

October-November, 1962
 Flat 3, "Way's End", Beech Ave.
 Camberley, Surrey, England

My dear friends,

At last we are settled in our new home. The trees all round us are really quite wonderful. I hear that the English Sage -- as I call him -- Mr. E. L. Gardner, has a talk about the trees of Tekels Park and their attendant Devas. We have had practically no real summer here. I believe it was Napoleon who said that the worst point against England was its climate! You may be sure it will rain nearly every day. I found that many Australians would not go out if it rained. If we did that here we should hardly ever get outside. But I am always struck with the beauty of the English country side. It is almost more beautiful in its way than any other country I know. The woods and moors of England are unique. If you go up to Scotland you will find scenery on a grand and tremendous scale, especially on the West coast. Ireland is a very green isle and holds always a subtle spiritual quality, the "Isle of Saints." But England merits Shakespeare's immortal words about the precious jewel set in a silver sea. Perhaps because it is so wet the prevailing English infirmity is rheumatism, whilst my friends in America seem to go in for ulcers.

I once read a pamphlet by H. P. Blavatsky about interfering with life, but I cannot remember its name. I think it is published by Adyar. I remember certain things she said there, that quite a number of our common troubles arise from not growing evenly and slowly, but by developing in one way or another too quickly and thus creating excrescences.

All natural growth is slow and steady, but this natural growth is often interfered with by human free-will, and desire. She writes in Isis Unveiled: "Everything in this world has its time, and truth, however based upon unimpeachable evidence, will not root or grow, unless, like a plant, it is thrown into soil in its proper season." She says that no wild animal knows diseases until its last hour, and that most of our diseases come from not following nature, and from our uncontrolled imagination. For will, desire, and the imagination are all of them creative powers. If we control the imagination and leave things to Nature, she will correct all herself.

Now what is Nature? I have just come across one or two definitions. Here is one from the great German poet Goethe: "Nature is the living visible garment of God. There is no trifling with her. She is always true, grave, severe, always in the right. The faults and errors are ours. She defies incompetence but reveals her secrets to the competent, truthful, pure." Novalis, the mystic, said: "Nature is an aeolian harp, a musical instrument whose tones are the echo of higher strings within us." The poet Cowper said: "Nature is but a name for an effect whose cause is God." Galileo said: "The laws of Nature are the thought of God," which reminds me of H.P.B.'s own saying that the laws of Nature were the impress of the Divine Mind upon matter. Life, which is God, means our steady, sequential growth towards absolute bliss and fulfillment. But we are always interfering with nature and think we know better. So we generate pain. I will quote H.P.B. again: "Harmony is the law of life, discord its shadow (though the Master says that discord is the harmony of the universe) whence springs suffering, the teacher, the awakener of consciousness."

Pain is the teacher, the awakener of more subtle responses. Many seers have seen that. The ancient Celts said of a man who suffered much: "He is making his soul." And the poet Keats, who certainly suffered more than his share in his short life,

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wrote in a letter: "Do you not see how necessary a world of pain and trouble is, to school an intelligence and make it a soul?"

H.P.B. says there are three causes of pain. 1. To look for permanency in a world of continual change. Permanency is not to be found here, nor enduring happiness either. These are only to be found in the immortal world of spirit. So let us resign ourselves to the inevitable and realise that all things must pass. This is the world of phenomena, which Greek word means the appearance only. And that appearance changes from moment to moment. Nothing in all the world endures for ever. She once wrote some sentences on Self-knowledge: "The first necessity for obtaining Self-knowledge is to become profoundly conscious of ignorance, to feel with every fibre of the heart that we are ceaselessly self-deceived." She says that we should continually remember that we are not this garment of flesh and try always to identify ourselves with the pure, impersonal Divine Ego within. I am not this body which I shall certainly lose one day. I am not really my powerful changing emotions, though they are the moving force in life. And I am not really my ever changing thoughts. So then we ask ourselves, "Who am I?" St. Augustine did that. He wrote: "O God, help me to perceive Thee. Help me to perceive myself. For understanding Thee, I will know about myself. And once I understand myself, I will know about Thee." (I will say more about this next time.)

2. That much that we suffer are growing pains. Mostly because we have developed unequally, so nature tries to level us up to make us grow in undeveloped directions.

3. Over-anxiety. Trying to better the best, over-doing things. I have found that many times. We think we are going to better things and find that we have made only more complications. Just sit loose and let life direct your course. I remember Krishnaji once saying, "All of you try to twist life into what you want. Why do you not let life shape you?" That does not mean that we just drift. But co-operate with life, try to understand its great purposes, and when the great opportunity presents itself we take it because we have faithfully taken all the smaller ones leading up to it. But supposing we have missed it? Well, another will occur. What were Browning's words? "There shall never be one lost good, what was will be as before."

I think we should try to be "good sports" about life. It seems uncertain, but if we knew for certain that we were going to have just what we wanted, how very dull it would become. Life is an adventure, and the fun of it is that we do not know what is round the corner. I think I must close with some words of Dr. Annie Besant:

"Never forget that Life can only be nobly inspired and rightly lived if you take it bravely and gallantly as a splendid adventure, in which you are setting out into an unknown country, to face many a danger, to meet many a joy, to find many a comrade, to win and to lose many a battle."

She did not mind whether she won or lost. She just went on.

Your affectionate friend,

Clara Codd

From your secretary: November 1st is when the yearly pledges are due again. They can be paid later -- but many have asked for a reminder, so here it is!