

My dear Friends --

I am quite busy in England, going up and down this very beautiful land. No wonder Shakespeare called it a jewel "set in a silver sea." Always, when I come back from perhaps many years in other countries, its freshness, delicacy and greenness strike me anew. I have also been to Ireland which is always very green. I noticed the extraordinary difference in "atmosphere" when crossing the frontier between Northern and Southern Ireland. And the two great towns, Belfast and Dublin, might be considered as masculine and feminine towns respectively. I told you in my last letter about the wild wonderful beauty of Scotland. I am always lost in admiration for the sterling character of the Scots people. No wonder they rule the earth! I remember a long time ago spending a summer with a Scotch family on the island of Skye. They were all very Scotch in their speech, and I thought what fun it would be if I walked into the London Headquarters talking broad Scotch! So I asked the eldest boy, a shy and rather surly youth of nine summers, if he thought I could do it? "Naw," he replied, "ye wull not." Besides, we're no Scotch." "Oh!" I said, "what are you then?" "We're no Scotch, he replied, "we're vege-tar-ians."

Recently I attended three summer schools. One was a Theosophical School, and one of the speakers was Mrs. Ransom who recited the Gyatri in Sanscrit for us. Another was a Liberal Catholic Summer School. We had many Church services, and every afternoon a lecture. I had to speak on "The Mysticism of the Pauline Epistles." I like that lecture very much myself, but, dear me! how I can quote the Bible! That is because my father made me learn so much of it by heart when I was young. But they do say that the greatest adept at quoting the Scriptures is our friend the devil!

I also attended an International Week at that beautiful centre, St. Michael's, Huizen, in Holland. That place grows more and more in beauty. I was so glad to be able to go. The prevailing key-note was the value of meditation in the spiritual life. Among the speakers was Professor van der Stok. I had never seen him before although I had often wished to. And I fell under his spell immediately. Such a frail but saintly old man, and perhaps now the greatest psychic we have in the Society. I wish I could always hear him properly, and even when I do, understand him too. But I am quite resigned to never hearing a lecture again quite properly. Instead one gets the prevailing tone of the speech which is even more interesting. I cannot hear music either. I now only hear a kind of noise. That is a little sad, because I love to hear every Christmas time, Handel's great Oratorio, "The Messiah". There never was an oratorio like it. Never shall I forget the stately rhythm of the great choruses like the one, "Behold the Lamb of God." Once, long years ago, I heard such a magnificent rendering of those choruses in Sydney, Australia, that the audience, instead of encoring the principals, encored the chorus again and again. They had been so well trained that one could actually hear every word they sang. I feel a little cross with Mr. Cyril Scott for writing that Handel was responsible for the stuffiness of the Victorian era! To my mind it was the determined little Queen who did most of that.

I was born in the Victorian era, and when I look at the world today I can hardly believe that it is the same world. Class distinctions are gone or are going, also caste in the East. Women have come up more or less equal with men in the world's work, dogmatic religions are fast losing their hold, horses no longer pull us along (thank heaven for that), all sorts of standards have altered or devaluated. I wish good manners had not disappeared, but perhaps they will come back again.



I do not mind good humoured lack of them. I smile when I remember trying to get on a London bus, and the conductor pulling me on and saying affectionately, "Come on, Ma." Nowadays many conductors are women. One woman told me that she had been on the same bus for seventeen years. Sometimes the conductors are East Indians. But I have not yet seen any women bus drivers, though I often see women railway workers. And now that I am telling stories about myself, I heard such a nice one the other day. I was lecturing in Brighton, and my chairman told the audience that many years ago he had taken the chair for me in a cinema theater in Harrow. Two boys came in who evidently expected a picture, not a lecture. However, when the collection came, one said to the other, "I say, Bill, she deserves a tanner (6d.), don't she?"

I meant to tell you something of what I said about meditation at the International Week, where I had the very great pleasure of meeting so many chief officers from all the various European centres. But I cannot find my notes, so I will tell you what is even better, something of what Madame Scheffmacher said. She said "that the problem of meditation was one of particular difficulty in the West on account of the multiplicity of abstract thought and the excessively fast rhythm of life which does not allow men to relax. The beginner often clings to a form and allows himself to become engrossed by concrete images. They may be helpful at the beginning, but the time comes when they must be discarded. Everyone must discover for himself his own particular method according to his temperament and capacity. It must have a goal -- the unification with the God within; and a purpose -- through the attainment of the goal to become a more selfless and devoted servant of mankind.

"The meditator does not live in the present only. He acquires a greater understanding of the past, tries to reap its harvest in the present, and lays the foundation for the future. The goal being mystical union with the Highest, meditation should be approached with humility and reverence. One needs a strong will and the ability to persist. Following a plan adjusts the vehicles.

"At first the student will limit his practice of meditation to definite times, but as he goes on, his life will become a continuous meditation. This does not mean that he will sit all day and meditate, but that in the bustle of everyday life he will remain aware of his higher life and not allow it to become obscured by outer events."

This speech will, I think, be printed in the Theosophist, where you will be able to read it in full.

Meditation is a necessity for all those who would follow and develop the Inner Life. In the words of the Master K.H. to Miss Arundale, we thus win our way ever upward to the higher planes of spiritual consciousness. "Fear not, faint not," He said to her, "be faithful to the ideal you now can dimly see." If it is only five or ten minutes a day, give this time to Heaven, for never can Heaven draw nigh to us until we first draw nigh unto God ourselves.

Your affectionate friend,

Clara M. Codd