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"Way's End," Beech Ave., Camberley  
Surrey, England

My dear Friends,

Since I last wrote to you I have been giving a series of lectures on "The Ageless Wisdom of Life" in the London Headquarters. I think we had a good time, the audience was so warm and responsive. I felt as if I had suddenly acquired a number of new friends. I sometimes hear our members talk of people who are "not ready" for Theosophy. I have never found any such people. I remember when I was in S. Africa that the native janitor of the building used to come and listen to me outside the door.

And sometimes we have discussions on what is Theosophy? My pet definition is that it is the real truth about everything in life. I remember its first impact on myself. I thought: "It is what I always thought myself, but I did not know how to put it into words." I think it is the same with many of our members. In fact, the Master says as much in one of His letters: "The converging lines of your Karma have drawn each and all of you into this Society as to a common focus that you may each help to work out the results of your interrupted beginnings in the last birth. None of you can be so blind as to suppose that this is your first dealing with Theosophy? You surely must realise that this would be the same as to say that effects came without causes." Probably many of us were Neo-Platonists, etc., in past lives. That these things are often pre-ordained is sure. I can tell you a story about myself. When I was twenty-three, my Father died, and we all went to live in Geneva. I used to teach English or any other job I could get. I answered an advertisement for an English teacher to spend the summer with an inn-keeper's daughter up in the Jura Mountains. In those lonely mountains there did not seem to be any doctors. When anyone was ill they consulted a "wise woman" who dosed them with herbs. I knew one such rather wonderful little woman who told me that she gathered her herbs in the early morning whilst the dew was still on them. Some of these people were clairvoyant. I heard of one young peasant woman who was renowned for telling fortunes. I went to ask her in what way I could best earn a living. Evidently she was used to that question. Holding my hand in a trance condition she murmured, "Not a lady's maid, not a shop-girl, etc. Then she paused for a while. Suddenly she spoke, "Oh! I see you. You are standing on a platform before a large number of people." I had not heard of Theosophy then, so I asked "Am I an actress?" She shook her head vigorously. "No! No!" she said. "Then what am I?" I asked. "I cannot tell you," she answered, "but it sounds to me like the music of Richard Wagner." Some time afterwards I found Theosophy through hearing Colonel Olcott in the home of the Russian Consul. I think the "music of Richard Wagner" is quite an apt description of Theosophy. So before I had heard of Theosophy I was fated to teach it.

Another fortune-teller told me in India some years ago that I would live to be very old and go about with a stick. I have not reached the stick stage yet. But I am certainly very old. The queer part is that I never feel old. I feel just the same as I did when I was twenty. I think there is a magic about the Ageless Wisdom. It makes you eternally young, no age, in fact. The immortal one inside us is the eternal youth, and his world is what the ancient Celts called "the Land of the Ever-Young." Only his body gets old, like a suit of clothes wearing out.

There are compensations for getting old. One does not have the same physical vitality perhaps. But one has the wisdom of experience. When we are young we all do foolish things. Now we are wiser. The Master says that there is a compensation for every ill and every mistake. Never mind having made many mistakes. The man who never made a mistake, never made anything else either. The mistake does not matter if we are big enough to learn from its results. Do not indulge in remorse. H.P.B. says that remorse is rooted in egotism.

A correspondent asks me why there is so much cruelty in Nature, little chickens being eaten by hawks, and mice by cats, etc. The question of animal suffering has troubled many of us, and I have never found a really complete answer. I can tell you what the Master says about it in the Mahatma Letters, p. 56. "Evil has no existence per se and is but the absence of good, and exists but for him who is made its victim." (Robert Browning: "Evil is null, is nought; is silence implying sound.") "It proceeds from two causes, and no more than good is it an independent cause in Nature. Nature is destitute of goodness or malice; she only follows immutable laws when she either gives life and joy, or sends suffering and death, and destroys what she has created. Nature has an antidote for every poison and her laws a reward for every suffering. The butterfly devoured by a bird becomes that bird, and the little bird killed by an animal goes into a higher form. It is the blind law of necessity and the eternal fitness of things, and hence cannot be called Evil in Nature. The real evil proceeds from human intelligence, and its origin rests entirely with reasoning man who dissociates himself from Nature. Humanity alone is the true source of evil. Evil is the exaggeration of good, the progeny of human selfishness and greediness. Think profoundly and you will find that save death -- which is no evil but a necessary law, and accidents which will always find their reward in a future life -- the origin of every evil, whether small or great, is in human action, in man whose intelligence makes him the one free agent in Nature. It is not nature that creates diseases, but man. The latter's mission and destiny in the economy of nature is to die his natural death brought on by old age; save accident, neither a savage nor a wild (free) animal dies of disease. Food, sexual relations, drink, are all natural necessities of life; yet excess in them brings on disease, misery, suffering, mental and physical, and the latter are transmitted as the greatest evils to future generations, the progeny of the culprits. Ambition, the desire of securing happiness and comfort for those we love, by obtaining honours and riches, are praiseworthy natural feelings, but when they transform man into an ambitious, cruel tyrant, a miser, a selfish egotist, they bring untold misery on those around him, on nations as well as individuals..... Therefore it is neither nature nor an imaginary deity that has to be blamed, but human nature made vile by selfishness." There is more in this letter but I cannot quote it all. Man is responsible for the most hideous cruelty in this world. A savage or an animal only kill for food. Only civilized man kills for the lust of killing.

Let us end on a more cheerful note! The end of cruelty is coming. Future ages will know it no more.

A happy Christmas and New Year to you all.

Your affectionate friend,

Clara Codd

From your secretary: If I am not using your Zip Code number, please send it to me? Also: Since our fund is operating well "in the black", "we" have sent Miss Codd an extra \$50 for her birthday (in October), and another \$50 extra for Christmas. (the 10th)