The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE


Editor: Dr. Paul Carus.

Associates: E. C. Hegeler

Mary Carus.

VOL. XIX. (NO. 11.) NOVEMBER, 1905. NO. 594

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steel are constantly changing and re-arranging in position or form. Each orb in space is interrelated with every other sphere, and there is an endless interchange of energy among all. The same is true of every atom of matter and every individual personality in the range of creation. Nature works ceaselessly throughout her mighty realm. She destroys ruthlessly, but annihilates nothing; all is change. Rest in any form is simply a change in activity; possibly of vibratory energy.

"There is everywhere endless flux which the thoughtful of all times have seen to be the most evident feature in the universe; changes in the internal relations of structure,—breaking up of molecules, crystal passing into solution, the activity of spheres ending with the loss of heat which inspired their life." Then follows readjustment of molecular construction through temperative influences, aided by other cosmic agencies.

III.

It cannot be asserted that all matter is sentient, but it is rational to declare that it is instinct with life. And wherever life is, there must also be activity.

Contemplation of the tremendous activities everywhere, reveals the astonishing absurdity of the musty myth from Chaldea, brought away by Israelitish captives as a mental infection of her heathen legends, that a curse had been affixed to man: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."

"Work," said George Sand, "is not man's punishment; it is his reward and his strength, his glory and his pleasure."

In the light of to-day, to call the activities of our existence a "curse" inherited from Adam, is silly. Such theological nonsense has done much hurt, and caused futile repinings and complaints against God's injustice: blinding men to the real beneficence and meaning of work. Life would become as "tedious as a twice-told tale," did man have his food placed ready before him.

And if the pronouncement be a "curse," as alleged, then it applies to all creation, organic and inorganic alike; plant, animal, man, atom, and molecule; whether of earth or elsewhere in the universe. Even the beast of the field must chase its prey, fish for its dinner, crop its herbage, hunt afield for provender, use force, cunning, or artifice at every turn to compass its livelihood, and defend its own life. All of this involves activity, labor, and zealous effort: and all is designed by the Creator as health-giving, and strengthen-
ing to the mental and physical powers, and, mayhap, to fit each individual for yet more strenuous labors in a succeeding career.

Human life (and animal and vegetable as well) is typified by the story of Sisyphus in mythology, rolling the stone up the steeps of Caucasus, unendingly. The lessons of life are never complete, but each hour and day brings a task.

Inertia is as insupportable as labor, and enforced idleness is fraught with pain quite as much as necessitous work.

Out of the murkiness of life's causa rerum there comes "as through a glass darkly," a ghostly chimera or scintillation of reason, or dawning of intelligence, that there neither can be, has been, nor ever will be any progress in the universe known to man, except through struggle; that the efficient motive of advance in any line soever is the impelling pain of necessity.

Supineness means death, in any department of physical life; and the laws of the physical are related to those of the spiritual life. Release from effort induces decay; slothfulness of mind prefigures atony of brain power; too much sleep means dry rot of mind and body.

Inertness of life forces finds rigorous law as inexorable in enactment as the course of the spheres in their orbits: slothfulness means dissolution!

IV.

"In nature nothing is given; all is sold," said Emerson. It is true. Man pays a price for all happiness or advancement whatsoever. His upright posture of body is had at increased expense to life and added dangers to health.

If he can feel that he has anything gratis, it is the esthetic joy of refined sense that comes as the exultation of spring, the beauty of scene, the bloomings of flowers, the charm of music, the exuberance of spirit in the gladness of youth, and the blessedness of quietude in solitary places when the world-worn soul needs repose. But even these have been bought with a price; even these are artificialities. The nervous developments and psychical unfoldments that contribute to the faculty of esthetic enjoyment are not natural, but are the outgrowths of an unnatural condition of existence called society. It is, like the sense of conscience, an eductive product largely dependent on geographical and environmental conditions. The age likewise is involved, for the orthodoxy of one period is the heterodoxy of another. The sin of yesterday is the virtue of to-day. The admired of to-day may be the hated of to-morrow. Ethics and
esthetics are artificial plants engrafted on our civilized body, and subject to pruning and regrafting of other cults according to the changing views of clime and civilization.

In considering the ruthlessness of nature in exacting toll for every advance or happiness, man can not regard himself as above his fellow creatures of other species, whom he vain-gloriously regards as "lower orders." Man is no more a favorite of nature than the smallest insect or mollusk. He must fight for his life, and suffer pain, and advance only through struggle and rigor alike with all other creatures. Nothing is given him; he pays toll for every advantage, for every step forward, for every happiness.

Nor do I find any true relationship between happiness and pain, except that pain seems the parent of pleasure; that but for the faculty of pain man could not enjoy; and there is surely more pain allotted him than pleasure. Pain is absolute; pleasure is purely relative. Pleasure has its limits in pain, and for pleasure pain exacts compensation.

V.

There is a fly in the ointment everywhere. Nature has made nothing perfect. There is a flaw in all her works. The most beautiful form has the misprision of a plain face; or angelic features are fixed upon a misshapen figure. The rose has its thorn, and but few thorns are adorned with roses. Nature is a monster parent who doles out her gifts in a miserly fashion and rakes in usury with hard grasp.

It must be just right, though not comprehensible to our senses as right justice.

Nature is, to finite sense, the active refutation of our assertion God is love. Our love is finite, and blind. The babe shrieks in its bath, nor has remotest idea of the great mother love which smiles at its woe. We are merest babes in intelligence, and curse that fate or God which enforces exaction of world-baths upon us.

Surely the cares of life are meant for our good, else they should not be laid imperatively upon us. The child's bath is designed for its health and welfare. Our worldly inundations of care are much like the babe's washing.

VI.

"The consummation towards which organic evolution is tending," said Fiske, "is the production of the highest and most perfect psychical life."

Activities are needful. Activity is the agent of evolution, every-
where; for evolution is at work in all nature. There can be no progress in man's estate except through struggle, effort, work; "in the sweat of his face"; through the impulsion of pain.

Pain is the artificer that chisels and shapes the soul.
Pain is the arduous and ardent tutor of the mind.
Pain is man's fate: pain drives to effort.
Pain scourges to vigor.
Pain giveth man to understand;
Pain opens his eyes; and through adversity does he see.
Pain preserves his body, and makes him careful of that raiment of the soul.
Pain makes him relinquish it when it is worn or torn or unfitted for the indwelling of his spirit!
Pain makes him travail over-night, but joy cometh in the morning when he awakes in the likeness of psychical perfection designed and predicate of the soul.

Even the flounderings of the religious mind through the mazes of priestcraft and the insanity of zealot mystics that have surrounded man since his evolvement from the night of prehistoric savage life are typical of that laboring which marks every step in his advance. The goal is psychical growth, henceforth; and only through pain, pain, pain, can he advance.

VII.

Frost is essential to the future flower, vegetable, oak.

Pain is the sun which quickens the graces of soul, which awakens into activity the seeds of larger life, and brings to full fruition fortitude, energy, gratitude, pity, beneficence, altruism. It is the "fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind." It is the hurting "touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

The lashings of circumstance are providential; they are fatalistic; actually designed of God to refine our dross, to chip away the inequalities of our character; to strengthen our soul-fibres by adversity, as the reed is made withy and staunch in the wind; to educe vigor of soul; to provoke psychical development; to excite thought-force; to promote an evolution of the ego to—what end?

Cui bono?

Surely, to fit for superior and yet more strenuous stages to follow this present scene, and which are inevitable; which no death can obviate; which must be met soon or late, and which it were wisdom to courageously look forward to and serenely assume as fore-ordained of the Lord of creation, and of ultimate beneficence.
Verily, all is progression; and only through precedent struggle, pain. The soul is strengthened thus, and fitted for later burdens: or else, sinking under lighter weights, goes down and out of life. It is the strong of soul who continue, much as it is a survival of the fittest in physical life.

Once, the development of man's physical life was paramount. Now the unfoldment of his soul-part is most essential, and we may expect reactionary involvement of his physical organism; as for instance, vestigial organs that yet hamper his physical form, and are subject to disease as outlawed tissue, redundant, undesired by the body, and seeking to be cast off.

VIII.

Pain is not to be reckoned as abnormal, but as nature's protest against the abnormal: it is her finger sternly pointing the other way that she means us to go.

The laws of nature are docile if harnessed in obedience to the laws of God. These laws are not written on tables of stone. Nor are they readable save by the light of experience. Experience is the essence of the earth-life.

Till we learn that a given act, or want of action brings disease or injury to the body, we suffer. Fire would destroy if my hand felt no pain when in contact with the flame. Pain makes us care for this suit of the soul which temporarily invests the spirit.

If we go contrary to nature's laws, wittingly or ignorantly, we are victims of pain or destruction. Man, animal, and plant are all subject to the same laws.

Pathology is only physiology carried to excess. Fatigue is a form of suffering to warn that certain elements poisonous to the body have been generated within, and that we must pause till they are eliminated by the processes of life-chemistry, active during rest.

We can conquer pain by avoiding its causes; we can only avoid by knowledge. Knowledge comes by experience.

If we but knew or realized that no law of nature can be violated except an inexorable penalty be exacted in pain, how much greater happiness might result. This law applies equally to every department of our lives; whether it be physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or intellectual.

All our sufferings are due to ignorance. When we learn that fire is painful we avoid its burnings. We are taught only through pain.

The harsh grindstone makes the sharp axe.
Anguish drives us to effort, and it is only through endeavor that we make any progress whatever. There is no royal road to any success. The price for every gain must be paid. Let no man cheat himself by thinking otherwise, but rather let him gird up his loins and courageously endure hardships, care, and the drenchings of sorrow. They are designed for his advancement and good. It is only thus that he can go forward. To learn is his fate; and he can only learn through suffering. And if he does not see the lesson intended, he must suffer again and again till he has clear vision, and obedient heart. Nature is obdurate and merciless. She will be obeyed, or slays ruthlessly, even unto the last.

From infancy to manhood we grow in stature and strength, and are thus fitted for the rigors of man's estate. One life seems to prefigure and fit for a subsequent life; that is to be more strenuous than the preceding; else the sufferings of the one that now is were futile.

The experiences of a matured man are not handed on to his progeny, because the richest and most valuable of them do not come till he has passed the active procreative period. Then are not the accumulations of ripe age and intellect wasted if death ends all. if such harvested lessons are to be lost in the grave? No; we have need for such experiences; for the fruit of life seems to be to gain experience, which is to serve us in a subsequent career. If we enter a heaven of idle rest after death we have wasted our time in gathering experience during our earthly existence.

IX.

Physical pain is a consequence of that natural blindness to the results that follow our action or inaction. The unsophisticated babe grasps at the candle, and its hand would be destroyed by the fire, did not the nerves cry out in agony, causing the removal of threatened fingers. All physical pain is thus a teacher.

Psychical pain comes as the effect of heedlessness, want of thought, on our own or another's part; or because of a misconception of the function of death, which momentarily separates friends and loved ones. When the soul husks off its body it does not divide itself from friends more than the closing of our eyes cuts us off from visible communication.

The only painless thing in life is the act of death.

Aristotle suggested the hint that pain (evil) had an indispensable function: and that nothing found in nature was out of place, but had its uses.
In the blindness of our finite understandings we cannot quite comprehend the ever needful utility of pain; but as we work upward into the light of intellectual evolvement, doubtless we shall realize the beneficence of anguish, strife, activity; that the principle concerned is psychic unfoldment. Through the clarifying influence of this soul-intelligence there will appear much that is incomprehensible at this stage; there will eventuate ability to perceive and intelligence to avoid the evil of pain, the stress of work, the ardor of struggle. Knowledge will bring enlarged judgment, and appreciation of consequences of acts which are entailed by our present ignorance.

Some philosophers since Darwin consider the meaning of the universal struggle for existence to have been "to bring forth as the consummate product of creative energy, the Human Soul." Analogically, the gradual unfoldment of the psychical in the lower orders must likewise be reckoned thus; else, why do they, too, strive as man has striven?

Leibnitz regarded evil as a negative condition, i.e., the absence of the good; and held that "its active and seemingly positive character is an incidental and not an essential part of its nature." The pessimistic Schopenhauer retorts "it is good that is negative; happiness and satisfaction implying some desire fulfilled, some state of pain brought to an end." It seems that both may be mistaken.

The greatest good comes out of deepest sorrow. It is the contrast with one state that enables appreciation of the other.

The continued sipping of sweets cloys the taste. So likewise, the constant goal of care lessens its pricking.

A ship without ballast is as flotsam and jetsam. A career without responsibilities is inane.

A protected plant is brittle and weak; the one inured to winds is sturdy and withy.

The tales of the men of one age are soon told and soon forgotten.

"After the lapse of a thousand years," said Shaler, "not one name in a hundred million names is remembered."

What, then, is history? In the milleniums of the ages of creation what folly to reckon by time!

Life is an ever-fleeting change; a restless hurrying of kinematoscopic events; and he is the happiest man who seeks to utilize or enjoy the actual present.

Men toil and moil for the future, and lie down to die. What of their substance? It goes quickly; and those who are its heirs wonder aghast at the wings with which it has flown.
Life is simply a progression, without beginning or end, save as it is always beginning and ending.

Life is given to us to gain experience. And each fits for others yet to come. The more strenuous the experience, the deeper the lesson branded on the soul.

*The motive of early existence seems to be to get experience which shall fit us for yet more rigorous endurings afterwhiles.*

Please ponder this thought.

It is certain that we never learn anything except through pain. We did not learn to walk but by bumping our infant shins; nor to eat without the precedent pang of tooth-cutting; nor to lift a burden without previous effort at a lesser burden; much as the man who lifted a calf day by day that he might eventually lift it as an ox.

And the more highly we become developed in muscle, nerve, or intellectual nature, and the more refined and sensitized our emotional nature, the more keenly do we feel. The thrust of woe into the sodden of earth is infinitely less agonizing than to the finely drawn nervous organization of the more highly bred creature. The same is true of plant life as of man or animal. The more developed, the more delicate in sensibility and susceptibility.

The condition of growth in any department of life is exercise. Hence, the wrenchings and poignancy of heart suggest strength of soul added after each storm.

Life is a problem not yet solved. Yet he who has no trials is essentially weak of heart when the real assaults of life are upon him. One should be grateful to the fate which brings difficulties that must needs be overcome. Troubles should be regarded as blessings. They beat out the soul and make it strong,—much as enforced labor of body enables it to withstand hardship and toil that comes in later days. Strength of heart gotten in this life is but a preparation for yet more earnest tasks in a subsequent career. Else, why the threshings here? A supine heaven of idle rest seems absurd and unwarranted by any analogy in nature. The evolutionary history of all life, organic and inorganic, teaches thus: the survival of the fittest is conclusive. He who weakly succumbs, whatever his genera, goes down and out. His species is gone even, if it adapt not itself to conditions of nature.

The soul on earth has several physical methods of gaining information of mundane conditions. It can have no cognizance of this earth save through the senses operating through the eye, ear, tongue, olfactories, and nerves of sensation. If either sense organ
were destroyed the soul would have no cognition of the world to that extent. Hence, the soul is alive to earth only so long as its organs of communication are operative. The soul is alien to this planet: while here it is in the dark. Its lamps are the five senses. If one lamp be put out the soul perceives only by the others. The soul can suffer no physical pain for it is spiritual. When its mortal senses are destroyed it must flee away to its altersphere,—its alternity. The soul gets its perceptions of earth through the faculties of the body, and is alone sensible of its earth-existence through such powers or instruments.

Destroy certain brain cells and the soul to that extent is dead. Compress the brain in certain centers, and the soul is insensible to external conditions. Remove the compression, and the soul revives, and is alive to conditions about it.

There is another phase: a life of ease and luxury is selfish. For every day of leisure, some one else has had to toil and sweat. Inferentially, for every pang you escape some one else has had to endure. You may have learned by another's experience to avoid certain steps that lead into danger. Your woe, in turn, may save some one else sorrow.

As for psychical griefs: are they not bound up in the saying of the Bard of Avon: "There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so"? Society has certain laws, the infraction of which brings social disgrace. The odium of organized society gives mental pain. The view-point may be different to-morrow. For that which is creed to-day may be heresy to-morrow. The esthetic evils of life are not such per se, but in the prevalent opinion which the surrounding civilization holds in regard to them. Sin depends on the age and the social conditions obtaining. Take any of the cardinal sins: Polygamy for instance. Was it not the accepted will of God throughout the Israelitic régime; and instead of long petitions being presented the law-givers, protesting against the seating of an elector in the house of Judaic legislation, it was considered unbecoming for an unmarried or a monogamous man to be selected. History teaches that public opinion differs as time and conditions change. Many mental worries, therefore, are hateful simply because of the opinion we assume others to entertain of an act or condition.

How is the psychical entity developed? Through the sensibilities; the affections, the sympathies, the strivings of spirit; through heart-burnings, mental agonies, the teasing ecstacies of apprehen-
sion, the desolation of loss, the midnight of despair, the weightings of woe, and the rackings of pain—pain of mind and body.

Pain is the food of the soul which grows with what it feeds upon.

The oak waxes strong in the winds that wrench its branches; the plant in the protected corner grows white and sickly and frail. The sturdy of soul is that one whom the storms of passion, sorrow, and poignancy have lashed and swirled and sorely wounded.

The fruit of life is Experience; and Circumstance is the schoolmaster who whips with inexorable ardor; but never with unkindly meaning, however mercilessly. The apparent malignancy toward man is no less virulent than towards all of earth.

The planets in abysmal space are torn and rent with ceaseless storm and cataclysm only to fit them for their ultimate uses.

Inanimate things are as constant in activity as animate. Inorganic creation is as incessantly changing its molecular parts as occur the physiological mutations of organic career.

Nature is bloody-jawed toward all; plant, insect, animal, man. No life without death of some other life. No food but through the destruction of some other life, either of plant or animal. Nor is the eductive sense yclept conscience to be heard when the remorseless stomach's call is made, and which ever recurs, as the ancient cry of the horse-leech: "Give, give!"

Nature is as merciless in her inherent demands as she is prolific in animate productions. Living creatures are born in multitudinous hordes only to be hustled into the hopper of death, through which operation strengh is afforded other beings with which to procreate yet other teeming victims, who in turn eat their contemporaries and in their turn execute their little act of reproduction in pain, existing themselves through the pain of their victims to nutrition; and then, complete in due process the tragedy of their brief existence by passing out of life to yield up their own bodies and blood for the sustenance of those who follow hard after.

To kill life in one form means to create life in another form.

Life preys on life; death thrives only on death, even as it promotes life through continuing the decimation of life.

Oh! how inscrutable the hardness of that power which overrules all! Oh! how futile and sad the operation of the impulse of altruism in the face of such fatalistic careers which none can avert!

"How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"
XI.

Life is a portentous actuality; and if unexplained by evolution or its outgrowth, then indeed is it an unfathomable injustice, and a gift thrust upon ourselves as causeless victims of implacable cruelty or meaningless fate.

“The history of civilization,” said Huxley, “is the record of the attempt of the human race to escape from the indictment of nature.” And as if man’s woe in his battle with nature were not enough, it has been augmented by the frightful imagining of perverted or diseased minds. These for ulterior selfish motives, or having benevolent design and “thinking to do God service,” devised supernatural, intangible, unseen, and mythical agencies to whom in the first instance must be made offerings of the “first fruits” and choicest products (through themselves as vice-gerents), in propitiation for innate impulse or thoughtless acts denominated sin; and secondly, that the darkened understanding of humanity might “serve the Lord with gladness.”

Bewildered, man yielded worship to the God of Love whom he was told to “fear,” and bowed in unfeigned fear and abject servility to the devil whom he was told epitomized Hate.

How silly and blind and sad is the record of theology! How much of selfishness and how much of goodness inspired the devotion of the theologians of the past! How tremendous the coming awakening of the near future! How quintescent the buffoonery of imagination that has tried to portray the mis-known God, and how grovelling and puerile His attributes as delineated by theology! “Who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who by searching can find Him out?”

The dark ages did not end with the thirteenth century, but are fading with the dawn of the twentieth.

Reason “sits as a refiner and purifier,” and the theology of yesterday and to-day will be cast out and trodden under foot as the rottenness of mildew, and “God, even our God,” will be “worshipped in the beauty of holiness;” and the earth shall be filled with his knowledge and glory as the waters that cover the sea!

XII.

We do not possess life; life possesses us. We are life.

Each life is a duty to be done; death comes as its crown.

We are no poorer at the end of each day. Our existence is not shortened through the lapse of hours and days.
This life is but a brief period in eternity,—one end of it being before and the other behind us.

We are in eternity now, and as much in the presence of God as we will ever be.

Time is only man's mode of reckoning his sojourn on earth, and calculating events of history.

XIII.

The brain is the residence of the mind; and it is from there the mind chiefly directs the growth of the body, through which its mandates are obeyed. If the mind be stolid and dense the body must needs be coarse and gross, and the brain is less finer in texture and cell. Such a brain and body must hence blunder over and accomplish its tasks laboriously, painfully, uncouthly.

"The test of civilization is the saving of labor." (Jordan.)

The advance of intelligence means the emancipation of the body from effort, from pain of nerves, and weariness of muscles. "In the sweat of thy face" is God's greatest blessing. Its enactment gives that pain which awakes thought in the sufferer, provokes ideas, stimulates to inspiration, inspires intellectual growth, and thus contrives easier methods. Notwithstanding, with each advance is opened wider fields, newer duties, keener spurrings, stronger desires, greater aspirations, all of which tend to force the individual up onto higher planes of thought.

Where the brain will not work the pitiful body must. Idleness, slothfulness, undue sleep, all exact toll.

It is not the intermarriage of royalty that causes the degeneracy we prate of, but the purposeless life they lead; the want of necessity for activity; the curse of the parasitic existence maintained. It is not the intermixture of related bloods, per se, that educes the degeneracy; but the joining of two sluggish streams, enervated by inaction of idle strains, which, combined, find no energizing principle to be transmitted to their unfortunate progeny.

"The creatures which rule the world are the children of struggle and storm," be it of man or animal or plant. For plants are sessile animals, yet must work for their existence.

A tree or plant is never still; but even in stillest appearance is undergoing a vibratory, spiral working of trunk, or stem, or leaf. Thus it works for its living, even as the haughty descendant of him of Eden who was cast out to earn his bread by "the sweat of his face."
XIV.

"In the process of re-production" said an eminent scientist, "all the experience of antecedent life is passed on from generation to generation, over a molecular bridge,—a tiny mass of protoplasm,—imponderably small, carrying on from parent to child the body, the mind, all indeed that the predecessors in tens of thousands of specific forms and unimaginable millions of individuals have won of enduring profit from their experience." In the twilight of ancestral development, the struggle for existence, the pain endured, was of different sort from that of ten thousand years later, or than that suffered by us of present development. Theirs was less specialized sensibility, and necessarily less acute of perception. Their struggles and effort became an habituation of work, and as such effort became engrafted upon the organism, other lessons obtruded on the senses: and these became painful in turn till their goad became tolerant, and habit rendered their pain obtuse. Then came other woe or effort, or work in the struggle upwards,—all tending to the development of the psychical. Once, man had to fix his mind on the processes of digestion, on his heart beat, on his respiration, etc.

This struggle endured by his predecessors finds man of to-day fitted to the pressure of the air, the beat of his heart. Habit becomes second nature. But with each adaptation comes enforced progress: for *with each height gained there comes need for other climbing*.

Progress ever brings organic dissatisfaction; enlarged activities; imperative further effort; struggle with new conditions.

"A developed society is dynamic," says David Starr Jordan. "A static society, no matter how perfect it seem, whether a Utopia, Icaria, or City of the Sun, is a condition of arrested development. Its perfection is that of death. The most highly developed organisms show the greatest imperfections. The most perfect adaptions to conditions need re-adaptation, as conditions themselves speedily change. The dream of a static millennium, when struggle and change shall be over, when all shall be happy and secure, finds no warrant in our knowledge of man and the world."

So of all animate life. The attainment of one height but brings higher mounts in view.

The reaching of perfection typified by the Christ-life will bring hitherto unimagined moral planes into consideration.

That which is to-day our crystallized ethical thought in the Son of God must one distant day be displaced by another transcendentally beyond our ethical ken of now.
The hardest tasks of the race lie before it; not behind. The ability to endure carries with it the necessity of endurance. The capacity for suffering will bring the pain; but with it there comes the intellectual ability to work out a way of escape; and upon such struggle there hinges that further soul progression towards which man has ever tended, and must ever go.

XV.

More and more grows the conviction that this present life is a crysalis of psychic growth, and that our encasement is "of the earth earthy," and intended for temporary corporeal use. Our present career is a transitory stage, and we pass through the process called death to lay aside a habitation no longer tenable, or perchance outgrown by the spirit seeking wider, newer, larger experiences, which tend toward imperative psychical growth and ripeness.

Hence, the wisdom of life is to live in the actual present; enjoy to-day as the only one vouchsafed; do good to-day as the "chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely"; spread the gospel of kindness to-day; deny ourselves no legitimate joy, for we have only this one day. Mayhap, another day will dawn, but it is only one more of to-day, and it should likewise be lived as yesterday,—as affording one other opportunity of usefulness, beneficence, experience-getting; all tending to soul-enlargement, spiritual grace, psychical unfoldment. For life is in no sense "a paltry misery closed in the grave."

XVI.

The troubles of this life clearly portray, by prefigurement, our need for soul-growth. The unborn infant is not conscious of the soul within itself, nor cognizant of its birth. The soul in the growing child is innocent of its progression. The spirit of the full-grown man is dimly conscious of being, and is most sensible of it when in pain. When he dies he enters upon another plane, mayhap like that he now finds himself upon, even as the infant enters here. The pang of death is no more to the dying than that of birth to the infant entering into life.

The child in utero is gathering physical lineaments; the man gathers spiritual markings. Each is a condition of nascency; and who shall say that it is all ended by the death of the individual any more than the unconscious child's life ends with its worldly entrance.

The foetus in utero passes through a kinematoscopic history of its ancestry's physical career throughout millions of years.

May not the death of the individual mean the enactment on or
in another element the soul-history of earth, which will fit by a mystical period of growth, for another and larger career?

XVII.

Surely, the prolonged grindings of the emery of time, the accumulations of experience, the brandings of pain, affliction, despair, and death, have unitedly their mission; they have wrought out the psychical part of man, of beast, of all creation. And this work is not done, but must continue. All creatures involved are being thus brought upon a plane of intelligence, whereby capabilities of forethought aid in avoiding the entailed disaster of ignorant acts, and facilitate obviation of woes common to progenitors.

It is the lessons of experience—pain—by which we learn. And with this development is a further price: the enlarged capacity for keener pangs, commensurate, too, with the ability to enjoy because of the refinement of nerve-cell. For with the chastenings of the physical comes a sensitizing of the susceptibilities. And as the progress of man in future will be along the psychical, the physical will become even more subordinate to the soul-part, and be simply the housement of the spirit, refined, purified, etherialized, fit for the Master’s use, as the “temple of God.”

Towards such consummation the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together.

Hear the conclusion of this whole matter:

Pain begets experience;
Experience is the genesis of real life;
Life is preparation through which the soul is individualized.
Death convoys into enlarged psychical spheres of activity, from whence, after seasonable lessons, the spirit passes on into yet higher fields.

And thus ever on and on through progressive evolutionary stages towards heights intellectual and spiritual not imaginable by finite powers.

Aye, life with its griefs is a mystery, but afterwhiles, we will be

“Laughing to learn
Death was so friendly, and the toils of life
So fruitful for all living things; and pain,
Seed of all pleasure; and our worst of woes
So like the foolish anguish of the babe,
Whereat the mother, loving most, smiles most.”