LABOR-DAY.

It has become customary to celebrate the first Monday in September as Labor-Day. Not the authorities of State or Church have introduced the new festival, but the laborers; and well may they be proud of it, for it is one of the signs of the time, indicating that a new era is dawning upon mankind in which labor will no longer be regarded as a burden and a curse, but as the true and, indeed, the noblest manifestation of our existence. Labor, as we understand it now, is the very substance of our life and the seal of our manhood. He who does not labor does not live; his existence is empty; his soul is a cipher; and when death comes he is doomed to an ignominious annihilation, for immortality must be earned by wisely directed work and untiring exertions.

In commemoration of Labor-Day, which now has become a legal holiday, let us consider the significance of labor in its most important aspects, which are:

1. The curse of labor as drudgery;
2. The origin and nature of labor;
3. The blessings of labor;
4. The dignity of labor; and finally,
5. The problem of labor.

All who labor and plod, who work and toil, almost breaking down under the burdens that the various stations of life in which you live place upon you, lay aside for a moment your axe, pickaxe, hammer, spade, or pen, and your cares; cease worrying, for a moment, and pause to think of the nature of your labor. I trust that by rightly understanding the significance of labor, you will gain the right attitude in life, and if you do, you will resume your work with greater vigor. If you comprehend the grandeur of labor, its importance in your psychical development, and the close relation in which it stands to the very essence of your soul, you will become reconciled even to its unpleasant features, and will rejoice at the very idea of being a laborer, called upon to contribute his mite in building the glorious temple of humanity.

Labor is by no means a pleasure; it is not mere sport or play, but a very serious occupation; there is no trifling about it. Labor is hard work in almost all the walks of life: no wonder that it at first sight appears as the curse of mankind.

We read in the holy legend of the Old Testament that Adam's disobedience brought down upon his race the dire destiny of drudgery and death which changed paradise into a valley of tears. God's wrath makes the access to the resources of the earth difficult; the ground is cursed, and in sorrow shall man eat of the herbs of the field all the days of his life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth, and he shall eat his bread in the sweat of his brow until he return to the ground out of which he was taken. "For," says the Lord, "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

This curse of labor as symbolised in thorns and thistles does not rest upon the tiller of the soil alone, but also upon the artisan, the mason, the miner, the manufacturer, the merchant, the teacher, the artist, the poet. All labor in the long run is hard; and it is the exception only that from time to time labor becomes easy in one or another department of life. The rule is that whenever the rewards of work are extraordinary bounteous in one field of industry, a rush of competition towards the centre of low pressure will set in according to the same law that regulates the distribution of water and the conditions of our atmosphere, always tending to a universal equalisation.

It is generally supposed that the wealthy do not feel the pricks of the thorns and thistles growing in the various fields of human work, and it is true that there are some few who draw the interest of a godly inheritance and their capital being securely invested have little idea of the enormous exertions which the mass of mankind must make in order to continue existence in the present state of civilisation; but it is an error to think that our capitalists so called, i. e., those men who possess wealth and use it for the production of more wealth in industrial enterprises are exempt from the curse that rests upon labor. Their lot is, closely considered, not better than that of other mortals. Certainly they enjoy great advantages, but their position is at the same time more intermingled with worries, unknown to the rest of mankind, while the danger of losing their preferences is more dreadful to them than the loss of life to the frugal day-laborer.
THE OPEN COURT.

It is a well-known truth upon which the poets of all times have dwelt, that more and truer happiness is found in the humble cottage than in the palaces of the powerful. Shakespeare's words "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," is true not only of those who sit on royal thrones, but in a proportionate degree, of all rulers, leaders, directors, of all who wield power of any kind in all the various walks of life. Wealth invested in industrial enterprises is in a constant jeopardy, and if not managed with great circumspection will quickly dwindle away to the detriment of the owner and all those who are dependent upon him; but while the latter have their chances to embark in some other and more successful venture, the former as a rule is ruined with but slight hope of recovery which demands more energy and luck than before. He is in the position of a workman whose tools are broken and there is no one who will replace them. He has become unfit to train himself for other work, as much so as a driver who, on the opening of a new railroad line having lost his trade, vainly attempts to fill the place of an engineer. And nothing is harder to bear than a reversion of progress previously gained.

Considering all in all, is it not natural that the so-called middle classes alone possess, as it were, a monopoly of the enjoyment of life? Among them we find all those boons which cannot be bought with money, or money's worth. Among them we find humor, laughter, and genuine contentment; among them we find humanity at its best, with the immedialeness of limpid sentiment and the warmth of unreflecting love. Here the curse of labor, equalised to a steady state of the psychical barometer is least perceptible, and the sky of the soul is mostly serene. Yet even here its pressure is never absent, for, indeed, it surrounds mankind everywhere, and nowhere can we escape from it.

II.

The sufferings of mankind, its cares and toils, are so universal that they appear to be bound up with life itself. Our forefathers dreamed of a life without labor and thought that labor had come into the world as the penalty of sin, but a careful investigation of the nature of life will teach us that labor is an intrinsic feature in the constitution, not only of this earth, but of any possible world of living beings.

No exertion would be needed in a universe which consisted of inert matter only, but as this world of ours is a world of life, of spiritual aspiration, and of progressive evolution, we have labor. Labor is simply the consequence of life, and labor alone is the means of the acquisition of higher life.

If we lived in a paradise with an abundance of supplies for the necessities of life, mankind would soon increase so as to utilise them to their full extent, and we should artificially have to create new resources to render the old ones more productive, or if the limit were reached, struggle would arise; and struggle is only a peculiar form of labor, involving the same or even greater hardships.

Growth is impossible without labor, and thus labor is inevitable in any possible world in which organised life appears. Without labor, life would never develop from its lowest plane to higher and ever higher conditions.

Suppose the supplies for the sustenance of life were so inexhaustible that they were in space everywhere, that they surrounded us as water surrounds the fish; and suppose the ocean of life were as boundless as infinite space, would not life be satisfied in itself? Would it ever develop higher qualities than those of a senseless vegetation? A life without wants lacks the stimulus of evolution. Resistance is needed to develop the spirit of man and his rational will. Progress, growth, aspiration would be meaningless in a world without needs; they are actually impossible; but if they were possible they would be redundant and even nonsensical, like the fixed ideas of a lunatic.

Labor is inseparable from any life that has a purpose, for labor is the accomplishment of a purpose, and by labor we rise higher and higher on the ladder of life.

Labor is the school of the soul; it is the educational system of nature by which she teaches her creatures, imparting to them her lessons and instructions. But since labor constitutes the object-lessons of mankind's education, it is labor which begats our souls and creates the substance of which our spiritual being consists.

What is our eye but the sum of innumerable memories of seeing? Every organ is the inherited product of a constantly repeated activity.

If a being in any of its organs fails to suit the conditions under which it has developed, it is cut off from further existence, while the most perfect individuals are selected from the continuation of its kind.

Man's entire organisation, corporeal as well as intellectual, is, as it were, capitalised labor; it is the preservation of former work employed to render future work more effective. When the psychologist on the loom of science unravels the web and woof of the human soul he finds that there is nothing in it but work and the product of work. Does not this consideration open a new vista for the appreciation of labor?

III.

Thus we see that the origin of labor rises from the needs of life, and labor itself is the means of acquiring a greater fulness of existence. Labor is the symptom of the presence of spirit; it is the manifestation of
spirit, for without labor the soul could never make its appearance in the world.

According to the law of cause and effect a premium is given to those who strain their energies most potently in the right direction of the evolution of life. Those who swerve away from the straight path or lag behind in the general advance are cut off in the competition for survival. Thus we understand that nature always exacts the greatest possible exertions, appearing to her children as a cruel taskmaster, driving those who loiter with ruthless lashes of her whip, and taxing the strength of all to the utmost.

The unavoidable urgency of labor for the mere sustenance of life and its exigency are perceived as a tyrannical oppression, and this is the reason why we can speak at all of the curse of labor; but understanding that our labor represents an onward march, and that every step taken in the direction is an advance to higher conditions of life and a noble evolution of spirit, we shall see that the hardships of labor beget the highest blessings attainable.

Consider but the nature of your soul, analyse your own spiritual being, unravel the skein of your ideas, thoughts, desires, habits, aspirations, and you will see that you are the product of labor previously done. There is no living being but consists of the summed-up inherited memories of innumerable exertions since an immeasurably remote past.

How wonderful is the structure of man's bodily system, nay, of every tree, every rose, every blade of grass, and of any creature of any description. Their nature is determined according to the law of cause and effect by all their actions in former existences and in their present state of being. Special conditions make life react in a special way, and every mode of reaction forms a precedent. It is preserved as a memory ready for revival. It stays and remains an immortal presence for all time to come. Thus it is for our own benefit that nature forces the unwilling like a slave-driver to exert themselves, for while toiling and laboring we are building up our souls and immortalise our being in the universal life of mankind.

Labor, accordingly, forms the contents of life and the substance of our soul. Labor, with all its grievances, is a blessing, nay, it is the source of all blessings; it is the condition of man's humanity and the foundation upon which rests his dignity.

The life of a man who does not labor is an empty blank. He is like seeds that uselessly rot away without sprouting and blossoming out into a full evolution of the noble potentialities to which his spiritual inheritance has destined him. The constant application of our talents is the price we have to pay for continuing on the list of the living. Says Faust in the dying scene:

"Yes! to this thought I hold with firm persistence
The last result of wisdom stamps it true:
He only earns his freedom and existence,
Who daily conquers them anew,
Thus here, by dangers girt, shall glide away
Of childhood, manhood, age, the vigorous day."

The luxuries of life and the ease afforded by great wealth quickly inveigle men into loose ways of action and entice them into indulgence in the pleasures of life to the neglect of industrious work and serious occupation. The truth is that most men, perhaps all of us, need a certain pressure which will gently compel them to work out their own salvation, few can stand affluence or ease. Goethe, who knew the breadth and depths of the human soul, says:

"Nichts ist schwerer zu ertragen,
Als eine Reise von guten Tagen."
[Nothing more difficult to bear,
Than many good days devoid of care.]

By labor alone we acquire the right to our manhood; he who does not work is not worthy to be called a man; he is like the prodigal son who wastes his inheritance and is doomed, in his spiritual existence at least, to sink down to the level of the swine, for he feeds his soul with intellectual swill and degrades his nobility to the self-indulgence of a mere vegetative existence, which will finally doom his type of existence to an ignominious extermination.

There was a time, and in some parts of the world it still lingers with us, when the ruling classes arrogated all the rights to themselves and shouldered all the duties upon others. The enfranchisement from labor was considered the privilege of the aristocracy. This principle was carried to its extreme in France since the time of Louis XIV., reaching its climax under Louis XV., and tragically ending in the catastrophe of the French Revolution. It seemed possible to the powerful to divide society into two castes, one born for enjoyment only, the other destined to work. They contrived a plan of throwing all the burdens of life upon the so-called tiers état, the third estate, which compared with the nobility and clergy was considered as a lower class, while luxuries and pleasures were reserved to those of noble birth. The consequence of this policy was the emasculation of the so-called upper classes, and while the tiers état had been nothing but the drudge of the others, it, by this very reason, became the standard-bearer of the civilisation and at last the sole wielder of all power. Said the Abbé Sieyes in the critical days before the outbreak of the Revolution:

"Qu'est-ce que le tiers état?" (What is the third estate?) and he answered, "Tout," i. e. all! The tiers état, he said, does all the work, industrial as well as intellectual: in the fields, in the trades, in the government, in the army, among the clergy, and at the
bar: the tiers état is burdened with all that is toil or worry. Those positions, however, which are endowed with rich emoluments and honors are exclusively in the hands of the aristocracy. This oligarchy of the privileged is a social crime and treason against public welfare. An aristocracy which places itself above the nation ceases to belong to the nation and is no longer a part of it. Those who labor are all, and ought to be all.

It is scarcely necessary to add that we use the word "labor" in its most comprehensive meaning. The term "labor" is applicable, not only to the work of the man who carries the hod, but also to the planning of the architect; it embraces the exertions of the sailor and also the thoughts of the captain who directs the ship's course. Toil is entitled to respect and sympathy, but let us remember that toil is not limited to those whose work can mechanically be measured, because it is performed with muscles; toil is the common fate of all workers.

It is characteristic of the national character of our country that labor is no longer regarded as degrading. Our most prominent men and women in all branches of public, industrial, commercial, and private life have never been ashamed to work; indeed they have been great workers, and success in this country, more so than in any other, depends not on birth, inherited wealth, or even natural gifts, but upon the energetic application of our abilities in practical life. America is destined to produce an aristocracy of laborers, not of such as impose restrictions upon those people who do not belong to a certain clique or clan, but of true laborers, of producers and increasers of wealth, of men who regard labor as the seal of man's manhood, as evidencing his worth and proving his dignity.

v.

There are many more considerations which suggest themselves in connexion with our subject. It is, for instance, a strange fact that every useful work tends to spread its blessings over the whole world. It is as if all mankind were destined to inherit the boons of a worker, a thinker, an inventor. What, for instance, have the Bedouins done to deserve to be benefited by the invention of rifles? Nothing at all. Nevertheless, they have their guns and protect themselves against wild beasts and other enemies, as if one of their fathers had invented the use of gun-powder. The same is true of all other inventions, the benefits of which are communicated more and more to all mankind. Further, no one can utilise capital, which is the hoarded treasure of former labor, without engaging labor, and thus opening to laborers new fields of employment. This world is not built to accommodate the egotist who wants everything for himself, but it aggrandises him only who communicates the fruits of his industry to his fellow men.

Before concluding this lecture allow me to add only one more consideration. We must learn that the so called labor problem is not due to special conditions of the present time which by the application of some panacea can be solved, but that it is the present condition only of labor in its import to the various members of the human race. It is an expression of the resentment against the unavoidable hardships of labor the cause of which is often ill understood, and also the constantly renewed attempts to readjust their equal distribution. The hope that the time will come when the labor problem will be definitely settled can only evoke a smile. We might as well expect to suppress all storms and produce never ceasing sunshine upon earth.

Our authorities endeavor to give full liberty to the readjustments between the various classes of society among themselves and also between single classes in their relations to the public at large, as they appear in strikes and other social disturbances, for a suppression of discontent by force will prove only a temporary expediency, and on the other hand the struggling parties must be educated to the full consciousness of their responsibilities. They must understand that the ethics of social struggle demands a strict obedience to the law. As soon as they resort to violence they will have to suffer violence themselves. "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matth. xxvi, 52). No strike has as yet been successful through intimidation, destruction of property, or rioting. Illegal acts can only ruin the party for whose benefit deluded zealots commit them. What we need is evolution, not revolution.

The solution of the labor problem as it is to-day can end neither in the abolition nor in the nationalisation of capital, but must seek its increase and wide distribution. He who lives from hand to mouth must acquire foresight, he must learn to save and imitate the capitalist in his thrift and circumspection; in a word, he must also become a capitalist.

The more capital our laborers acquire, the better wages can they exact, and the more prosperous will be the whole state of society; for a laboring class which is possessed of means not only will be better educated but can afford to be independent. It need no longer solicit the patronage of capital.

When the laborer is destitute capital engages labor at the lowest price a laborer can afford to accept; however, where the laborer is himself a capitalist he can exact the highest price capital can afford to pay. And let me add, in the degree that the laborer partakes of the risks and sorrows of capital, he will become more conservative; his judgment will be maturer and he will
know what he can reasonably demand of capital. Nor is there any doubt that under the more favorable conditions of a larger stock of capitalised wealth, all his reasonable demands will be granted.

Thus we conclude with the paradoxical propositions that our capitalists in order to prosper must remain laborers, while our laborers for their own welfare must become capitalists.

Let us not look for a millennium on earth, but let us hope for progress. This life is intrinsically a world of labor, and the laborer is he who builds the future. Labor consists of toil, drudgery, and privations of all kinds, yet it is the essence of all that is great, noble, and elevating. As the word of the Psalmist expresses it:

"The days of our life are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow."

P. C.

Buddhism in Japan.

By Nobuta Kishimoto, M.A.

IV. Present Condition.

Although Japanese Buddhism is divided into many sects, yet these sects agree in many points. I have said above that there are three systems of religion and morality in Japan: Shintoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism, living together on friendly terms, helping one another and supplying one another’s insufficiency. Shintoism in itself has at least ten different sects, while there are two broad divisions among the scholars of Chinese philosophy. As to Buddhism, there are ten (or, twelve) sects in existence which in turn are subdivided into more than thirty minor sects.

One might suppose that if there are so many sects and subsects among the Buddhists, there must be some narrow sectarian spirit among them. Yes, there is some such spirit; and yet as in the case of the different systems of religion and morality, so also among the different sects of one system, the relation is more friendly and pleasant than one is apt to suppose. Most Buddhists admit that Buddha taught all sorts of teaching according to the needs of the special case and the degree of intelligence of his hearers. He is said to have preached both the Hinayana and Mahayana doctrines, both the temporary and permanent doctrines, both the sudden and gradual doctrines, both the expeditious and true doctrines, and finally both the esoteric and exoteric doctrines. It is natural, of course, for the followers of each sect to regard their own sect as superior to the rest, but the majority of the Japanese Buddhists admit the peculiar excellence of each and all of these different sects.

It is important to bear in mind that the followers of Buddhism, in Japan, as elsewhere, are divided into two great classes, the clergy and the laity or the special believers and the ordinary believers. By the clergy I mean priests, monks, and nuns, who forsake this world and its pleasures to devote their lives and their all to the study and promulgation of Buddhism. By the laity I mean the ordinary men and women who live ordinary lives and pursue ordinary occupations, yet who believe in Buddhism and seek to be saved. The clergy, as a rule, adhere more strictly to the teachings of their own respective sects and call themselves by the name of the sects to which they belong. But among the lay members this line of demarcation, although there is such a line, is very faint and very irregular. It is true that every family in Japan used to have its own sect, as the sect of my father’s family was the Jodo sect. It is true, also, that in certain districts certain sects are more predominant than other sects. But it is also true that many a temple of one sect is crowded by the believers of the different sects, while the temples of the different sects are visited by one and the same pilgrim.

Now let us investigate some important features of Japanese Buddhism, which are common to all the sects and also common to both the clergy and the laity.

All these sects agree not only in tracing the fundamental origin of their teaching and thought to Buddha, but also in not being atheistic. This double agreement is remarkable, for, as far as we know from the Pali or Southern Scriptures, which are generally regarded as purer and older than the Northern ones, Buddha did not admit the existence of God, neither did he attempt to explain the origin of the universe. In Mālunaka suata we have the following story, which Spence Hardy gives in his Manual of Buddhism. "When Mālunaka asked the Buddha whether the existence of the world is eternal or not eternal, he made him no reply; but the reason of this was, that it was considered by the teacher as an inquiry that tended to no profit." Thus not only the primary origin of the universe was left unsolved by Buddha, but the general tenor of his whole teaching is against theism, the doctrine that affirms the existence of One Permanent and Personal Cause of the universe. The salvation taught by Buddha is well described by Dr. Rhys Davids in the following words: "Salvation merely by self-control and love, without any of the rites, any of the ceremonies, any of the charms, any of the priestly powers, any of the gods, in which men love to trust." Such seems to have been the original teaching of Buddha, assuming the Pali Scriptures to be the faithful record of his teachings.

Now, all the Japanese Buddhist sects trace their origin to Buddha and call themselves Buddhist sects, but none of them is as atheistic as this original teaching of Buddha. Instead of being atheistic, some of
them are pantheistic, while others may almost be called theistic. Most of them assert that all living beings have the "nature of Buddha" and hence they can attain Buddhahood—the calm and happy state of Enlightenment—either in this life or in a future one. As this "nature of Buddha" is regarded to be everywhere and within reach of every living being, and as it is, in one sense, not substantially different from that immortal principle of life or energy which pervades the universe, all those sects which hold this view may be called pantheistic. Some sects assert the existence of an all-wise and all compassionate, as well as eternal and permanent, Being called Amitabha Buddha, whose special residing place is the "Pure Land in the West." As far as I can see, this conception of Amitabha is not much different from the Christian idea of God who is said to be in heaven. If the latter can be called theistic, I see no reason why the former should not be called theistic. Anyway, all the Japanese Buddhist sects differ from the original teaching of Buddha in their not being atheistic.

In the second place, all these sects agree in the belief in the transmigration of the soul. I say the "transmigration of the soul," and not simply "transmigration," because not only the conception of transmigration is impossible without something to transmigrate, but as a matter of fact the most, I might say all, Japanese Buddhists admit the existence of the soul as well as its transmigration. As to the question What becomes of individual souls when freed from transmigration, some difference of opinion exists. Some seem to think that then the consciousness of individual souls as separate entities ceases because of their enlightenment, that the separate existences are illusions, everything being Buddha and Buddha being everything. Others take a less subtle point of view and claim that all souls will continue as such, each enjoying the eternal and pure happiness in Paradise. But both of these schools unite in the teaching that, as long as there is necessity for transmigration, so long the individual souls will continue to exist as such.

It is universally admitted, even by the Western Buddhist scholars, that Buddha taught the doctrine of transmigration. But did Buddha admit the existence of the soul capable of transmigration? The Western scholars tell us that the doctrine of atman, i. e., of soul or self, was regarded by Buddha, together with sensuality, heresy, and belief in the efficacy of rites and ceremonies, as the four things which cause birth, pain, decay, and death,—the "four miseries." According to them, Buddha denied the reality of the immortal soul or self, as well as the reality of God and the universe. If so, what transmigrates? Transmigration is admitted, but there seems to be nothing left to transmigrate. How can we reconcile this inconsistency?

Some Japanese Buddhists are of opinion that in one sense Buddha denied the reality of the soul, but in another sense admitted its reality. He denied the reality of the phenomenal or conscious soul, but he did not deny the reality of the noumenal or real soul. These scholars seem to admit that there exist certain forms of activity, which lie in man behind what we call his conscious soul, and which only under certain conditions emerge above the horizon of consciousness; that this activity is subject to both subjective and objective influences, so that habits and tendencies can be formed in it; that it is indestructible and is destined by a mysterious law of transmigration to pass through different lives and generations. In this way the above inconsistency is reconciled. The fact of transmigration is accounted for by the indestructibility of these forms of activity, while the denial of the existence of the "atman, soul, or self," can be explained by this, that Buddha denied only the existence of the phenomenal soul, the "noumenal soul" being left untouched. Even Dr. Rhys Davids, when he says that "the 'grasping state of mind' causes the new being (not, of course, a new soul, but a new set of skandhas, a new body with mental tendencies and capabilities)" seems to admit the transmigration of some "mental tendencies and capabilities," if not the soul itself.

In the third place, all our Buddhist sects agree in the adoption of the doctrine of karma. Whatever be the origin and nature of the doctrine of transmigration, it has always been very influential among the Buddhists, because it explains the apparently unjust distribution of happiness and misery here on this earth. The word karma literally means "doing," or "deed," but it is generally understood to mean rather the "result or fruit of doing or deed," than "doing or deed" itself. The essence of the doctrine of karma is well expressed by the sentence: "Whatever a man soweth, that also shall he reap." You may die and your body may decay; the result of your deeds, either good or bad, does not die. Sooner or later you have to reap the fruit thereof. Thus if you are in a miserable condition in this life and yet cannot suspect any cause of your own for that condition, Buddha will tell you that "you are reaping the effect of your evil deeds in your past lives, for although your consciousness may cease and your body may decay, yet your actions, words, and thoughts will live and work out their full effect either to the pleasant or the bitter end in this and in coming lives, till an end is set to all by the attainment of Nirvana.

In the fourth place, all the Japanese Buddhist sects agree in the adoption of the doctrine of Nirvana, although as to the exact meaning and condition represented by this word they differ among themselves, while they also differ more or less as to the exact na-
ture of the original teaching of the founder of their religion. What Buddha meant by Nirvāṇa is not the question I propose to investigate. Whether he meant by Nirvāṇa the complete annihilation of the body and the soul, or only the "extinction of that sinful, grasping condition of mind and heart," is immaterial here. The Japanese Buddhists are widely different in their understanding of the nature of the state indicated by the word Nirvāṇa. Some sects identify Nirvāṇa with the Western paradise, and with them to enter Nirvāṇa means to enter into this happy and eternal life of the Pure Land where death and sorrow are unknown. Other sects understand Nirvāṇa to mean a calm and blessed state of enlightenment, free from all sorts of evils and disturbances. This state of enlightenment can be entered into here on this earth, for it is the result of discipline and contemplation. Thus with the Japanese Buddhists, Nirvāṇa does not necessarily mean the annihilation even of the body, for many of the pleasures of the Western paradise are of a physical nature. Far less does it mean the annihilation of the soul. Nirvāṇa is universally represented as the blessed state of existence, in which there is no birth nor death. It is also regarded as of eternal duration. It may begin here on this earth, but it will continue eternally on the other shore of the sea of sorrow and death. If there is any idea of annihilation contained in the doctrine of Nirvāṇa, as it is understood by our Buddhists, it is found in the annihilation of evil thoughts, evil desires, and evil passions. These must be destroyed, for without their destruction the attainment of the state of enlightenment is impossible. Thus even here the distinction is clear. We annihilate evil passions in order to attain Nirvāṇa, and hence this Nirvāṇa must be something positive and not a mere negation.

In the fifth and last place, all the Japanese Buddhist sects are unanimous in being ultimately optimistic in spirit and in teaching. At present, whenever one hears the word pessimism pronounced, his associations will soon carry him either to Schopenhauer or to Buddha. The former represents the modern pessimism, the latter represents the ancient pessimism. The one was born in Europe, and the other in Asia. The one taught his pessimism in the midst of the Christian civilisation, while the other preached his pessimism among heathen ascetics and idolators. How much is common between these two systems, or how much pessimism was really contained in the Buddhism of Buddha, does not concern us here. Sufficient to say that Buddha was so deeply impressed with the impermanence and misery of human life, that he is reported finally to have arrived at the conclusion that existence itself is an evil, and that an end must be put to our own existence. Here lies the fundamental pessimism of the teaching of Buddha. He thought that our life is full of sorrow and suffering; that desires are the cause of the origin and continuation of life; that these desires must be annihilated in order to put an end to both our life and its misery; that to annihilate our desires we must practise "eight virtues"; and that to practise these virtues and thus to attain Nirvāṇa the best way is to renounce this world and to join the Order.

In Japan, as well as in China, Buddhism is not so absolutely pessimistic. Indeed, it becomes more and more optimistic as it journeys further and further from its native soil. The Buddhism of China is, generally speaking, more optimistic than that of Buddha himself, and again, the Buddhism of Japan is more optimistic than that of China. Theoretically, most Japanese Buddhist sects hold a pessimistic view of the present world, but practically the monks and priests of these sects are in many respects made optimistic by the healthy and cheerful influences of the Japanese social life. Many sects declare that even in this life, even with this material body born of parents, one can attain the state of happiness and enlightenment. Buddhism is much more optimistic in its relation to the present world in Japan than anywhere else.

**CHAPTERS FROM THE NEW APOCRYPHA.**

**BY HUDOR GENONE.**

**THE PARABLE OF THE GOLDEN BOWL.**

There was a certain rich man which had a great household and many servants;

And he was old and well stricken in years, and he had an only son in whom his soul delighted.

Whom he kept under governors till the time should come when he was of full age.

And the lad grew and waxed strong, for he ate simple food convenient for him, even bread and the milk of kine and goats.

And the lad had a wooden bowl from which he ate, fashioned like unto them his father's servants used.

But it came to pass that his father made a feast; and while the guests dined, the lad looked in upon them as they sat at meat;

And he saw and beheld that every one had a golden bowl and did eat therefrom.

And the lad was grieved and said unto his father, Give me, I pray thee, likewise a golden bowl that I be not ashamed.

And his father took the wooden bowl and called an artificer, and the artificer did gild the bowl.

And the lad did eat from the gilded bowl and was content, and became puffed up because of the bowl.

Then the tutor said unto him, Why art thou puffed
up? And he showed him a bowl of gold, and let the lad take it in the one hand, and his own gilded bowl in the other.

Then said the lad, My father hath deceived me. And he ran and told his father how he had weighed the bowls in his hands, and his own was wanting;

Again his father sent to the artificer; and the artificer took the wooden bowl and in it he put a lump of lead, and did gild it yet again.

And the lad took the bowl that was gilded and rejoiced in that he found it heavy;

And he was puffed up yet the more, and did say unto the servants and the tutor that he was the heir, and boasted exceedingly.

That same day was another feast made; and the lad said unto his father, Bid me, I pray thee, to the feast, for I have a golden bowl even as thy guests which are bidden.

And his father did as the lad desired;

And the feast was made, and every guest at the feast ate, every one out of his own golden bowl.

Now when they had done eating the priest came in, saying, Give now thine offerings unto the Lord, every man his own offering.

Then every man gave his offering unto the priest, yea, every man his own golden bowl.

And the priest took the bowls, beginning at the first unto the last, from every man his own bowl.

And as he took the bowls he said unto him whose offering it was, Is this thine offering?

And the guest, each in his own order, answered and said, It is mine offering.

And the priest spoke again, saying, Is this thine offering which thou hast made worthy for an offering unto the Lord?

Then every guest answered, each in his own order, It is worthy. Test it, I pray thee, whether or not it be worthy for an offering unto the Lord.

And the priest took the offerings of gold and tried them; for every man his own offering; and every offering was found worthy.

And when he came unto the lad he said also unto him, Is this thine offering?

And the lad answered and said unto the priest, It is mine offering.

And again the priest said unto him, Is this thine offering which thou hast made worthy for an offering unto the Lord?

Then the lad answered, It is worthy.

And the priest was wroth, and said, Sayest thou not unto me, test it, whether or not it be worthy for an offering unto the Lord?

And while the lad was dumb before him, the priest tried the bowl, and it brake in pieces like a potter's vessel, and the leaden weight fell out.

And the lad was shamed before them all, and he went out and wept bitterly.

But while he was yet weeping his father came unto him. And he called together the servants and the tutor, and said unto them,

Bring unto this my son another bowl of wood and let him eat therefrom until the time that he shall be of full age.

And unto the lad he saith, Now seest thou my son thy folly and thine haste. Tarry yet awhile under thy governors.

Thou didst think in thy heart that I dealt not aright thee, and didst say with thy lips that I deceived thee.

Yet was it in love that I tempted thee and tried thee, and showed thee both the false and the true.

And the lad cried unto his father, saying, O father, I have sinned in that I have desired to be that which I was not. Father, forgive me, for I knew not what I did.

NOTES.

The Labor Day address published in the present number of The Open Court was delivered, on September 1, at the camp of the Spiritualistic Association of Lake Brady, Ohio, upon the invitation of its president, Capt. Benjamin F. Lee. The editor of The Open Court enjoyed on this occasion a visit at one of the headquarters of spiritualism, where he became acquainted not only with several leaders of the movement but also with their customs, modes of thought, and aspirations. He has seen much that was new to him, the report of which would prove very interesting.

But the subject is too great to be disposed of without entering deeper into several intricate problems, and venturing more boldly into an investigation of facts. This is sufficient reason to drop the task at present, as there is plenty of other urgent work, which, being begun and half completed, cannot be dropped. At some distant future, when more at leisure and better equipped with a more complete information, we hope to be able to deal with the new problem that has been presented to us.

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