizes that Maya is Maya, he proves himself free from the thralldom of Maya. Those self - righteous ones who exclaim: ‘He’s a genius, poor fellow, so I suppose we must forgive him...’ are neither charitable nor enlightened; only in the heart of the flower of true understanding is hidden the sweet honey of pardon. Thus love - affairs are not evil in themselves; they are only evil when they upset a man’s judgment, bring suffering to others or lure us away from the

Great Purpose.”

This statement, however, he went on to say, was not applicable to souls so advanced as to be nearing Masterhood. In the case of these, sexual fidelity to one woman was desirable, because infidelity had a disintegrating effect upon the higher bodies. Here M.H. gave a lengthy occult explanation which would not be intelligible to the uninitiated.[?]

He concluded his discourse by saying: “The highest type of love may be seen where two people are united in the spirit of perfect freedom, yet neither of them feel the desire to avail themselves of it. But although this may be the highest form of love, it is not of necessity the highest form of marriage. Only when such people marry in order to serve the Higher Ones and Humanity, be it either through work which can only be undertaken conjointly, or by providing suitable bodies for souls wishing to reincarnate through them, only then do they enter upon that type of marriage which has the highest of all, and hence totally beyond the glamorous distortions of Maya.”

CHAPTER XV

PERMANENT LOVE - CONSCIOUSNESS

THE following Wednesday Master gave a lecture for the benefit of the newer chelas on concentration, meditation, and contemplation, and how by their practice permanent love - consciousness could be acquired. He told us that those who could succeed in holding their minds unwaveringly for eighty - four and a third minutes on the One Self, which is Unity- Love - Bliss, would retain those attributes of that Self as a consciousness for the remainder of their lives. But he warned us that such concentration was not only very difficult to acquire, but that long protracted meditation was injurious unless practiced under the personal supervision of a Guru.

“Let people meditate often.” He explained, “but only for short periods at a time. It is better to meditate say, ten times a day for a few moments or even less, than a whole hour in succession. And always remember,” he added, “that the Imagination should be employed and not the Will, as most people understand that word; and further, that whenever we in this Order use the expression to will, we mean to make an effort of the imagination. Another important point is the necessity for synchronization between feeling and thought. When you meditate on Love, you must not only think Love, but feel Love- again through an effort of the Imagination.”

And here he pronounced one of those melodious utterances which remain in the foreground of memory.

“Imagination,” he said, “is that divine ladder built by God, whereby the aspirant may climb to the blissful heights of Realisation.

“Those who indulge in mere desultory dreaming are misusing the faculty of imagination,” he continued, “but if you who have recently become chelas will for the

[?] Those finer bodies which surround and interpenetrate the physical, and are perceptible to the trained clairvoyant.

present practice mediation in the manner I have just advocated, you may eventually find that there will be times when you will be rewarded with a changeless feeling of love towards everybody, whoever and whatever they are, and yet you won't mind if they love you in return or not. At such times there will be no more of those inconvenient antipathies you so often feel towards people; you won't mind whether a person is ugly or beautiful, refined or vulgar, cleaver or stupid, wicked or virtuous- none of these attributes will inhibit the incomparable sensation of love flowing out in all its joy and peacefulness from yourselves towards them. Some of you may even discover that such Love - consciousness has become permanent, for you may be only re - acquiring what you have already acquired in a previous life."

And he went on to show how even spiritual powers are dependent on past incarnations, the particular type of body we inhabit, heredity, and so forth.

As he neared the conclusion of his discourse he said: "Are there no other methods for acquiring this attitude- other than the methods of meditation prescribed? Personally I believe there are. Take the analogy of the blacksmith's arm; his right arm is unusually strong and muscular, his left is weak and puny in comparison. Why is this? Because he has developed the strength of his right arm by swinging the hammer; his left he has only used as all people use it who are not ambidextrous. And it's just the same with love- exercise the will to love, and you develop the capacity to love, so that your whole love - nature becomes strong and enduring; love in the ordinary way as people do who are merely attracted, and your love - nature remains weak and sickly, and eventually dies altogether. For observe; love requires to be nourished from within and not from without. As long as you are dependent on externals you'll never be safe. Only when you make up your mind not to depend on those externals will you be secure. But you must start now while you're young; when you are old it will be too late. The attitude once acquired will persist of its own accord; then when old age has come upon you there will be none of this difficulty about making new friends that we so often hear of. Instead of merely being fond of one or two friends you'll be fond of ten friends, twenty, a hundred- there is no limit beyond what you yourselves impose. And of course as the number increases the likelihood of your outliving them diminishes. The lonely lovelessness of old age is but the penalty one pays for exclusiveness.

"To come to a practical suggestion; why not select at least one person from among your acquaintances who is not sympathetic to you, and then, always, of course, with the aid of Imagination, will yourself to love that person. I'm not by this implying that there are some here who actually and actively hate anybody, because, as you know, we dare not initiate those who have not got over such an emotion as hatred. But there are still persons to whom you feel- shall we say extremely indifferent; whose actual bodies are not sympathetic to you, so that you would care to take their arm or touch their hand or show any of that physical demonstrativeness which specially women are accustomed to show one another. You needn't even go further afield than our own immediate circle; for although I admit that on the whole the spirit amongst you is one of love and fellowship, there is in some isolated cases room for improvement. There are one or two or you women who might feel a great deal more loving towards each other than you do at present. Your own hearts will tell you what I myself don't need to

tell you. But I ask you to let those hearts of yours speak, and to follow their promptings. I assure you that by acting on my suggestion you can progress very considerably. I should add that the exercise of this will to love need not be restricted to members of the same sex. How often, for instance, does a woman feel that such and such a man is quite agreeable to talk to, but that she would scream- women are very fond of this talk about screaming- if he were to take her hand or put his arm round her? And the same with a man towards a woman, except that men don't usually scream! Is any form of repulsion, towards whomever it may be, an ideal state of things? Oh, I grant I'm not asking from you something that's very easy when I suggest that you should overcome all such repulsions- but then if we only did the easy things in life we should never progress at all. This love - consciousness at which you are aiming has, like the kingdom of heaven, to be taken by force; to be conquered; and like all things where conquest is involved it requires effort. I'll go so far as to say that it would- for some people- be much easier to love God than an unsympathetic neighbour. God you can endow with every lovable and wonderful quality you like, and He doesn't suddenly appear in person to annoy and disappoint you. You can even credit Him with undesirable qualities, such as jealousy, anger, or revengefulness, if these attributes happen to please you - but your unsympathetic neighbour you're obliged to take just as he is. It is you who have to change, not he- and it is you who first of all must wish to change.

“And so I say to you who are striving for Love - consciousness, use every means in your power to attain it. Don't let mere meditation suffice, but learn to love even your seemingly less lovable neighbour. Learn to love him for the sake of the Self, the One in the Many.”

CHAPTER XVI THE REVELATION

BEFORE I returned to my club after the discourse M.H. took me aside and asked me to come the following Friday morning at eleven o'clock, as he had something of importance to say to me. That it was connected with what I had come to think of as the mystery, I felt instinctively the moment he spoke. At last my countless speculations would be set at rest; the time was now evidently ripe for me to learn the reason for my long journey. But what had brought about its ripening? Or better said, what actions on my part had caused it to ripen? This I was unable to tell, and found the problem more baffling than ever. When I came to take a retrospective view of past events, all I could see was my romance with Clare and my friendship with Viola Brind. I had of course in addition learnt much from Master's talks, but I was unable to connect anything in the nature of an intended sacrifice on my part with views and doctrines he had set forth.

I found the Master in an unusually serious mood when I walked into his study. Not that by serious I would imply even a suspicion of gloominess; I mean purely that the calm, benign and fatherly attributes of his many-sided personality were more especially in evidence that morning.

"Let's have a smoke while we talk," he said, offering me a cigar after we had shaken hands.

I accepted one, and sat down in the comfortable armchair he had drawn up for me in front of the log fire.

"You will remember, my son," he began, "that when I wrote and asked you to come over here, it was with a definite object. This object I promised to make known to you in due course."

I nodded.

"Well, I think," he continued, "I may now tell you what I had in my mind. You are at a certain stage of your evolution and you'll perhaps remember I wrote you that unless a definite step were taken, I did not see the possibility of your progressing much further in this incarnation. You remember?"

"Certainly I do."

"I'm going to ask you, my son, something, which will mean an alteration in your whole life and which, as I've already told you, will demand great self-abnegation and even a reversal of some of your most cherished ideas. But I hope and think that your faith is strong enough to make you realize that in doing so I have not only your evolution, but also your happiness in view. Yes, a happiness so great that even you with your poetical imagination can only dimly conjure it up for yourself. It's true you've already had moments of that Bliss-Consciousness at which all our students are aiming,

but these have only made you long all the more to have that state more frequently. Isn't that so?"

"Absolutely."

"Well, now, as I said the other night, there are more ways than one of arriving at it. There is the method of meditation which you are already practicing, but there is also another - a quicker and more heroic method. It is to place oneself in such circumstances that one is forced to will oneself to acquire that unconditional Joy - and - Love - Consciousness - or else suffer in consequence."

"But how does one make such condition?" I asked, utterly bewildered.

"That, my son, you could have gathered from our talks. But it is one thing to tell you all in a body, and another to ask you individually to carry out my suggestions. There are in fact very few here in this circle whom I could ask what I'm going to ask of you; they are not all at the stage of evolution which makes such a test possible."

"But won't you tell me what it is?" I said, finding the suspense painful.

"All in good time, though I will not keep you in suspense much longer now." He paused for a moment, then continued: "You are approaching fifty, aren't you? - and up till now have not gone through an experience I regard as very beneficial to certain types of souls. That experience, my son, is marriage, for it is not good for a man to live his entire life alone, having to consider nobody but himself."

In a flash it came to me that he wished me to marry Clare, but my astonishment was so great that I cannot pretend to know whether I felt glad or sorry.

"You, my son, are averse to marriage; you do not believe in marriage, because you realize that only in about one case in a thousand, if even that, love endures marriage turns out a success?"

"Yes, these are my views."

"But do you think any sort of aversion, especially one so strong, is good for the soul - does it not stand in the way of Advancement? Besides think how much can be learnt in the process of trying to overcome that aversion, as I pointed out only the other day."

"Then you wish me ... to marry... Clare?" I stammered.

He shook his head gravely. "That would practically be marrying for your pleasure. You love Clare - by marrying her the lesson would be an easy one to learn."

"But I - I don't understand," I interrupted, distinctly upset, "who else..."

"Listen, my son," he said soothingly, "unconditional Love - Consciousness is not attained by loving somebody we already love, but only by learning to love somebody we do not love as yet."

"But surely," I exclaimed, "one can do that without marrying them?"

"One can, but one doesn't," he answered, "Then there are other reasons connected with the part; Karmic reasons. And even that is not all in your case - I have still weightier motives for asking you to marry - a particular person - whom as yet you do not love."

Then suddenly with a shock I realized everything. "It's Viola Brind you mean?" I said, making an effort to hide my feelings.

"Yes; it is Viola Brind."

For a moment, finding no words, I gazed dejectedly into the fire. It seemed as if he

had asked more of me than I could possibly fulfill- yet at the same time I knew I should not refuse him. In those few moments I saw myself giving up Clare, with all the sorrow such a course would involve- and then tying myself to a girl I now realized more than ever I did not love in the very least; indeed the unaccountable feeling of antagonism towards her that had troubled me several times, now became suddenly enhanced to a formidable extent. I felt the idea of marriage with her absolutely repugnant, and almost resented that M.H. should demand such a thing of me at all.

His voice broke in upon my reflections- it sounded inexpressibly tender. "My son," he said, touching my hand, "I'm sorry you should suffer, but console yourself a little with the thought that had it not been for your unflinching faith and obedience I could never have put you to such a test. Even now- remember, I force none of my pupils to do what is against their will- they are all free agents and must work out their own salvation. You don't need to give me your answer now; I'd rather you did not; for it's advisable you should have time to reflect. At present the idea is so new that it not unnaturally startles you; but believe me, it's remarkable how soon one can accustom oneself to even the strangest things. Take your time, think well over the whole matter, and then choose. In the meanwhile unburden yourself fully to me, and ask anything that's in your mind."

"You mean ask you now?" I said.

"Yes, my son; I have specially made myself free so that we should have plenty of time together."

I was silent for a moment; my mind was in such a state of confusion and I had so many things to ask that I hardly knew where to begin.

"But what about Viola herself?" I said at last.

"She will agree if you do."

"Poor girl," I mused with a touch of bitterness, "and she loves someone else..." Then suddenly: "I suppose you mean it to be a platonic marriage?"

"No, my son, I mean you to be married in every sense of the word."

I looked at him aghast. "But the idea is horrible," I cried, "I don't think I could..."

"It may repel you at first, I grant- but not so later on. And just think what you can learn in overcoming that repulsion. Besides there are other reasons why you should overcome it. There is a particular ego for whom you two could provide a vehicle; this ego is so highly evolved that he cannot reincarnate as the result of passion, but only as the result of self - sacrifice and deliberation. Vehicles produced through passion may be all very well for medium souls, but great souls cannot be brought into the world in that way."

I sunk my head in my hands.

"Isn't it reasonable, my son," he continued, "that advanced souls, as you two are, should provide bodies for other advanced souls? How could these obtain suitable vehicles at all if you, and others like you, refuse to do your duty?"

I was still silent.

Though he had put forward these same ideas in his discourse on "Maya" the other night, and I had given full mental assent to them, it was, as he evidently realized, a very different matter to be asked to put them into practice myself.

“There is something further I must tell you. Between you and Viola, some Karma has to be worked off. Do you know why that feeling of hostility towards her came into your consciousness? It was because of misdeeds in the past. My son, if you don’t make good in this incarnation, you’ll have to do in so in the next- it will only mean postponement. You may resent what I’m asking you to do, but it’s not my fault that your Karma has to be paid off, is it?”

I seized his hand and pressed it by way of answer.

“And then there is the work,” he explained. “You’ll remember I told you that if you carried out my programme, your inspiration would be greatly enhanced. And isn’t that natural? Think what the poetry of a man would be like whose consciousness was coloured with Love and Bliss! Would he not over - reach all the poets of his day? But in addition to all that, Viola, with her particular type of vision, could help you in a way you little dream of. She can see the other planes and give you first hand knowledge it would be difficult for you otherwise to obtain. Also she will at times be able to establish the means of communication between yourself and me; for it is not my wish that you should permanently remain here. It is not the right atmosphere for you- besides, I have work for you to do over in England. You too must do a little teaching.”

I was beginning to see things in a slightly less gloomy light. “You said once that I could help her- but how?”

“My son, you have more of the wisdom - side of evolution than she has, and it will be your mission to teach her what she lacks, for with all her faculties she is not quite such an old soul as you are yourself. It will be the combination of your wisdom with her intuition which will provide the suitable magnetism in which the Masters can work through you both. By living together there will result an interblending of atmosphere, so to speak, and that is why marriage for you and Viola is so important.”

I was silent again, though I felt less miserable now that he had explained so much

“Is there anything further you wish to ask, my son?” he said.

“What about- Clare? I am in love- even passionately in love with her.”

He smiled at me cryptically. “Do not worry, my son. Viola will not be jealous, I think; nor is she asking you to give up Clare- all will smooth itself out in good time.”

“Oh, I’m not one of those who think that sort of love lasts forever- I know it doesn’t; but even so, how can I be certain that I shan’t feel attracted towards other women?” I got out of my armchair and started walking up and down.

“Nobody is asking you to be certain. On the contrary it is for you and Viola to show to the world the ideal marriage of the future- the free marriage which is beyond jealousy and acquisitiveness.”

“But surely that’s easy enough if one doesn’t love one another?”

“You are forgetting what I’ve said, my son; I don’t say you’ll ever have a passion for each other, nor is that desirable; passion after all is only a form of bondage. You will, I think, overcome your physical antipathy, but that is different from feeling passion. What I foresee for you is a spiritual and mental unity, a perfect comradeship in every sense of the word, and with it, of course, perfect freedom; for true love knows no bondage nor jealousy. I dare say you know the original meaning of ‘jealous’ was ‘watchful,’” he added parenthetically. “So you see you have no need to fear for your

freedom. Just as you will not be jealous if Viola gets attracted towards other men, so she will not be jealous if you get attracted towards other women. Nobody has the right to hold a person exclusively to themselves- that is what I'm trying to teach my pupils over here, and that is why I often allude to it in my talks. I want my pupils to spread the ideal of the higher type of marriage and the higher type of constancy."

"That won't be very easy to teach a world that only understands enforced constancy."

"Or all - absorbing constancy," he added, which is not the ideal either, for it may lead to a kind of double selfishness. It is right that they should be so wrapped up, each in each, that no love is left over for anybody else. When this is the case, how can they hope to do good in this world through helping their fellows? Will they even want to help them unless they love them? For the spirit of service begins with love. And so what I foresee for you and Viola is not a selfish mutually absorbing love, but that you should be help - mates one to the other- unified in love and spirit, but free nevertheless. On the higher planes there is already unity between you, but for Karmic reasons it has not filtered through into the physical as yet... And now is there anything more you wish to ask me, my son?"

"I can't think of anything more at present," I answered.

"Very well, then. Think it all over- and may you choose wisely. In the meantime do your best to think of Viola with affection. Use meditation and suggestion for this purpose- they will help."

"I will try," I said somewhat doubtfully.

"And- succeed..." he completed.

I prepared to take my leave. He held my hand for a few moments as we said good - bye. "By the way," he observed, "I'm very glad you took my advice and did not neglect your work- you have turned the love which you are feeling to good account. If you will also try to express in poetry your present turmoil of soul, you will not only obtain relief but do good. To you as poet it is given to idealise suffering, and to give its fruits to the world. Never forget that- and be grateful that it lies in your power to do so. The ordinary man rejoices or suffers, as the case may be- but who else benefits by his joy or his suffering? With you it is different; therefore see, my son, that you take advantage of that difference. And let it be a consolation to you to feel that from your sorrow others may reap good. I give you my blessing," he added, embracing me.

CHAPTER XVII CONSEQUENCES

MY first inclination on leaving the Master's house was to go straight to Clare for comfort. But as I was not certain whether I should find her at home, I thought it best to go back to the club and telephone to her. As I entered the hall, and from mere habit looked at the letter rack, I found a note for me. Hardly looking at the envelope- I was too preoccupied with my thoughts to notice anything- I opened it and read:

"Dear Fellow - Chela,

My father has arrived in New York on business, so I am joining him there for a week or ten days. By now you will know. Master told me yesterday. I am dreadfully sorry for you and hardly know what to say. I am sure you must be wishing you had never set eyes on me. Still- if it has to be, I want you to realize that I will try my very best not to make it too hard for you. It is indeed a queer state of affairs that two people should have to try and comfort one another for having to marry one another, but if we do try, perhaps that will be the first step towards what Master wishes. I can't write more now, I only decided at the last moment to write at all.

Yours,

Viola Brind."

At any rate, I thought as I stuffed the letter into my pocket, she has broken the ice; our first interview in these extraordinary circumstances won't be quite so embarrassing now. Then I rang up Clare. She answered in person.

"I want to see you at once," I said.

"Yes, ear- is anything wrong? Your voice sounds so strange."

"I'm rather upset- about something..."

"Oh, my poor honey! Come right now and stay to lunch. Mother has gone to Brooklyn and won't be back till evening, I guess."

Ten minutes later I entered her boudoir.

"But what has happened?" she cried, embracing me, "you look very badly- you're all drawn and queer - looking."

I sank down beside her on the sofa and leant my head against her shoulder. She took my hand in both of hers. "Honey- what is it?"

"Something which sounds almost incredible. I can hardly believe it myself- yet."

"You've lost somebody?"

"Oh, no- not that."

"Well, then- what?"

"Master wants me to get married," I blurted out.

She started perceptible. "Married! But- "

"Alas, not to you, darling. I wish to God it were..."

Though I could not see her face I knew by the way she breathed that she was undergoing a shock.

"You poor thing," she murmured after a moment's silence. "But I don't understand- is there some girl you've got into trouble?"

"Good Lord, no!" I exclaimed, lifting my head.

"Then for heaven's sake why?"

"Oh, it's a long story," I said wearily, "and you'll need every ounce of your faith to understand it."

"Are you absolutely forced to do it? Suppose you said 'no'?"

"In the circumstances I should be a fool to say 'no'- he says it would mean practically no more progress in this incarnation."

"It's all beyond me," she sighed with a gesture of bewilderment.

I then proceeded to tell her about my interview with M.H., and everything he had said. She listened with increasing amazement. "At any rate whatever happens, it needn't make any difference to us," I ended.

She shook her head despondently. "I'm afraid it will make a difference though."

"But why?" I cried.

"An engaged man... it's not the same- we oughtn't to see each other any more."

"Are you going to make it more difficult for me than it is already?" I asked sadly.

She was silent.

"Are you?" I persisted.

"There's Viola to be considered- she's my friend."

"But surely you don't suppose she will mind?"

"Women are funny- you never know."

"But even Master himself did not say we were to break with one another!"

The gong for luncheon sounded, and I cursed the interruption.

"Clare!" I exclaimed desperately, "I'm about as miserable as any man can be as it is, but if I've got to lose you as well... For God's sake say it's all right before we go downstairs."

She shrugged her shoulder. "At least give me time," she said in a hard voice, "at present I don't know where I am..."

She led the way to the dining - room. Over luncheon, for which I had no appetite, it was of course impossible to discuss the subject further; and as I was in no mood for other subjects, the atmosphere was strained. Clare made conversation of a sort, but it only jarred on me and made me wish for silence, so that I might be left to my conflicting thoughts. What troubled me in addition to everything else was pity for Clare. The thought of hurting her was like a knife stabbing me. If I could as I viewed it, then all would be comparatively well for us both, unless- suddenly it occurred to me that I had forgotten to ask when Master wished me to go through with this marriage. Was it to be soon while I was still in love with Clare, or would he be content if I waited a year, two years- how long? He had said that matters between Clare and myself would smooth themselves out; but what did that mean? Why had it not occurred to me to ask

him to be more explicit on such an important point? I would certainly ask him tonight after the lecture; I must know at once and so, I felt, must Clare.

Although after lunch we discussed the subject for nearly two hours, and probably would have continued longer if she had not had an appointment, we got no further. It was evident that with all her unconventionality Clare entertained scruples. She told me in so many words that to go on conducting a love affair with an engaged or married man was highly undignified and no the right thing.

“If you have to go through with this almost at once,” she said, and her voice was still hard, “then we must make up our minds to separate; but if it’s only in a year’s time—well— I suppose you’ll be long since back in England and— we shall be separated anyway.” And at that we left if for the time being.

I managed to get in a few words with M.H. that evening, though they were hurried ones, as he was leaving by a night train on one of his mysterious journeys.

“How soon do you want me to - to get married?” I asked, “you don’t wish it at once, do you?”

“That would hardly be possible, my son,” he answered kindly, “for many reasons it can only be when you both return to England.”

“I ask because of Clare— she thinks— ” I hesitated.

“Well, my son, what is it?”

“That she ought to break off with me, if I ... get definitely engaged.”

“She too has her tests to go through and certain Karma to work off. What she may decide to do is not for me to dictate. Neither of you are children.” He smiled gravely. “This is a matter which can only be adjusted between yourselves.”

“Yet even foreseeing this you encouraged us...?”

“To sympathise with those who are destined to go through a romance is not of necessity to encourage it. As I said, the Karma that is to be, must be. My work is to turn the outcome to good account. The only thing I’d suggest is for her to weigh her scruples and see if they stand the test of true unselfishness.”

So Clare is also undergoing a test! I thought as I walked back to my club. It was too late to go and see her or ring her up, thus I was unable to relieve her mind about my marriage until the following day. On that day I did, however, after much difficulty and many tears on her part, manage to make her see the situation in a different light. And it was finally arranged that at any rate for the time being things should remain unchanged between us.

CHAPTER XVIII ADAPTATION

MASTER remained away till the following Wednesday, so I did not see him again until the actual lecture; all the same I often felt him very near, as if he were inspiring me with encouragement and sympathy. In those few days I distinctly made some progress, though at times the feeling of antagonism towards Viola arose very strongly. But one thing I certainly did achieve: it was the resolution to go through with the project whatever might happen. I also wrote to Viola as nice a letter as I could manage to write, in which I told her the Master's wishes were law to me, as I gathered they were to her, and that I also would do all in my power to make things as little hard for her as I possible could. I further asked her to let me know the moment she got back, so that we could meet and, as she suggested, "console each other for having to marry each other."

In reply she wrote telling me she would be back Thursday, the day after the lecture, and would I come to tea at her lodgings?

But of that I will write later, for the Master's lecture is what I am concerned with at this juncture.

"Well now- what's the subject to be his evening?" he asked as he stepped up on to the little platform. "Any suggestions?"

"Why not just talk and see what happens?" Arkwright said.

M.H. laughed, as did the others. "You'd better ask a woman to do that," he observed, "she'll talk to you about the philosophy of- "

"Hats- " said Heddon, drily, and there was more laughter.

"Thank you, my son, that reminds me of something that happened in England not long ago. You may or may not know that St. Paul once said no woman must enter a church with her head uncovered. As the result of this a few women entered a church without their hats on. Those clergymen didn't seem to realize that in the days of St. Paul and in the country where he lived, for a woman to enter a church or anywhere else for that matter- unveiled, would be equivalent nowadays to her entering a church in nothing but her underclothes."

Another outburst of laughter greeted this.

"Yes- it is funny," M.H. agreed, "it is also instructive. It's even instructive enough to provide us with a subject is? I give you three guesses."

"The philosophy of clothes, à la Sartor Resartus," somebody suggested.

M.H. shook his head.

“St. Paul is Initiate,” from Arkwright.

“Too obvious. Try something more subtle.”

“Pin - points,”[?] came the third shot.

“All wrong. The subject I had in my mind was Adaptation; and by that I mean adaptation of spiritual utterances, precepts and injunctions to varying circumstances, nations and periods of history. That episode I just related shows on the part of those clergymen an unenlightened attitude of mind. Far from it being a good thing from their point of view for women to go to church in hats, it would be much better to pass an edict nowadays decreeing that all hats must be removed. Instead of attending to the service each woman may be, and probably is, either admiring, envying or criticizing every hat within her range of vision.

“Well, then- It is obvious that every rule and religio - moral precept uttered two thousand years ago cannot be applied without the slightest alteration and adaptation nowadays when times and conditions have changed so materially. And I don't mind in what sacred book those precepts stand, nor who uttered them; it is all the same. Didn't Christ Himself tell the parable of the talent and the napkin, and censure the man for making on use whatever of his piece of money? And yet that's exactly what so many people do with religio - moral precepts; they just leave them exactly as they stand, and don't adjust them to the altered circumstances of life.”

The Master took out a cigar, felt in his pocket for matches, and not finding any asked for some.

“Smoking is also a matter of adaptation,” he said after he had lighted up. “Perhaps some of you wonder why a man you believe to have bliss - consciousness needs to smoke. The answer is her doesn't. But he smokes all the same; he is adapting himself to you. If I didn't smoke you'd feel uncomfortable when you wanted to smoke yourselves. This does not mean that I am martyrising myself and that I dislike my cigar - Oh no- because when we dislike a thing we are doing we are not happy at that moment, and of course there is no such thing as permanent Bliss - consciousness and unhappiness at the same time; black can never be white and Bliss can never be its own absence. But I have a further reason for smoking- it is to make war against what might so easily develop into occult Pharisaism. In some books on philosophy ad occultism I have seen statements which almost imply that in order to reach Adeptship you must act - well- practically like prigs. These books would have us believe that we must never laugh heartily, that it's a dreadful and dirty habit to smoke, that we ought never to drink tea or coffee, never let a barber cut our hair, because of the bad magnetism imparted by his hands to our own; further, that we should never eat uncooked food unless we've picked it ourselves- again because of the bad magnetism imparted to it by the hand of the pickers; and so on and so forth well - nigh ad infinitum. Now I don't for a moment say there's no truth in this matter of bad magnetism, but I do say that if you are such frail and sensitive creatures as to be materially affected by it, you won't get very far in this incarnation. To me the whole matter savours too much of the monastic conception of life. To prevent yourselves doing, seeing and coming into contact with this, that and

[?] An expressive big of slang, practically untranslatable; the nearest approach to it being unessentials, “small - mindednesses.”

the other, lock yourselves up in a monastery where you'll be safe. That is the idea I am constrained to see in this long string of prohibitions. Good gracious, is our progress along the path to be impeded by a puff of tobacco smoke or a bit of bad magnetism; are we to be the slaves of mere trifling circumstances? If so, then our divine philosophy is indeed little use to us. Surely the very essence of that philosophy lies in the word immunity; it teaches us how not to be affected by the countless vicissitudes of life; not how to avoid them by running away. And our philosophy reaches something more; philosopher adapts himself to the exigencies of life, not the exigencies of life to himself.

“But we started with the intention of showing the necessity for the adaptation of religious and moral precepts. Have any of you a clear conception of the complete purpose of World Teachers?”

“To emphasise different phases of spiritual ideals,” somebody answered.

“And to adapt them to the needs of the times, you must add,” corrected the Master. “That is why World Teacher is not sufficient for all nations and all times. He has of course other functions about which you will find a great deal of theorizing in various occult books, but with these we are not concerned at present. One might put it even better still and say His office is to re - adjust the balance of moral and spiritual ideals. The Masters have a similar office, but whereas each World Teacher does this on a very large scale, the Masters do it on a smaller one; they do for their few pupils what the World Teacher does for mankind in general. The reason is obvious. Those few pupils, through desiring to hasten on their evolution, are already now at a stage at which the generality of mankind will only arrive after a considerable period of time. That does not of course imply that the World Teacher will have to wait before He appears again until everybody on this earth has reached so - called discipleship, but it does mean that the bulk of mankind will need to have progressed up to a certain point; otherwise His advent would not be worth while. I said a moment ago that He comes to adjust the balance of moral and spiritual ideals. Let us take an example. We were talking of Karma one evening and showing that it could gain far too much importance in some people's minds. Now suppose the doctrine of Karma became as generally distorted as has been the doctrine of Faith in Christian countries- you know the nonsense that is preached, namely that by mere belief you can be immediately saved. What would the World Teacher need to do? He would have so to emphasise some other phase of religious - philosophical truth as to cause the idea of Karma to sink into the background. Only by so doing could He adjust the balance. The same would apply to morals. He will set new moral ideals for Humanity at large, just as we masters, on a smaller scale, are setting new moral ideals for our chelas. Which reminds me that one of my pupils once wrote a book about my own humble self, though needless to say he used the utmost discretion and wrote it in a very veiled manner, otherwise,” the Master assumed an expression of humorous solemnity, “they there would have been trouble. In that book some of our views on the marriage question are set down, and I raised no objection to this as I was in hopes that they might do some good. There was a woman friend of my pupils who was in great trouble and had turned to books on higher occultism for comfort; and among many others he lent her was this anonymous one on myself. She read it; and the

next time my pupil went to see her I made it my business to be in touch with his consciousness, as I wanted to assist him to help her. He himself wasn't aware of the fact, but that is neither here nor there. What concerns us is the significant verdict that good lady passed upon the book and upon me. 'Really,' she said, 'I'm most disappointed in that book you lent me about a Master. His ideas on love and on marriage- why- they're positively immoral! If that's the sort of thing Masters teach well...' The sentence was never completed."

This story told against himself raised a laugh all round.

"Perhaps you'll think," continued M.H. with a touch of mischief in his eyes, "that I sank through the floor when I heard this flattering opinion of myself- but no - I'm quite used to that sort of thing by now; I assure you my pupil felt far more uncomfortable than I did. And what do you suppose it was all about? I had merely pacified some irate parents who were behaving in a very small - minded fashion towards their grown - up children. I had persuaded a full-blooded military gentleman to forgive his wife and take her back instead of revenging himself in the usual way; and a few more trifles of that kind. In short, I had simply adapted the spirit of the last World Teacher's utterances to a few ticklish situations in our modern life. But because I had suggested the application of that spirit to a greater extent than is customary, I shocked that good lady and many others besides. You see, some people are as easily shocked by unusual virtues as by usual vices. It is the same with our religion; as long as we are mildly Christian nobody objects, but as soon as we are unusually Christian people think we're a bit touched. It's the feeling that to be different even in this respect from our fellows is not quite nice, not gentlemanlike, not ladylike. In the eyes of many persons to be unconventional is a crime. My own crime had consisted in suggesting an application of the Christ teaching which struck my pupil's friend as unconventional.

"People like that require to realize that books even like the Bible, are in many ways similar to those on medicine. In the Pharmacopoeia a countless variety of drugs are tabulated; but what would be the good of reading that encyclopedic work unless one also learnt how to select and apply and adapt those various drugs to each particular complaint and patient? We Masters, if we are anything at, are spiritual physicians; we endeavour to cure and nourish the souls of our patients, not only by administering the suitable spiritual drug, but by doing so at the right moment. To this end it is essential that we should possess a degree more knowledge, insight, and imagination, than do the majority of our fellows. But a little of that imagination we do expect them to possess when they enter upon the study which eventually will make them *das* ourselves. Neither we nor the World Teachers can dot every single *i*, just for the benefit of mental sluggards. If people are so lacking in imagination as not to realize that when the World Teacher says, 'Forgive your enemies' He also means forgive your sisters, your brothers, and wives, is it to be wondered at that we shock their susceptibilities in showing how these ideals really can be carried to their logical conclusion? Therefore I say- teach people Adaptation, teach people to ask themselves whether in all situations of life they are applying the spirit of charity and of tolerance, and you will teach them an invaluable lesson."

CHAPTER XIX THE INTERVIEW

As a little boy I always imagined that the older one grew, the less was one troubled by such drawbacks as shyness, embarrassment, and the like- but I find this very far from correct. On occasions, even at my age, I am capable of feeling extremely embarrassed, and the prospect of my interview with Viola was one of them. It is true the way had been somewhat cleared by the exchange of letters, but even so I was full of speculations as to what I should say when it actually came to the point.

As it turned out, she spoke first.

“Well,” she said with a wry smile as we shook hands, “we’re thoroughly in the soup. The best thing is just to see the humour of it.”

“Yes, I think that is about the best thing,” I laughed, but my laugh sounded nervous. I also noticed that she was nervous, despite her efforts at concealment.

“I wonder if anybody in the world has ever found themselves in such a curious situation before,” she said.

“Only in Court circles, I should imagine.”

She looked at me enquiringly.

“Where a prince has to marry a foreign princess for diplomatic reasons.”

“Oh, that- I’m a bit dense to - day.”

“I don’t wonder at it- having to marry me! I’m surprised you’re not more than dense.”

“But what about your having to marry me?”

“I’d much rather marry an advanced soul whom Master thought a great deal of, than take my chance with another woman.”

“But you hate marriage itself, don’t you?”

“How do you know that?” I was beginning to lose my embarrassment, “did I ever tell you?”

“No, but I know all the same.”

“Clairvoyance?”

She shook her head. “Master told me.”

My interest was immediately stimulated. “I wonder if you felt as awful at your interview as I did at mine!” I exclaimed, quite off my guard, then realized that I had been very unflattering to her- indirectly... I must have shown it by my expression, for she laughed and said: “Oh, you needn’t mind. I quite understand. I’m really awfully sorry for you.”

“And I for you.”

“At any rate I don’t hate marriage itself like you do- women don’t, you know?”

“But it’s rotten luck on you having to marry a man you don’t love.”

She hung her head and was silent for a moment. I felt she was thinking of the man she did love. “But I will get to love you,” she said, shaking off her depression.

I suddenly drew back into myself; I did not want her to love me; I pictured her becoming sentimental, and the idea was repugnant to me. I felt that uncomfortable sensation of hostility again; it gripped me and rendered me inarticulate. If only we could be allowed to remain platonic I should hardly have minded, but any other relationship-

She broke in upon my thoughts. “Did Master tell you what we did to each other in the past?”

“No. Merely that there was Karma to work off.

“Nor that we had been married before?”

“No.”

“Well, we have- but we made a mess of it then; twice, in fact.”

“Then that accounts for what I told you the other day- the feeling of antagonism?”

“Yes, it is Karmic. In the life before the last you made me suffer- last life I made you suffer and you got to dislike me thoroughly.”

“What did I do to you that life before last? Do you know or didn’t he tell you?”

“You married me without really loving me- though you thought you loved me at first. You were a great student of philosophy- a sort of book - worm, and you wrapped yourself up in your studies and neglected me. I fell desperately in love with another man- I suppose as the result; but you locked me in a room and wouldn’t let me see him. I believe I died of a broken heart or something of the kind.”

“I sound a beauty!” I exclaimed, “no wonder I’m expected to make good. And the next life?”

“I made you fall in love with me; and then when I got you, I threw you over for another man, and you got very ill and died young.”

“Serve me right,” I said, “did Master tell you all this?”

She nodded.

“What else did he tell you?”

“Oh- many things.”

“Am I allowed to know?”

“I don’t think he’d mind- at least most of them; but it’s not easy for me to tell you- just now. When we get a little further- perhaps then.”

There was a pause in which she offered me a cigarette and lit one herself. We smoked for a few moments in silence; then I said: “What I don’t understand is if I made you suffer in one incarnation, and you made me suffer in the next, why aren’t we quits?”

“Yes, I don’t understand that either. We’d better ask M.H.”

“How extraordinary it all is,” I mused. “When I used to rack my brains to think what kind of a sacrifice I was intended to make, this certainly never entered my head.”

“Nor mine...” her laugh was rather wistful.

“I suppose you wouldn’t have married your man in any case?” I asked reflectively.

“You mean he wouldn’t have married your man in any case?” I asked reflectively.

“Nor would Clare have married me.”

“Oh, yes, there’s Clare- I’d forgotten her for the moment. What on earth does she think about all?”

“It’s been a bit of a blow, I’m afraid. I want you to do something for me in that quarter- will you?”

“Well, of course.”

“She has an idea that if you and I make or our minds to go through with this- even though it won’t be for some time yet- you might object.”

“I object? But for heaven’s sake, why? Do you object to my still loving my man? How absurd! Poor old Clare...” she added affectionately.

“I wish you could make her see it.”

“Of course, I’ll make her see it.”

“Thank you,” I said, extending a grateful hand which she clasped. The feeling of antagonism had gone again, and I saw vistas of comradeship and mutual help.

We then turned to more mundane subjects- the prospective attitude of her parents, and also the financial side of the question. This latter I had feared might be an obstacle, for my creative activities were not money - producing. Although I was comfortably off for a married man, I would be *uncomfortably* off for a married man. Viola told me, however, that she had an income of her own and that she would eventually inherit a good deal of money, so that if anything I realized that my marriage would increase my fortunes rather than diminish them.

It was nearly dinner time before I left her, feeling that at any rate the strangest interview of my life lay behind me. The one with M.H. had been soul - disturbing and impressive; this had been of a very different nature, though equally unique of its kind.

Months afterwards Viola fulfilled her promise and told me more of her interview with the Master. It must have been as impressive as my own on that memorable Friday morning, and further goes to reveal the powers of the Adept - mind.

He had been very paternal, very serious and very gentle with her too. Although she had hidden her true feelings from me, and had almost led me to believe that her aversion to marriage with me was not so great as my own to marriage with her, this was far from the case. She had told him that morning that she really felt it impossible to make the sacrifice he asked of her. She was one of those women who, far from having an aversion to matrimony, regard a happy marriage almost as one aim of a woman’s life. To marry a man she loved had been her great desire ever since she was old enough to think of the subject at all.

“My child,” he had said, “if you had been allowed to meet a man whom you could love as most people love when they wish to marry, where would your happiness have been when that love had worn off? There is one man you might have met and loved with all the passion of body and soul—*for a time*; but you were not permitted to meet that man for your own sake. Your ego forbade it, knowing it would be hostile to your progress, and ultimately, to your happiness. You married that man once before, but whereas you have evolved much, he has evolved but little, and would have resented your occult studies and stood in your way; finally you’d have come to see him as an obstacle and would have resented his interference, and then discord instead of

continued happiness would have been between you.”

She told me that once or twice during that interview she had broken down and sobbed, and that M.H. had taken her in his arms and soothed her as he had done with the girl in the churchyard.

“You see, my child,” he had comforted her, “I can tell what lies ahead. What good would I be to you otherwise? I can see happiness in store for you if you will marry this man who I *know* will be your spiritual complement. He can help you more than anyone else, and you can help him. Will you not sacrifice your present dream of happiness not only for the sake of another’s soul, but for the sake of your own *future* happiness? Come, my child, where is your selflessness of motive?”

“But it’s awful to marry a mere stone when all my life I’ve longed for love,” she had sobbed.

“My child, he who loses his life shall save it. I am not asking you to marry a stone: I am giving you a beautiful gem with many facets. Some of those facets shine, and some as yet do not. It is for you to polish those which do not, and make brighter those which already do. Yes, and there is even more to it than that: for if we don’t polish a gem, the whole gem may become dull. Would you let this happen to one of my most precious sons?”

She had hung her head and made no reply.

“Listen, my child,” he had proceeded, “though you are not given to expressing your enthusiasms so freely as some others do over here, yet you admired this man’s work long before you ever met him; isn’t that so?”

She admitted this.

“You also know what I think of his work. Would you take away that man’s chance of producing far greater work than he has hitherto produced, just for the sake of a dream which in this life you may never realize? For suppose you refuse to do what I ask, how can you be certain you’ll ever meet a man you’ll love and who’ll love you as you now think you want to be loved? For the sake of an unrealizable dream are you going to deny the world the truly great works which, with all their elevating influence, could otherwise be given to it?”

“But how can such things depend on an insignificant creature like me?” she had asked despairingly.

“My child, even modesty must be tempered with discrimination. If one of the thousand links of a very long chain could speak, might it not say: ‘How can the strength of this great chain depend on so small a thing as myself?’ But he who can see the whole length of the chain, instead of merely that one link, knows the foolishness of that question.”

“Can you also see,” she had then asked brokenly, “what will happen to me if—if I can’t bring myself to do this thing?”

“Yes, that I can also see,” he had replied with an indulgent smile. “When such an opportunity has once been given, but has been rejected, a feeling of dissatisfaction comes into and colours the whole life; that dissatisfaction is, as it were, the voice of the soul continually reminding the personal self of what it has missed, and how through thus missing it, it has wasted years and years by the wayside instead of hastening

forward towards the Goal.”

It had ended in her promising at any rate to try to view the matter in the light M.H. wished; and I came to know later that she had written that letter to me only one day after the interview in order to force herself to keep her promise. She knew that when the first step had been taken, it would be far harder to turn back and would mean humiliation. Nevertheless, she told me that even after *our* interview she had gone more than once to the Master and told him that she really felt she could not go on with it. But of this she said nothing to me at the time, being gifted with the power of hiding her emotions. She did not want to hurt my feelings, also she was not at all certain of herself. Her feelings at that time—as is often the case with women—were strangely variable. One day she had fully made up her mind to do as Master wished, the next she felt it to be utterly impossible. It was only when he finally said she *must* choose one way or the other, that she at last decided—in favour of me.

CHAPTER XX THE INVISIBLE CAUSE OF WAR

THE following Wednesday we were all assembled at the usual time, but there was no Master. Half an hour, an hour passed, and still he did not arrive. Yet I noticed no impatience, nor even especial surprise, except on the part of the newer chelas. These began to ask questions and to murmur something about getting home so late, having to be up so early in the morning- could M.H. have had an accident? Did anybody know where he could be? Did he often do this...? And so on. I had asked several questions myself, only to be met with non - committal, though perfectly good - natured smiles or shrugs. Then I overheard Heddon answering someone; "He's in the Blue Room, where nobody's ever allowed to disturb him, and that's all I can tell you!" So by this I knew at any rate that he was in the house, and probably in Samadhi;² but why he should choose to be in Samadhi just then, I had no idea.

He appeared exactly two and a half hours after time, and his first words were: "I thank all my chelas who've been patient. The others- in case they should think unpunctuality doesn't matter," he smiled, "well, it does matter- to those who've not as yet learnt patience, faith and control; that's why I'm so late."

As all this was said with a touch of humour, though none the less meant to strike home, most of us laughed.

"And now," he suggested more seriously, "any of you who wish to go home may do so, for the talk this evening will be a long one. I don't mind personally whether I get to bed at all, but perhaps you'll say we are not you. Very good."

Nobody stirred.

He looked at us approvingly and said: "Buddha maintained that the man who could force himself to keep awake for two nights in succession, might accomplish anything. Very well, let us start in by keeping awake for half a night."

The chelas laughed again.

But it is not the rather long discourse which followed that I intend to include in this book, but a shorter one which M.H. gave us in answer to a question. He had ended his lecture with the sentence: "The man who fights his own character is a greater hero than the man who fights the most formidable foe, for the struggle between a man and his foe can last but a short while, but the struggle between a man and his own character lasts a whole life - time."

"You have just mentioned fighting," said Mr. Galais, "and I've often intended to ask you if you consider that humanity has evolved far enough to render another war

² Superconscious trance or profound contemplation.

impossible?”

“No, my son,” M.H. replied, and his voice was very grave, “humanity has not evolved far enough. And we Masters already now can see those clouds forming which may burst into a storm even more frightful than the last. Instead of learning the lesson that the Great War had to teach, thousands of people not only shirked that lesson, but took advantage of the war to enrich themselves at the cost of the suffering of their poorer neighbors. Thus, and in many other ways, new Karma was made where old Karma should have been wiped off. The type of peace that obtains today, as all of you know without the telling, is merely the cessation of fighting- the peace of the letter but not of the spirit. War has been transferred from the plane of the visible to the planes of the invisible,⁷ merely to return again to the visible in other forms - in strikes, revolutions and general discordant emotional turmoil. And so it goes on in a vicious circle, and more and more evil force accumulates; the thunder - clouds on the unseen planes grow larger and blacker. Do you know that the evil thought - forms generated as far back as the days of the Gladiatorial Games, still persist? Do you know that the thought - forms created by Black Magic practiced hundreds, nay, thousands of years ago, are still to be seen by those who can see? Think, then, what evil thought - forces the Russian Revolution with all its cruelty and bloodshed must be creating at this very moment. What is to happen with all that force? It will gravitate by the law of attraction to those other thought - forms just mentioned, and will swell the storm - clouds yet more. No wonder the prophets lift up their voice in warning! The world is going through one of its most critical periods of history, and what we Masters fear for humanity is a conflict between the Yellow Races and the White. If this should happen, God help you all. Not only will you have to contend against numbers far outweighing your own, but with the terrible cruelty which characterizes insensitive fourth - race bodies. Should this war eventuate, then the progress of the world will be thrown back for thousands of years.”

The Master paused, and there was a note of appeal in his voice when he continued: “It is for you to prevent this war- it is for those all over the world like you to prevent it. It is for the members of mystical, occult, Masonic, New Thought and similar communities to live up to the very highest in their nature, and so help the White Powers to overcome the Powers of Evil. It is for you to generate those spiritual forces which may be used by the Great White Lodge to disperse the thunder - clouds of impending war. And if at any time during the next years you see those signs which might herald the approach of this Great War, or any other war, then is the time to link all thoughts of personal evolution into the higher cause of saving humanity. Think Peace, visualize the word Peace in large white shining letters. You who are Americans, visualize them in your Government House; you who are Englishmen, in your Houses of Parliament, over the King’s palace, and over the King himself. Because those who definitely work to serve the White Powers are in the minority, they must work double time, as it were, and put forward the maximum of effort. Teach Christians to think and feel peace in their hearts and really to love their enemies. Teach Christians not to hate war because they fear war, but to have war because they love Peace in its highest and

⁷ but not invisible to Initiate and seers.

truest sense. Only when mankind has learnt to feel 'Peace and Good - will towards all men' in their own hearts, will the danger of wars have passed, never to return."

CHAPTER XXI THE DECISION

M.H. HAD given me an appointment for the following afternoon at tea - time. When I arrived I did not find him in that serious mood which had characterized the previous occasion.

“Well,” he said cheerfully as I entered, “greetings to you, my son.” He took my hand in his. “How do things stand now? Have you come to ask me something or tell me something?”

“Both,” I answered, “and I think you know it.”

He smiled to himself by way of reply.

“I am glad, my son, very glad,” he spoke lovingly; the paternal element had come back into his voice.

“But there are things that puzzle me- ”

“Ah- well, perhaps we can straighten them out for you.”

“I don’t want to sound conceited- but I think I may safely say I’m a fairly philosophical person as a rule; I do think I’ve actually imbibed a good deal of the right attitude towards life. Things have ceased to trouble me- I mean the kind of things which seem to upset others.”

He had folded his arms and was looking at me intently as he listened.

“It’s true,” I continued, “that I’ve objected to marriage, because with my temperament I’ve been convinced that it wouldn’t do. I’ve not been one of those who could see thousands of unhappy couples around me and imagine I’d be the one exception. But apart from that, I’ve always thought that marriage would be an obstacle to my work. I’ve believed in the doctrine that an artist should be wedded not to a woman but to his work. Besides, how could I hope to write good stuff with a young brat tooting on a tin trumpet or yelling at the top of his voice?” (M.H. laughed heartily). “Yet I knew that to marry and refuse to have any children wouldn’t be right either. I’ve at least enough sympathy and understanding to realize that it’s quite unfair to deny a woman what is the greatest and most natural desire of her life. Somebody once told me that marriage means so much more to women than to men, because of this intense, though often subconscious, longing to have a child. Is that true?”

He nodded.

“So you see, if I have an aversion to marriage, it’s not founded on mere caprice but on what seems to me good sound common sense. But now comes the puzzling part of the whole business. Although you’ve shown marriage to me in quite a new light, and I’m convinced that all you say about it is true, why on earth do I suffer like this? When

I think over the matter with calm, cold reason, I can see very little to be upset about. It will only be more or less like living with a friend, and as far as that goes, I've lived with a friend more than once in my life, and got on splendidly. There is of course the physical side, but after all it's not as if Viola were an old lady or a hunch - back or even ugly. I can imagine some people finding her extremely prepossessing. It seems to me, then, that my suffering is quite out of proportion, and also quite inconsistent with my general character and philosophical attitude towards life. So I ask myself why- or rather I should say I've come to ask you why?"

"The whole thing can be accounted for in one word- the Blacks," he said, handing me a cigar and taking one himself. "Don't you see, my son, that these brothers of the Left - Hand path have everything to lose by this prospective marriage, and so they'll do all they can to prevent it? They're perturbed enough about your work as it is, because of the good it will do when humanity is a little more ready for it; but if through marriage that work becomes ten times more powerful, is it to be wondered at that they try to bring about your downfall?"

"But can they succeed?" I asked apprehensively.

"Not unless you allow them to. And remember you have the White Masters to help you."

"There is another thing I want to ask you- it's about Karma."

"Well, my son?"

"I understand from Viola that in one life I injured her, and in the next she injured me; if that's so, why doesn't the Karma work out equal?"

"Two wrongs hardly make a right, my son. If in your last life you had forgiven her for the wrong she did you, it would have been different. But when she threw you over, you allowed vanity and resentment to get the upper hand, and so your love turned to hostility. Had it been otherwise, in this incarnation you wouldn't have had to wrestle with yourself as you have to now- for you'd have loved her of your own accord."

"But what about the Blacks in that case?"

"They would have enough other means to separate you- perhaps influenced her parents against you, or something of that kind. There are more ways than one of making it uncomfortable for people."

"It seems incredible that I should be worth all his trouble!"

"My son," he said lovingly, "we Masters are not grudging with our praise and encouragement where these are due; and so I will tell you without reserve that it's your absolute purity of purpose which rejoices the White Masters but angers the Black ones. There are few people in whom the spirit of service is so pronounced as in you. It was this which attracted the Masters, and it was because of this our Chief sent me to you in London- though of course you were not aware of His part in it. Yes, my son, though many things may look like chance, nothing is chance really, and you have to thank your purity of heart that you and I ever met in this life. And if before long you reach Bliss - Consciousness, as I hope and think you will, you'll again have to thank your won faith, obedience and efforts. Therefore do your own utmost to complete what you've so well begun. And when the Brothers of the Left - Hand Path raise up that wall between you and the woman we have chosen to help you along the Path, then simply

call down the Love of the Masters on her- and the wall will vanish. Do this each time it happens, and one day it will happen no more. And also, my son, take her hand sometimes and show other little marks of affection, even though you do not feel inclined; and if she does the same to you, do not shrink, but accept it for the sake of the One Love- the Unconditional Love itself. Learn to come to the personal through the impersonal. Hitherto you have only loved those who have attracted you which after all is not very difficult; but now you must learn to love someone who does not attract you, and that can only be achieved through the impersonal Love. And realize that such Love, when once attained, can never be destroyed by the Blacks, for they can only work on the personal which belongs to the astral plane- the higher planes they can never touch... And now is there anything more you wish to ask me?"

"Yes- just one thing, it's a point about tests."

"You said the other day that Clare had her tests too. I took your advice and told her what you suggested- I mean that she should look her scruples well in the face. I also told her that as long as I was still over here, I understood you to mean that this prospective marriage - project needn't be allowed to make any difference. Was I right?"

"Quite, my son."

"Well, I'm going to say something that may sound rather strange in the circumstances, because it would come very hard for me to give up Clare at present, so please don't misunderstand me. But wouldn't it be a far greater test for her if you did ask her to give me up now?"

He smiled indulgently, and his answer was - to me- profoundly instructive. "My son," he said, "that which appears on the surface to be the most painful does not always prove the most useful lesson in the end. Let me give you a very simple example. Supposing a woman- of course I don't mean Clare herself in this case- is both extremely proud and extremely conventional, and she falls in love with a man who doesn't propose marriage to her, his reason being that he feels he must get to know more of her character before it would be wise to do so. Now wouldn't that a woman be learning far more by overcoming her pride and her conventionality, than by giving up that man, even if she were to suffer in the process of giving him up?"

I began to see what he meant.

"Of course the world who couldn't look into her soul would say she was perfectly right- and so she might be from the conventional point of view. Take your own case. If you were to tell, not the worldly - minded person but someone who already had spiritual ideals derived mostly from books on ethics and theosophy- if you were to tell someone that you were about to marry a woman who didn't love you and whom you didn't love, what answer would you get? You'd be told that it was an immoral and disgusting thing to enter into intimate relationships with anybody unless you really loved them. And yet here am I, one of the Elder Brothers, asking you to do this very thing. Now do you understand? If Clare could learn the particular lesson I think she ought to learn by giving you up now, I should ask her to do so, but as I see her character I know that she can learn a greater lesson by not giving you up. It is for me to judge, not for you, my son; and I am glad you followed my advice even if you didn't

see its significance.”

He got up from his chair, which I took to be a sign that I ought not to stay any longer. But at the door he said, firmly grasping my hand: “I give you my blessing on the resolution you have made, my son.” And I went away feeling happier than I had done for some days.

CHAPTER XXII

SEX

IT was shortly following this interview that M.H., after one of the Friday talks, made some illuminating remarks on the subject of sex and present - day sexual morals.

Viola had asked his opinion of psycho - analysis.

“This science,” he replied, “is one which may and does prove highly beneficial in certain cases, such as where the neurosis is due to some impression received in early childhood, or at any rate during the present life of the patient. But as the majority of psycho - analytic practitioners do not admit the existence of anything beyond the material plane, and hence do not take into account man’s higher bodies and the laws of Karma and reincarnation, they are to a great extent working into the dark, with forces which they do not truly comprehend, and thus playing with little bit of knowledge which is so dangerous a thing. For example, I once knew a case in which the analyst unknowingly probed so deep into the patient’s subconscious mind, that memories of long past incarnations were uncovered, that should never have been touched in this present life at all. As most of these memories were of a primitive and painful nature, shocking to the personality, the patient was overwhelmed with such a sense of guilt, remorse and self - abasement, that instead of that harmonization of the entire being which is the psycho - analyst’s true aim, exactly the opposite was the result.

“But for what we have special reason to be grateful to Freud and other exponents of the science, is the manner in which they are gradually educating people to adopt a more rational attitude towards all matters of sex. They are helping to dissipate that reprehensible feeling of disgust which has been brought over from the repressive epoch of Queen Victoria. For the so - called ‘chastity’ of the Victorian era was only surface and not intrinsic chastity. Octogenarians may recall with pride and satisfaction the beautiful innocence and purity of their young days when every well - brought - up girl blushed when looked at and fainted when proposed to; but just consider the different conditions of those days. There were no bicycles for women, no violent games, no health and muscle - producing contrivances; merely such mild pursuits as croquet, embroidering, gossiping, piano - tinkling, and the like. No wonder girls were chaste, with such poor circulations; no wonder they fainted and burst into tears on the slightest provocation, when their bodies were a mass of toxins as the result of inactivity. How easy to be chaste in such circumstances, and consequently how little meritorious, especially if you add to the foregoing the constant attendance of a governess, chaperon, lady’s maid or any other kind of society spy you like to imagine. It was very much like being immured in a convent or shut up in a cage! But let the young nuns come out into

the world, and let a few Adonises start making love to them, and then we'll see if they're rally chaste or not. The criterion of virtue is not how people behave when they are bound, be it by the walls of a convent or the subtler walls of public opinion or social conventions, but how they behave when they are free.

“And the young people of to - day are free; partly as an indirect effect of the war, and partly because, as I said, psycho - analysis has shown the evils of sexual repression, and consequently a fair proportion of parents and guardians have become more tolerant. There are others, on the contrary, who are more than ever shocked and pained, and ask themselves what the young people are coming to, and wonder ‘where it will all end...’ And these questions are to be expected from individuals who can only see, as it were, in terms of a few years, and even then merely the surface of things without their underlying case. But we Masters who look at matters from the standpoint of centuries, regard the present sexual situation simply as a necessary stage in evolution. To return to my simile of the nun and the convent. It is easy for a nun to be chaste because she has neither temptations nor opportunities to be otherwise. But suppose she were permitted to come forth into the world and be as unchaste as she liked without her Mother Superior or anyone else making objections- what then? Only if in spite of al her freedom, she chose to remain chaste, would she really be living up to the ideal of chastity. It is the motive which makes the merit. The motive with which individuals can henceforth set out to learn chastity, is the pure aspiration to acquire control, and that alone. As the social walls by which, so to speak, women have hitherto been enclosed, are for the most part knocked down, there is lees fear of consequences, and hence the purely material reasons for chaste behaviour have practically vanished. Even the distorted idea that sex - passion is evil in itself or degrading or necessarily hostile to spiritual advancement, is losing its hold on public opinion. What reasons, the, are left, or better said, will be left, when the walls are completely laid low? None- except the reason which comes from within; this one desire for control, this one desire to be the masters of nature in all its branches, instead of its slaves.”

The Master paused, then after a while continued: “And now as we are on the subject of sex, I should like to add a few words relating to sex - aberrations. These have, as you know, engaged the attention of the psycho - analyst, but only the occultist, I think, touches the root of the matter, and in so doing, helps to dispel the pronounced spirit of intolerance which is directed towards them. For strange though it may seem, sex - aberrations are not of necessity a sign of utter depravity; they are often the result of an attempt on the part of the Higher Self to conquer sex - desire altogether. This is sometimes the case with those who have developed their mental body before their astral, or where the soul is, as it were, trying to progress too quickly for the unmanageable physical body which it inhabits. You may of course think that the methods is a very peculiar one, yet it is more its manifestation on the physical plane which works out as peculiar, rather than the methods itself. Let us take an example from Nature. Supposing you stand a board up on its side across a flowing stream, what happens? The water, prevented from taking its usual course, rushes off into numerous little side - streams, which may run for quite a distance in all directions. It is very much the same with the sex - force. The result of trying to damn it up, is that it goes off into a

variety of side - channels which are apparently as far removed from normal sexuality as are the numerous little outflowing tributaries from the stream's ordinary course. And so if you can realize this fact when you come across people with sexual aberrations and teach others to realize it too, you will help mankind towards the attainment of a greater charitableness instead of that feeling of disgust, contempt and repulsion which they usually show towards abnormalities which they fail to understand. Of course as a rule the people themselves who are abnormal in this respect, do not realize what their egos are trying to accomplish, but that does not alter the fact itself. Here again, by the way, your own occult knowledge may prove of great help. I once heard of an unfortunate boy who committed suicide on account of one of these abnormalities. He was an idealist along spiritual lines and had been a monk in a previous incarnation. If someone with occult knowledge could have told him the reason underlying his sexual aberration, he could have been saved; for it was just the overwhelming shame occasioned by the conflict between his ideals and his desires which caused him to abandon his body.

“Again, these abnormalities are sometimes to be accounted for by the fact that the soul which in itself is sexless, inhabits on the physical plane a body either male or female; and if by chance a man has been a woman in his last incarnation, or vice versa, the tendency may be retained to repeat the sexual trend of that last life, regardless of the difference in the present by penal methods, but only by psycho - therapeutical treatment of a very specific kind.

“And so you see, even in a question like this, it is mainly a matter of looking deep enough; and those who are in a position to do this, should help those who are not. Knowledge is power, but never forget that that power should be used for others, and not for oneself. The more highly evolved we grow, the more we can feel for the difficulties, vices and passions of our fellows. There are many would - be occultists and others who so completely overlook this, that they are even shocked that we Masters should enter into this question of sex - aberration at all. They imagine we ought not to soil our lips by as much as talking about such things. But alas, it is they who are at fault, and not we. Can our lips be soiled through our love for ‘the great orphan humanity,’ as one of us has called it? For remember, love which is not coupled with full understanding, is not love as we comprehend the fullest sense of that word. And surely it is the function of real love to understand and sympathise with every phase of life, whatever it be; and especially such phases which entail pain and suffering to our loved ones.”

CHAPTER XXIII THE RATIONALE OF CLARE'S TEST

MY stay had protracted itself until Christmas and I spent Christmas Day with the Delafields. In the evening they gave a party to which several friends were invited, including Viola.

It says much for Clare and the latter that the marriage - project, far from diminishing their friendship for one another, actually augmented it. They sought each other's society more than ever. Advanced souls that they were - could they have been M.H.'s pupils otherwise? - they exchanged sympathy, Clare with Viola for having to marry me, and Viola with Clare for having to lose me, not because of the marriage itself, but because of the separation which would inevitably come about before long. The end of my stay was now in sight, and Clare was beginning to dread the parting, as was I myself. Much as we loved each other, we were both too enlightened, to suppose that that kind of love would survive the test of time and separation. But to let our love gradually die, and to suppress it at its height as Clare imagined we ought to were two very different things; and that she finally decided against the latter course I afterwards learnt was not so much due to my efforts as to Viola's.

I also came to know why the test imposed on Clare by M.H. was not in the nature of asking her to give me up; he desired to test her faith, and further to make her realize what he himself had impressed on me in our last interview. For however unconventional Clare may appear to a particular type of English mind, for an American girl she was less so than it might seem on the surface. There are a number of American women who do not consider it wrong to allow the men they love a certain license, provided those men are neither engaged nor married. As soon, therefore, as I became to all intents and purposes engaged, Clare came up against a streak of conventionality in her character which the Master had seen but which I myself had little suspected. She had pretended to me on the occasion when we first discussed the matter that Viola might be hurt if we continued to love one another; but it was only pretence, as even I surmised.

In one of the many discussions we had on the subject she said: "He seems to be asking me to do a thing which is actually wrong, and not only me - but all three of us."

"How so?" I asked.

"First of all he, well, allows you and me to love each other, then a few weeks later he goes and tells you to get engaged to Viola, and after you are engaged he tells you it is not necessary for me to give you up. Are you sure, dear, it isn't you who've got a bit muddled?"

"I'm perfectly sure."

"Well, then, I don't understand."

"Why don't you go and ask him yourself?"

"I'm a bit scared. Besides he might just say: 'You've had it from two people, isn't that enough?'"

"Then Viola has told you too?"

"M'mm..."

"I wonder why you're shy with Master?" I said, "somehow you're not the same Clare when he's about. You even talk quite differently. You lose the little American turns of phrase I find so fascinating."

"You're a darling," she said, pressing my hand. "But am I really different?"

"Of course you are, and you know it."

She laughed. "But he's so wonderful and impressive and- "

"If he's so wonderful," I interrupted, "why do you doubt him?"

"I don't know. I don't want to doubt him, but he does ask us to do queer things, now doesn't he?"

Nevertheless it had ended in her passing the test, and on the strength of it, M.H. asked her to come and see him the day before Christmas.

"He was just lovely," she said, and I couldn't help laughing, even though I was getting accustomed to other phrase- many of the girls used it. "I was scared at first, but I think I've gotten over that for good now- I hope so, anyway."

"Am I allowed to hear what he said?"

"Surely, but it won't be the same thing- telling it."

"Never mind about that. Was he in a very serious mood?"

"Not at first. He saw I wasn't quite myself, and talked in a cheery sort of way."

"And afterwards?"

"He got more solemn, but very loving- always 'my child.' How little one gets to know him from his 'talks.'"

"But surely you saw something of the real man that day in the churchyard?"

"Yes, but you forget, after hearing him on Wednesday, he's so different then. He seems to have so many personalities. He was different again yesterday, though more like that time we took the trip together."

"Did he say much about us?"

"Oh, a lot."

"What sort of things did he say?"

"Nice things."

"Well- tell me."

"It's not easy to reel them off right now."

She finally did manage to give me a very fair impression of that interview, all the same. He had, in the first place, commended her for allowing faith to overcome doubt.

"My child," he had said, "without faith we can achieve nothing in life- we cannot even walk across the street."

She was puzzled; this sounded a little too far - fetched to be believed.

"Well, isn't it so?" he had continued, "would you even set out to cross the street if

you hadn't sufficient faith to realize that you'd get to the other side? That faith is based on memory and experience, hence understanding, oh yes- but it is faith all the same. And so, my child, if you would progress quickly, never for an instant lose hold of your faith."

"But that sounds almost like ordinary Christianity, she objected, thinking herself quite bold in doing so.

"There are many things in ordinary Christianity which are not to be despised," he smiled gravely, "and yet there is a difference. Some preachers of Christianity see merit in trying so believe the unbelievable- and that is called 'blind faith.' The faith which isn't blind is based either on understanding alone or on understanding coupled with imagination."

Again she was mystified. "When I decided not to break with Mr. Broadbent, I did so even though I didn't understand."

"Then why did you do it, my child?" he had asked very gently.

"Because you wanted me to, or so I thought."

"And wasn't that because your imagination told you I had very good reasons for wanting you to?"

"Yes - I suppose it was."

"Well, then, wouldn't it be correct to say that peculiar though I am, you have at any rate a partial understanding of me, and for the rest you fall back on the divine quality of imagination? The two together constitute your faith, and that is the faith by which you will progress."

He had paused for a moment, then added: "The man you love is a very dear son of mine- it is just his unswerving faith which makes him so dear to me and to the other Masters- you know that all Masters are one. Because of his faith he came over here, and because of his faith he will make this sacrifice I have asked of him."

"But how will it all end- for me, for us?" she asked suddenly.

Again he had smiled gravely. "If I were to tell my chelas exactly all that was in the future, I should be giving them an advantage over their fellow creatures which they have not earned. If I tell you it will not end in unhappiness, that is enough."

"Have we been together in other lives- I mean he and I?" she asked.

"Yes, my child."

"As what?"

"Oh- as brother and sister, as mother and son. He was your mother, last time."

She laughed. "That seems very strange. If that's true why did we fall in love in this life?"

"When two souls re - meet in bodies of the opposite sex, the physical often obtrudes itself- at first."

"Now I come to think of it, what you say about mother and son accounts for something - I always feel that Charlie's attitude towards me is extraordinarily protective."

"Your feeling is quite correct; there is a great deal of the paternal in his love. Even his poems- those which you have inspired- contain much of that element."

"You really think I've inspired him?"

“Certainly, my child.”

“Oh, I’m so happy!” she cried.

“To artists, poets and musicians, love is the great source of inspiration. That is partly why some artists have so many love - affairs. The world grudgingly forgives the men, but their partners, the women, they do not forgive. Yet much should be forgiven the women too- for through their love for these men they have indirectly enriched the very world which condemns them.”

“You are wonderfully charitable!” she had exclaimed, “do you know, sometimes I feel I want to- to kiss you...”

By way of answer he had taken her hand and kissed it instead.

“Do you think it was very forward of me? She asked me with one of her most child - like expressions.

“He evidently didn’t think so.”

“Wasn’t it just lovely of him?”

I smiled. “You are the most adorable of children...” She was quite right, I did feel very paternal towards her- I was even becoming conscious that the paternal element was in the ascendant. My love was gradually undergoing a change: I loved her, but I was not quite so much in love with her. Was this what M.H. had meant when he said: “Don’t worry, my son, things between you and Clare will smooth themselves out?”

CHAPTER XXIV THE TYRANNY OF VIEWPOINTS

MASTER had left Boston late on Christmas Eve and did not return till the following Wednesday in time for the lecture.

“In that little book,” he began, “I sometimes quote called ‘the Real Tolerance.’ It is started that a point of view is a prophylactic against all evil; but whether that is true or not entirely depends upon what the point of view happens to be; it can also act as a prophylactic against good as well as evil, and for that reason the adoption of a judicious view - point is one of the most important things in life. Look around you and you’ll see that the majority of people are the abject slaves of their view - points. Because of their view - points even so - called good persons will commit the most uncharitable atrocities on themselves and on others; the religious fanatic will hold his arm in the air till it withers; another will make up his mind not to speak for a number of years; another will turn his daughter out of the house because she’s had an illegitimate child; a fourth will disinherit his only son because he’s married a barmaid; a fifth will shoot his wife’s lover because he thinks his outraged honour demands it; a sixth will never wear a hat in the street because he thinks it’s good for the hair- and so on it goes from the great to the small;- and all because of a point of view.

“I once read that book *The Garden of Allah*, by Robert Hichens. It is an instructive story because it shows how a good and loving - hearted woman will, under the tyranny of a view - point, behave in a hard and uncharitable way, thereby torturing the man she loves and herself in addition. You remember the story- the book is a popular one- how a woman who is an R.C. meets a man in Egypt, falls deeply in love with him and he with her, how without any attempt to know one another’s histories or characters they rush to the altar, so to speak, and immediately afterwards make a long journey into the desert where they live for a time in conjugal bliss, and as the phrase goes, are all in all to each other; so much so that the man, at any rate, would like to have his wife entirely to himself and resents the appearance of any strangers or acquaintances on the scene. Yet in spite of all their ecstatic love - making the woman has a feeling that her husband is not completely happy, and that something is preying on his mind, some secret he is afraid to reveal. And then finally matters come to a climax and she learns from his own lips that he is an escaped Trappist monk and has broken his vows after so long a period as twenty years. He had entered the Order when he was too young to realize the fieriness of his own temperament, and although all went well for a time there came a day when through a combination of circumstances, together with an insufficiency of insight on the part of the Head of the Monastery, he was able ‘to resist everything

except temptation,' and so at last had run away.

"And now, on hearing his confession, how does this woman behave? The first thing she does is to move into another tent. Not because she has ceased to love the man - oh, no - after an inward struggle with herself she comes to the conclusion that she loves him more than ever - all the same she moves into another tent because it strikes her as the proper thing to do. (In all matrimonial differences, the first thing is to move out of the bedroom!) That the wretched man is already suffering agonies of soul she knows perfectly well, but this doesn't deter her from adding to them by the course she adopts; not only does she refuse to share the same tent with him, but she won't even touch his hand. Not one comforting sisterly sign of affection will she show to that unfortunate, misery - stricken husband of hers. On the contrary, she is outwardly as adamant as a stone. And what is more, having prayed to God, she imagines he is upholding her in her resolves.

"How does the story end? She, with the supposed assistance of God, forces the man to go and confess to a certain austere priest, who she knows will prescribe but one course of action - that her husband should go back to the Monastery from which he has escaped. This he does the very next day, and only as he is about to enter the door, does she imprint one little kiss on his forehead. She won't even comfort the man by letting him know that she's expecting a child to enliven her own loneliness - not one fraction of an inch will she give way. The final picture shows a garden on the edge of the desert in which, with her little son, she lives shut away from the world, and dreaming of the husband she will never see again.

"Here then we have a story showing up with admirable consistency the tyranny of a view - point. Let us examine the matter closely and see what we can learn from it, and what in the nature of a warning we can extract. As the woman in question doesn't exist," the Master interpolated whimsically, "we shall not be guilty of uncharitable gossiping if we say exactly what we think about her.

"And firstly I should say it's a pity she didn't mix a little logic with her imagination. It is a beautiful thing to love God as she did, but it's a dangerous thing to have an illogical conception of God. The result may be anything from burning your neighbor so that his soul may be saved, to the morally cruel behavior of this otherwise well - meaning woman... Yet in one sense can we blame her? As long as it is considered blasphemous or irreverent to reason about God, what can we expect? As a matter of fact, far from being blasphemous or irreverent, it's the best mental - spiritual exercise you can take. As soon as you are really interested in a being, whether God, angel or man, you're bound to reason about him; it would be unnatural not to do so. You may arrive at no definite conclusions perhaps, but at least you will heighten your conception of God and not endow Him with the undesirable attributes this woman, in the *Garden of Allah*, endowed Him with! But of course - and here comes the folly of it - she was quite unconscious of the unflattering aspersions she was casting on God. She all too painfully realized that her husband, in her own words, 'had insulted God,' but she little thought that in an indirect way she herself was insulting Him too. For one thing, to think that a Being so great and all - loving as God could be so small - minded and non - understanding as to be capable of feeling insulted, is already an insult in

itself. In comparison with God, for instance, we Initiates are as mere worms- but even we aren't susceptible to insults. If a man came into this room and said to me: 'You're an impostor and a charlatan,' I shouldn't feel the least inclined to give him a black eye - I so thoroughly understand his point of view; to such man I am an impostor and a charlatan!

"But you'll say: 'What about this monk's broken vows? What are your views with regard to them?' well, frankly I don't believe in those sort of vows. In my opinion the taking of vows springs from a feeling of uncertainty. It is like tying your own feet together when you scent danger, in case you may be tempted to run away. He, who has completely renounced, never needs to take vows, because nobody requires to bind himself to refrain from doing what he never wishes to do. Somebody has written: 'Renunciation is only true and complete when there is no sense of renunciation'; and that is correct. Does the adult have to renounce the pleasures of childhood? Certainly not; he renounces them inwardly because he has outgrown them. It's the same with adults in wisdom- they need not take oaths that they'll give up resentment, jealousy, envy, hatred, and the like- they never have the temptation to feel such emotions; they can't even feel them- they've forgotten how! Or take yourselves and your attitude to Yoga philosophy. To you it is the background of everything. Each one of you now knows that whatever happens you will still be true to your philosophy. And why? Because it's the highest interest you have in your lives. Do you need to make vows on the subject? Surely they would be quite superfluous. But supposing on the other hand you do take a vow- say to perform a certain kind of work, and then you lose interest in that work but continue it simply because of your vows, what sort of work will you produce as the result? Probably bad work- for what's not done with love is, with few exceptions, badly done.

"And now to return to this monk. He entered that monastery when he was seventeen, knowing nothing whatever of life, yet he vowed to renounce life. But can anybody renounce a thing they have never known? It's a contradiction in terms. Therefore whatever vows that monk may have taken, they were not those of renunciation, except in mere words. If he'd been a nun, I suppose one would say he had wedded himself to God, but as God is usually considered to be of the male sex, one would need to express it differently. In any case one thing is certain: wedded or not, those broken vows would hardly bread God's heart. He is not quite dependent for His happiness on the fidelity of one rather insignificant man. Just think of the unconscious conceit of that man! For that is one of the drawbacks to Dualism. Here is God who created this vast universe- probably according to that monk's conception, out of nothing- yet He's going to worry Himself and feel insulted and pained because one little insignificant creature living on one of His countless earths has ceased to pray all the day long. It may be very flattering to us to think that we are necessary to God, but it's bad for our heads; it tends to make them more swollen than they are already. The doctrine that with every trifling sin we commit we are paining God, is perhaps a useful one for the education of imaginative children who can't realize the conceit it implies, but apart from that it's a dangerous doctrine. There is a moment in the book under discussion when the wife of this vow-breaking monk says: 'I feel that God has been more intent on you than on anyone I

have ever know.’ This sentence remained in my memory on account of the boundless conceit it implies. We laugh at a savage’s conception of God as the angry thunderer who needs propitiating, but the savage is at least modest; he thinks his God a mighty God, and himself a worm- for remember you only entertain the propitiation idea if you regard someone as mightier than yourself.

“That woman in the *Garden of Allah* thought she believed in a mighty and a loving God, but even so she seems to have taken it as a matter of course when He apparently prompted her to behave in a very unloving manner. It’s as if He had said: ‘My business is love- yes- but you- you are different, your business is to how yourself hard and cruel, in that way you’ll carry out My plans and decrees. By your behaviour you must force this erring monk to return to me. I need him more than you do. It’s true you have only the few pleasures and joys of your little world and I’ve the whole infinite universe for my play - ground, still- I must have that man. I’m sorry to take him away from you, of course, but then you shouldn’t have been so foolish as to become attached to a man like that. The mischief’s done now, so you’ll just have to bear it. In any case you’ve always got my love to console you, and after all it’s much better than any man’s. And now I’m afraid that’s the best I can do for you...”

“These sentiments sound very elevated from the lips of the All - loving! If that woman were here and it told her what I have just told you, she’d think me a blasphemer. But it is not I who am putting those words into God’s mouth, it is so to say she herself. It’s her own view - point which is responsible, not my view - point. I’m not blaspheming, because I don’t believe such a God exists. We can’t be irreverent towards a myth. And here we come to another factor in the argument- the supposition if a person is capable of love, he must inevitably be capable of suffering, and as this is the case with ordinary humans, it must hence be the case with God. Our monk and his pious wife imagined that God loved them so deeply that He suffered through the former’s infidelity. But does this argument hold water? The one sun sins in the sky but is reflected in millions of little dew - drops; if the dew - drop is big, the reflection is big, if small, the reflection is tarnished- yet the real sun shines pure and unaffected in all the unconditional feeling of Love and Bliss in Itself which it pours out over everything and everybody, can the behaviour of the individuals it shines upon alter its Love and Bliss? Certainly not; but only the more evolved can realize this, the less evolved are unable to conceive that even God—to put it crudely—can do anything for nothing.’ These latter can’t imagine the sensation of absolute Love in itself. Their idea is that in order to love, you must have some particular person or persons towards whom to direct that love. It’s the same with joy—there must be something about which to feel joyous; remove that something and the joy disappears. What was this monk really thinking in his heart? Why, that God was partly dependent on him for happiness, and that as soon as he misbehaved himself, God was distressed about it—so much so that He must endeavour to retrieve him at whatever cost. It’s like an unevolved husband feels towards his wife; as long as she behaves herself, he takes her as a matter of course, but as soon as she starts to flirt with other men, she suddenly begins to loom very important in his eyes—and in a painful way. As I told you, that woman in the story said: ‘ feel that God has been more intent on you than on anyone I have ever known.’ And

here in this sentence speaks the very human conception of the Almighty. 'Now that you've ceased to love God, His vanity is hurt, and hence He wants his unfaithful wife.' Yet does all this coincide with logic and experience; is there an unconditional Love, an unconditional Bliss, or not?" We gurus know there is, because we've experience that Love and Bliss in ourselves. We were taught how to experience it, and now we are trying to teach others to do likewise.

"But first we must make war against the many false conceptions of God, and all they involve. If people think of God as a jealous God they'll imagine they have a right to be jealous. If they think of Him as a sad God they themselves will think they can give way to sorrow; that is where the tyranny of their view - point will come in. it was because this woman in the Garden of Allah thought her God capable of sadness that she resigned herself to sadness and treated her husband so harshly and inhumanly in the process. Unconsciously she thought herself stronger and more heroic than God. Nobody would go and wreck her own life for a Being she knew to be incapable of feeling sorrow. The strong don't need to sacrifice themselves for the equally strong or more strong, they sacrifice themselves for the weak. That is why I say this woman subconsciously imagined herself stronger than God. And the result was Tragedy. Ah Epictetus was very wise when he said: 'It's not things but our opinions about things that matter.' Sum up the net results of the opinions of these two characters in the book. Because of his opinions, this man became a monk; because of his opinions he took vows which, with his temperament, he never should have taken; because of his opinions he leaves her to loneliness and sorrow, and incidentally to the bringing up of a 'fatherless' son of after all a father who is shut up for life in a monastery is as good as dead. And what of hers? Because of her opinions she marries a man of whom she knows practically nothing. Because of her opinions she is all but driven to despair when she hears he has broken his vows. Because of her opinions she immediately moves into another tent. Because of her opinions she behaves in a hard and inhuman way. Because of her opinions she refuses to tell him that she is pregnant. Because of her opinions she can never marry again, since even to seek for an annulment of marriage would go contrary to her opinions. And now after all this," the Master smiled quizzically, "I hope you realize the tyranny of view - points, and how dangerous they can be. If only people would learn to think before they evolve their point of view, or having evolved one, would at least weigh every pro and con to see whether there are not follies and inconsistencies which need altering and readjusting! But unfortunately most people never think out a point of view for themselves, they just adopt any one that happens to be floating around. If they admire some person in particular they'll adopt his view - point, quite irrespective of its suitability to their own temperament or mentality. It is on account of this diversity of human temperaments that the Great Sages who gave to the world the Yoga Philosophy divided it into several paths- so that each student should follow that one most suited to him. Are you here in this circle all treading exactly the same path? No, of course you're not; how were that possible when exactly the same phase of Yoga does not appeal to all of you alike?

"But that I s somewhat by the way. The lesson I want to impress upon you tonight is this: if one species of view - point can produce unhappiness and cruelty, another

species can produce the opposite. Therefore what you whoa re, I hope, learning a little wisdom must do, is to teach people to form love - and - happiness - producing view - points, not the reverse, as did this woman in the Garden of Allah. And now in conclusion," the Master said genially, "I think we owe Mr. Robert Hichens a debt of gratitude for all the food for reflection he has given us through his book this evening. It's true that as he's not present it's no use expressing ourselves in the usual way- however-

"Are there any questions?"

"I don't quite understand your attitude to those broken vows," said Wilson tentatively, "you seem to have made rather light of them. Surely vows once made ought to be kept?"

M.H. smiled to himself. "Firstly," he answered, "I was looking at the matter from God's point of view; secondly, whether vows ought to be kept entirely depends on circumstances. If you credit God with even a degree of knowledge and foresight He must have known in advance that the monk in question might possibly not keep those vows, therefore why should He be upset when what He foresaw happened? As to whether vows should be kept or broken- that depends on the underlying reason. A man who breaks a vow through weakness may be forgiven but not exactly admired. On the other hand the man who breads a vow because he has come to alter his convictions since the time it was made is worthy of admiration. It is motive that counts. If you injure others when you break a vow then you must not bread it."

Clare said: "You spoke of Love in Itself- the sensation of Love without an object; but I've read in books on theosophy that even God divided Himself into many so as to have an object or rather a multitude of objects to love. I don't quite understand how the two statements agree."

"Supposing you were the first person in the world to discover gold and you wanted other people to profit by that gold- could you ever entertain such a thought unless you had the gold to begin with and felt the sensation of benevolence in your own heart? Similarly God already had the 'sensation' of Love, but He wanted others to profit by that Love. That, I think, is more or less the idea expressed in the books. Any more questions?"

One of the men students asked: "Do you think that monk ought to have gone back to his monastery or stayed with his wife?"

"I should have thought, my son, that you could answer that question yourself,' the Master said, "perhaps one of the other chelas will oblige."

Mr. Galais volunteered: "If his convictions told him it was the right thing to do, it was right for him."

"Any more questions?" from the Master.

Nobody responded.

CHAPTER XXV
THE DYAN CHOCHAN AND THE BOOK

“I WANT to write another book about you,” I said to M.H. the following morning. He had asked Viola and me to come to him because he wanted to tell us of some little service of a private nature which he wished us to perform and we had just finished discussing the details of it. “Would you object if a sequel to *The Initiate* appeared?”

He laughed.

“There’s a most imposing Indian Master here,” said Viola, “I can see him standing behind your chair, M.H., and hear him saying: ‘Yes, let him write that book, we wish it.’”

M.H. laughed again. “Of course if they want it- ” he broke off with a gesture.

“But don’t you think it might do some good?” I asked, “judging from the number of letters I had about the first one?”

“Yes, I think it might,” he admitted.

“The Indian Master- at least I suppose he must be a Master,” said Viola, “he looks so perfectly glorious- is smiling and saying: ‘There is no doubt that it would be very beneficial.’”

“Young lady,” M.H. teased her, “those clairvoyant faculties of yours- - ”

But Viola’s answering smile was rather grave. She told me that the Being she saw had such a very exalted and impressive atmosphere about Him.

“Who is it she sees?” I asked M.H., wishing I could see too.

“One who takes a special interest in you, my son,” he said, suddenly becoming serious, “a Dyan Chohan- that must suffice for you.”

“But a Dyan Chohan is even greater than a Master...” I stammered, feeling awed but intensely grateful for His interest in one so unworthy as myself.

M.H. nodded. “My children, if you hadn’t made up your minds to do what I asked, that Dyan Chohan would not have appeared to you here. “Is he still there, Viola?”

“Yes- I hear him say: ‘My loved ones, I give you my blessing. At your marriage I will come again. Farewell,’”

There was pause. “Now he has gone,” she added reverently. We were all silent for a few moments; then I saw M.H. looking at me with one of his whimsical expressions, and I felt he knew what was in my mind; I had been wondering why he had asked Viola that last question. Surely he could see perfectly well himself whether the Dyan Chohan was still there or not. It was Viola who afterwards enlightened me.

“He always does that,” she said, “he only uses his own powers when there’s no pupil handy- haven’t you noticed with the Yoga exercises that he never shows you them

himself, but gets a pupil to show them instead? I suppose it's his modesty."

"But about this book," said M.H., breaking the silence in a cheerful and business like tone of voice.

"Would you allow me to reconstruct some of the lectures from my notes?" I asked tentatively, "or would that be verging on the indiscreet?"

"If you want to include some of the talks you can save yourself a lot of trouble by simply asking Heddon to lend you his copy of them. He takes some of them down in short - hand for the library. You can easily get few of them typed."

"That'll be splendid!"

"The only thing is, I should want to have a say in the selection. Some of them are only suited for initiates and not for the general public. We'll go through them together one day before you leave."

CHAPTER XXVI MUSIC AND "MIRACLES"

ON New Year's Eve M.H. had invited all his pupils to dinner, and afterwards there was music, also reciting, and "stunts of various kinds. One of the Chelas played a few modern piano works, Debussy's, Ravel's, and others. Some songs were sung by a really excellent singer. Viola read one or two passages out of her mystic books, I "intoned" some of my poems, and Arkwright gave us three or four character - sketches. He proved himself a comedian of the first rank, and the audience was in fits of laughter. The most enthralling part of the evening, however, was the half - hour in which the Master was prevailed upon to show us a few phenomena. He precluded his performance by reminding us that what we were about to witness was all Maya. He also said: "Some occult societies, the Theosophical, for instance, think it's infra dig to produce phenomena of any sort- but the truth is, since Madame Blavatsky has moved on to another plane, there's nobody in the Society who can produce them. Besides which motive is everything. If I show you a few things tonight it's to amuse you, I grant, but it's also to give you more faith. You may ask why, for the same reason, I don't take the big hall here and give an exhibition? The answer is, I should not increase the faith of the general public if I did- their faith and yours are two different things- they would merely explain everything away by calling my performances conjuring tricks. You wouldn't. Wasn't old Madame Blavatsky 'proved' an imposter in spite of everything?"

"How about doing some of her stunts?" suggested Arkwright.

"Which, for instance?"

"Wasn't there something with a table- fixing the thing so that no one could budge it?"

M.H. smiled. "Anybody want to try and move that little table over there?" he said, pointing to the back of the room.

Several of the pupils, including myself, went over to it, pushed and pulled and tried to lift it with all our strength, while the rest looked on and laughed at our efforts- but it was as firm as a rock; we could not move it one fraction of an inch. At last we gave it up as hopeless.

“Try now,” said M.H., amused.

Arkwright took hold of it and lifted it with one hand...

“Any more suggestions?” M.H. asked.

“Would you not make yourself invisible?” said one of the students- an Irish - American.

“All right, but first watch me blow rings.” He took a long puff at his cigar, and a moment afterwards two perfect rings on which we all fixed our eyes with admiration slowly ascended. The next instant when I came to look at M.H. he had vanished- the chair on the platform was empty.

“My!” said Clare, who was sitting next to me; and that one interjection was more than expressive.

Suddenly we heard the chord of C Major on the piano. All eyes were at once turned in that direction, but only to find that no one was anywhere near the instrument.

“Spooks!” came Master’s voice, and there he was once more seated in his chair and beaming at us. “What’s the next suggestion?”

“Would it be possible to- how shall I put it - duplicate yourself?” I asked.

“Well- exactly how?”

“Suppose you remain in that chair- then we’ll open the folding doors at the back there, and you’ll materialize a duplicate of yourself in that room?”

“I see you’re possessed of some imagination, my friend,” he said with twinkle, “but I’m an accommodating person, so you shall have your wish. In one minute from now somebody can open the doors.”

He sat bolt upright in the chair and closed his eyes. Arkwright pulled out his watch. There was silence. “The minute is up,” he said finally, “open the doors.”

We all looked towards the ante - room and there was the exact replica of M.H., including the chair and platform. The effect was so amazing that I found it very difficult to believe my senses, and kept looking from the one M.H. to the other. All of a sudden a bell rang; it had a most beautiful tone, and seemed to come from the ceiling. Everybody looked up, but there was nothing to be seen.

“More spooks,” smiled M.H. and relit his cigar. His duplicate had disappeared. “What’s the next to be?” he asked.

“Levitation,” somebody suggested.

“Oh, Arkwright can do that- come along, my boy.”

Arkwright went up to the platform, and between them they lifted the chair on to the floor.

“Now then, full length on your back and keep rigid.”

Arkwright did as he was told; the Master stood over him, placed one hand about two feet above his recumbent body, then slowly raised it and Arkwright rose in the air, as if he were being pulled up by an invisible cord. He remained for about one minute suspended a yard above the top of the platform, then slowly sank down again.

A burst of applause greeted this performance, and Arkwright got up and made a mock bow.

“Have you had enough?” M.H. asked.

There were cries of “No, no, please show us some more!”

“Well, then, out with your suggestions!”

“Let’s have the Musical - box stunt,” from Heddon.

M.H. went to a desk, opened a drawer, and took out one of those little musical boxes that are played by turning a handle.

“Now who wants to lock the doors and put the keys in their pocket to show there’s no deception? He enquired.

Mr. Galais volunteered. Having locked the doors he held up the keys for us to see, and then dropped them into his pocket.

“This phenomenon,” said M.H. “is something the spiritists produce. We require no spirits of the departed. Are we ready? Well, then- go!”

The musical box ascended in the air, revolved several times round the room over our heads, then disappeared right through one of the closed doors, and we heard it still playing in the pass - age. There was a thud- it had evidently fallen down- and silence. Some of the company looked dumbfounded, others merely amused- the latter had witnessed this phenomenon before.

“Better make certain the musical box is outside,” said M.H., with the suspicion of a wink. “Galais- forward with the keys.”

Mr. Galais produced them from his pocket, held them up on view, and proceeded to unlock the doors. May of us crowded round him; and sure enough, there outside on the mat was the little toy. Mr. Galais picked it up and handed it to M.H. who put it back in his desk.

“One more,” he said then, “what’s is to be?”

“My mother sent me a large bunch of grapes,” said a pianist named Hausmann, “it’s lying in my dining - room at home on the buffet- can you transport it here?”

“Somebody fetch me a newspaper,” was Master’s reply. Arkwright went out of the room and presently appeared with a copy of the *New York Herald*. M.H. made it into a cone - shaped receptacle, closed his eyes for a few moments, then delved down with his hand into the cone, and produced a magnificent bunch of muscatels.

“Are the company allowed to taste them?” he asked Hausmann genially.

“Sure- I move they be handed round.”

We all tasted them, and they were genuine grapes right enough, unusually luscious ones, in fact.

“Well,” said M.H. finally, “I think we’ve had enough miracles now. I suggest that Hausmann should play us a little Scriabine.”

“And then that you give us a little talk,” somebody added, “It’ll be a good way of beginning the New Year- for us!”

The others chimed in with: “yes, do- please!”

M.H. smiled. “Well, as you wish...”

“Since we are concerned,” he began, after the Scriabine was over, “with anniversaries tonight, a few thoughts on the subject present themselves. One is that to keep an anniversary which has sorrowful associations is a waste of god emotion, and therefore unwise and quite useless. It is bad enough as it is to dwell on pain when we can’t help ourselves, but actually to force ourselves to dwell on it for one particular day in the year is really very foolish. Religious festivals have their esoteric significance-

Christmas, for one;- but that is another matter. Christmas inspires people to feel joy, which is a constructive emotion, but a death - anniversary moves them to feel sadness and selfishness which are destructive emotions. As to New Year's Eve- there are many who will no do but look sorrowfully back and think: 'In this now expiring year I lost such and such a friend or relative'; while there are others and wiser ones who will think not: 'How sad I have been the last twelve months,' but: "How much progress have I made in my evolution? How much nearer am I to my ideal?" And perhaps to encourage themselves they will conjure up in their minds all the joys and beauties of that Ideal, and picture themselves as having attained it, with all the felicity inherent in that attainment. And that would be a wise and fruitful way of seeing the old year out. You will have noticed, perhaps, that when you've become inspired by some book to adopt a certain course in your lives, and then have grown a little luke - warm, and lost some of your interest, if you re - read the book it inspires you anew, and once again with fresh energy you forge ahead. And so I thought that tonight, while the old year is passing away, I would like to take the place of that book and try to bring your thoughts to bear on the joys and beauties of that particular Ideal all of you here so ardently wish to attain. For although it is my policy to keep that Ideal always before your mind, tonight I will dwell on the almost unimaginable advantages of having attained it- that by my so doing you may perhaps strive with renewed energy to attain it; and of course by it, I mean Love as a permanent consciousness, and Bliss as a permanent consciousness.

"In one of the ancient Indian scriptures there is a very apt fable. It relates how a man, who complained that the earth we walk on is all rough and covered with stones and thorns, hit on what he thought was a wonderful discovery. He said: 'Let us collect all the leather in the world and cover the whole of the earth's surface with it, then every where we walk will be lovely and smooth, and there'll be no more sore feet.' A little child was present at the time and heard what he said, but being more imaginative than the man put forward a much better suggestion. 'It's going to be a terrible lot of trouble,' the child said, 'to cover the whole earth with leather, so why not just tie a bit of leather on to your feet instead; the effect will be exactly the same.' And it is just this effect you are aiming at when, instead of trying to alter the external world in order to adjust it to your own desires, you strive to alter your own consciousness instead. It is true you may endeavour to do a bit of good here and there, but what you actually achieve is, when all is said, but very little. It is almost like trying to empty a pond by means of a spoon. Still, we must not forget that if a thousand or ten thousand people were to start ladling out that pond with even so small an implement, an appreciable effect would be produced. But- to carry my simile further - who would wish to do something so monotonous and fatiguing unless they were possessed of an internal joy which no task, however arid and strenuous, could take from them? And it's the same with the task of trying to do good in the world. As long as we have not attained Love and Joy as permanent states of consciousness, our capacity to do good will be limited by our desire to do good- at least very largely so. Do you not wish to help those you love more than those you do not love? Most certainly you do. Therefore think what it would mean if you could love everybody- not because all persons in the world are so attractive and lovable that they awaken your love, but because an ever - present consciousness of

Love exists within yourselves and, like the sun, rays out in all directions on the 'just and unjust' alike.

"Now, there are some people who can't get rid of the notion that spiritual Love for all humanity is something rather too remote or abstract or cold or dull to be worth such a lot of striving for; they want something more concrete, more emotional, like the love between lovers or intensely devoted friends. These people, in fact, are confounding benevolence or a mere feeling of kindness, with love. I am not saying that benevolence isn't a beautiful thing as far as it goes, but it is a very mild emotion indeed compared with Love Consciousness; even the affection between friends is mild compared with that. For remember, the most devoted friends are not thinking of one another all the time. You may get a thrill of affection whenever you do think of a being you love very much, but just because your thoughts are not centered on that being the whole of the day those thrills are comparatively rare, so cannot be termed part of your normal consciousness. Besides which, if you have to separate from your friend, either you suffer, or else- should that separation last a long time- your love begins to grow dim, for conditional love is largely dependent for its existence on memory. How could anybody ever love an absent one unless he were possessed of a memory- would it not be an impossibility? So you see that when people try to compare unfavorably conditional personal love with unconditional spiritual Love, they do so because they have never experienced the latter and therefore do not know. Let them once experience it, even for the space of one minute, and for ever after they will talk differently. It is not something abstract and Luke - warm and coolly detached- it is joy and peace and warmth and beauty all blended into one. There was once youth who smelt a strange and beautiful perfume, and could not account for it at all. He put his nose into every flower he saw thinking it might come from one of the other, but none of the flowers exhaled a scent that was anything like it in the least. Then finally he discovered the truth: the perfume was on himself, and it was he who was carrying it wherever he went; for the previous day his beloved had dropped on drop of some sweet - smelling essential oil on to his turban, but the circumstance had escaped his memory. And just as it was with that young man so it is with those who have attained Love - Consciousness- they too carry that Love and Joy around with them wherever they go, for it is within themselves instead of without. Enter where they may they find an atmosphere of Love, because it is they who bring that atmosphere; and because Love beautifies everything, even sordid and ugly places seem beautiful to them. Think, for example, when you take a railway - journey and you come to a crowded station where a lot of people want to get into your carriage. Perhaps among them there is a not over - clean woman with a baby, so that you say to yourself: 'I only hope she won't get in here with her baby that'll cry and make a horrid noise, disturbing my reflections.' And then perhaps she and her baby get into the carriage and you feel uncomfortable and disgusted and move as far away from her as you possible can. Well, are you feeling happy in your discomfort and disgust? You are only hoping she'll get out at the next station and rid you of her disagreeable presence. But how very different it would all be if, because of a never - to - be - banished feeling of love within yourself, you loved even that woman and her baby, and were glad she should enter your carriage. What would it matter to you if you

weren't able to continue your reflections or the reading of your book or paper> you would be just as happy sitting doing nothing as enjoying the most exciting novel. For your happiness would not depend for its existence on a book or on whether you were in a stuffy railway carriage or on a mountain - top. You would be happy anywhere, because you yourself would be one with Happiness, as the really healthy man may be said to be one with health.

“And now on your efforts this New Year, I give you my blessings and wishes that you may all come nearer to the Goal. Learn more and more to use your God - given imaginations to that end; learn more and more to think Love and to think Joy, that you may become what potentially you are- the Eternal Ineffable Self- the Absolute - Existence - Knowledge - Love - and - Bliss.”

The Master's speech had been a short one, but it had been unusually impressive, especially its conclusion. The wonderful love in his voice as he gave us his blessing, I will not attempt to describe. I can only say that its power and beauty moved every one of us. For quite a minute after he had finished, although there was a general movement towards leave - taking, none of us spoke; and when finally we did, it was in an undertone.

I was wondering whether I should go up to M.H. and say good night when Mr. Galais, as the eldest of the chelas, got up on to the platform and said a few words of thanks to the Master in the name of all present. It was not only for the enjoyable and varied evening he thanked, but for everything Master had done for us in the past, and he knew would do in the future. He said he realized that anything he might say could not express even an infinitesimal part of the gratitude we all felt, but there were times when he was unable to refrain from at least making the attempt- such as it was.

When he had finished, M.H. in return thanked him and all of us for our thanks, and said that in addition he wished to express his indebtedness to those who had played and sung and recited that evening, and so added to the general enjoyment. After which with a smile he wished us all a happy New Year.

EPILOGUE

IN writing this Epilogue I feel like the old - fashioned novelist who always thought it necessary to round off his characters. The difference is that whereas he probably wrote his final chapter immediately after he had written the foregoing ones, I am writing my final chapter after a lapse of several years.

Viola and I have now been married for some time, and the child which M.H. desired we should have, is fast growing into a sturdy boy. Although he appears to possess an unusually happy nature, he does not express that happiness in the "musical" way I once feared he might. He has neither been given nor e asked for a tin trumpet on which to toot discordantly while his father is trying to work...

Shortly before his birth, our Master told us who he was, or rather, who he had been, and as I think and hope only one or two very close friends know who we are, when denuded of our pseudonyms, I may say that not only were we greatly astonished but felt even more greatly honoured. In fact we have many times during the last few years had reason to be thankful we carried out Master's wishes. Not that things were easy at first; they were extremely difficult; but the difficult time passed quickly and is now almost forgotten.

Although I have not seen M.H. in the flesh since leaving Boston, he occasionally- when he thinks we need him- visits us in his "Astral," and as Viola can see him clairvoyantly and clairaudiently hear all he says, she repeats his messages to me. There is another mode of communication which he sometimes adopts, and through which he is able to speak to me directly, and I to him, but of this I am not at liberty to write. That he is often with me when I am busy upon some inspirational work I know- again through Viola- who has on several occasions sensed his presence. She tells me that I, who have only seen him in the flesh, can form no idea of what he really looks like. Though in the physical he has a noble and arresting face, in his "Astral Form" she says his beauty is not to be described. His aura is so large that it extends far beyond the house whenever he visits us. Even his visits are not entirely without their humorous side, for there are times when our cook, who is somewhat clairvoyant without realizing it, wonders why everything in the kitchen "looks pink," and whether there may not be something wrong with her eyes! We, of course, cannot very well enlighten her...

M.H. never writes to me, which might seem curious because I know through Heddon, his secretary, that he does dictate a great many letters; but as he can communicate by other means, this is not a matter for surprise. But I do receive indirect news of him and his doings through Arkwright, who corresponds with me. One of his letters contained some startling news about Clare.

Our parting had not been quite so painful as I had anticipated, for she and her mother had intended “making the trip” to England the following summer. But I never saw Clare again- she died of pneumonia three months after I left the United States. “She passed out in Canada, and quite painlessly,” Arkwright wrote. For several days she had been unconscious, and only regained consciousness an hour or so before she died. Master was with her at the last- this she herself told Viola who sees her from time to time when she visits us from the “Other Side.” Like many people on the point of death, Clare had become clairvoyant for a while, and had seen Master standing beside her to comfort her and lead her across the border. She is very happy and very helpful to us in many ways, for she describes the conditions on her plane, and we have learnt a number of interesting details from her. Now of course I understand why Master would not tell her the future in relation with herself and me. Nevertheless her death puzzled me- more than it distressed me- and I had to appeal to him for enlightenment.

“Why should you take a pupil,” I asked, “when you must have known that he would die a few months afterwards? It seems sheer waste of time.”

He smiled his characteristic gentle smile. “My son,” he replied, “I took her partly as a greater test for you, and partly- well- it’s not necessary for you to know the other reason. It would have been comparatively easy for you to grow fond of Viola if you had not been in love with Clare. Yet even apart from that, there was no waste; do you suppose that just because Clare is what the ignorant call dead, she is parted from me and can no longer be my *chela*?”

I laughed at my own foolishness.

“And so,” I said afterwards to Viola, “it’s a good job I never married Clare- I’d have been a widower by now.”

“And it’s a good job I never married Norman,” she replied, “or I should have been perfectly wretched all the time. As it is, we’re both of us happy together, and we both have a spiritual consciousness which has been mighty cheap at the price.”

“And have still retained our sense of humour,” I added with mischievous irony. “Marvellous, isn’t it?”