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NEW THOUGHT.

A Magazine devoted to Practical Idealism and Self-Development through Self-Knowledge.

Conducted by A. Osborne Eaves.

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Stray Thoughts.

One hears from time to time that students fail to realise the truths of New Thought and they wonder why. Many reasons might be given, but we assuredly know that the law cannot fail, that if we comply with its conditions we must necessarily experience the results. An animal is self-contained, that is to say, it has definite limits to its being; these it soon learns and keeps within those limits. Man, on the contrary, has no limits, and he never explores the vastness of his own consciousness and powers, so he is constantly making mistakes, and he cannot avoid the consequences.

As a writer says: "Every person is a world by itself, and is his own maker; he rewards himself, and also punishes himself; if he believes in God, then God is to him personal living in him, and if he believes in a devil, the devil is himself, a part of his own being." The above sentence will bear pondering over. No human being is utterly devoid of belief of some kind, and it is more than probable that he will believe in negatives rather than positives, in shadows instead of substance, because the bulk of people live under the veil of illusion. It is this universality of illusion that led Eastern races to assert that this life is only illusion; that the real life is that which follows this—nirvana. It is this idea which leads so many to the habit of looking forward—of contemplating a time in which all sorrows and cares will be laid aside and real rest and peace take their place.

The illusion is self-made, however, and the present world may be made very real, very beautiful, and a free, glorious existence passed in it, if we will only ally ourselves with the real and ideal. It is something to have reached the point where one sees that one is living under illusion, because thousands pass out of this life without ever guessing such a stupendous truth. Even poets, thinkers, scientists, great men (in other respects) have so gone hence—the countless rationalists, amongst whom are reckoned Shelly, Tennyson, Edison, and many others, testify to the glamour of life stupefying the higher consciousness.

So that we come back to simple fundamentals. If we meditate on good it becomes our belief, and it is then acted out, or expressed in our life; good pre-luminates, and ultimately the whole of life may be summed up in the word good—we know no other phase of existence. Begin to-day with the practice of this idea and see if this is not your experience.

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Reviews.

Those interested in Freemasonry should find "Azoth," the American magazine, of interest. Frank C. Higgins (320 A.A.S.R.) deals with masonic geometry, which the outsider will be repaid in reading for numbers undoubtedly possess occult power when understood. The editor, Michael Whitty, who has just died, and who wielded such a facile pen, is convinced that mankind is entering a new era, and that it is being aided by the spiritual teachers of the race and its nations. Though occult students, he says, do not take much interest in politics they must in world-wide ones, and really earnest students may have the opportunity of receiving instruction in spiritual development, free of any cost.

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"Man occupies a unique place in creation," says Henry Victor Morgan, in "Power." Beneath him all forms of life are arbitrarily fixed from without, and bounds set beyond which there can be no progress. But in the mind of man we behold a new order, and a new factor in evolution has to be considered. That which to the brute is the iron bar of circumstance, when seen in reason's light becomes a means to power. While the leopard cannot change his spots, thinking man can change his environment, heal his body and mould his character."

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An article in a recent issue of "Health Culture," a well-known American magazine, is "How to keep Young One Hundred Years." Non-flesh diet is recommended, though fish is not tabooed; plenty of soft, pure water, juicy fruits, exercise, are necessary. The Hindu "complete breath" is advocated. This is an excellent method of breathing, and it is worth giving. "When the breath is drawn in there should first be a swelling outward of the abdominal region; next there is a lateral expansion of the lower part of the chest, and lastly as the upper chest is filled, the abdomen is drawn in, and the whole chest is lifted up. Breathing in this way completely fills the lungs, and it is a fine tonic for both body and brain."

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Undoubtedly it is, and no better time than spring could it be practised. Suitable affirmations will enhance its value, and it will keep one fit for the remainder of the year.

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"The human need for a renaissance" is voiced in "The Journal of Industrial Welfare," whose slogan is: "Longing for a Practical Good-will between Employer and Employed."

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Monthly, 9d. In it we learn that in Sweden, every child that is born, rich or poor, boy or girl, undergoes daily physical training for 54 minutes. It is a pity this could not be followed in this country, for physical decadence seems universal.

LESSON 14.

It is becoming increasingly evident that character is the basis of all growth. For a long time—in fact, for centuries—it was believed that so long as one could get along without being too squeamish, so long as one did not injure one's fellow men too much there was little to complain of. Few people believe so now. Honesty "pays" in the most literal sense possible, and as every human being is being sharpened up through the great change that is being wrought in us the need of character is apparent. Character stands for many things, and amongst them is stability.

We know it would be very awkward if some morning we woke up we found an earthquake had occurred during the night, torn up the permanent way of the railroad, divided one town from another by great fissures a mile deep and two or three wide—things would go awry. If, when all was put right, supposing it were possible, it happened again a week after, and time after time, we should be all thoroughly disorganised. There would be a want of stability, we should say. The same thing has been seen the last few years in international affairs; things have not been stable, and as a result nations have suffered. Now note the attitude of people to a man who is known to have no stability about him. It is possible, even probable, that people simply have to do business with him in some capacity or other, but it will be found on enquiry that they do as little as possible with him; they may not exactly mistrust him, as he may be perfectly honest and above-board, but they have a feeling without being told, that he is not reliable, that he is not a man who can be depended upon, and he is regarded in a cold, detached sort of way. In a phrase "he does not count." He is a mere nobody, a nonentity, to all intents and purposes. He is weak, and to be weak is worse than being wicked, because, as I have remarked more than once, badness requires some backbone, seeing that law and order, the opinions of those who count, are set at nought; but weakness is not a positive quality—it is an emptiness, a void, a want of something—it is truly nothing. We despise the weakling mentally, and pity the physical weakling.

Now the one thing that raises a man in the estimate of his fellows is character; stability is synonymous with strength, and the world worships strength, whether found in a nation or an individual. You feel a sense of satisfaction of being at home when in the presence or coming into touch with the man with character. There is felt to be something dependable about such a man. Unconsciously men bring to him their troubles, unburden themselves often in a way that surprises them afterwards, but they feel that they will get advice and help because they find he is a strong man and far-seeing.

We all admit a sneaking regard for the strong character; we admire him, and we often wish we were like him. We say: "How easy it is for him to do right to act up to good resolutions," but if we enquired into the matter we should find in nearly every case that this strong self-reliant man was not born so, that this character was not hereditary, nor did it spring up like a mushroom, but that it was the result of struggle, of rigid self-denial, of much suffering, and searing of the deepest springs of the soul.

There can be no character which is not made by ourselves is a truth which requires proclaiming from the house-tops, as so many people get it into their heads that it is so easy for the strong to be good. They see a man born with a weak body and another with a strong one,

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and imagine that character is the same, but it is not often the case ; nearly always it is the result of a forging out, beaten with the hammer of circumstances and adversity, and this is one of the uses of the negative aspect of life.

At one time it was thought that misery and a hard life were essential to the development of character, as it tried a man like fire. This was quite true, but that was in the old days, and our forefathers acquired a sturdy character under more difficult circumstances than we do to-day. They had not the advantage of a training in practical psychology as we to-day have. It is no longer indispensable that we should go through the fire, and suffer all the pains and penalties our forefathers underwent to purify their weaknesses ; no, we live in a severely practical and at the same time, scientific age, and we can attain the same ends with infinitely less heart-aching. Do not, however, misunderstand me. Do not think I am teaching that a weak character can become strong without earnest striving. What I mean is, that just as a man does not need to beat his body with a flail or wire-tipped whip till he brings blood, or hang head downward for years to strengthen his will or become a nobler man, so it is not necessary to lead a life of negation, or be a martyr to become strong in character. We do not plead for a soft, sensuous, lap-of-luxury existence, because this would defeat the object in view, but it is necessary to make sacrifices if we would attain to a strong character. Nature never gives something for nothing, but she does at least give us every cent we earn. Nothing is ever withheld from us, and we earn all we get. This is an immutable law, and it should ever be remembered, because there are so many people who bemoan that they never get what they deserve, that they are taken in by people, or badly treated without meriting it. Bad luck or misfortune is put down to the same cause, and it is never thought that there can be no injustice in a universe governed by law from the tiniest to the greatest thing we can conceive.

It may be questioned by some as to whether it is possible for any man to secure a strong character, but it can unhesitatingly be asserted that it can ; no man or woman is too weak to become strong, though he or she may think him or herself the possessor of a weak will. It is quite true that one may have a weak will, but this does not mean he has to have it all his life, but only as long as he cares to put up with it. Indeed, he may have not a weak will at all, but he may think he has, or, what is more likely, he has never tried to find whether he had a will or not. At any rate, he need not from this moment have one, nor need he suffer any longer from a weak character. Let him go carefully through the lessons which have been given, and note the methods by which various forces of the mind are trained and apply them, and it will not be long before he finds that he is making real headway in the matter of character.

The basis of character is self-control, and once a man has this he soon gains self-respect, which is very closely allied to it. These lessons have dwelt upon self-reliance pretty fully, because if a man has no belief in himself he will not put into operation the instructions given and he has to *live* these instructions if he wishes to win success. Sometimes a student gains self-reliance to a marked extent, yet he lacks some of the essentials of character ; for instance, he perhaps finds it difficult to get rid of the idea that some one he knows is not superior to him. A man moving in the highest walks of society, respected by all, looked up to, exhibiting nobility of character in every respect, seems to him to be far above him, to be in a position unattainable, to

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be, in short, of different clay. Whatever he is you are, but he has worked and gained what he is by what he has done. You have not paid the same attention to the matter, but as you do you, too, will begin to become what he is. You must drop the idea that you are inferior. The fact that you have to work for your living—possibly fill a very humble rôle in the world's workshop—may be galling, humiliating, and you think that you are where you are because you are so inferior to the men you admire, who occupy high positions in life, but you need not long entertain this feeling.

Determine that you will raise yourself to the moral height of those you most respect. Even in our own country poor boys without influence have risen to the position of a premier or peer, and very high positions, so that the fact that you do not possess means, or the advantage of a university education need not deter you from aspiring to become a strong and virile character.

There has long been an idea that you might appear to be good to others, not to wrong others, but to do as you like when no one but yourself is concerned. For instance, it used to be said: "You may think what you please, but you must not say what you think," so a man would be chivalrous, generous, highminded towards other people, but do mean things as far as himself was concerned; that is to say he would do things he would be ashamed of others knowing. He would not think it mattered much, however, seeing that he alone suffered. This is the big mistake that is made. You cannot be true to others till you are true to yourself. So people often think they are "taking it out" of someone whilst going scot free themselves, but they cannot.

Taking the above as the standard, it must be obvious to anyone that the basis of all character must be reality. It is no use harbouring mean, spiteful thoughts for a certain portion of the day, and then trying to efface all the effects flowing from them. Character means being the same all the way through. It is as though in one vast sheet of metal there were a little flaw scarcely perceptible to the eye, yet when this metal were put to straining point, the flaw would tell. We are constantly being told to "assume a virtue though you have it not," and this is excellent advice, but the fault with those who attempt to carry it into practice is they "assume" it all their lives. The object of assuming a virtue is so that it shall ultimately become a reality in the nature, but if we regard it always as something we put on or take up, for certain purposes, then we are making no headway at all, it is only acting. As long as virtue is assumed, there can be little growth made. Anyone who has followed this course of lessons so far will see that what we are continually advocating is the raising of the consciousness until we leave the ordinary normal one entirely. It is as though we had been all our lives at the bottom of a very deep valley, a valley in which no ray of sunlight ever dawned on account of the narrowness and great depth of it, and when after laboriously struggling we managed to reach the heights above, we were in another atmosphere; our eyes dwell upon the horizon, and we see that we are in another realm altogether—we might almost be justified in saying that we were in another world, for everything is so very different here.

Now character is something like this, it is the leaving on one side, whatever we have been, a determination not to revert to such a condition; to keep constantly in view the ideals we have set ourselves, the total ignoring of everything which will in the slightest degree interfere with those ideals; it is a gradual living on the heights and refusing under any circumstances to come down once more and live the old life.

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If there is this assuming attitude always in the life, there are two strata of consciousness, and these two must necessarily be opposed to each other, because the nature of each differs utterly.

The wider life is the natural life ; anything which is not in accord with this life is going against the progress which we have more than once asserted to be eternal. Shallow-minded people have often thought that the sentence : "the way of the transgressor is hard" was not true to life, that it was merely a poetic sentiment having no foundation for it. As a matter of fact, it is absolutely scientific, and for this reason : when we go with the stream, resistance is less ; when we attempt to go against the stream the strain is intensified many times over. Now this physical simile applies to the moral world, because there are moral laws as well as physical laws. And though one may appear to find a case where evil is not punished, the observer does not go deep enough into the case to see the final outcome of it, for there can be no cause without effect, and success is often an appearance only. The writer has in his mind at the moment the cases of the financiers, who in their finance : "Went up like a rocket, and came down like a stick." The student will, no doubt readily call to mind half dozen such incidents, and these might be multiplied indefinitely.

We should be inclined to put character as the foundation on which all other powers of the mind and the higher forces of the mentality rest. Certainly one must learn to think before one can affect one's character, just as many laws of the mind with which we have been dealing in this course must be understood and practised, before much character building can be entered upon ; but now that these laws have been given pretty fully, the whys and the wherefores explained, the student is in a position to take up the study of character building, armed and prepared in a manner that will fit him for the work to a far greater extent than could otherwise have been done.

To build character scientifically we must take certain traits in a certain order, as each of the factors must necessarily be co-ordinated. The first requisite is breadth of mind, or toleration, the ability to allow everyone to see a question from his own standpoint and not to force your own upon him. Seeing that no two human beings are precisely alike it is foolish to expect that any two can see the same thing in exactly the same light. By this toleration we do not unnecessarily ruffle our own feelings or those of our neighbours, because the latter do not happen to see eye to eye with us. That practice calls for considerable patience and watchfulness on our part, and once we can be quite cool when we see a man taking the opposite view of a case which appears quite plain to us, we may rest assured that we are making headway.

With this toleration we find that discrimination begins to appear ; we begin to exercise our judgment, and the faculty of observation is aroused within us, or being aroused is intensified. We shall now be better able to understand the view-point of our neighbours, and when this is the case there will be a desire to help them where they stand and not from our standpoint. The mind is bound to expand under such a regime. Self-control will now be a marked characteristic in the nature, and with some success in the controlling of one's mind, one is in a position to undertake more difficult tasks. The student will be able to discriminate between the real and the unreal therefore he will cease to be the butt or sport of Fate or circumstances any longer ; he will have gained a dispassionate outlook upon life, and will always know how to weigh evenly all the elements with which he has to deal.

To be continued.

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LESSON III.—WHAT CREATES, AND HOW.

As nothing happens by chance in any kingdom of Nature, so no form of life exists which was not called into existence by the life ensouling it. The desire for more extended consciousness lifted the stone to the position of a plant. The wish of the plant for movement led to the appearance of the animal, and the wish to express rapidity of movement, keenness of vision, insensibility to heat or cold, or pain, led to the many species we see around us. A writer has remarked that the desire on the part of man to fly would evolve wings, and this is true, though mechanical means are the easiest.

All creation is from within, which may seem the reverse of what has been understood to be the fact. This creation, however, has hitherto only been partly conscious. It has not been consciously directed: it has been directed by a part of Nature which has escaped observation, as though it were automatic. Once the beating of the heart was a voluntary action necessitating thought on the part of the living organism; so was breathing and the functioning of other processes connected with life, but as time went on these functions became automatic so that man might be relieved of the constant overlooking and watchfulness. His consciousness was set at liberty to formulate and express those desires which rose spontaneously from time to time, but the senses being turned from the within to the without constantly the growth of mentality was delayed. The goal of the individual was lost sight of; the impinging of the vibrations of matter upon mind, or, in other and more accurate words, the contact of the not-self with the Self (or the known and the knower), led in many cases to an eclipse of the finer faculties, and the growth of the individual was handed over to heredity to look after. This was another instance of the Law of Stability, and for a time it worked well. With the child learning to walk the adventitious aid of the mother is a necessity at first, but if the child were never allowed to "feel its feet" and walk alone and unaided it would grow up helpless. The protecting arm of the mother would then be a hindrance, for self-dependence would be destroyed. So with the individual. Heredity safeguards the man up to a certain point, implants within him the "first law of Nature"—self-preservation, and the stability of the race is insured thereby. Morality is founded and maintained in the same way. But there comes a point in the life of every man when he and heredity must part company; when he "feels his feet," when he obtains a glimpse—a flash, it may be—of the purpose of existence, of the place of man in the universe. Then and then only begins the dawn of Self-Creation. Creation is his work. So far he has relegated it to Nature to do it for him; he has been quite content to feel that he was leaving the matter in capable hands. He looks round and he sees the process and heredity working very well. Men are born and told they should not deviate from the position in which they have been placed, that that is their destiny, and they must be content—it saves such a lot of bother, this being content—and they fall comfortably back in the rut they and their forefathers have got on so well in. Heredity sees to it that their wants are attended to; and when a certain time-limit is reached she strikes off their bodies, as she can teach them no more this time.

Desire, then, as we have seen, is the one factor which is at work in Creation, and any man can test the truth of this statement by dispassionately examining and dissecting his own nature. He will find

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within it certain desires—whether “good” or “bad,” according to the code of morals current at the period or in the country of his birth is beside the mark at present—but he will certainly find tendencies, and these tendencies are assuredly the result of his own mind. Heredity is only a money-box into which we drop from time to time a coin of our own manufacture, and which coins accumulating year by year, life by life, make a character. We borrow from relatives also, and their traits are found to blend curiously with our own, and ours with theirs—action and interaction. And surely this is fair? We are all so affected by each.

Psycho-analysis is not a process of which one is fond, and much of it, unless carried on in the right spirit is liable to lead to morbidness, and an unhealthy mentality. But this mental stock-taking reveals at times little suspected characteristics, if we are honest with ourselves. Let us note the tendencies which show themselves, and we shall then be able to see why we perform certain actions; why we are as we are.

It may be asked: Why should not creation be initiated from without and not from within? The idea of a creator usually associates itself with something outside and apart from that which is created—one associates the artificer and the material with which he works, the sculptor and the marble. In the earlier period of the world's history evolution proceeded in this manner, but when self-consciousness, as distinct from ordinary consciousness, was attained in humanity then creative functions were withdrawn. They were implanted as a germ in man, and did opportunity permit several lessons might profitably be spent considering the permanent atom and the important part which it plays in evolution. The principle of creation was implanted in man that he might in turn become a creator, that the Divine Spark, which was his highest Self, might develop. There would be far more glory, more merit, in man making himself than in being like putty, moulded by something outside himself. Sir Oliver Lodge and other scientists have now come to the conclusion, a conclusion arrived at not from the indulging of a play of fancy, but from strict logical necessity, that there are beings as far above man as he is above the beetle. There can be no link in the chain of consciousness wanting, and no evidence can be adduced why self-consciousness should come to a dead stop. Progress is the keynote of all manifestation, and man has now arrived at the point when he can comprehend something of the law of his being, why he is here, and what his destiny is.

All matter, whatever be its form, is mind stuff under some guise, and nothing can come into objective existence without its being acted upon by mind. The world existed as thought before it took concrete form, and all thought tends to take shape of some kind or other. Ideas, except purely abstract ones, relating to truth, beauty, goodness, etc., objectives, that is to say, become material. When thought has no course or pattern for it, it takes the form most easily reproduced goes along the line of least resistance, like all other forces, and this line is the type of thought entertained by a man. Thought cannot remain entirely inactive unless under a trained mind; countless images are thrown up by every mind daily, and these are supplied more or less with matter to work on. Creation is going on every moment in every person, physically and mentally, but the great bulk of it is done automatically. The birth and death of each atom are covered by an automatism, both the atoms of the physical body, and those of the mind, the consciousness of each atom being expanded but little for a long period.

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LESSON IV.—CHANGING THE CONSCIOUSNESS.

Before we can create consciously we must take stock of our mental make-up. Although everyone has much the same kind of grey matter we call brain the differences in each man will be very great in many directions, so one cannot lay down a hard and fast rule as to general make-up. It is agreed that each reader wishes to graft on to his nature some characteristics in which he is deficient, and eliminate others of an undesirable type. He may be even more ambitious: he may wish to reproduce certain changes in his body, to make of himself a new man. Whatever be the change he seeks he must formulate in clear-cut fashion exactly what he aims at. This in itself will give much to do. It is not necessary, however, to imagine a complete and final change, as the mind would scarcely be able to assimilate a set of factors entirely different to the ones with which it had been accustomed to deal. As it took long periods of time to make the consciousness what it is, so time would be necessary to bring about changes in it now. The length of time necessary for such changes is vastly briefer now, because changes in the past were made unconsciously, without man's direct volition. The material to be affected then was denser, and therefore required longer to change. Every object in the universe, whatever it may be, is composed of atoms whirling round with inconceivable rapidity. The atoms are said to vibrate at certain rates. The denser the atoms the slower their rate of motion. The atoms of thought move more rapidly than any other class, and it is for this reason that changes in the consciousness can be brought about in a fraction of the time as compared with the period when there was no volition to act upon consciousness.

Let me try to work out this point of knowing what to change. You come across a young man who seems a good fellow looked at all round, but you observe that he exercises an economy which astonishes you. You never see him spend a penny. He is not stingy; he does not appear to be selfish, and there is no indication that he is poor. You may pass your holidays with the individual and have this trait brought into greater prominence. If you knew all the circumstances of the case you would find that the virtue of economy was one which was utterly foreign to the nature, but that the family had suffered great financial loss, and in consequence the utmost care had to be given to the subject of money—probably the father was dead and only a small amount had been left to the widow, who had a certain appearance to maintain, and a family to rear. The working man with sixty-five shillings a week would not experience the anxiety in regard to money matters that this family deprived of its head would, having to exercise year by year this rigid adherence to economy, and the fact would eat into the soul of the members of the family, so that in after life it would be difficult to break away from it when circumstances no longer rendered it a strict necessity.

If you had recently imbibed a little New Thought philosophy you might be inclined to spend more freely, to show your utter disregard of any cramping circumstances and to regard your friend as parsimonious. The very fact of seeing what you regard as niggardliness might effect your character to a sufficient extent to become a little more reckless in regard to spending.

This effect on you might react on your friend, and make him the more careful, as he would see ruin facing him if he persisted in following an extravagant course. Hence two people, both by example, might become confirmed in habits which would appear

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undesirable to each. That is to say, the careful man deplors the wanton spending of money of his friend, and the latter feels contempt for saving. Place yourselves apart and this accentuation would not be so marked.

We affect and are affected by others, and if we wish to undertake the creation of ourselves we must know what it is we wish to create and why. If we are inclined to extravagance we should ask ourselves what do we desire to build into ourselves. How far will a careless regard to money serve the end we have in view? Or, if we are inclined to exercise a spartan-like attitude in respect to the spending of money, we must endeavour to see whether our end in view will be served by such a policy. Until we are able to get a sense of proportion in such a case our efforts at Self-Creation cannot be expected to prove successful.

What we shall be safe in assuming, however, is that more knowledge is desirable, that when we know more of the mechanism which runs us, or we run, we shall then be in a position to decide in what way the consciousness would be changed.

We shall not endeavour to do what several of the great religions of the world have been trying to do for centuries—make ourselves copies of something else—imitations. Difference exists in the kosmos to show that the Divine mind is illimitable, that a million universes and suns, teeming with myriad forms of life can only express in their totality a tithe of that mind. Were all alike it would predicate a poverty of conception worthy only of a limited and therefore imperfect entity. Difference is the signet of omnipotence. The higher we go in evolution the greater the differences, and when we set about changing the consciousness let us see to it that we do not take what we regard as a virtue in others; but aim at originality.

LESSON V.—ORIGINALITY IN SELF-CREATION.

The striving to be oneself, to express the highest we have any conception of will result in original thought and through original thought the consciousness will be changed and Self-Creation become and accomplished fact. We have too long been a mere reflection of the thoughts of others, of our own dead selves that the bundle of ideas which passed for us has not fairly or adequately represented us, and we have been commonplace, and like those around us. One's standard of life and general outlook must be altered to permit original thought. Beneath the threshold of our normal consciousness a vast unexplored area exists, and it must be our aim to quarry some of the rich ore which but awaits our attention. To do this a habit of quietness must be cultivated. The mind is ever in a state of activity, and this has been intensified of late years. Reflection is found to be difficult to all but contemplative natures, and these do not elicit original thought often, but review ideas which have occupied their own mind areas. When a man has a few minutes with nothing to do he generally takes up a paper or a magazine, and it is due to his habit that we have had such a phenomenal number of publications of late years. Something of concentration must be learnt, and the mind directed to one point. Vagueness must be avoided because the inevitable result is that the mind drifts. Quietness will enable the mind to turn itself inwards. Instead of contacting the things outside it will listen for the prompting of the subconsciousness.

To be continued.

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If this is true, then war, pestilence, famine, intemperance, and hydrophobia all put together are more harmless than religion.

The quintessence of insanity is in a religion that embraces the idea of a vengeful God and a condition of endless punishment—no matter whether that condition be a burning hell or a burning conscience.

And there is no one, not a loving soul on earth, who can enter into a living, vital realisation of such belief and remain sane. I have a right to know this ; for I was on the extreme verge of insanity when I discarded my religion.

I took it all in such dead earnest, I could not forget it for one instant. I had been steeped in it from my birth. I knew nothing different. I was surrounded by the absolutely unbroken influence of the church ; and no idea had ever reached me through my reading, or the influence of others, to awaken a doubt in my mind as to the truthfulness of the whole fearful scheme, from the horror of which I could never free myself for a single moment after I reached an age where I began to think.

But my tremendous awakening to the horrors of the Christian religion came after my marriage. It came with the birth of my baby daughter. As the child grew my terrors grew.

The preachers always put up at our house ; I was so "conscientious a Christian," I worked so hard, and I begged so much money for them ; I was the best cook on the circuit, and I baked myself over the kitchen stove to pander to their appetites until I was ready to expire with the effort.

But all the time I was begging to know more of the plan of salvation. I wanted positive assurance that my baby would be saved. I demanded an absolute guarantee of this. Half-way promises only served to make me wild. Eventually I did become wild and desperate at their indifference. I began to wonder how men, whose business was the saving of souls, could eat, and sleep, and laugh, and recount anecdotes, and be genial and joyful, and fond of money and pleasure, and strive for the good things of earth quite as much as other men, while my baby and a world of other babies were in jeopardy of hell-fire. The questions I put to them, and the whole tenor of my talk, rendered me a perfect blister to them. Finally, I accused them of the deadly sin of indifference ; and at last one Sunday afternoon, when the presiding elder and four or five other preachers were present, I became violent. I passed from under my own power of self-control. I was realising—in a manner beyond the possibility of description—the awfulness of hell and the helplessness of man ; how only so few would avail themselves of God's plan of salvation, and how many would, of necessity, be doomed to the tortures of an endless punishment ; and there were the preachers smoking cigars and laughing and talking over the small topics of neighbourhood gossip. I asked them how they could find room in their brains for a happy thought ?

"Take it easy, sister," said the elder ; make your own calling and election sure, and leave the rest with God."

I remember the very words I used in answering him. I said : "I can never be happy in heaven if even a dog has to endure the tortures of an endless hell. Oh, what shall I do ?"

He began some more of his platitudes, but I did not listen ; I became wild with passion, and ordered them all out of the house. And they went, too, and did not stop to say good-bye.

And when they were gone I sat down and waited and waited for contrition to come ; for before, when I had spoken an unkind word, I

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repented it quickly and bitterly. But no repentance came this time, but in its place such lightness, such happiness, such glorious relief, as I had never experienced in all my life.

I was free from the bondage of a life-long fear. And I had come free through the effort of irrational brute force; because I did not know at that time that I was right. I did not know but that I was sinking into the depths of irretrievable damnation. And it was only after I had burst my bonds in this unreasoning way that the light broke in upon me.

But how rapidly it did break into my mind! It was not ten minutes before I saw the utter absurdity of the scheme of salvation, and not a figment of its bondage ever returned to me. It was as if my mind had been growing under a fearful pressure, as a blade of grass grows under a rock—curling round and round upon itself in its efforts to reach the light, when suddenly the rock is rolled away and the poor, tortured thing straightens up in the splendid sunshine and achieves in an hour an altitude that requires weeks of ordinary growth to reach.

From that moment the whole world assumed a different meaning to me. The books that I had read and that had helped to rivet my bonds became arrant nonsense. My mind was as clear as spring; I grasped the fallacy of every argument that religion had ever used. I laughed at the Christian's personal God, just as I laugh at it to-day; and in all the years that have passed since then, I have never once had the faintest suspicion that I made a mistake in throwing the whole nightmare bugaboo overboard.

I was a changed woman from that hour. I felt within myself the religion of a truer humanity than had entered the conception of any one of the various creeds. I looked out with glowing love upon the race; with an honest pride in its endeavour to actualise its ideal; and with a divine restfulness in its power to eventually save itself from the curse of its own ignorance, which, even then, I saw to be the only curse under which it laboured.

I have given this personal experience because I am sure that there are some students who are as helplessly hemmed in by early education and present environment as I was; and who will never free themselves except by the tremendous and apparently irrational effort that I made. I had come to a place in my experience where I had to choose between going to hell (as I supposed) or going insane; and some desperate and reckless impulse within me—which turned out to be the beautiful spirit of freedom—made me prefer the former. And who can reckon the surprise I felt when I found heaven instead—a heaven that has been enlarging to my comprehension ever since.

If you would learn truth you must first discard prejudice, even if you tear its old rags from you with brute force, and if their absence leaves you utterly naked. It is a daring deed that truth always rewards by clothing you anew in her own beautiful garments.

LESSON VI—THE SOUL OF THINGS.

To be nobler; to be better; to be greater intrinsically and all over; to be more and do more; to project a grander doing from a grander being; to extract a deeper vitality from a deeper knowing—this is the enticement to live.

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Why, men are actually asking for some incentive to live! They are so tired of the old beliefs, and yet unable—with the limited range of their mental vision—to see anything better, that they are begging to be shown something worth living for. They feel their stagnation so much, submerged as they are in the world's dead thought, that each day is a weariness to them, and will be until they are aroused by the newer and more invigorating ideas founded upon a wider conception of man's own latent possibilities.

Only their own original thought can save them.

And the fountain-head of this original thought within the man has been dammed up so long by the dead beliefs of a dead age, that not in a hundred knows that he can think. Fewer still have the slightest conception of the power of thought, or dream of how this alone will change the whole current of existence for them when it begins to flow; nor of how it will not only make them alive all over, but will give life to everything they see; thus transforming the dead world into a living world of enchanted beauty.

Self-generating thought is the vital fluid itself. It courses through a man's veins and stimulates him to undreamed activities. But he needs to draw it fresh from the fountain-head of his own organism each day. Therefore, he must at once turn his back on the beliefs of the present age—on all of them—for they are not his. Even those among them which are truest are not properly related to him by the divine parentage of his own creative functions; and so he must let them go, and step clear from them all in absolute nakedness. He must then search his own organism for the well-spring of original thought, and bring it forth in which to clothe himself. For man is a mental being, and truth, in a thousand forms, is the Life Principle lying latent within him, and it must be brought forward and made visible by his own recognition of it. This is the true method of mental growth—which is also "physical" growth—for as sure as the world turns on its axis, Walt Whitman was right when he said: "The soul is the body and the body is the soul" For a man is whole. His so-called physical being is his mental being, and the ever progressive unfoldment of the physical.

At present the mental is standing still, chained to the old dead beliefs; and the physical is standing still, chained to the old dead beliefs, because the mental and physical are one. The physical is the mental and the mental is the physical. It is one; and is one with the dead beliefs, and dead with them. Yes, dead, all but that faint consciousness of life that renders death perceptible.

Truth is a substantial element springing from the human organism in obedience to the demand for it. Ask yourself a question in relation to your own vital unfoldment, and the answer is revealed to you out of yourself, just as the fruit on the tree makes its demands upon the roots of the tree for more nourishment, and gets it. What you ask for will come to you in the shape of thought; and what is more, it will be pure, vital life essence, and will fill you with fresh power.

Without knowing anything about anatomy, or caring anything about it, I yet seem to perceive that the human organism—in itself one whole and perfect laboratory for the evolution of life—is composed of three distinct departments; of which the stomach with its dependencies comes first in the process of growth, and is the lowest—being nearest the earth, as it were—its business being the transmutation of the earth's products into something finer than itself, out of which arises the second laboratory, represented by the sex-

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system, or the vital and reproductive system. Then from these two lower laboratories—the digestive and the reproductive—comes the third and highest, which is the brain.

The earth and all of its products are tributary to the lower of these laboratories, the digestive system. The digestive and the sex-system, with the whole earth and all its, as yet, unknown elements, are tributary to the brain. There is nothing in the world that the brain may not command and obtain, provided the order is sent by the proper route—namely, through its tributary digestive systems that unite it with the earth. For it is a fact that a man is a growth, just as a tree is a growth. He is rooted in the earth and draws sustenance from the earth by his stomach, just as the tree is rooted and draws sustenance from the earth through its roots.

Nor does the proof of his kinship with the tree stop here, for the tree corresponds to the man in other ways. Its body corresponds to the man's vital system, and its leaves and flowers to the brain. The whole effort of nature is to develop this threefold digestive machine to a point where it can understand for itself the meaning of its organisation and the power vested in it.

Always evolution is from lower to higher; from the earth upward or outward; always away from the more leaden or the deader influences of the earth towards the freedom of the more etherialised substances that exist in greater abundance outside the earth, and that keep refining and strengthening in proportion as they go outward.

Therefore, the time comes when the trees are emancipated in a measure from the earth. Their roots are no longer embedded in the soil, but have assumed the form of feet and roam over the ground in the lives of various animals. In their development they have been recognising (unconsciously to themselves) more and more of the infinite Vital Principle that permeates all intelligence, and this enlarged recognition has projected more enlarged and more free lives. All evolution leads in the direction of freedom.

The subject of evolution will never be understood until the great change in human thought, now going on, is in a measure completed. That change means the complete transposition of thought from the basis of dead matter and a material universe, to the basis of vital intelligence and a universe of living mental substance. The old scientists have elaborated the idea on the materialistic plane; they have done immense good in just this; but when their entire system shall have become transmuted from material to intellectual, or spiritual, it will then stand forth in its true colours, and the whole world will understand the mystery of (so-called) creation.

Man is a spokesman of the one eternal Life. He is the interpreter of it. It "materialises," or becomes visible externally through his comprehension of it—through his intelligence.

Man is an unending fountain of truth whose constant outflow, if encouraged, would fill life with new activities, and the world with new and mighty uses. But it is not encouraged. On the contrary, every outlet for the flow of new and fresh and vital truth is closed up by the tyranny of the old thought that rules the age.

The old is enemy to the new, and yet the new alone has saving power. Must this state of affairs continue? Must the synods continue to crush their foremost men because they cannot help but think? Must the newspapers, in their sedulous effort to keep with the majority, treat with contempt, and often with abuse, each new idea that appears in print for the simple reason that it is new? *To be continued.*

How I Trebled my Income.

Among my personal friends, there is a traveling salesman who declares he has trebled his yearly income since he adopted the new way in doing business. He has not changed his work; he has not changed his route; and conditions have not changed to any extent as far as the firm or its fields of action are concerned; but he, himself, has changed remarkably, and his attitude towards his work has actually been revolutionized. He no longer applies merely a fraction of himself, but the whole of himself; and he applies his energy and his talent so that all of it will tell—every action moving directly and unerringly to the point of desired results.

He has learned to concentrate, so that he no longer scatters his forces; he has learned to use his will, so that he can control both himself and his faculties; he has learned to meet people in such a way that he gets into immediate harmony with everybody, and does not antagonize or refuse the mind of anyone; he has developed an enormous amount of faith and confidence in himself and in his work, and thereby inspires faith and confidence in the minds of all with whom he comes in contact; he has developed himself into a strong positive, convincing personality, and you know at once there is something in him; he has learned to draw upon the greater resources of his deeper mentality, and therefore has increased remarkably his capacity for work. He has learned all of these new ways; but he does not merely talk about them. He puts them into actual practice every day; and he gets results.

This man does not work hard in the usual sense of that term. He is not strenuous, and does not "rip" and "tear" in the "whirlwind" fashion of some of the so-called "live-wires." He goes about his work quietly, but every movement tells—goes right to the mark. He does not wear himself out; he feels just as energetic in the evening as in the morning; he has practically forgotten how it feels to feel tired; he has more time for pleasure than ever before, and his mind is in a condition to enjoy pleasures to a far greater degree than ever before; he therefore gets a great deal more out of life, and with it all, he has, during the past few years, trebled his income.

There is no "frenzied finance" in his field of action; just good, useful work, and he gets enough out of it to satisfy all normal wants, with many luxuries thrown in. In addition, he keeps three boys at college. The results, therefore that he is getting are by no means insignificant.

This man is another illustration, among hundreds that we meet at the present time, proving the fact that they who get hold of the new idea in doing things, and learn how to apply it in their work, invariably secure greater results.

This is an age of advancement and improvement along all lines. We are eliminating helter-skelter methods; we are trying to make living a fine art, and working an exact science. But in trying to do these things, we must deal directly with the principal factor back of it all; and that is the individual himself. You are the principal factor in everything that you attempt; and results will depend largely upon how well you apply this principal factor. The question then with you should always be, "What can I do with myself?" And if you answer this question in a manner that is thoroughly satisfactory to that part of the world for which you are working, the future that lies before you will certainly be a pathway of continuous and most satisfying advancement.

In answering this important question, you will find that the new idea in doing things will start you at once upon the right track, because the very principle of this new idea, is to turn more and more of you to good account.

There are indeed tens of thousands who have adopted this new idea, as the most effective idea in the business world; and in fact in every world of good and useful work; but they all have not entered deeply enough into the spirit of this idea to make practical use of it in daily work. In brief, they have not found the "knack" of converting an excellent idea into more excellent work. But this "knack" the salesman mentioned above has certainly found and mastered to a marked degree. That is his principal secret. We all, however, can do as well as he, or far better. We all have the power; and we all may turn on the full current whenever we actually and sincerely make up our minds to do so.

Work for greater things; live for that which is thoroughly worth while; have some great and wonderful purpose in view, and you will never give way to any form of temptation.

The wise man reasons in this fashion: "It is immaterial to me whether you criticise or commend my philosophy; for so long as you think and talk that philosophy, for or against, you are moving directly into it, at full speed, and with all your belongings. And before you are aware of it, you will become a more ardent advocate of that philosophy than I could ever have been." The moral to this is very simple: Do not think or talk of what you do not want. When a dog hears his name called he may suddenly appear on the scene whether he is wanted or not.

We all believe that like attracts like; but sometimes the law does not seem to work as we would wish. We seem to attract what we do not want, and what does not seem to be similar to ourselves in any shape or manner. The reason for this seems a mystery, in most instances, although it is simple enough when we look beneath the surface. However, we do not always look beneath the surface but instead, try to force a change. This is what a young girl of forty autumns or more tried to do a few years ago, with consequences that involved both pathos and humour.

She wrote to me, thinking that I knew everything, and told me what she wanted, feeling convinced that I could tell her how to get him, because that was what she did want. She said the Law of Attraction did not seem to work in her system any longer. She did not attract anything or anybody. How to arouse the force of attraction within herself, so she could at least attract something, this was her problem. And she felt certain that I could tell her how this might be done. Her letter was one that would naturally arouse sympathy.

To be continued.

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