



A Book of Secrets

HORATIO W. DRESSER

A Book of Secrets

A Book of Secrets

with Studies in the Art of Self-Control

Horatio W. Dresser

YogeBooks: Hollister, MO

YOgeBooks by Roger L. Cole, Hollister, MO 65672
© 2015 YOgeBooks by Roger L. Cole
All rights reserved. Electronic edition published 2015
ISBN: 978-1-61183-296-9 PDF
ISBN: 978-1-61183-297-6 EPUB
2015:10:03:04:32:29
www.yogebooks.com

The text of this ebook is in the public domain, but this ebook is not. Please do not distribute it without authorization.

Contents

CHAPTER I. THE SECRET OF SUCCESS	3
CHAPTER II. A SECRET OF EVOLUTION	9
CHAPTER III. THE SECRET OF ADJUSTMENT	13
CHAPTER IV. SOCIAL ADJUSTMENTS	17
CHAPTER V. SECRETS OF THE AGE	25
CHAPTER VI. A CHRISTIAN SECRET	31
CHAPTER VII. ANOTHER SECRET	35
CHAPTER VIII. THE SECRET OF PESSIMISM	37
CHAPTER IX. THE SECRET OF WORK	41
CHAPTER X. THE ART OF HEALTH	45
CHAPTER XI. THE SECRET OF SELF-HELP	49
CHAPTER XII. THE SECRET OF ACTION	53
CHAPTER XIII. A VITAL SECRET	61
CHAPTER XIV. A PERSONAL LETTER	65
CHAPTER XV. THE SECRET OF CHARACTER	67
CHAPTER XVI. SPIRITUAL LAWS	75
CHAPTER XVII. A SOUL'S MESSAGE	87
BIBLIOGRAPHY	93

A Book of Secrets

Chapter I. The Secret of Success

EVERY MAN wants to succeed. He may not know why or in what respect. But love of power is innate; and even the lowest member of society is spurred on by an ill-defined restlessness, a half-conscious ambition, at least to realise the ideals of self-interest.

Success itself is a powerful incentive, for man is an imitative being. But success has many lessons to teach, according to the point of view of the observer. What the world applauds, the wise may condemn. What is deemed success by one is regarded as failure by another. Before we try to master the secret, we must agree upon a standard which applies to all cases.

Probably everyone who thinks about it would agree that success crowns man's efforts only to the degree in which he expresses himself. A half-finished work, a deed which has called forth only a moderate display of power, is not what is called a success. In a successful undertaking man mounts as high as he can. Consequently, a successful piece of work fulfils many ends. It gives play to originality. It is of benefit to humanity. It brings material reward. It is a work of art. It is ethical. Its production is a pleasure. If our work lacks one of these essentials, we feel that it has fallen short. Success, therefore, is many-sided, it is beautiful. Like the divine order, it is organic.

A man may, it is true, subordinate all ends to money-making, and accumulate a vast amount of money. By business men he is called successful. But is his life, is he, a success? The chances are that he has used questionable means, that he has striven day and night, and won his fortune through the oppression of thousands. His work, therefore, lacks proportion, intrinsically and extrinsically. It has been wrought at enormous expense and sacrifice. On the other hand, if a man's work is sound, beautiful, and is wrought because in it the man truly found himself, it is sure to bring financial return, although not produced with that end in view. By observing the law of proportion, of adjustment between various ends, the secondary ideals are realised without specifically labouring for them. And, surely, moneymaking must always be a secondary end if man is an ethical, a spiritual being.

Moreover, since success is symmetrical, it is free from the painful reactions which follow when one attempts to shape all things for personal ends. For example, when a man uses unscrupulous financial methods he may not at once suffer, but every unethical deed must be accounted for. The only success which permits a man to rest peacefully is the deed which expresses, first, his soul, his heart, his conscience; and, second, is true to each of the subordinate details.

If, then, success is primarily moral and spiritual, governed by the law of proportion, a man must know himself many-sidedly to succeed. The essentials of success, on the inner side, are a high ideal, self-knowledge, self-control, and self-cultivation; and, on the outer, self-realisation, tempered by ethical recognition of society.

A man may indeed be on the road to success when his conduct is subordinate to commercialism, or when he is the possessor of great wealth; but he cannot truly be called successful as a human being. And unless a man be a success as a human being, let us repeat, his work is never truly successful.

The welfare of others is essential to the success of every man, however independent he seems. While thousands of people are in dire need no

millionaire may rightly be called successful. He may give thousands to found charitable institutions or endow universities, but he cannot hide the fact that the social organism of which he is a member has still a demand upon him.

It is undoubtedly a law that the more man cares for the spiritual life, the less interest he takes in material possessions, considered as of value in themselves. He values tangible wealth for what it brings and undoubtedly may possess a vast amount of it and still be human. He enjoys the world of nature and observes physical laws. However spiritual he may be, his work should bring sufficient financial return to keep him comfortably housed, clothed, and fed. But, generally speaking, he is likely to place too little value upon material things to be accounted wealthy. Life is too precious to spend in money-making. We may as well relegate the financial standard of success to the lower order, whither every true man has already subordinated that which the world applauds.

The man who aspires to spiritual success may as well anticipate classification as a failure by the majority of men. He must also be prepared to meet the taunts of people who sneeringly call him impractical.

Success is supremely practical. A spiritual work is not a success if one must be constantly dropping hints or begging. It is not a success when one keeps alive only because pitying friends every now and then come to the rescue with money and clothes. These deeds of charity are sometimes pointed out as evidences that the spiritual law has been demonstrated. They are rather evidences of downright failure. They are sure signs of asceticism or fanaticism. A mistaken view of life is betrayed by this spurious spirituality.

As already intimated, if a thing is a success, it is needed by the world. If needed, it will be supported. To the degree that it is propped, it fails to meet one of the essentials of success. It is a pathetic fact that, because of their blind optimism, spiritually developed people seldom know when they have failed. It is more pitiable still that, having decried all business methods as "commercial," they resort to means and methods which are far below the standards of the honest business man.

The understanding of the multiform constitution of man is thus one of the credentials of success. Another essential is knowledge of natural law. Why does Nature succeed? Because she is painstaking, and never hurries through or tries to evade even the most insignificant stage of evolution, and because she seeks the line of least resistance.

The successful man takes plenty of time for thought. He carefully looks the ground over, searches for weak and strong points, then adjusts himself to the needed conditions. He is patient, considerate, poised. He husband his energy. He awaits fitting occasions. When the right time comes, he strikes out courageously. He gladly learns the lessons of partial failures, and, having discovered the remedy, wastes no energy either in regrets or promises. He is the man of action, the willing worker, a faithful believer in himself.

He is wise enough to have more than one pursuit. Both work and play are organic; his avocation counterbalances his vocation. He is not a mere partisan, but primarily a truth-seeker. He can serve a cause, on occasion; but this is not his best work. He is not a proselyter, but a brother.

Included in the secret of success are thus many other secrets which we shall consider in these pages before uttering the final word. The art of health is one, the art of work another, the art of social adjustment is a third; and we shall have somewhat to say about character.

Here is what one man indicates as the secret of his success: fidelity to the spontaneous promptings of his higher self. For those promptings have somehow led the way to each of the subordinate essentials.

Consecration to a life-work, another says.

Tremendous capacity for work, others say.

Thus each man learns the same secret in his own way. The sooner he comes to judgment, the more quickly will he begin to succeed.

It is a partial help to affirm success, but there are no royal roads to it. There is no formula for success. The Power which called us into being as granted to each the possibilities of success; and even if it be but partial success in the external world, it shall be perfect in the world of the soul.

The secret of success is, in fine, to live by the Spirit. All other methods must partly fail. Man's many-sidedness is the form which the creative life assumes. This must be thoroughly understood and faithfully developed. But it is the Spirit which gives life to this form. The true beauty is of the soul; and while all so-called success is of educational value, in the end it is only the soul that succeeds.

Chapter II. A Secret of Evolution

ONE OF the great lessons of the ages is this many-sided ideal which we have found to be the form of success. The Greeks understood this law of symmetry, and not only chose beauty as the ideal of practical life, but described the universe in terms of order, beauty. But the tendency of the more spiritual nations was decidedly narrow in comparison. In India the spiritual man became a hermit or monk. All through the Middle Ages in Europe, the ascetic life prevailed among the spiritually inclined. The body was despised, culture was allowed to fall into oblivion, and it was only the determined effort of the leaders of the Renaissance which finally brought about a reform through a return to the Greek ideal.

In all ages the noblest Christians have tended to one-sidedness. Excessive thought upon the spiritual world, entire dedication to the life of self-sacrifice, tends to this result.

From one point of view no career is so noble as that of the self-sacrificing Christian. I would not for a moment underestimate this ideal. But the world has gradually reacted from this extreme position, so that to-day very few defend a strictly ascetic life.

Moreover, the Greek spirit has so persistently worked its way into the Christian life that we can no longer call ourselves simply Christians, in the old sense of the word. We are assimilating Greek life in the Christian spirit.

The Greek ideal was self-realisation, the symmetrical development of all our faculties and powers. The Christian ideal, as enunciated by Jesus, was love, humility, service. And we are learning that there is ultimately no conflict between individuality and service. There is no need to mortify the flesh or restrain the art impulse. The more broadly cultivated we are, the more skilful and beautiful, the more truly we can serve.

The same lesson is taught by Nature. Nature knows no excess. She proceeds by slow and easy stages until her products are artistically complete. She is organic; all her products are organic. Nothing is complete in itself. Everything must serve. And the grand outcome of this service of parts, this co-operation of organs, is at once Greek and Christian; it fulfils the ideals of beauty and love.

Thus the ideal of all evolutionary development is symmetry. Our being consists of body, reason, conscience, the social instinct, the sentiment of worship; and reason assures us that we must give due time and thought to all of these. We must have physical exercise, we must feed the intellect, we must be moral, we must express our affections, serve our fellows, and manifest the religious spirit. If we attend to all of these our life will be. sound, beautiful, true, noble.

Conversely, if we suffer, if we are distressed, miserable, and unhappy, we may know that we have been guilty of excess. Disease is excess. Pain is an expression of excess. Its cure is poise, moderation, equanimity. Consequently, the remedy for every defect is beauty, proportion, organic adjustment.

First, then, know yourself as a rounded being; discover your needs and tendencies.

Second, learn Nature's way of realising the ideals of beauty and love through gradual evolution, and adjust yourself to Nature's pace, remembering that impatience is ugliness.

Finally, call the powers of mind into play by calmly yet persistently dwelling upon the rounded-out ideal. Co-operate with Nature in thought. Adjust yourself philosophically to all that she aspires to achieve through you. Thus shall you learn that harmonious lesson which every human experience is designed to teach. Thus shall you gradually overcome the ills and torments of the flesh, the ugliness of thought and deed, and the unruly tendencies which formerly led to constant excess.

Chapter III. The Secret of Adjustment

SOCRATES DECLARED that his work in life was to help the growing mind to express its ideas. By skilful questioning he first learned his pupil's point of view; then by raising equally skilful objections he compelled the young mind to defend itself, and so deliver its full message. Thus was born into full life among the Greeks the method which is now the pride of what we call the New Education. And thus was outlined a philosophy which Henry Ward Beecher summarised in these words: "Find out the way God is going, and then go in that way." The best thought of our time recognises this philosophy as the essence of wisdom in all our relations with life.

The fundamental fact about the universe is that God is resident in it, forwarding its evolution. The fundamental fact in regard to human life is that the soul is immanent in it, demanding expression.

All philosophical and practical endeavour must take account of the fact that the conditions which enable God and the soul to come forth are secondary in importance. God and the soul stand first. The adjustment is not to the rhythm of the external or educational process, but to the power within, the quickening life which attracts the conditions essential to evolution.

God is to be judged not by the passing event, which may inadequately reveal him, but by what he is making of and through the universe during all

the ages. The soul cannot be truly understood by this or that deed alone, which may even misrepresent the true man; but by its life as a whole when seen from the point of view of motive, individuality. The outward expression must ever be imperfect, since the soul unceasingly presses forward.

The real is what man would be. The actual is apparent only, and, like all appearances, is partial, limited. The actual is great only through its suggestiveness of the "flying perfect." The actual passes and is forgotten. What the soul sought to achieve but partly failed to accomplish thereby lives on and on, for ever. Only by regarding the actual in the light of the ideal can we truly help to create the ideal. For creation is not artificial manufacture: it is the evolution of the Spirit into fulness of life. All educational methods err in so far as they seek to rearrange circumstances from outside. Only the soul knows the needs of the soul, and only the soul shall supply the power needed to readjust environment.

First learn the rhythm of the Spirit; then shall you truly know the countless rhythms of the flesh and of all evolution. Know the laws of the soul; then you shall understand the laws of its objectification. Some theorists err by too much concern for the inner life, without due consideration of its measured outworking. Others become so much absorbed in the process that they forget the reality which the process manifests. The highest ideal of adjustment is to remember the soul while taking into account the conditions which it progressively attracts.

To co-operate with God we must know and choose the ideals of God. These are manifold and many-sided. God does not make for pleasure alone but for profit, not alone for truth but for goodness and beauty. To pursue one ideal is to be maimed, as if life were valued as a process simply, not as the instrument of the soul.

Therefore, adjustment requires the keenest discrimination. A thing is good in its place, in proper relation. No faculty, no tendency, is adequate by itself. To feel, to be deeply emotional, is to be noble, if emotion be balanced by organic adjustment in a scale of worths or values. Life is first for feeling, then

for thought; now for science, and now for art; at times for contemplation, and at proper seasons for action. The divine life flows through all the channels of existence, including every portion of the body, and he is wise who neglects none of these.

Error is an aspiration for the truth, potentially immanent in it. Ugliness yearns to be beauty; evil seeks its completion in good. Disease is lack of symmetry; its cure is the attainment of proportion.

In all its multiform tendencies the divine life is moderate, rhythmical; in all adjustment between tendencies moderation is life's lesson. Each tendency may have its rhythm but all are alike characterised by that harmony of motion which makes for beauty, peace, poise. Therefore, the secret of adjustment is the ideal of all art, and every true artist knows that the highest possibility of his life is to build upon the immanent tendency or beauty of the object spread before him. As nature is the landscape of God, so the body is the landscape of the soul. You may search the visible world in vain for some of the features portrayed on canvas or in marble by the great artist. But he saw truly when he wrought. You may wonder at the enthusiasm of the lover when you see the loved one's face. But you will no longer question when you as truly perceive the beauty and nobility of soul. Thus the clue to all that resides in the outer world, as well as to that which merely comes and goes, is the deep-lying beauty, love, truth, goodness. Seek these and you shall find the rest. Seek these and your life shall become a permanent adjustment to the forward-flowing life of God.

Chapter IV. Social Adjustments

SENSITIVELY ORGANISED people seldom need to be reminded of a fault: they need encouragement. It is an art to receive criticism graciously and profit by it, whatever its source and whether or not it be just. It is equally difficult to criticise, to avoid hasty, superficial, and unkind judgments.

As it takes two to make a quarrel, so it requires two to re-establish harmony. It is almost impossible for some people to admit that they are not blameless, that the other party to a quarrel is not the only one to change. Be willing to confess a fault, even if you acknowledge far more than your share.

When one harbours a critical spirit towards another, everything that person does is turned to ill account. When two members of a household agree concerning the faults of a third, the latter suffers a serious disadvantage. In such cases the fault is usually magnified. Generally speaking, an ill wind blows when two put their heads together.

A new-comer in an inharmonious household is apt to think he knows precisely where the fault lies. He assumes to know the people better than those who have "summered and wintered" them.

After a quarrel with a friend, both are inclined to hold off and let the other "make up." This is selfishness.

It is shallow criticism which rejects a person, as soon as limitations are seen. Criticism should be many-sided, judicial, never merely negative. Rightly understood, it is appreciation, never fault-finding. Cease negative criticism, and people will treat you better.

Familiarity breeds neglect and impoliteness. Is there any reason why one should not be as courteous to a brother, a mother, a wife, as to a stranger?

There must be entire frankness where there is to be entire harmony. Sincerity is absolutely essential to friendship.

Where there is domestic inharmony, there must be mutual understanding as the remedy. Love is the greatest remedy. But better understanding is also essential.

Some err by yielding too much, some by yielding not enough.

Do not use pressure. If another fails to see the wisdom of your advice, grant him the liberty of experience.

Life means development. Do not expect unmixed happiness. Call out the soul. Remember the ideals which your associates are seeking to realise, and do not lay stress on the crude conditions of their evolution. Concentrate on ends rather than on means. Remember that your judgment of another is at best only a point of view. It is the other's life as you regard it. You may be mistaken.

When we discover faults in ourselves or in another we are apt to magnify them, as the letters of a printed page are enlarged under a microscope by throwing them out of relation with the neighbouring words. This effect is often intensified by misjudgment of the cause; for frequently we blame ourselves and are criticised for faults which are due to uncontrollable circumstances. Self-condemnation and judgment from appearances may often lead to the erection of obstacles in our pathway, where more careful scrutiny would have given the mind a charitable turn.

A person may seem reserved who is suffering from grief or trouble which a stranger could not share. Or one may seem cold who has a wealth of unexpressed feeling. One may have had great affection to bestow which was

driven back upon itself by rebuffs and misplaced love. Some are deemed reticent who at times tell more than they should, while others are so discreet that their real sentiments are a mystery.

A friend may think he understands another, when there is in reality an undreamed-of depth of inner experience which is only revealed to those in truest sympathy. An apparently dull moralist may even be brilliant, when recounting tales of travel or personal experiences.

The drawing apart of friends is usually due to misunderstanding, to lack of frankness in regard to some new experience. In married life especially there must be entire mutual understanding on every point. The sensitive mind easily closes into self. Its helpmate should immediately come to the rescue with love.

There can be no true friendship without equality. Even though one be far wiser than the other, there must be equality of spirit. The true friend is loyal, patient, never exacting. In true friendship there is always mutual respect, never the familiarity which intimate acquaintance sometimes brings to the uncultivated.

If one has put one's self on exhibition to win an advantage, it is best to throw down the mask at once.

Let the bubble of idolatry be pricked as soon as discovered.

True love never becomes an "old story."

True charity is no respecter of persons.

"Contract" friendship is an absurdity. Equally absurd is "impersonal" friendship. Spontaneity and unselfishness are evidences of true friendship.

He who distrusts others first distrusts himself.

A world of trouble is sometimes caused by those who, assuming to know what is best for a friend, rigidly, dogmatically hold to it, and communicate their opinionated misjudgment to others. What right have onlookers to assume that they know better than the individual soul?

Does not the genuine guidance in regard to all important matters in life, the choice of a vocation, of friends, of husband or wife, come directly to

those who are to be partners to such a friendship? Others may point out certain considerations; but where is the court of final appeal if not in the sacred precincts of the soul, in solitude, free from all dominating influences? Has God left any soul without guidance?

How easily the mind is deceived by selfish desires, personal preferences, social and financial considerations!

What is more contrary to spiritual law than the attempt to manage another, to "marry off to good advantage"? Has anyone a right to intrude into that sacred world where marriage is holy?

What is more important than to overcome all obstacles to the divine guidance, and so grant freedom of individuality to all mankind?

Is any judgment based on observation, astrology, graphology, palmistry, occultism, or phrenology to be compared with the inner prompting of the soul? Suppose that prompting conflicts with these secondary judgments, what of that? Of what import is it to a man who has received the soul's guidance? Should he not be true to that, though all the world condemn him? How disloyal it is to charge a friend with inconsistency because we, forsooth, do not understand his motives! We do not know what prompting may have come in the quiet of his soul.

Be loyal, even though your friend seems to act in contradiction to his professed doctrine. He may have excellent reasons for departing from his usual course. Circumstances may sometimes compel us to make unpleasant revelations, to speak truth plainly, although at the risk of reputation, business, and social standing. A statement of facts is not a personal attack, even though the truth it reveals prove another to be a hypocrite.

The ideal of an harmonious social state is illustrated by the playing of a symphony orchestra. Each musician must be an artist in his special sphere, yet subordinate his instrument to the harmony of the whole. Each is essential; yet the beauty of the symphony is the blending, the *ensemble*. The harmony is organic; it is composed of mutually dependent, contributory parts, which co-operate in the realisation of a common ideal.

The moment we cease to expect what a person or a place cannot give, we begin to discover virtues to which we were blind before.

There are times for silence and times when, if another grants the opportunity, one may speak freely and give valuable advice. But, until the right time comes, there is naught to do but trust, even though one sees that a friend is under a spell.

A friend is a friend indeed who can help another to shake off an hypnotic spell. But all pleadings are futile until the victim learns that he is a victim.

It is astonishing that one mind can dominate another for months, while the subjugated person is unconscious that he is a slave. The spell steals over the mind like a mist at night-fall. It settles down and becomes solidified like a cap, commanding the subservient brain as a disembodied spirit is said to control a medium. It leads a man to think he loves a woman for whom he had no natural attraction. It weakens the mind and degenerates the body. The higher nature is imprisoned for the time, so that, even if it knows that all is wrong, it cannot resist.

Women doubt that their fellow-women have such powers. But it takes a man to find out a woman. Conversely, woman knows man as man does not.

How strange when onlookers think they have spied out a love affair, and the man or woman in question is totally oblivious of it,—a mere Platonic friendship! How soon a philosophical friendship drifts into the personal! Will a time come when all this eagerness shall cease, and the spiritual law shall rule? Would that a continuous philosophical friendship were possible! It would not then be necessary to be reserved the moment personal emotion appears.

The power is deep and subtle which draws two people together. One should not expect to understand it through self-analysis. The phenomena of infatuation are subject to analysis. But love comes not that way.

Doubt is not always a safe guide. For what is more natural, when one has decided the great question of marriage, than that all that can rouse into opposition should be stirred? All doubts are superficial and transient when

compared with love. On the other hand, no thought is so profound, none so trustworthy, none so persistent as doubt, when one is merely infatuated. There is a vast difference between thinking one's self in love and actually being in love. The criterion? Always the inmost whispering of the individual soul, in the silence of free solitude.

What an amount of mischief is sometimes wrought by a chance word! For example, when a young man and young woman are frequently seen together, the comment is made in their presence which puts the thought of marriage into the young person's mind, when such a thought might never have occurred to either. Again, it is some comment which, like a poisoned dart, strikes into the heart of an otherwise beautiful friendship.

To the majority it is doubtless a mysterious fact that a prophet has no honour in his own country, that one's kinsmen are the last to recognise wisdom in one's ideas. But the reason is not difficult to find. The home people have seen the prophet in his gestative years. If he chanced to reveal his lesser self, they were sure to know of it. When a rumour comes from abroad that he has accomplished something, his townspeople think: "Why, how can he do anything? I knew him as a boy: he did thus and so."

Thus every negative characteristic is remembered. What other people applaud, the home people condemn. If the prophet returns and tries to introduce reforms, he is deemed impertinent. If he labours for the cause of truth, he is condemned because he does not support his old-time church or society. Even when he marries, he is supposed to have degenerated.

His fellow-people will, however, flock to hear some one from another State who does not know half as much. There are those who could tell stories about this imported prophet; but, fortunately, this man's gossips have remained at home. And so, misunderstood, it is no wonder that the prophet goes where people believe in him. But is there any reason why familiarity should breed contempt?

A married man recently said, feelingly, that he would be glad if his wife would idealise him as she did before their marriage, seven years before.

Then she saw only the ideal; now she looked at the negative stages of its evolution. Before marriage her idealism was a tremendous incentive; now her fault-finding had become such a weight that he must seek encouragement elsewhere. So it is a pitiable fact that husbands and wives often have as little honour at home as the prophet in his own country, and for the same reason.

A husband will pass a book by without reading it because it was his wife who recommended it. When an outsider speaks of it, he thinks it must be worth something. A wife will consult a stranger when she needs advice on a difficult point. She will then return home triumphantly with the new wisdom. But the husband possessed that wisdom long ago, and had expressed it many times. A parent will dismiss a child without giving a moment's consideration to the proffered wisdom, although it happens to be knowledge which the parent had long sought. A sister or brother will for years scorn the new ideas of a brother or sister, until at last a stranger imparts the same valuable doctrine, and it is believed.

Yet, if possessed of their senses, no one is better situated to appreciate genius than those who see a person at close range. The whole trouble consists in the neglect of true idealism. Always the loss is on the side of the one who condemns. The prophet thrives even if he is condemned at home. He would not be a prophet unless possessed of unflinching self-reliance. It is burdensome to be misunderstood; but appreciation comes after a time, and one learns to be superior to adverse criticism. Emerson saw all this when he said: "Blame is safer than praise." "To be great is to be misunderstood."

When a man advances from ignorance to knowledge, he realises retrospectively that his former judgments were conditioned by his state of development. If he hears another man making the same prejudiced statements, he knows the reason. If thoughtful, he does not condemn; for he knows that a man's judgments are limited by his knowledge and experience. Here is the basis of tolerance.

We know, if we pause to think, that our knowledge is largely conditioned by what we have read, seen, and experienced. If our range is limited, our

knowledge is slight. What a New Englander thinks is likely to be different from what a Turk thinks, because the conditions are different. Thus customs, philosophies, religious and practical methods differ. Thus is individuality fostered.

The mischief begins with the assumption that my way or my thought is better than yours. The trouble begins in the home. It flourishes in the religious world. It conquers in the political arena. The mischief becomes tyranny when we insist that our way shall be our neighbour's way.

Take this thought home for a moment, and consider how many times a day you insist that your judgment is correct, your method right. You do not remember that your thought is only your point of view, that, though you claim divine authority for it, it is no more than an individual opinion. You forget that your way may not be wise for another. You insist that others shall accept your judgment as sound: others may hold opinions; your word is law.

A large part of the impatience which causes domestic inharmony springs from unwillingness to let others work out life in their own way. We insist that others shall accept our truth, and accept it now, forgetting that truth is such only when proved by individual experience. We forget, too, that difference or thought and life is the prime source of the variety which makes our social life enjoyable. In deepest truth, no man can see for another.

Chapter V. Secrets of the Age

THE LIGHT of a great revelation is breaking in upon us during these wonderful transition years. Men and women far and wide are awakening to knowledge of the sublime fact that no boundary separates them from the spiritual world. All about us there is a great spiritual realm and a transcendently beautiful Presence, whence cometh all life, all wisdom, all love and power. What seems death is only a new birth. What seems a fleshly prison is in deepest truth no obstacle. He who has awakened to consciousness of that enviroing realm and that sustaining Presence, passes from one plane of life to the other, as one travels from town to town; and all who are still in the flesh may likewise hold communion with that world of worlds, that Reality of all realities.

He who dwelt for a time on earth nineteen centuries ago counselled men to seek above all else that kingdom, to be true to its law, to live its righteousness, and to make known its love. If we could see him now and know the scope of his glorious work, we should find many thousand times the number of followers that once left all for him, we should be uplifted by the love and purity of a multitude of presences, we should receive from all the readiest help and the heartiest sympathy.

But we need not wait to be free from the flesh. The greater triumph is to live the spiritual life now. And we may confidently open our consciousness to the great world of the Christ, the universal brotherhood of consecrated souls, knowing that their fellowship will keep us each and all. This is the great revelation of our time. This is the great gift of one century to another. And, if you would really know the age at its best, open your soul in prayerful receptivity that you may feel the forward pulse of the immanent creative Presence which carries all things forward toward the realisation of the Christ ideal.

For a new life is stirring in the hearts and minds of men and women to-day. It is a new vision of the Christ.

For many centuries the death of Jesus has been emphasised. To-day the essential is the life he lived. Men have long sought to save their souls. To-day the watchword is service, unceasing labour for the betterment of humanity.

Once men were frightened by the fear of hell,—warned against the temptations of satan. Now they are inspired by the glorious possibility of heaven on earth, while satan has been found to be human selfishness.

Once emphasis was placed upon dogma, creed, and ritual. Now, in these remarkable days of returning interest in the gospel narrative, stress is laid upon the spiritual simplicity of Jesus.

Thus the transformation goes on, and few are they who can tell how far the change will go or how quickly it will reach the hard-hearted and the intellectually cold.

The day of mere liberalism is passed. It is no longer in order for the liberals to hold love-feasts, and congratulate one another because they have held liberal views for forty years. To-day the cry should not be, "Behold, how advanced we are!" but, "Behold, the harvest is plenteous, and there is no time for mere liberality. "Soon the liberals will be the conservatives, unless they, too, begin to serve.

For the great movement of our time is the return to Christ, the social Christ, the elder brother, whose gospel is the salvation of the poor, the

oppressed, and the afflicted. It is wonderful to see how many have felt this human touch, this new and practical Christ.

The critical onlookers declare that these people have "gone back to orthodoxy." In truth, they have returned to the Spirit. They have grown weary of cold metaphysics. Their hearts are warmed once more. They have a deep longing to help humanity. Human religion has taken the place of supernatural theology.

When a man feels the social touch, he wonders how he could have spent so much time on matters of minor importance.

The day is coming when no man will be called a Christian unless he lives for humanity as Jesus lived. Jesus was, above all else, a man of sympathy, of love. He freely and promptly responded to any and all calls for help, the opportunities which were closest at hand. He did not stop to investigate scientifically. He did not stop to argue. He did something. He gave himself fully and freely.

Here is a cycle through which many people pass ere this vision of the living Christ comes. At the outset they are orthodox church members. Some incident arises which quickens liberal thought. Doubts follow thick and fast. There is an awakening to freedom, a realisation that dogmas and creeds have been hard taskmasters. A breaking away from the church follows, and the atmosphere of the great free world is so delightful that for a time the church seems the gloomiest of prisons. No words can be found strong enough with which to condemn the priests. Loss of reverence for all that is religious follows; and grim agnosticism stalks behind. This period lasts until the soul again hungers for spiritual food.

Then a gradual reaction begins. The sentiment of reverence and worship returns, and the New Testament is read with new meaning. Finally, the reaction is complete. The church once more occupies its accustomed place, though revered for its spiritual ideal, not for its creeds. The new freedom is retained; but with it is mingled all that was hastily discarded when dogmas and rituals were cast aside. All that is most noble and beautiful, all that is

most sacred in the church, now assumes its true place; and there is great rejoicing that the days of wandering are past.

With the return of faith there is a strong tendency toward the concrete, the practical. It was the old abstract theology which sent men forth from the church. In their inmost hearts they really loved the Christian life all through the doubting period. What they needed was a practical doctrine to supplement this faith; it has come. Our age is at once social and practical. The great revelation is this discovery of the practical in the spiritual, the social in the religious.

It is a new revelation of the individual as truly as it is a social dispensation. That which was once limited to systems, creeds, or books, is now heralded as the possession of every individual—the revelation of God within.

While therefore, this dawning cycle is the age of renewed spiritual faith, the recognition of an environing spiritual world, it is also the age of democracy.

Once heaven was supposed to be the final abiding-place of the elect. Now we know that heaven is democracy, the universe for the people.

Once God was deemed an aristocrat, a hurler of creative fiat from his secluded throne. Now we know that the true Father is the Father of the people, that creation is gradual and ends only with the emancipation of the people.

Time was when a priest or pope was supposed to be the viceregent of God. Now all people have access to the Father.

How absurd seems the pomp and grandeur of those who, because of "royal blood," have deemed themselves rulers of the people! Rulers? Who dares to speak of kings and queens in these enlightened times?

The rulers are the people. They permit certain ones the joy of seeming to reign for a season. But how easily they could wrest the sceptre from the regal hands of the titled rulers!

If you meet an artist or an author in search of inspiration, suggest that he portray this democratic idea. If you find an inventor who has made a new

and valuable machine, tell him to dedicate it to the people,—to beware of the temptation to make money out of it.

The land is for the people—the fair, fresh landscape of nature. Therefore encourage men to work in the soil. Do everything to keep them in the small towns and the country and out of the great cities. Let us make nature the home of democracy. Let us carry the democratic ideal into all departments of thought and realise it in all spheres of action.

Come down from your pedestal and be a man among men. Open the blinds and let a little warmth in. This is the era of democracy, of returning faith in Jesus as our elder social brother.

Chapter VI. A Christian Secret

THERE IS one phase of Christianity which has been persistently overlooked until recently,—the application of the teachings of Jesus to health. This oversight has been in large measure due to the dogma that the cures wrought by Jesus were supernatural, and therefore the age of miracles is past. The moment this dogma is discarded, everyone must admit that the healing of disease was a prominent feature of Jesus' work. It soon dawns upon the mind that it is impossible fully to understand or be faithful to the Christian ideal without studying the relationship between the gospel of health and the gospel of salvation. It requires no argument to prove to an unbiased mind that with Jesus these two gospels were one, that this was one secret of his success. He came to seek and to regenerate those who were lost in the wilderness of sorrow, trouble, disease, or sin, of whatever kind. He had power over all these conditions, and to be a true follower of him is to apply the Christian spirit as extensively as did Jesus.

It is noticeable that Jesus spoke of disease and sin synonymously. What was the basis of this identification?

Everyone admits that sin springs from the individual, but disease is usually supposed to be of external origin. If the theory of disease implied in Jesus' teaching be the true one, disease, like sin, is disloyalty to divine

law. Whatever its external conditions, it is primarily due to wrong conduct emanating from within.

Jesus unqualifiedly declares that what comes from within defiles a man. Even to be angry, to harbour lustful thoughts, is accounted equivalent to actual misconduct. All through Jesus' teachings there are references to the inner world as the source not only of man's wrong life, but of the regenerating thoughts which purify him.

Health to him is wholeness. He frequently declares that the one whom he has healed is made whole. One who is whole is sound both in mind and in body. His inner life is beautiful, his outer life is consistent with it. No man who is morally unsound is in perfect health, nor is an unhealthy man morally upright in every way. For the moral law is a law of the total universe; it applies to everything; it is the law of purity. To be diseased, a man must in some measure be impure. To be whole is to be every whit clean and beautiful.

What makes man whole? Jesus states the means to this end in two forms: to be free from sin, or to be united with the power of God through faith. "Thy faith hath made thee whole" is repeated again and again. What constituted that faith? Recognition of the power of which Jesus was the messenger, and belief that this power could accomplish anything. Sometimes the multitude tried to impede the working of that faith. For example, see Luke xviii., 35-40. But the man of faith cried out the more vehemently, until Jesus asked: "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee."

Another sufferer was content merely to touch the hem of his garment. Others were so tormented that, in the language of those ancient times, "they were possessed of many devils." Even in these cases we find the power of God recognised. The unconquered or sinful part of man's nature cries out in sheer desperation when it finds itself at last in the presence of the Christ.

There is no kind of disease which Jesus does not heal. He refrains from performing "mighty works" only in those regions where there is such lack of faith that there is as yet no receptivity to the righteous life, which is the

remedy offered by Jesus for all disease. It is evident that he could have wrought cures in these less enlightened places, but that it was not wise, for healing was with him the occasion for enforcing a lesson, the pointing out of that kind of life which brings freedom from disease. He emphasises the correspondence between receptivity and regeneration, faith and that which faith desires, zeal for righteousness and wholeness. There was much more that he might have done, but he devoted his life to those most in need of him, most ready for the Christ.

Throughout his gospel Jesus emphasises love, the life of service, self-denial, unselfishness. The great truth cannot, then, be concealed that this righteous life to which he called all men was the life of health, wholeness. There is a close correspondence between selfishness and disease. If health is righteousness, anything which savours of unrighteousness is more or less unhealthy. If a man would be sound, let him then begin to love, to serve, to get outside of himself.

It seems mysterious, and at first sight irrational, to say that the first procedure for a sick person is to think of others. But study the lives of sick people, particularly the wealthy, and note the conclusions to which you are driven.

It was said by one who was trying in his humble way to heal as Jesus healed, "My most difficult patients are 'only daughters' and single women who board." Why? Because "only daughters" are apt to be humoured, and well-to-do boarders have time to nourish their ills.

The first step in many cases is to persuade the sick person to find something to do.

Probably every reader of these words is thinking of sweet, cheerful, patient invalids, to whom the above does not apply. It is not denied that sickness may be a "means of grace." But what kind of thoughts usually fill the minds of those who have time and money to be ill? How long would they remain ill if their consciousness were to become as filled with faith in God as those whom Jesus healed?

But, you say, the afflicted people of nineteen hundred years ago could look upon the living Jesus, beholding the radiance of his face. Undoubtedly this was a help. But the Christ is here now. We not only have the record of the mighty works wrought by Jesus, but the evidence of all the Christian centuries in which the power sent out by Jesus has been at work in the minds and hearts of men. God exists to-day. The Christ is in all men. Faith can accomplish as much. What Jesus uttered is still as true as it was then. It may demand greater faith to believe in the unseen Christ, but we are more developed and have the greater power. It is a greater sin if we do not have the faith.

Thus Christian healing is faith in God,—Christian righteousness. Just as Jesus calmed the troubled waves of unbelief when his disciples were so disturbed, so we should walk on the water of our troubles, stand firm in that purer region above the raging sea, and utter those magic words: "Peace, be still!"

Jesus could thus command and find that even the winds and waves obeyed him, because his will was one with the Father's, because he lived the righteous life. Righteousness in anyone has a similar power. It is only because of Christian one-sidedness that diseases have not been cured all down the ages by those who have felt the spirit of Jesus. Far too much emphasis has been placed upon the sin, and far too little on that other aspect of the sinful life, disease.

The greatest error has been the emphasis of sin instead of the way of escape. So long as righteousness was supposed to come through supernatural grace, and while Christian healing was deemed miraculous, the day of salvation was postponed. Now we know that both grace and healing come through law, through receptivity and faith. There is no longer the slightest excuse for failing to apply our Christianity even to the most threatening diseases of the body.

Chapter VII. Another Secret

THROUGH DISLOYALTY to the gospel of Jesus in its fulness, it has long been maintained that Christianity is essentially a religion of renunciation in a negative sense, that Jesus was above all "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Consequently great stress has been placed upon these characteristics, and certain new doctrines have been heralded abroad by critics of Christianity, who assure us that at last a religion of joy has been found.

Is Christianity necessarily a religion of sorrow and of weakening self-renunciation? Does the fault lie with Jesus or with the interpreters of Jesus?

Jesus came with the glad tidings that the kingdom of heaven was "at hand." He came to bring "life and immortality to light." He not only healed the sick, but freed the mentally imprisoned and quickened the soul. What could be more joyous, what could more surely summon the dormant individuality of his hearers?

Jesus specifically stated that he who renounced himself should find his true being. Man was not to renounce and to lose, but to consecrate and to gain. The doctrine of Jesus was therefore very far from the weakening attitude inspired by Oriental pessimism, an attitude to which the renunciation taught by Jesus has frequently been compared, to the detriment of Christianity.

All negative statements to the contrary notwithstanding, Jesus was primarily an optimist, as contrasted with those who, in despair of an existence wherein man was bound to gross materiality, declare that our external life is evil. He did not bid men "kill out desire." He did not inspire zeal for "Nirvana." Nor did he denounce the body. The ascetic conclusions drawn from his doctrine are derived from false premises, which Jesus never laid down.

Jesus regarded the world of nature, and with it the body, as a manifestation of the glory and wisdom of God. He taught that man was to care first for the possessions of the soul. But all things external were to be added in right relations, when man had found his true life in the invisible kingdom. Hence his doctrine was in every respect positive where the critics referred to have given it a negative interpretation. It was practical—this was the great secret.

As for the acquaintance of Jesus with sorrow and grief, that was owing to his compassionate sympathy. We are not to understand by this that the Master emphasised sorrow,—that by being long-faced a man becomes Christlike. We are to recognise the sorrow and the need for help, yet look beyond it to the compensations of the spiritual life. The emphasis is to be placed on the glad news which reveals the deep significance of suffering.

One is inclined, then, to believe that those who thus disparage Christianity in reality overlook the deeper joy of the gospel, and substitute a superficial self-complacency in which sympathy is notably lacking. A larger vision would seem to reveal the joy of Jesus for the first time in its true light. Instead of rejecting and disparaging him, one ought rather to rejoice that now at last certain obstacles to true interpretation are out of the way. And instead of thoughtlessly declaring that "Jesus need not have suffered," one might better look beneath that suffering to the larger joy which the apparent renunciation reveals.

Chapter VIII. The Secret of Pessimism

A CLERGYMAN who had long suffered from periods of intense depression and animality once confided to me the secret struggles of his soul. He had already passed middle life and consequently had a fund of experiences on which to draw. For many years enthralling spiritual visions had occasionally been interspersed with his ordinary thoughts, visions wherein he seemed to be lifted to the most exalted heights. For the time being he dwelt with the God of his orthodox belief,—with all the angels, saints, and prophets. No one could be happier, while the vision lasted.

Then would follow days and days of despair, during which his mind was filled with the most unholy thoughts and desires, quite foreign to his better self. It was incomprehensible to him that one who sought spirituality above everything else should on occasion be so carnally minded. Questioning my confidant, I learned that when the supernal visions came he threw himself into them in ecstasy, determined not to let them go without their full blessing. Then came the apparent curse.

Here was the cause of his depression. The pendulum must swing as far one way as the other. Excessive ecstasy was followed by extreme depression. Thus the mystery was explained.

Had the man calmly contemplated the vision, letting his soul assimilate what it would, naturally and easily, there would have been no reaction. There is a natural law of capacity for spiritual food as there is for material sustenance. The soul knows what it can profitably partake of; it needs no coercion.

That this is true is proved by the experience of many who, naturally extremists and ascetics, have acquired moderation in all things and learned to approach every experience with equanimity. Asceticism is a disease. Moderation is health.

Thus it is that the art of self-control is inseparable from that of health. Ill-health is in many instances merely the intensified, habitual reaction following closely upon undue emotion or ecstasy.

Pessimism is the habitually extreme mood which accompanies physical excess or disorder. He who deems the world unsound and impure is himself ill-balanced and morbid. Excessive consciousness of sin, or the fear that one has committed the unpardonable sin, is merely the pessimistic reaction from excessive contemplation of one idea. Morbid self-consciousness is simply excess. Pessimism is undue emphasis of one side of life.

It by no means follows that optimism of thought or temperament means sanity of philosophical thinking. The optimist may be as blind as the pessimist. Uncritical optimism may be shallow puerility. The true philosophy of life must be a synthesis of all points of view.

Yet, generally speaking, the pessimistic mood is more apt to be coloured by a pathological condition. It is usually a vision in darkness, through the obscurest tissues of the flesh.

The evidence for this conclusion is found in the fact that depressing, despondent emotions tend inward and downward. There is a closing in, a sinking to the depths, accompanied by an increase of doubt, self-condemnation, and despair. The mind is absorbed in its own woes and pains. It seeks consolation by dwelling on the sufferings of others, the prevalence of misery. The world is condemned for being so degraded. God is despised

for creating such a world. Worse calamity lurks on the horizon, and death crowns all.

The optimistic vision embraces a vast range of phenomena unseen by this gloomy introspection. It is light, hopeful, cheery. It looks far and beyond,—around, up, and out. It is synthetic, comprehensive, illimitable. Come what may, it knows by a secret intuition that only good can come.

Those who possess keen self-knowledge and power of self-control are intimately aware of the first symptoms of pessimism. At a crucial moment it is possible either to close in or open out, to sink into the flesh or rise calmly above it. To seize the optimistic alternative is to escape the woes of sensuality and turn the same energy into the production of hope.

It may be that one misses something by rising above the sensuous level. But that experience is of little value which must be entirely recast in another mould.

True, if one could conquer every woe one would be decidedly a loser. No one wants to be a stoic.

But the powers that be will send us suffering enough which we cannot escape. Sorrow will come,—unexpected defeats and manifold hindrances. Let these teach their lesson, and be thankful.

Yet no one expects to rise and fall for ever. There is a well-balanced state where one may look up or down with equal serenity. One can be in a world of woe, yet not of it.

In so far as we can conquer it is probably right. That man is a mere animal who yields to all moods. As we shall see in another chapter, there is a noble balance between feeling and thought.

The man who possesses self-control can let himself go, if he chooses. Thus he possesses a tremendous advantage even over one who has a greater capacity for feeling. What we could have done but would not has far greater moral significance than that which is easy. Each man is both angel and devil. There is small credit in being an angel if you have never met temptation.

To him who overcometh, not to him who simply feels, more and more shall be added. And the ideal situation is to have both optimism and pessimism in your power. What bearing this has on the problem of evil the reader will readily see.

To understand pessimism, and to know how the mood comes on or the habit grows, is to master an entire phase of human life. What one beheld as in a glass darkly was of course true in its own right, but when daylight came one corrected a thousand illusions. The pessimistic mood was then labelled and put away as of retrospective value only, as a contrast effect by which to judge the worth of optimism. For when a cure for depression is found, a way of escape from pain and sorrow, misery and calamity, in so far as these imprison, why should one any longer view life pessimistically?

Pain is not an evil; it is Nature's intimation that the normal limit has been passed,—that a process of restoration has begun. Death is not an evil to one who looks upon life from the point of view of the eternal now, where the soul dwells continuously. Nor is our unethical life evil when regarded from the point of view of moral and spiritual compensation.

These things seem unqualifiedly evil only to those who have not learned the way of escape, who know not their meaning. To judge the world by these is to be guilty of a great error in reasoning.

When one finds in the life of peace, poise, moderation, many-sidedness, a complete solution for these excesses; when one discovers a principle of activity within whereby these tendencies may one and all be conquered, an entire reversal of judgment results. One knows that one must not judge while the darker mood is on. One must await the day. And little by little the nights grow shorter, till day becomes practically continuous.

Thus only when pessimism has gone is its true character seen. But we are telling the sequel before the story is finished. Let us now turn to the consideration of other aspects of the art of self-control.

Chapter IX. The Secret of Work

A FEW years ago I had opportunity to observe a number of day-labourers at their toil. The land around an old house in a country town was being improved, after years of neglect. There was digging to do, grading, and the felling of trees. The labourers were inhabitants of the old and conservative town. The contractor was from another town, and had fallen victim to the commercial spirit. His men worked "by the day," but the contractor worked with his men, to push the work so that his contract might be as profitable as possible.

The contrast between the labourers' method of work and that of their contractor was very noticeable. The labourers lifted the shovel with measured pace, and rested a moment between each blow of the axe. Evidently they had learned how to wield the shovel and axe rhythmically, with the least expenditure of energy, so that they could work all day, day after day, and week after week.

But when the contractor lifted his axe one blow followed another with surprising rapidity. He was a remarkably strong, energetic man, capable of doing two days' work in one. The observer could hardly help admiring his enterprise. His muscular frame had already borne years of this ambitious toil.

Many months passed, when one day I heard that this contractor was seriously ill. I do not know what the doctor named the disease. But probably, as he was an old-school physician, his patient was said to have some well-classified malady. The man was ill many months. The following summer I saw him working as vigorously as ever, apparently not a whit wiser.

Why was one man taken ill while the others worked without intermission? Would it have mattered much what sort of food the men ate? Could religion or philosophy have been the determining factor?

No, it was primarily a difference in the way of using force; the difference between chaos and order.

I care not now what you call that force. No man, no woman, under any system of diet, philosophy, or religion can overdraw Nature's regular supply of force without paying the penalty. The collapse may be long postponed. By an optimistic process of thought one may temporarily rise above the nervous reaction. But sooner or later there must be a reckoning.

To know the cause of collapses from overwork we must understand the temperament of the individual. We must know his secrets, how he uses himself, whether or not he smokes and drinks, or is the victim of any kind of excess. In case of a woman, we must know how far she is a slave to custom in all its imprisoning forms. We must study both men and women at their vocations, learn how they work, note whether they have learned to rest, discover the degree of self-control, the type of consciousness.

Behind all disturbed mental and physical activities there is wrong adjustment to the forces which play upon the soul.

All depends upon the degree of inner consciousness. The soul that has come to judgment possesses a power of which man ordinarily does not dream.

The majority are creatures of habit. Only the well-poised soul knows what it means to preside over the genesis of action. For it requires no small degree of self-possession to stem the tide of impulses which sweep men on from birth to death.

When life is at last characterised by serenity a marvellous change occurs. Instead of forcing the body, instead of compelling the brain to think, one works more with the Spirit. One discovers lines of least resistance. One awaits occasions. One learns that the highest guidance comes spontaneously, that a vast amount of time and energy may be saved by simplifying life, so that only what the Spirit approves is acted upon, while all else is passed by without regret.

Yet this great secret of the inner life is the same principle which every wise man learns, whatever his occupation. He obeys the same law of rhythmic moderation when he drives his horse on an all-day's journey. The experienced mountaineer observes it when he makes a day's ascent of a rocky height. The successful manual laborer has mastered it. In countless ways the secret has been won.

Yet many a man who has mastered it in his profession is a slave to passion or some excess outside of his chosen pursuit. The art of work must be applied in all departments to be truly successful. There is a secret of secrets, an inner law of self-control. To know this is to have possession of all the lines of activity that constitute a human being.

Many who are exteriorly calm have raging volcanoes and buzzsaws within. The art of arts is to know how to be still at the centre, though raging without.

Do you realise how tremendous a possession is self-control, the secret of work?

Do you know that it is possible to be so moderate in all your ways that your inner life shall be in perfect adjustment to the rhythmical functioning of the body, thus rendering disease impossible?

Do you realise that self-control means soul-control, otherwise it is a mere pretender; that the soul is an immortal spirit and commands forces which can actually accomplish the so-called impossible, can control even that which nearly all men believe uncontrollable?

If you realise it, a tremendous responsibility is put upon you, a responsibility which encompasses everything, from the religious life

downward, a responsibility which shows that the self-controlled man must be unselfish.

There are other aspects of the secret of work. For instance, knowledge of and dependence on the subconscious mind. But all these are natural results of composure or poise. We are considering these in varying terms throughout this volume. The essential point just now is economy of energy. It is impossible to sunder the art of work from the art of health, and here is our secret of pessimism in another form.

Pessimism is waste of force,—the penalty of one who knows not how to live. There is a joy in the higher, rhythmical mode of working of which the pessimist has no conception. Something is wrong with us if we do not rejoice in our work, and the victory over that impediment is the same triumph which we are considering in a different form in each chapter.

Chapter X. The Art of Health

THE COMPLAINT is sometimes made that, owing to the existence of disease in the world, God or the universe has not dealt fairly with us. If we had only been created sound and healthy, so the complaint runs, we might have a chance in life; but many of us are so hampered and crippled that we are practically useless.

In order to test the soundness of this criticism, let us suppose that one of these critics is suddenly restored to perfect health. He is, we will say, a nervous wreck, after years of nervous hurry and rush. Health comes to him by a miracle,—that is, without bringing knowledge concerning the method of cure or the cause of his disease.

How long will such a person retain his health? Of what value is a temporary glossing over of effects, a merely external cure, if the person learns nothing in regard to the fundamental origin of disease?

Or suppose that all pain were removed from the world. This would be heaven, some say; for pain is “synonymous with evil.” But if pain were removed, what would warn men when they overwork, what would compel them to rest, or to care for an injury?

It is easy to see that human life would go to ruin in a few days,—with some in a few hours. Among the vast majority of mankind, pain is the

only balance-wheel, the stern necessity without which they would slay themselves a thousand times a year, if they had as many lives to lose. Even if all present suffering were removed, and nothing else were changed, men would immediately develop it again. No one should expect to be hived in a city, living on rich food, keeping late hours, running the bodily machinery at full speed, and at the same time be free from pain. It is one of the wisest of the many wise provisions in our great universe that the moment man veers from the natural, from the moderate, in any direction, he suffers pain. It is only the lesson of pain which little by little is teaching men to be wise, poised, well-balanced. Without pain as a warning we should in fact have no clue to the sanity of life.

Disease is of human origin,—that is, disease as we suffer it, to say nothing of the diseases of plants and animals; for if man were sound, he could avoid all external contamination.

Man has wandered away from nature; he has departed from the ideals of simplicity. He lives an artificial life, and suffers the consequences. Therefore, he has only himself to blame. He has caused his misery ignorantly, to be sure; and it is because he is ignorant that he condemns the universe. Still, ignorance of the law does not excuse him; and the fact remains that he has laid the foundations of his own painful life.

The remedy is not far to seek. Man can enjoy all that, in his opinion, of which the universe has deprived him. He can have health, he can have freedom from pain. But, if he desires such freedom, he must pay its high price.

In the first place, he must study himself,—learn his habits, how he can best work, under what conditions and toward what end.

Second, he must understand disease,—how it is developed by the way we live, how it is handed down by wrong living, and how increased by erroneous treatment. In all this he must be very broad, not confining himself to mental or to physical causes, not tracing all diseases to a disordered stomach, and not expecting to find perfect health by simply becoming a

vegetarian, by eating only two meals a day, or by merely affirming high-strung ideals. As disease is an expression of our entire wrong life, so its cure must come by complete change in thought, habit, and methods.

Man must learn the great truth that health is moderation, balance, harmony. It is futile to change from one cult to another, expecting to find peace, when one is still the same bigot or extremist, still tyrannical, anxious, nervous, or selfish. It is the life that must be modified. One can be healthy under almost any form of belief if one is moderate, sane. The essential is to be at peace, to understand one's self—how to live, how to keep well, not simply how to regain health.

The art of health, then, is the art of life. It is the art of adjustment, the secret of power. It is another form of the great art of success. For health in the profoundest sense is inseparable from the particular calling to which we choose to dedicate our forces.

Chapter XI. The Secret of Self-Help

IF I should meet an angry mob on a city street and try to quell the surging mass by coercive measures, by threats and violent abuse, the mob would become the more furious, perhaps set upon and kill me. But if, happening to know the cause of the disturbance, I should approach as a brother, a messenger of peace, uttering words of sympathy and wisdom, my hearers would feel the calm power of my words and the surging throng would become quiet. Then it would be possible for me to make a full explanation of the difficulty in question.

The first method would be blow for blow. The second would not be non-resistance, it would be the triumph of a greater power over a lesser. The illustration exactly typifies the relationship of two methods of encountering painful sensations.

To meet pain on its own plane, to become absorbed in and to battle with it, is greatly to intensify it. To turn the attention away from it to a higher plane of consciousness, is to lessen its power and attain decided advantage over it.

The mob-queller first becomes calm, centred, poised. He then quietly considers the situation, that he may utter the decisive word; and, emptying his mind of every sentiment except sympathy, calmly yet forcibly and

confidently states the wisdom of the situation. The effect is magical because it removes misapprehension, because it is the word of power, of resistless peace and insight.

He who seeks relief from threatening sensation must as resolutely obtain a calm perspective. Absenting himself for the moment from the mob of swaying forces, let him rise to the mountain height of philosophical insight. Let him seek the solitudes of the soul and walk in the pathways of the Spirit. All those solitudes are refreshing and all those ways are peaceful.

Every mob is an outburst of excess. Every painful sensation is an expression of excessive activity in some form. Therefore one must become exceedingly moderate in spirit, voice, and manner. The energy which would naturally have spent itself in a sudden outburst of violence must be distributed through successive moments of well-exerted strength. If the violence or the mob be sent back upon itself, let it rebound. Keep calm and observant, letting the power work, yet ready to give a new impetus upon occasion.

If you can keep free from the mob process, the process will take care of itself.

Do not think that you must reason with each man. Deal with the mass as a whole.

Utter the word of wisdom and adapt yourself to the response. Nature is competent to care for the rest.

A word of peace carries a power which no calculation can measure. Wisdom has a weight which no error can support.

It is the truth of the situation which calms the mob, the real facts set forth with wise persuasion.

Likewise, it is the truth which sets the sick man free. The sufferer is ill in mind and body, to be sure. But he is greater than his illness. He is a soul, a son of God, who is wisdom and love and peace. As a soul he dwells not only with the body but in a higher region, the environing spiritual world where God acts directly. As a soul he has the power to transcend the mob

of his sensations and become the man of wisdom, appeal to the living Christ whose word of peace stills the troubled sea of the lower life.

From one point of view it is almost matter of indifference what is the trouble. The wisdom of God is a panacea for all ills, his peace has power over all circumstances. That peace and that power are open to every soul, for God is omnipresent; every man and woman is his child; the Christ exists for all mankind.

Therefore the essential is to seek this wisdom and peace, asking for guidance to meet the case in hand. When the guidance comes it will reveal the truth of the present situation. When the peace is perceived, it will bring the power to quell the mob.

Here is, perhaps, the profoundest secret in human life. This is the great truth implied in the foregoing chapters. Man is a two-fold being. He is not alone the being who seems to succeed or fail on the external plane. He is not alone the one who outwardly learns the secrets of evolution and adjustment, the art of physical and intellectual labour, of optimistic and pessimistic moods. Nor is the rounded personality, exemplifying the Greek ideal of self-realisation, the total man. There is a self within that uses all these as instruments, a self that lives not alone in the temporal world but in eternity, a brother of the Christ, a child of God.

He who has found that inner self can succeed beyond all dreams of relative or external success. He adjusts himself to that which moves within and behind all evolution. He works with a finer rhythm than the rhythms of brain and muscle. He has resources of which the unquickened man does not dream. He triumphs over conditions that would overwhelm anyone not thus enlightened.

When the tide of mob violence and selfishness sets in, he is not perturbed. Calmly and confidently he transcends any and all contending forces that may arise. In all times of doubt, of pain and sorrow, he is equally aware of the source of help. He knows that to yield to the opposing tide is to be swept under. He must not yield an iota. He disconnects from the lower and

opens his soul to the higher stream of forces. Then all that is from beneath is powerless. The lower may writhe and rage, but it cannot break away. He who is thus centred may wait till the storm has subsided; for the decisive moment is the ascent from lower to higher, the turning from the merely human to the divinely guided and sustained.

Chapter XII. The Secret of Action

IT HAS long been customary to regard human existence as ultimately a life of thought. All idealism is grounded on this supposition. It is the basis of many popular doctrines.

But gradually the conclusion has been changing, so that the tendency now is to include activity as equally fundamental. The conclusion is important for our purposes, since it throws light on that crucial transition which Emerson tells us is seldom taken,—namely, the change from thought to conduct.

A moment's reflection reminds us that belief may or may not influence conduct. Just as a sermon may enter one ear and pass ineffectively out of the other, so many other thoughts may be impotent unless followed by action.

Someone has said that "fear is the backbone of disease." But all depends upon the emotion which comes with fear. It is the emotion that plays the havoc; fear does not invariably produce disease.

Whether a man be thinking about socialism or the Vedanta philosophy, the vital consideration is: What one among his great rush of thoughts is chosen as the guiding factor in action? If the man is spending his energy twice too rapidly, neither socialism nor the Vedanta will save him from nervous collapse, after years of such excess. If, however, his religion has

given him peace, that is a vantage-ground whereon he may build a new and well-poised man.

Were we mere machines, calm doctrine might mean calmness of life. But we have fanatics ever before us as terrible warnings of what may mar any form of religion or other doctrine. The will has a decisive part to play in all such cases, and volition may set free a flood of excesses.

Ideals are of priceless value in evolution, but after all it is the dynamic or subconscious realisation which is the potent factor. When I am rushing along at full speed, it is helpful to say: Peace, be still! But if I shut off power within, as the engineer grasps the throttle and shuts off steam, the headlong pace is conquered. Note that the soul is fundamental alike to the thought, the will, and the deed. Thought may be superficial, will may be weak, but when thought is made an end of action a result inevitably follows. The new dynamic attitude of the soul, therefore, is the secret of action.

Man is an active being; let us remember that. He is not a thought. He is not limited to thinking as a means of self-development. He can seize the reins of power and take actual hold at the centre.

It is a small area, this little centre where one seizes the reins. But, like the throttle of the locomotive, it regulates a vast machine. The man who knows how to slacken or increase speed at critical junctures possesses power so mighty that he can laugh at that which would terrify the creature of emotion.

For this little domain is at the centre of both the mental life and the bodily activity. The entire mind will be calm if the centre is peaceful. The circulation, the breathing, the digestive apparatus and all the other functions of the body are affected by it. Simply to know how to reduce the heat of the body by taking hold at the centre, is to be able to conquer certain diseases in their inception. And if a man can conquer disease he can conquer his passions. He even has the power of life and death in his hands.

I should not write these words, had I not proved every item of this theory. When a man has as consciously saved his life as the engineer slackens the speed of a locomotive, he knows whereof he speaks.

The great secret is, to possess the soul as a centre of power beneath and controlling emotion and thought. For there is another and profounder state than the merely mental, a state so much more vital, that the soul can carry all things before it for good, even when both mind and body make for ill.

Let us deepen our hold upon this great truth by contrasting feeling and thought.

How do we come in contact with the world? Is it by thought? Do you think you touch yonder tree, and so touch it? If a stone hits you do you *think* you are hurt?

No, you feel it. Whatever you think, you are made to feel that you are in the presence of a world which is objective to thought and will. You enter into closest contact with that world, not when you think, but when you act.

The most real world, then, is the world of feeling. All our pains, joys, loves are of this character. The term "feeling" covers the widest possible range, from gross sensation to the highest religious sentiment.

Feeling, springing from and emerging into activity, is essential to life. Deprive us of this and we would cease to be.

That which we really care most for in life is feeling,—that which endears and unites us, that for which we most heartily strive, that which we seek to interpret. The spiritual life would be nothing without it. Feeling is direct, immediate, from the moment of birth. Thought is indirect and has a history. We feel more in a moment than we can understand in years.

Thought is imitative; it stands for feeling. The idea is not the thing itself; but an abstraction, a phase of feeling, an image, formula, or sign.

In our scientific and theoretical interests we are apt to forget this distinction. We become so absorbed in ideas and controversies that we make the symbol the symbolised. We even fight over words.

We defend favourite abstractions as real worlds, abstractions which have almost no connection with fact. It is not strange that we substitute artificial for concrete methods of growth and reform. A little sensible reflection shows that what we are really seeking to accomplish is to readjust ourselves to

forces, to cultivate certain activities and let others die. We call in the intellect to aid, but when we have understood we must begin to act.

Feeling is consciousness of force, acting and being acted upon. No phase of existence is more profound—except the soul which feels and reacts.

It is through feeling that we act,—that is, we act when the soul, overcoming resistance, accelerates or institutes a new direction of force. It is not the thought, but the fiat issuing in a dynamic attitude, which does the work. The thought is a picture of the end chosen, the act is the means to that end. I may sit by the window thinking of myself as walking up yonder hill. I may wish myself there. But I begin to move thither when I start the activity which overcomes the inertia of my sitting posture.

To distinguish between the relative value of feeling and thought is very far, however, from contending for an emotional life. Emotions are usually superficial, passing and conflicting. The man who is controlled by his emotions is a flighty sentimentalist. He lacks balance, sanity.

To pass beneath all emotions and thoughts is to discriminate between alternatives of feeling, to discover a finer quality of feeling. This finer state is spiritual, intuitional, compounded of love, educated by wisdom, and acted upon by the soul. It has been tried and tested. It has deepened through years of experience and thought.

The soul knows God by intuition. It knows of its own existence and that of the world by the same habitual, immediate relationship. There is no space between.

A similar immediacy unites the soul to the forces which play upon it, and the forces which it controls.

Therefore, to assume a new dynamic attitude is for the soul to bring about a new intuitive relation to these forces.

The soul may, it is true, be passive, and so yield to an emotion or thought. But I am speaking now of the higher process, where the soul is not only receptive, but decides which feeling or thought to act upon.

A thought may be made dynamic by dwelling upon it long enough to make an impression upon the deeper energies. This result comes by holding the centre, by regaining poise, equanimity. It comes through harmonious adjustment, not with physical sensation, but by co-operation with the power behind and beneath it. Or it comes when the idea has so taken hold of the mind that one subconsciously yields the life forces to its realisation.

The ideal is the focal point round which the energies gather as they are sent forth to new duty. It absorbs the attention, lifts the mind to a higher plane, while the soul by concentration upon it takes a new dynamic attitude.

Suggestion without dynamic realisation may be ineffectual. But a centre of poise, peace, equanimity, is a constant and unfailing source of power, whatever the passing thought or emotion.

Thus it is that the man of habitual poise and self-mastery faces and conquers an angry mob where all others would fail.

The angry mob is swayed by ungoverned emotions. Every individual composing it is a victim of riotous force. Wrong ideas play their part, to be sure. To convey right ideas is to assuage the mob. But if the men had self-control they would not be victims of a mob. In the work of pacification everything depends upon the manner of presenting the right ideas. It is composure that wins. A lawless man would be unable to calm a mob even though he were to convey the truth.

The man who fights the mob fails because, to borrow Emerson's phrase, he "descends to meet." He hurls back like force for like force. To still the lawless multitude he must use unlike force. He must ascend to a higher plane. The force which would naturally expend itself in violence must be sent forth as peace.

Thus transmutation of energy is the secret. This is the sovereign remedy for all warfare. Every man wins this victory who masters his impulses. The well co-ordinated man knows how to help others to attain self-control.

He who is able to turn to the higher plane can sway the multitude as readily as it once responded to the stimuli of anarchistic suggestion. Yea, far

greater are those powers of the soul in the domain whose peace passeth all understanding.

The alternatives should be regarded, therefore, as two streams on two levels. The soul may ascend from the lower to the higher level, and send forth the same power which would make for ill so that it shall produce good. The lower stream flows through the narrowing forms of bitterness, jealousy, revenge, selfishness, and anger. The higher broadens into sympathy, forgiveness, love, altruism, and charity.

On both levels thought and feeling play their part. But the soul is common to all and learns the secrets of power by ascending and descending, by comparing feeling and thought, emotion and emotion.

Feeling and thought, for example, are mutually corrective and helpful. Thought meditates upon feeling and learns to discriminate between passions, ephemeral emotions, and temporary losses of equilibrium, on the one hand; and the higher, finer feelings which spring from divine communion, on the other. The soul profits by these meditations and makes headway in the regulation of emotions. As experience deepens, there develops a higher state compounded of these philosophical meditations and victories over emotions. This state, fed by both feeling and thought, voices itself now in nobler ideas, now in nobler deeds. Feeling and thought are thus mutually fecundative, producing a unity of which either alone is incapable.

For the co-ordination of forces which I have termed spiritual poise is a result, let us repeat, of both intuition and understanding. We must know our forces, their laws and relative values. And we must be guided by this wisdom in their progressive advancement. To know is not necessarily to do. To act is not always intelligently to control.

The well co-ordinated individual is at once masculine and feminine, both rational and intuitive, positive and receptive.

Half the victory is right knowledge of the states through which one is passing. The other half is adaptation of the attitude, with due recognition of the evolutionary changes which follow any new application of power.

Thus the process reduces itself to the steady advance toward spiritual co-ordination, by due adjustment between complementary phases of the inner life. The ideal is the due apportionment of time and energy among the various ends that are really worth pursuing in life. It is the adjustment between equanimity and organic rhythm. It is harmony between inner and outer life, the individual and society.

It is moderation in all things, even in zeal for spiritual development. It is at once a life of action and a life of repose. Everything is organic, relative, yet everything is contributory. As such, this wise activity is a product of experience tempered by philosophy and made sacred by religion. Man may sometime be born with it, but nowadays it is a crowning achievement of the enlightened soul.

Chapter XIII. A Vital Secret

HOW CAN a state of exalted spiritual feeling affect the body? In the same way that any emotional change affects it. Why does the mob respond when met by sympathy and peace? The people feel the greater power, and new dynamic attitudes result. Each man gradually regains his equilibrium.

What a man can accomplish in the presence of a mob may be repeated when he faces the mob of life within, if with equal skill he rises supreme amidst a critical environment.

For the soul is owner of the inner as well as of the outer forces; it is in touch with the body as well as with the mind.

If you are a poorly co-ordinated person you should not of course expect suddenly to control the forces that make for sanity of mind and body. But if you have trained your organism for years you already possess habits whereby you may not only control your temper, and the animal in you, but also the deeper activity which has the power of life and death.

Suppose, for example, that you have been overworking the brain for many months. There is far too much blood, and consequently excessive heat, in the brain. After a time your organism can bear the congestion no longer and the process of expulsion of this superfluous heat begins. The heat works down into the throat and chest. If ignorant, you declare that you have caught

a terrible cold. Accordingly, you try to recollect when you exposed yourself. You fear pneumonia, possibly consumption and death.

Just here is the crucial point, the vital secret.

Read these words thoughtfully, repeatedly. They convey truths of incalculable value to every living soul.

As such a condition increases, two courses open before you. If you become imprisoned in the painful sensations, if you name them and permit anxious emotions to arise, call a doctor and take drugs, you may have pneumonia, and may die.

But if possessed of the priceless self-command and wisdom of which I speak, you will be able in a few moments to turn the life-tide. After that, you will be safe. It may be weeks before Nature renews your health, after the long excess, but you may quietly rest and let the work be done.

This statement would sound preposterous unless the principle had been proved. The crisis is as grave and calls for as much wisdom as the facing of a murderous mob. You must summon all your powers of self-command, you must be calm, you must act quickly, and you must husband every atom of energy. The balance of power in your hands at the critical moment, you can turn the scale almost in an instant.

For there is a critical point where the temperature is rising, where fears clamour for recognition, and the odds are apparently on the other side. To yield to the oncoming wave is immediately to lose command. To think of the pain is to become enveloped by it.

There is one and only one course at this juncture, namely, to turn, as one would from the angry mob, to that superior world which environs the visible realm,—summoning all one's faith, peace and poise, the love of God, and the inspiring ideal of the Christ,—then hold still, calm, and even at the centre—calm, calm, while passing through the crucial moment.

Can this be accomplished for another? Yes, it is sometimes easier than to win the triumph alone.

Once I sat by the bedside of a nervous invalid who thought she was dying. A woman of remarkably clear insight ordinarily, she was so deeply immersed in the sea of sensation that all was dark and ominous around her. It required the utmost calmness, for the odds against me were momentarily increasing. The experience was conceivably like that of a tight-rope walker crossing Niagara River on a wire. I seemed like one above a great abyss between two countries. I must keep a perfectly steady head, turning neither to right nor left. I must not permit emotions or sympathies to arise for a moment. I must hold the balance of power as implacable as a statue until the narrow strait is passed. Once over, I may again think and look about.

But is not the reaction great after such intense concentration? No, because it is not the nerves that are held, it is a higher power back of them; it is a spiritual experience.

The opportunity to meet grim Death and conquer him comes seldom, because it is not often that a person has faith to trust another. But there are those who have more than once conquered death within themselves; and, as I said above, this is usually more difficult. For amidst the raging sea of sensation one must feel the peace and rest of heaven, the calmness of eternity, as unconscious of the danger as a little child at play.

One who has faced such a condition knows beyond all question that there literally is a spiritual domain near at hand whence one may draw power of far greater strength than any force in the physical or mental worlds.

To those who do not yet feel the commanding presence, one can only say: It is a growth, the fruition of months and years of steady forward movement, in which one is faithful to the highest guidance of the latest moment.

Fundamentally, it is a question of habit, the discrimination between and the control of the emotions, the measured growth of peace and poise, of increased faith in intuition and the stronger love of the Christ. Above all, it is a product of the severe experiences in life when, buffeted and tested to the utmost, faith has opportunity to do its perfect work.

Each new or trying experience is an occasion for the triumph of what I have called the real essence of life, the activity part of us as opposed to the thinking part.

One notices this element in those who speak with power rather than merely with words. The spirit tells more than the letter. A word so spoken bears power with it which makes its impression. The word is made flesh. This is the word that heals. It overcomes resistance and establishes a new habit.

Newton's first law of motion is suggestive at this point. "Every body continues in its state of rest or of uniform motion in a straight line unless compelled to change that state by an external force." Habits illustrate the same law. If by a new dynamic attitude you overcome sufficient resistance to start a new direction of bodily and mental energy, the life forces will tend to keep in motion in that direction unless impeded by an external force.

The essential, therefore, is to give the new impetus, to find the inner kingdom of heaven, the dominion of peace and poise from which all things needed inevitably follow.

Do not make the process complex and difficult. Do not be metaphysical and abstract. Your forces are here. Your soul is here. God is here. Alternatives are constantly brought before you. Do not wait until you are ill. Begin with the simplest occasions for self-control and character building. Decide which you will serve, lower or higher, impatience or patience, hate or love, anger or forgiveness, yourself or others.

Having chosen, act; then stand fast. Remember that the power tends to keep in motion. Let it work. You will gain self-command by every victory. The lesser victories will lead to the greater. In due course you will be able to master that which at first seemed impossible.

Chapter XIV. A Personal Letter

DEAR TROUBLED heart, I long to speak to thee as only the closest friend may speak, and I claim from thee this privilege for the moment, since I know so well what thy struggles mean. I, too, have passed between the crags which now hang over thee. I, too, have questioned whether I could pass safely by. But at the most trying moment a helping hand was sympathetically extended to me, and I believe that I can help thee as once a friend helped me.

I understand why life is burdensome just now. The conditions are exasperating, and you have much to bear. But you are not entirely to blame. You are inclined to belittle yourself, to be disheartened, when in truth you are doing far better than you know. You have more ability than you suspect. Think for a moment what you have overcome. Remember how grievous was the inheritance and how severely you were handicapped. Many of the most troublesome tendencies have already been conquered, and you have much to be thankful for. Soon you will reap the benefit of your exertions. Just now you are in a transition state, where you cannot see clearly. Moreover, your physical condition is such that your entire state of mind is affected by it, and sometimes when you condemn yourself it is only the physical state which is at fault.

You stand at the parting of the ways. Hitherto you have lived largely for self. You have been very personal, more so than you yet realise. You have been quick to take offense, ever ready to defend yourself, inclined to lay the balance of blame upon others. You have been unhappy, pessimistic, and—shall I say the word?—selfish. Accordingly you have reaped as you sowed, and the world has seemed a terrible testing-ground.

Now, all this is changing. You are displeased with yourself; you know not which way to turn in your distress. But, remember, it is what you have been that distresses you, not what you are to be. The fact that you are dissatisfied proves that a better self is triumphing. Cling to that better self and let the old self die. Or, rather, know that in so far as you give thought to the new the power of the old will be transmuted.

In your heart of hearts you long to be unselfish: therefore think of yourself as so. In your heart of hearts you forgive people: therefore turn from all sentiments of recrimination and revenge. What if people are annoying? What if they trample upon you? Learn to tolerate them, and they will treat you far better. It is utterly foolish to answer back; it is a waste of energy to be discouraged. Respect yourself, and others will respect you. Be gentle and patient and speak in low, tender tones and others will gladly respond.

It is all a question of unselfishness as opposed to selfishness. All that you suffer comes directly or indirectly from selfishness. All that you long for will come when you lose self, that you may find it. Having said this, I have said all. Why should I repeat it or say more? If you see it, all is settled. If you do not, probably I cannot make it clear, for each soul must see for itself. But of this rest assured: you have my heartiest sympathy. I know what the result will be, therefore I trust. Out of my heart I speak to thee in sweet kinship. Out of my heart I give thee all that I am that can help thee, and an unwritten message will go with these words to thy soul from mine.

Chapter XV. The Secret of Character

EVERYONE WHO has watched the rising and falling of the bow of a long ocean steamer as it mounts and descends from a high wave, must have observed the splendid triumphs which a modern ocean liner wins where the older steamers failed. Again and again the approaching wave seems about to dash over the bow and sweep across the decks. But just at the critical point the steamer rises gracefully over the threatening crest, which slinks rapidly to the stern and loses its grandeur in the rolling mass marked by the foamy churning of the tireless propellers.

This noble victory is typical of equally splendid triumphs of the soul. In our illustration the steamer which cuts under the swelling wave shall stand for the experiences on the lower plane of life, while the one which rises over shall typify the mastery of which the higher self is capable.

Here is a young woman, for example, who has spent several years away from home and has advanced beyond her parents, who have had few educational advantages. At home she was inclined to be impatient and disagreeable. In the larger world of city life she has grown intellectually strong and sweet tempered.

Returning home she encounters the old tendencies which once held her prisoner. The almost irresistible temptation is to be as ill-natured as ever.

Old habits surge towards her like the threatening waves of mid-ocean. Will she rise above them and press triumphantly forward, or will she be carried under into the trough of the sea? Everything depends upon her knowledge of self and her power of clinging to her new life. If she is keenly self-conscious at the crucial moment, she will say: That is my dead self, that is what I used to be; I have done with that for ever. Saying this, she will rise over a tendency which seems insuperable. But if she yields to the old impulse, its waves will break and dash over her until for the time her new life seems utterly swamped.

Probably every reader of these words returns occasionally to an environment where similar temptations are encountered. Nearly everybody succumbs in some measure. The majority plunge under without knowing that they are yielding. All servitude to vices, to habits, and customs is of a similar character. For a large part of the details of daily conduct we can assign no better reason than to admit that the swelling tide of passion or social impulse swept upon us and we rolled helplessly beneath it. Worse than that, society conspires to keep each of its members in subjection by insisting that a man cannot change his habits after a certain age.

No dogma is more false. Never in our history are we swept under when it is impossible in due course to rise above the wave. The only hindrance is ignorance of the alternative. Once let a man know that he is potentially a modern ocean liner and you shall witness a marvellous change.

Our great fault is that we do not try. A false philosophy has taken the life out of us. In our limp state we become more and more like animals. How low a man may sink! A man did I say? Yes, perhaps a potential man. But man is truly such in so far as he rises above what would have made him an animal, and worse,—a brute.

It is wonderful what one can ride over when the mind is alert and keen. Ordinarily, men think that environment must change before the inner life shall change. This is the radical defect in doctrine of nearly every socialist and social reformer. Radical socialism is a device for cowards who lack the

manliness to be souls in presence of heartless corporations. The beggar is a coward. The man who complains that he cannot find work is another. I say it without qualification, well knowing that I shall be severely criticised for uttering it; no one was ever compelled to wait long for employment who met his opportunity as the ocean liner rides the waves.

The prime fault lies not in our social system, however wrong that may be. It is not in our environment, either physical or social. The prime fault is with ourselves. A man may meet any possible situation with such strength that the world will find instant need of him.

The majority of men have been reared with the false idea that they must have a few vices. They have thought there was at least one impulse within them which must always ride over and besmear them. Here is where the trouble begins in many instances. If a man plunges under on one occasion he is likely to succumb in other situations. Finally, he becomes a creature of impulse, a slave of habit.

Likewise with woman. Her characteristic weakness is yielding at the wrong point. Sometimes on the great sea of life the weather is calm and there is no need to be positive. But the glory of woman should be in her strength, not in her weakness. Every woman has power to ride the waves which tempt her into servility. Every woman has that within which will make her the equal of the man who would be her master. By continually yielding, she forgets that she, too, has a right to stand erect.

It is cowardly for either the oppressed labourer or the downtrodden wife to wait until society changes. What is it that causes society to advance? It is the resistless movement of those who refuse to endure existing conditions. It is the activity of those who know no such word as fail.

Again and again we live on from week to week under a grievous burden, praying for someone to remove it from our back, when we are able at any moment to stand erect and let it fall. The trouble with us is that we do not use our powers.

This is true not only of many external conditions, but is true of our physical and mental states. Nine-tenths of our aches and pains, our woes and fits of depression, stay with us because we duck under them instead of rising above. Every one of our despondent states came on gradually, at least slowly enough so that, had we been alert at the outset, we might have passed serenely over.

We are not half awake yet. We have believed that many situations were unconquerable, and so we have listlessly capitulated. But there are fewer situations that call for adjustment than for victory. Disease will be wholly conquered some time, and all the obstacles of our physical environment. Even death may be postponed ten; twenty, yes, sometimes fifty years.

A prevailing fault with us is that we look too closely and constantly at the negative side. We regret, we despise ourselves, we yield to discouragement and become too self-analytical and introspective.

The present age is morally impotent. We need a revival of the old-time fire and zeal. We have grown pathetically optimistic, while waiting for all things to right themselves. "God helps those who help themselves." "Nothing venture, nothing have."

Agnosticism is cowardice. It is weak-kneed indolence. It lies down behind a fence and complains that we can know nothing of reality, because, forsooth, all that comes to us from beyond is the light that shines through the cracks. But to one who is riding on an express train there are no cracks, there is no fence.

The man of character achieves success by mastering the impossible. The man of wisdom sees God through the "unknowable." Obstacles are possibilities seen from the adverse side. The "unknowable" is man's own shadow, cast while he stands with his back to the sun.

The same conditions which seem overwhelming while viewed negatively, at close range become aids to success when we awaken from our lethargy.

Emerson said that "man is a god in ruins." But man is more truly a god with his eyes upon the earth, afraid to lift them aloft to the sun.

One who has once been a god may, indeed, fall under and become a slave. This condition of servitude may persist for months. One who has been spiritually illumined may become enveloped in the flesh so that where he once talked about the soul he now prates only of brains and nerves. But he is still a god. It was ill-timed advice or the influence of a mind that had no right to be influential which led to the fall. He who was once a master is now at the beck and call of an inferior. He yielded where he might have triumphed. He rolled under the sea of ennui and fatigue when it would have been fairly easy to breast the tide.

It is a pitiful state to be in, this base servility. One of the most tormenting situations in life is the enforced idleness of one who might have worked on triumphantly had he not yielded and thereby ceased to be himself.

It is remarkable to what depths the mighty may fall. Yet amidst the seeming ruins the god is there. No knowledge once gained is ever lost. No power once acquired can ever be taken away. Even if physical inability intervenes, the soul will some time find a way to breast the wave.

We are far too apt to dwell on the limitations of knowledge, on the circumstances which warp men's judgments. Thus we sometimes have a false charity. We sometimes excuse ourselves when we ought to be ashamed to permit bodily sensations to color the vision of the soul.

It is well to know that all experience is relative to our present state of development. It is important to learn that we see through the media of our education and the bodily organs. Yet it is far more important to know that we have higher powers by which we can almost instantly transcend these conditions. We may not only change the state of mind, but rise above consciousness of the body. A part may have to pass beneath the wave. But the higher self will pass over it.

Even heredity is a lower wave only. It is a tendency which may or may not become a permanent habit.

Likewise with many streams of tendency which threaten misfortune. My horoscope may foretell calamity at a certain time. On the lower level all that

the stars seem to indicate may be true. So with the fate of which the palmist or any other wizard may prophesy.

That man is foolish who believes such a prophecy. Such things are the toys of cowards and do-nothings. Every man who has breathed the pure air of the upper zone knows that he can draw upon resources which set the stars at naught. At the very moment when his ship seems about to be engulfed by the impending doom he is able to rise as serenely above it as though it were a wavelet in a tiny brook.

One who has learned how to ride the waves need pay no attention to signs of the weather. Any environment is favourable to a man of character.

We are too inclined to postpone until the ideal day. Every day is ideal to the illumined soul.

If a man wishes to write a book, for example, he thinks he must have a quiet, secluded study. For a number of years I have made it a point to do some literary work in the most disturbed environment. The coldest day in winter and the warmest in summer conquered, I brought my notes from below when aboard of a steamer amidst a hurricane, and found that I could readily absorb myself in philosophical composition.

If it be easy for me to maintain my doctrine when with friends, then let me try those who are unsympathetic. The mind is in an indolent state when one reads a book or hears a sermon without raising objections.

A man who is a slave to a thermometer is likely to quail before many other things. The same day is propitious or unpropitious to the same man in two moods. "There is a tide in the affairs of men," and "The occasion makes the man." Yet when the man is ready the occasion comes wherein he may make or unmake himself. Supply and demand are equal. Every moment while we sail life's sea a wave is approaching us. Wise is he who is preparing for the nearest wave.

Other writers have made note of many secrets of character besides the one here considered. But by this time the reader has discovered the essential

idea which differentiates each "secret" from the customary treatment of the themes here discussed.

There are numberless treatises on the moral and spiritual life which abound in beautiful descriptions of ethics and religion. There is abundant advice in regard to self-control. But there is a tendency to halt at the boundary of the theoretical world.

The present doctrine calls for the most concrete and searching action. Without acquaintance with the forces which play upon the soul, the finest advice may be profitless. Without a method of controlling emotions, habits, and the lower levels of consciousness, one's penetration into the subjective world may end in mere introspection. But with a clue to the powers lying beyond, one may pass the barrier where vast numbers have halted in despair.

There are many spiritual secrets, also, which have not been treated here. Little has been said about love and less about service. The Christ has not been mentioned as frequently as some would wish. Nor have we written of those supreme moments when it is not the individual which masters, but the dependence is upon prayer, the sweet peace of the Christ, the ever-watchful care of the Father.

But the highest which each reader's life or religion has brought to him is here assumed to be the source of inspiration for that part of our conduct which does come within human control. Do not let your vision fade with only the inner eye to behold; let it be objectified. Do not be religious in thought only; be religious in conduct. Do not apply your religion in one department alone; be organically religious, and let no function of your life be omitted.

This book aims to supply the link in the method, so that thought and life shall at last be united. Therefore preserve all that has made life rich: your well-developed physical habits as well as your most spiritual ideals. But add unto these. Widen your boundaries and pass into the realm of the nobly practical.

When you have triumphed, as this book promises you may triumph, by patience, moderation, and faith, you will be inspired with new zeal for service. For you will mingle with your fellow-men as a brother. Your presence, your life, will speak above words, and you will always have a message for the unruly, the sorrowing, the despondent, and the afflicted.

The time is coming when no man shall be truly accounted a man of character unless he is thus noticeably practical. The age of argumentation and speculation is passing. The age of brute impulse, of unguarded feeling, has been dying daily. Man is beginning by controlling himself as an individual. Presently he will begin to be self-masterful as a social being. A marvellous change in all departments of social life will follow. Disease will be conquered, and with it pain in many of its forms. Man will not be a creature of moods; he will be master of the moods which now colour and discolour our philosophy. And the clearer vision which shall come will convince men once for all that, truly to know life, one must first conquer it.

Of that sublime flood of light which occasionally bursts on the soul, one cannot as readily speak as of the conduct which should follow. Before we part, however, let us share at least a gleam of that resplendent presence, that we may suggest where we cannot describe, hint where it would be sacrilege to classify, and adore where we are unable to disclose the law or "secret."

Chapter XVI. Spiritual Laws

THE SUPREME evidence of a spiritual realm is the fact that our highest sentiments and insights are made known at a time and under conditions which we cannot fully control. While we can rationally apply the hypothesis of illusion, we are bound to declare that there is no spiritual realm with which we are in immediate relation. In so far, also, as our experiences come within the power of will we have not found the highest evidence. But when we must needs confess that unexpectedly the Spirit makes its presence known, we are compelled to admit that there is, in truth, a higher law; so that it is not the soul which voluntarily seeks and masters the Spirit, but it is the Spirit which is revealed to the soul.

In turning from the consideration of our more voluntary life to this highest range of spiritual insights, we do not, however, contend for aught that is inconsistent with the art of self-control, the art of character-building. We are simply bringing into greater prominence a factor which has played its part all along. We are considering self-control transfigured, the art of success inspired by the highest ideal for which the self with all its arts was reared. Especially is the presence of this immediately environing spiritual realm implied in the critical junctures where the soul comes face to face with disease and threatening death. The utmost that self-control can accomplish

is needed. Yet beyond and above there is that with which in its most critical moments the soul becomes adjusted, and without which these greatest triumphs could not be won.

In this chapter I shall develop some of the implications of this highest experience—always with the reservation that we know it only in part—and point out some of the methods whereby we may consciously prepare for its coming. I shall leave out of account the questionable experiences, where we do not know whether we are merely contemplating ourselves, our physical activities, or the features of some incarnate spirit, and confine myself to the unmistakable evidences of the peace and power, the love and wisdom, of that Spirit of spirits whom we call the Father. I shall not attempt to prove the genuineness of these experiences. Their character is their proof: there is no other. If you have perceived the presence, you know; if you have not, you do not know; and this ends all argument.

I do not, however, intend to imply that these experiences are irrational, but that one must feel their presence before one can make clear their reason. The situation is comparable to our acquaintance with the physical world. We do not argue that the physical world exists, hoping thereby to prove it to another. We call attention to the fact that we awaken into existence and find the world here. We distinguish between thoughts which we direct at will in our minds, and sensations which come to us from without, despite our wills. For example, there is a vast difference between fancy and the sensations described as hot and cold. Fancy we can put out of mind as unreal, or enlarge upon it, at will. But the sensation of heat or cold is forced upon us. In order to free ourselves from it, we are compelled to withdraw our physical organisms from the hot or cold environment.

Out of the sensations we are compelled to feel, we develop a conception of a world-order springing from an ultimate, self-existent Reality. By the same process we may logically reason from effect back to cause, when we stand in the presence of beauty, of peace, of love, and wisdom. Surely, the

logical process is as sound. We have as good reason for supposing Reality to be spiritual as we have for deeming it the ultimate foundation of the rock.

I have called attention to the fact that we know what states of consciousness spring from outside by contrast with will. The same law of contrast is exemplified in the experiences in which we feel the presence of the Spirit. For example, suppose one is in the depths of uncertainty about practical affairs, involved in doubt concerning ultimate principles, or truths. There is no better illustration of our finiteness. We struggle and contend, question and seek advice. We find ourselves on the verge of a solution of a trying problem; but that question depends upon another, and that upon somewhat else. Everything is at sea. We are beset by counter-influences and enticements. Doubt concerning minor problems leads to doubt in regard to major questions, until we wonder if divine guidance be possible. We doubt truth. We half doubt the existence of God. This confusion of mind sometimes continues for months.

Suddenly, in the darkest hour, at a moment wholly unforeseen, the sky clears, and once more we behold the beatific vision. The transformation is marvellous. Almost in a twinkling the dark hues of doubt are illumined by the beautiful lights and shades of a transcendental insight. Once more the Spirit is consciously with us. Once more all is conviction, repose, and trust. The way is so clear, the solution so simple, that we wonder alike at our stupidity and our distress.

This triumph of the Spirit is typical of the experiences whose law I am undertaking to describe. When we sink into the depths we know how small a thing is the personal self. When the Spirit comes we realise its greatness, compared with the petty doubts which expressed our faithlessness. By contrast, we know that a wisdom is present which so far surpasses the highest reaches of self-conscious thought that all other sources of inspiration are of slight consequence.

Here is the spiritual ideal. Once convinced by these sharply defined experiences that we live close to the sources of wisdom, power, and love,

the possibility is discovered that every consequential deed in life may be inspired by the Spirit. To live close to God, that is the ideal; to dwell at the fountain-head of truth, the home of peace and beauty; to speak with power, to move with that strength which shall carry all obstacles before it. How may this end be attained?

Receptivity is obviously one essential. We know from experience that, if we try to be receptive, we often fail. But by an eternal law we know that when, in the midst of doubt, the Father came, it must have been because at that moment our organism offered least resistance. And so we can at least train ourselves subconsciously. We may confidently believe that at any time the Spirit is likely to be revealed, and adapt our life accordingly.

Again, it is clear that the Spirit comes only when really needed. While it is better for us to work on alone, we are left to human resources. When we have had the benefit of personal experience, the way is made clear.

To illustrate. Suppose one is called to the bedside of an invalid to bring the help of the Spirit at a time when one possesses little power. To cry out for help is vain. One must work along, guided by the memory of past experiences. Anon a critical moment comes; and, behold! at that instant one feels an unusual sense of power. At other times one must work, and call all hopeful thoughts to the rescue. Now one is hardly more than a channel for superior power, an instrument through which greater results are wrought than could have been attained by merely human thought.

Do not misunderstand me. I do not say that the great Spirit of the universe gives specific attention to this one invalid, and chooses you or me for an instrument. But by this higher law the greater need subconsciously creates the deeper receptivity; and the soul is open to that presence which, like the sun, spreads its quickening light upon all.

We may therefore assure ourselves that, whenever the greater necessity arises, power will be given us, if it be wise. If our hands are held, we may know that for some reason, not yet clear, it was not wise for us to do the decisive work. Therefore we may trustfully await the divine prompting.

In this preparation for the spiritual vision, we must again remind ourselves of the manifold character of human nature, and consequently the need of adjustment, beauty. When a man beholds the glory of the higher vision he is apt to forget the art ideal. He therefore makes a specialty of spirituality and inculcates it as an exclusive theory.

The spiritual life becomes quickly odious if you preach nothing else. It is not the theorist who is most faithful; it is the man who quietly lives. The more truly spiritual, the less you hear from him about spirituality. The spiritual man is so little inclined to parade his highest sentiments that you must draw him out, you must study his conduct. For genuine spirituality is an almost unconscious accompaniment of the life of service, the growth of peace, the dominion of love.

The spiritual is not an end to be sought in itself, as if there were a spiritual quality or realm distinct from every other. The ideal is to lift all conduct, purify all thought, carry the higher consciousness into everything. The spiritual realm which we are in touch with is, in deepest truth, the creative life of all planes. There is no point where the spiritual ceases and somewhat else begins.

The tendency of the spiritual devotee in all ages has been toward the acceptance of a narrow segment of the great whole of life. The same tendency is strong to-day. The spiritual is still put off in a vague, abstract realm by itself. The zealot scorns the external, the physical, the social, or the artistic, as if he could cheat the universe and become spiritual by disregarding instead of including these. And so we find him maimed, lame, or ugly.

The artist knows better. Art is symmetrical. It has regard for anatomy, strength, simplicity, light, shade, perspective, proportion, and all the other fine distinctions and essentials by the synthesis of which the highest ideals of beauty are expressed. It is moderate, thorough. It gives attention both to the training of the eye and to the quickening of inner perfection. For beauty is neither wholly external nor wholly internal. Do not, then, be either too subjective, analytical, receptive, or too much on your guard lest you be

deceived by false prophets. But never depreciate the intellect. It is more unfortunate to be too emotional than to be too intellectual. For the intellect is self-protective, while emotion succumbs before all kinds of subtleties. He who never yields himself fully to the higher sentiments never knows their true worth; yet he who fails to reason, after he has enjoyed, as surely deprives himself of a needed experience.

In the same way persons play their part in one's spiritual growth, yet rightfully possess only a restricted influence. Many a spiritually minded person begins his higher life through discipleship. But woe unto him if he expects perfection on the part of his teacher! Persons are interesting and helpful if we do not approach too near. Draw close, and the illusion vanishes. As soon as limitations are seen, we turn quickly away. Had we reared no idols, there would have been no fall.

Personality worship has its lessons, however. We learn after a time that every man is beset with faults in order that he may be a good specialist. On one side we can learn of him. He has seen life from a particular point of view. That point of view is sure to be instructive. But it is only one among thousands. Let us listen and absorb while he expounds just this, then pass on.

Persons are secondary. As long as we run after them, we lack poise. What persons give us is at second-hand. Only from nature and from God can we learn at first hand. The spiritual shines upon all. Why stand behind a man, and try to look through him?

Many in these days are cultivating egoism, if not egotism, under the illusion that they are pursuing the true ideal. Thus eccentricity is emphasised instead of individuality.

You shall only hear the lyrical utterance of the Spirit from those who have refined their instruments until nothing is said for effect, but because there is a correspondence between the organism of the messenger and the sweet word of truth he brings. When his whole life tells the same story, you may know that he really believes what he is saying. Then his gospel is no theory: it

is life, it comes freighted with power, carrying with it that heart quality, that emphasis of the soul, which assures you that it is genuine and disinterested.

That message which is uttered for the Spirit's sake is not even put forth to do good. When we endeavour to do good, we have some particular person or group of persons in mind. But that which accomplishes the most good in the world is expressed simply because one had something to say. Art knows no higher ideal than art for art's sake.

Even the practice of "entering the silence," to become receptive and relaxed, may be carried to excess. Meditation is worth while, if it be of the right sort and if you know what you are seeking. But it is so easy to go to excess.

For the majority, it would doubtless be better to take up a volume by some seer or poet and read for a time, till some sentence strikes home. Then one may pursue creative thought precisely, thoroughly, and at leisure. Such thinking clears the brain, sharpens the faculties, and refines the entire organism. It invites poise; for it is balanced thinking, it is artistic. The mind grows keener year by year. The language becomes more logical, the thought more pure and refined.

Precise analysis, the examination of fine ethical distinctions, is as essential as the apprehension of great wholes. The universe is infinitely minute as well as infinitely large. He who would truly know must know both in detail and in general. The cultivation of discernment is as important as the development of sympathy. All things are lower and higher; and, if you are not discriminative, you cannot classify.

Many teachers counsel the spiritual man to face front and never back, dwell upon the positive, never upon the negative side. We are told, with good reason, to be constructive. We are warned not to be analytical. Yet if I spurn the intellect as analytical, I am likely to put out of mind precisely that consideration which, if rationally regarded, would enable me to keep my balance. To refuse to analyse is to lay the foundations for personality worship. The history of human nature shows that idols fall when people

become wide awake enough to detect faults. Idol worship is a sort of sleep: it dulls the sensibilities and deadens thought. Be on your guard when you are told to ask no questions.

How can you construct unless you have somewhat with which to construct? If you wish to erect a building, you must lay your foundations broad and deep, you must carefully select your materials and examine them most critically, lest there be fatal flaws. Should one be any less searching in scrutiny of those ideas and sentiments on which it is said one may build for the ages in the higher realm?

It is forever true, however, that one must be willing to give up everything. Do not insist upon your theories of art, your metaphysics, or your social scheme. Be ready to change your life in any respect, willing to forego any plan or take up your home anywhere. But when you have consecrated the thinker, the artist, the worker, you shall find that all these fragments of yourself are needed.

The Spirit, I insist, is rich; and man must be richly developed in order to express the divine beauty, truth, goodness, and love. The artist, consecrated to art for art's sake, has found the inner kingdom in his way. Therefore do not condemn him because he deems essential that which is meaningless to you. The philosopher, seeking to perfect a system of ultimate principles, has felt the same divine touch; and what is dark and gloomy to you is luminous and inspiring to him. The good man is ridiculed by the wit only because the wit does not know the inner meaning of the good man's action. The lover is deemed unbalanced because he sees such worth and beauty in a seemingly commonplace sweetheart; but he it is, and he only, who has entered the inner sanctuary of her heart and communed with her spotless soul.

The essential is to find the divine centre. If men discover that, do not complain. It is understood that each shall express himself in his own way.

Selfishness, after all, is lack of symmetry. We seize upon some one thing, demanding that it be ours. We become absorbed in a single sensation, and so suffer pain. We try to compel people to do our bidding, and so despoil

and degrade. But when we are unselfish we are erect; we grant freedom to all others to stand erect. We covet nothing, and so we have everything. We refuse to nurse a petty pain; so it disappears. Thus unselfishness is wholeness. No man is truly whole unless he looks beyond himself to that larger Whole of which he forms a part.

This is why, in the last analysis, the law of spiritual evolution is beyond human control. It is an inartistic motive which spurs us on to know the how and why of the divinest inspiration, as if we would chemically dissolve love to see whereof it is made. Such motives are fragments only. The real Presence is a whole. The same contrast holds true of the doubts of which I spoke at the outset. A doubt is a single point of view, whereas an insight is an assemblage of viewpoints. All that one saw in each doubting mood is there; but it is beheld as a plant is seen in the sunlight, environed by a boundless world. Looked at from the negative point of view, a plant's powers of assimilation are so small that it seems helpless. Looked at from above and around, it is beautiful; and the observer never thinks of limitations.

We are many times placed in a similar situation. That the Spirit should ever illumine you or me seems impossible. The receiving organism would be sure to discolour the divine light. The little light that succeeded in penetrating our thick skulls would not be divine by the time it reached us. So we doubt and argue. But the impossible is achieved when our consciousness is shifted to the Perfect Whole. After all, there is no part of the plant which does not feel the power of the sun's rays; and this mastering of all obstacles is poor when compared with the Spirit's achievements when it breaks our doubts.

Pursue your finite thoughts, then, when they come: let these fill your idle hours. But do not forget that they are finite and inartistic. Out of these same fragments, whose law of association you have sought in vain, the great Artist can create a fair and peaceful scene, whereon you will gaze with wonder. Not one piece shall be lacking, not one too many shall there be. Such is ever the mystery of transcendental art. It fulfils all ends. It is as economical and practical as it is divine and beautiful. Man, imitating the universal Power, will

do well to remember that only by perfection in all shall he attain perfection in any part.

But I have dwelt on the part and the whole long enough to be wearisome. I turn finally to the social side of these spiritual principles. While it is true that the real essence is imparted to us, not seized by us, we can at least train our organisms so that they shall be ready for the highest work; and the highest is unquestionably social.

From the added power of two congenial souls shall proceed a yet greater social power; and, when many men and women are truly married a leavening force shall be sent out into the world from the home, the like of which has never been known. In this way shall come the final social regeneration. One can no more engraft spirituality upon the social state from without than one can attain the kingdom by seeking first the things which are promised to be added. All spiritualising must come from within, proceeding from the centre to the circumference. It is the living power which touches the soul, then quickens the outer life. And so it must first touch souls, then groups of souls, and finally great masses of souls, until the impetus is so great that nothing can resist it.

True social life, then, is artistic. It robs man of nothing; it makes more beautiful all that he has.

Thus the great spiritual law, enunciated so long ago, assumes new significance when we realise the social changes which must follow in so far as men and women find the larger kingdom of heaven. Individual poise, personal vision of the Spirit, is only the beginning of the larger spiritual life. Man has a long road to pursue ere he becomes truly social.

Spiritual centres shall grow by aggregation as cells once grew, until human society shall be truly an organism. Now, society is a collection of fragments. As our doubts make war, so men and nations war upon each other, awaiting the divine moment when the part shall find rest in the whole. But, as our doubts are finally resolved, so shall these fragmentary groups of men and

women be drawn together. The Power of powers is working to bring about this harmony, hence the outreaching and the conflicts.

If you are convinced of the universality of this law for yourself, you must see that it applies to all men. Once convinced, each of us has a great work to do to point out the law. For it has little recognition in the world. Few adopt the rule which Jesus laid down.

The majority of people are specialists, partisans. He who would be truly spiritual must be universal. And so the practical rule for each is this: wherever you are, whoever you are, choose one of these roads to the universal; pursue art for art's sake, truth for truth's sake, or any of the higher ideals of service and education, and follow it as far as you can. Some day you shall awaken to the glad discovery that in truly pursuing one you have sought all, that the beautiful is good, ethical; that the ethical is artistic; that truth is both beautiful and good. Furthermore, you will learn that no part, no organ, is complete by itself: all are dependent, all are mutually helpful; nothing is absolute. If you would find all this, if you would be a part of this eternal harmony, seek first the Spirit, the creative life, the pure, white light.

Chapter XVII. A Soul's Message

PEACE BE unto you! Peace! The peace which passeth all understanding I bring from that eternal world where love and wisdom reign. For, though a humble soul, one not given to vaunting itself, I have access to a superior realm, and one would be unfaithful in the extreme who should keep silence when his lips have learned, at least haltingly, to speak with the spiritual tongue.

I live, as do you also, in two worlds. I am, as you are, two selves. With one tongue I might address you concerning the weather, the latest fashion, or the stock market, and you could give back surface for surface. But if I address you with the tongue of an angel shall you not as readily respond? Do you realise how many occasions we let pass when we might speak as only angels speak, were it not for pride or timidity, or base servility to custom?

It is written that once angels talked with men on earth, and we believe it—historically. But nowadays many are ashamed to utter the best that is in them, and some are grown cold and barren.

It is rumoured, too, that every man and woman of us came as an angel from heaven,—pure, innocent, and true,—but that the world corrupted us. We are told that we must again become as little children. We believe this also—theoretically. There are many who know the way, but walk not therein.

Yet each of us is an angel in heaven now. Nothing has ever separated us from the divine love and wisdom. Nothing has corrupted us, nothing can corrupt the soul. Once pure, always pure; the soul is ever an angel of God. The heart never loves less truly because the body ages and life grows complicated. Behind the illusions of the mind's fond conceits and fancies the faith of the soul is as firm as ever. The inner man is as zealous for truth as he is youthful and alert. The soul never grows old, never in reality yields to the petrifying tendencies of the flesh. Though the body totter and the sight grow dim, the soul is as erect and intuitive as on its natal day. We may think that our pristine purity is lost, we may think we disbelieve in God, but this seeming despair or scepticism is only temporary and superficial.

These are old, old truths, but we forget them in our servitude. In reality the soul lightly passes from joy to sorrow, from woe to ecstasy, merely touching or serenely observing where it seems to sink and to be overcome. The illusion is on the fleshly side, not on the spiritual. Never came a pain so deep or a trouble so wearing that it really imprisoned the soul. More than half the time we permit ourselves to be so burdened by the flesh that the soul is seemingly in slavery there. We talk as though this body were the soul, as if you and I were creatures of weather, of food, and money. But the consciousness has been withdrawn from the true man—that is all. The soul lives on, in freedom, and will presently narrate its over-dreams.

Meanwhile there are some who even now truly live, conscious of both the nether and the supernal dreams. What they see and say gives the lie to the poor pretensions of the under-man. It is the over-man who truly lives.

Pause for a moment amidst the fretting and fuming of your child-self and be a man, an angel. You shall find that a part of you is unruffled. It is only the surface that is disturbed. The waves of passion and fear do not touch the bottom. Beneath the passing storm there is solid being. Above the mist there is a self that can laugh at the child's play below.

How absurd to be tossed by the gale, when one may descend to the depths of the silent ocean, or rise to a height where all is light and clear.

But how terrible the gale, you say, and how pitiful that thousands should be tossed and buffeted. Behold, how they moan and cry!

True, but shall one think of that alone? Shall one mingle fears with the sorrowful and forget that one might be an angel of peace?

Yet if I retire thence, when I come again the storm still rages and I gaze helplessly at its fury. Is it so? Then you have not risen to the peaceful heights. For to pass thither and repass, is to come peace-laden and strong to conquer.

Turn with me thence and let us gaze together upon the vision ineffable.

Round about us, even where hearts are sorrowful and man is sordid, there is another world which the nether senses see not, but which the soul sees even as a sunset is beheld by the poet. That world is naught to those to whom kind fortune has not spiritually revealed it. You might argue for ever with one who has never felt its sweet peace, and fail as the poet and musician fail when they try to tell what beauties they have seen in nature to one who beholds only shapeless rocks or hears naught besides ugly discords.

Yet it is not alone of what poetry and music sing that I speak—of a passing beauty or a half-caught sound. I speak of that sublime fulness which the musician and poet saw, but of which they voiced only now and then a fragment. Or say that they heard a strain which passed all power to emulate, that this which the world throngs to hear is only the middle note whose height and depth they could not compress into their earthly symphony.

There is a region where all inspiration is one, where the soul breathes a hidden air of which it may outbreathe a bit as poetry or music, love, wisdom, peace, or beauty. There all men are equal, there they are united. One Spirit touches all and each reports as he will, or as he can.

Yet every soul has moments when it uses the spiritual tongue. Every soul understands it. It were futile for anyone, however conditioned, to pretend that he did not comprehend. Our English and our Pali, our Sanscrit and our German—these are given us to conceal thought. With these we rear barriers behind which we nourish spite and selfishness. But no man ever concealed

his soul. Some may not have eyes to see, or think they have not. Yet the vision is there to be seen.

In love and peace, in sympathy you may speak to any man, whatever his acquired tongue, and be understood. This brotherly tongue no man ever acquired; all were born with it, all lives bespeak it in some measure.

Give of yourself and no man under the sunlit sky can resist you. A man can neither doubt nor contend who hears that inner voice, stirred by the gift spirit. To doubt would be like doubting himself, and no man ever really did that. To fight were to strike his own heart.

Yet the farther we emerge from that realm where of all places one may be most truly alone, the more unlike we are. These signs and symbols of our earthhood are so many instruments of the infinite. Each man feels himself to be, as it were, infinite,—as we use words here below,—so rich are the resources of the eternal world, all of which seem to be in turn the possession of each.

Again, when I enter that sacred world, 't is not to be lost. I am still as truly myself as when I seize a torch and plunge into a huge cave. Indeed, I am my true self when I live there—though never do I seem so nearly insignificant. What you hear from me at other times is some idea or emotion masquerading as myself.

In fine, there is a wholeness of life so glorious that our fragmentary displays are dim and ugly in comparison. Were I to essay a description of what the soul sees when thus integrated and unveiled, all you would see in the word picture would be a thin radiance, mayhap suggesting to you the peace unspeakable, but it would be more likely to be elusive. But it was no mere thinness which the soul saw, nor was that peace elusive which it lived upon.

We have been educated to associate the illuminating radiance with spirits too pure to dwell on earth, or deemed it the glory of the Christ alone. Thus we have shut our eyes when we might have beheld souls transfigured.

Do you know what radiant beauty belonged to some who have lived on earth, to some who dwell here now? Have you ever tried to picture the angelic part of those nearest and dearest?

The scant deeds which history records are but a fraction of the life which some have scattered abroad while here. It is the deeds which attract the attention of the mass that are recorded. Or perchance a man receives the glory, whereas a woman wrought the deed!

Oftentimes it is the poorer part that is repeated down the ages. There was no chronicler to bear witness of the soul's triumphs and privations. And what one man or woman seems to do alone may be the work of many souls, present or absent. For in the upper world there is no space. Souls that are akin form one great family. That is why true men and women of genius cry, Not unto us! not unto us!

But remember that the radiant souls are not uncommon. You and I become radiant, too, in our humble way, when we rise to our true estate.

Procrastination is the thief of the soul. We are ever excusing ourselves from entering the radiant day, as if to plead with the powers of darkness: Just a few nights more in which to be devils!

But note this. The only way a man can be a devil is to descend. For every man is also an angel. There is not an atom of devilry in the upper world. At heart every man wants to be good.

A high churchman would take me to task for speaking so well of man. He would insist that I paint the blackness of sin. But alack and alas! how many spend so much time drawing the black veil that there is no time left to paint the brightness of the spirit!

I am now delivering the soul's message, not recording what men think. In the spiritual world the soul is as old as a thousand thousand ages. It looks before and after without limit, and in all that vast domain it beholds no blackness. Light and dark, like summer and winter, are seasons of earthly progress, conveniences of the nether world. Above the clouds of sense all is light, for the darker vales are beheld from the view-point of the divine

effulgence. In that world things are not as readily describable in terms of growth as in terms of being. The soul does not merely become light, it is light.

This seems paradoxical. Yet the spiritual world is at once the basis of growth, the source of all evolution, and the abiding reality which changes not nor fades.

Thus in human life. We live in two worlds. It is possible to see a thousand miles or years with the eye of the soul, yet be compelled to take each plodding step with the fleshly feet.

One ascends to that pure world to learn that a far more glorious life is possible. Yet one must take up the visible round of toil where it was left when the transcendent hour came. Why? Because there is before the soul this great ideal—to climb upwards from the earth until there shall be only heaven.

Few are they who know, as they climb, to what heights they are ascending. Hence the seeming hopelessness and the superficial atheism. But meanwhile there is that in us which knows it all, and when we do not see the way we may safely trust.

Every ideal shall blend into a greater, every achievement shall pale before a nobler deed yet to be. The soul knows no halting-place. Ever on it moves, yet ever in the same kinship with the eternal Spirit. This is its joy. This is its destiny.

From afar and near it whispers its gentle messages. From the Heart of hearts it draws the gift of love. He who as gently listens shall hear its sweet intonations. He who is well poised shall walk in the solitudes of the Spirit. Love and wisdom, joy, peace, and beauty—these are the words, these the long, deep harmonies in the symphony of the soul.

Bibliography

- Dresser, Julius A. *The True History of Mental Science: A Lecture Delivered at the Church of the Divine Unity, Boston, Mass., on Sunday Evening, Feb. 6, 1887*. Boston, MA: Alfred Mudge & Son, 1887. Copyright, 1887 by Julius A. Dresser.
- Dresser, Annetta Gertrude. *The Philosophy of P. P. Quimby with Selections from His Manuscripts and a Sketch of His Life*. 2nd Ed. Boston, MA: Geo. H. Ellis, 1895.
- Dresser, Horatio W. *The Immanent God: An Essay*. Boston, MA: Horatio W. Dresser, 1895. Copyright, 1895 by Horatio W. Dresser.
- Dresser, Horatio W. *The Power of Silence: An Interpretation of Life in Its Relation to Health and Happiness*. Boston, MA: Geo. H. Ellis, 1895. Copyright, 1895 by Horatio W. Dresser.
- Dresser, Horatio W. *The Perfect Whole: An Essay on the Conduct and Meaning of Life*. Boston, MA: Geo. H. Ellis, 1896. Copyright, 1896 by Horatio W. Dresser.
- Dresser, Horatio W. *The Heart of It: A Series of Extracts from The Power of Silence and The Perfect Whole*. Boston, MA: Geo. H. Ellis, 1897. Copyright, 1897 by Horatio W. Dresser.
- Dresser, Horatio W. *In Search of a Soul: A Series of Essays in Interpretation of the Higher Nature of Man*. Boston, MA: Geo. H. Ellis, 1898. Copyright, 1897 by Horatio W. Dresser.
- Dresser, Horatio W. *Voices of Hope and other Messages from the Hills: A Series of Essays on the Problem of Life, Optimism and the Christ*. Boston, MA: Geo. H. Ellis, 1898. Copyright, 1898 by Horatio W. Dresser.

- Dresser, Horatio W. *Methods and Problems of Spiritual Healing*. New York, NY and London, GB: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1899. Copyright, 1899 by Horatio W. Dresser.
- Dresser, Horatio W. *Voices of Freedom and Studies in the Philosophy of Individuality*. New York, NY and London, GB: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1899. Copyright, 1899 by Horatio W. Dresser.
- Dresser, Horatio W. *Living by the Spirit*. New York, NY and London, GB: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1900. Copyright, 1900 by Horatio Willis Dresser.
- Dresser, Horatio W. *Education and the Philosophical Ideal*. New York, NY and London, GB: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1900. Copyright, 1900 by Horatio Willis Dresser.
- Dresser, Horatio W. *The Power of Silence: An Interpretation of Life in Its Relation to Health and Happiness*. New York, NY and London, GB: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1901. Copyright, 1895 by Horatio W. Dresser.
- Dresser, Horatio W. *The Christ Ideal: A Study of the Spiritual Teachings of Jesus*. New York, NY and London, GB: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904. Copyright, May, 1901 by Horatio W. Dresser.
- Dresser, Horatio W. *A Book of Secrets with Studies in the Art of Self-Control*. New York, NY and London, GB: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1902. Copyright, 1902 by Horatio Willis Dresser.
- Dresser, Horatio W. *Man and the Divine Order: Essays in the Philosophy of Religion and in Constructive Idealism*. New York, NY and London, GB: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903. Copyright, 1903 by Horatio Willis Dresser.
- Dresser, Horatio W. *The Power of Silence: A Study of the Values and Ideals of the Inner Life*. 2nd ed., rev. ed. New York, NY and London, GB: G. P. Putnam's Sons. Copyright, 1895, 1904 by Horatio W. Dresser.
- Dresser, Horatio W. *Health and the Inner Life: An Analytical and Historical Study of Spiritual Healing Theories, with an Account of the Life and Teachings of P. P. Quimby*. New York, NY and London, GB: G. P. Putnam's Sons. Copyright, 1906 by Horatio Willis Dresser.
- Dresser, Horatio W. *The Greatest Truth and Other Discourses and Interpretations*. New York, NY: Progressive Literature, 1907.
- Dresser, Ph. D., Horatio W. *The Philosophy of the Spirit: A Study of the Spiritual Nature of Man and the Presence of God, with a Supplementary Essay on the Logic of Hegel*. New York, NY and London, GB: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903. Copyright, 1908 by Horatio Willis Dresser.

- Dresser, Ph. D., Horatio W. *A Physician to the Soul*. New York, NY and London, GB: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1908. Copyright, 1908 by Horatio Willis Dresser.
- Dresser, Ph. D., Horatio W. *A Message to the Well and Other Essays and Letters on the Art of Health*. New York, NY and London, GB: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1910. Copyright, 1910 by Horatio Willis Dresser.
- Dresser, Ph. D., Horatio W. *Human Efficiency: A Psychological Study of Modern Problems*. New York, NY and London, GB: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912. Copyright, 1912 by Horatio Willis Dresser.
- Dresser, Ph. D., Horatio W. *The Religion of the Spirit in Modern Life*. New York, NY and London, GB: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1914. Copyright, 1914 by Horatio Willis Dresser.
- Dresser, Ph. D., Horatio W. *Handbook of the New Thought*. New York, NY and London, GB: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1917. Copyright, 1917 by Horatio W. Dresser.
- Dresser, Ph. D., Horatio W. ed. *The Spirit of the New Thought: Essays and Addresses by Representative Authors and Leaders*. New York, NY: Thomas Y. Crowell Company. Copyright, 1917 by Thomas Y. Crowell Company.
- Dresser, Ph. D., Horatio W. *The Victorious Faith: Moral Ideals in War Time*. New York, NY and London, GB: Harper & Brothers Publishers. Copyright, 1917 by Harper & Brothers.
- Dresser, Ph. D., Horatio W. *A History of the New Thought Movement*. New York, NY: Thomas Y. Crowell Company. Copyright, 1919 by Thomas Y. Crowell Company.
- Dresser, Ph. D., Horatio W. *On the Threshold of the Spiritual World: A Study of Life and Death Over There*. New York, NY: George Sully and Company. Copyright, 1919 by George Sully and Company.
- Dresser, Ph. D., Horatio W. *The Open Vision: A Study of Phychic Phenomena*. New York, NY: Thomas Y. Crowell Company. Copyright, 1920 by Thomas Y. Crowell Company.
- Dresser, Horatio W. ed. *The Quimby Manuscripts: Showing the Discovery of Spiritual Healing and the Origin of Christian Science*. New York, NY: Thomas Y. Crowell Company. Copyright, 1921 by Thomas Y. Crowell Company.
- Dresser, Ph. D., Horatio W. *Spiritual Health and Healing*. New York, NY: Thomas Y. Crowell Company. Copyright, 1922 by Thomas Y. Crowell Company.
- Dresser, Ph. D., Horatio W. *Psychology in Theory and Application*. New York, NY: Thomas Y. Crowell Company. Copyright, 1924 by Thomas Y. Crowell Company.

-
- Dresser, Ph. D., Horatio W. *Ethics in Theory and Application*. New York, NY: Thomas Y. Crowell Company. Copyright, 1925 by Thomas Y. Crowell Company.
- Dresser, Ph. D., Horatio W. *A History of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*. New York, NY: Thomas Y. Crowell Company. Copyright, 1926 by Thomas Y. Crowell Company.
- Dresser, Ph. D., Horatio W. *A History of Modern Philosophy*. New York, NY: Thomas Y. Crowell Company. Copyright, 1928 by Thomas Y. Crowell Company.
- Dresser, Ph. D., Horatio W. *Outlines of the Psychology of Religion*. New York, NY: Thomas Y. Crowell Company. Copyright, 1929 by Thomas Y. Crowell Company.
- Dresser, Ph. D., Horatio W. *A History of Modern Philosophy*. New York, NY: Thomas Y. Crowell Company. Copyright, 1928 by Thomas Y. Crowell Company.
- Dresser, Ph. D., Horatio W. *Knowing and Helping People: A Study of Personal Problems and Psychological Techniques*. Boston, MA: The Beacon Press, Inc. Copyright, 1933 by The Beacon Press, Inc.