

LIFE'S GATEWAYS

OR

HOW TO WIN REAL SUCCESS

BY
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"Oh, Friend, never strike sail to fear.
Come into port grandly, or sail with God the seas."—EMERSON.



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TO
THE MEMORY OF MY DEAR
Mother,
WHOSE LOVE REACHES ACROSS THE
SEEMING GULF
BETWEEN LIFE IN THE BODY
AND LIFE OUT OF IT,
A STRENGTH ALWAYS AND AN INSPIRATION
TO HIGH ENDEAVOR,
THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY
INSCRIBED,

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PREFACE.

The simple talks, which do not pretend to rise into the dignity of essays, that make up this volume have appeared from time to time in *The Toledo Blade*, and the author is indebted to the courtesy of its publisher for permission to reprint them in this collected form in accordance with the numerous requests received from their readers.

These talks contain nothing new. They only repeat, again and again, truths which are as old as humanity itself—truths which, recognized and acted upon, would bring the highest success possible to human attainment. If they seem strange to any, it is because, in the rush after material prosperity, everything has been brought down to a purely physical basis, whereas it is the spiritual, which, through the mental, is at the root of all that is, has been, or ever will be upon any plane.

For the help which the writers, both living and dead, whose words are so often quoted in the following pages, have been to the author, she desires to here make acknowledgment. For the many

letters of tender appreciation of her own efforts to help others as she herself has been helped, she offers grateful thanks.

That this volume may aid those who are weary to bear their burdens more easily, may inspire the timid with greater courage, may point to those who have not yet seen them the open gateways to a life successful in its highest sense, is the earnest wish of the writer,

EMILY S. BOUTON.

LIFE'S GATEWAYS.

CHAPTER I.

LAW IS UNIVERSAL.

“Every time we conquer ourselves we are helping others to conquer themselves.”

LAW is operative everywhere.

It is just as potent upon the mental plane as upon the physical, although we have not yet learned to trace the effects so clearly when it is broken upon the former.

It is easy enough to see that the repeated blows with an axe upon the trunk of a growing tree will interrupt the flow of its life-blood, narrowing its channels constantly, and if continued, will finally cut them off entirely, and death will be the result.

Every child knows that if he pulls up the plants in his flower-garden, when the summer comes he will have no blossoms, but the weeds will run riot everywhere.

Whenever we put ourselves in the way of an advancing force, we are the sufferers just in proportion as that force is greater than any we can exert in opposition. In the physical world man knows these things, but in the mental and spiritual, he is not yet prepared to recognize the workings of this law. For it is law operative upon all planes, and there is no condition in life which is not the result of conformity with it or disobedience to its requirements. The sooner we recognize this fact the better. Emerson says: "The day of days, the great day of the feast of life, is that in which the inward eye opens to the Unity in things, to the omnipresence of law—sees that what is must be and ought to be, or is best." When this truth enters thoroughly into our consciousness then are we born into power.

And why?

Because every pain that we suffer, every misfortune that comes to us, every disappointment we meet is simply the working of law to bring us into harmony with itself, and thus with the Divine. Harmony is the great undertone of nature, and whoever produces discord must suffer the consequences until the discord ceases, otherwise universal chaos would be the result. This is

why "what is must be and ought to be, or is the best."

I know this is a hard thing to accept. It is far easier and more agreeable to believe that a mysterious Providence has taken a hand in afflicting us in a way that sometimes seems to the most unquestioning, a little capricious, to put it no more strongly. When, however, it is seen that the suffering has come because somewhere and sometime, consciously or unconsciously, a law has been broken, then this, the penalty, becomes easier to bear, for with the sufferer rests the speedy restoration of the lost harmony.

If this truth could become the ruling sentiment of the nation then the present condition of unrest and discontent would pass away. It is not strange that there is discontent, for greed and lawless competition, the handmaidens of selfishness, are uppermost, and their clamorings are fast silencing the voice of brotherhood. Who that are riding the crest of the wave successfully care for the farmer who is growing poorer every year; care that pauperism in our cities is increasing day by day; care that the laborer is without his hire; care that poverty is grinding the life out of the many whose numbers are increasing constantly.

Yet even these conditions, seeming to grow worse daily, are not without their brighter side. They are teaching the people through suffering to think, and with thought will come a perception of the truth which must prevail in order to restore the true relations of things, to bring back the reign of law upon all planes. "When souls reach a certain clearness of perception they accept a knowledge and motive above selfishness." Once accepted and the will aroused, they are carried forward into action. And so though the social, political, and financial future of this people may look dark, though it may seem as if every plant which might flower into greater mental and spiritual growth was being pulled up even to the roots, yet the perception that the moral laws, which come from the Unity of Life, are being broken is becoming stronger, and with the arousing of the will, a change for the better will finally come, even though it be through widespread pain and suffering.

How does this affect us individually? What have you or I to do with it?

Vital questions these, but easily answered, when one stops to consider the universality of the law of cause and effect. We have, each and all of us,

a share of responsibility for the discord which prevails everywhere. Whenever we break a law ; whenever we are dishonest with ourselves or others ; whenever we fail, in thought or deed, to control that lower self within us which is constantly striving to hold the soul within its own narrow limits, then we are adding to the discords which nature, with all of her might, is endeavoring through pain to turn again into harmony. The sentence at the head of this article tells exactly what, as individuals, we have to do in the present. " Every time we conquer ourselves we are helping others to conquer themselves." It is not so much the possession of passions, of selfish desires, that is to be regretted, but it is the failure to make of them " weapons and wings," with which to fight the good fight, and then to rise into higher, clearer atmospheres of moral and spiritual being. And not one can so rise but others are uplifted, are strengthened for duty, are stimulated to effort.

This is as true of the man or the woman who lives afar off in the lonely farmhouse as of the dweller in the city, for the self is to be conquered in one place as well as in another. Then, too, the pleasant, loving, harmonious thought may be

sent out with equal force from all places. There is no limit to the power of a true spirit of helpfulness. It does not matter where we are or how situated, it is the good intention which is potent. "When a god wishes to ride, any chip or pebble will bud and shoot out winged feet and serve him for a horse." This is law—that the earnest desire to help humanity will always, sooner or later, bring the opportunity.

I think then, that it is not hard to see a duty falling upon each to aid nature in restoring the harmony which we have all helped to destroy. It is certain that pain and suffering will continue until the discords wrought by selfishness cease, and well indeed is it for us in the finality that it is so. Writes Emerson: "Let us build altars to the Blessed Unity which holds nature and soul in perfect solution, and compels every atom to serve an universal end. Let us build to the beautiful Necessity which makes man brave in believing that he cannot shun a danger that is appointed, nor incur one that is not ; to the Necessity which rudely or softly educates him to the perception that there are no contingencies ; that law rules throughout existence ; a Law which is not intelligence ; not personal nor impersonal—it disdains

words and passes understanding ; it dissolves persons ; it vivifies nature ; yet solicits the pure in heart to draw on all its omnipotence."

The perception of this truth—the universality of Law—is, as I said, growing in the hearts and minds of people day by day. To the earnest watcher for the better time, lights are gleaming in the horizon, shooting now and then upwards towards the zenith of accomplishment, and they come from the larger comprehension of unity.

Where are the lights of which I am speaking ?

I see them in the higher education, the greater intelligence of the women who are, and are to be, the mothers of the nations. I see them in the broader thought, the more generous tolerance which, in spite of efforts to the contrary, are making way among the people. I see them in the unselfish working for the good of distressed humanity, and not for humanity alone, but for the relief of suffering animal life. I see them in the many unions for practical work in the way of bettering bad conditions and evil environments. And above all I see them in the outreaching for spiritual truth, visible everywhere. It permeates the literature of the day. By one way or another the struggling thought is being led upward, and

it matters little which is taken so long as it is followed with love as the watchword of action, and the end in truth. For the end of all honest, unselfish living is truth, and he who says lo here, or lo there, to any high moral purpose because not springing from the soil of his own conviction simply falls into the pit of self-righteousness.

It is this great outburst of desire to comprehend and live a higher spiritual life; in the larger appreciation of what is meant by the brotherhood of man; by the many movements for the betterment of his condition; in the increasing numbers of those who sacrifice self to work for others—it is in all these that I see the lights that mark the dawn of a brighter day, a day when the universality of Law upon all of the planes of being will be generally acknowledged, and life be shaped in accordance with its demands.

CHAPTER II.

THE RULE OF LIFE.

“If thou do ill, the joy fades, not the pains ;
If well, the pain doth fade, the joy remains.”

IN the two lines quoted above, George Herbert put the philosophy of life. He expresses the fact that whatever may be the first gratification of wrongdoing the “joy” gradually fades away, and then the “pains,” which the joy had veiled, appear and remain insistently with the doer until the wrong is expiated through his own action in good. There is absolutely no getting away from the consequences only by right effort ; no escaping the results of disobeying law, either here or hereafter, only through individual work. You may be sorry all you choose ; repentance may come to be your normal condition, but neither sorrow nor repentance will avail anything in abating the “pains” which somewhere and somehow must come, without they are put into expression in unselfish action.

And the keynote of the second line is as true to the law divine as the first. A right deed, an unselfish action, a resistance to temptation may, and often does, involve the keenest anguish in the beginning, but the anguish softens away and, at last, is lost utterly in the joy of having acted true to ourselves, or, in other words, of having listened to and obeyed the voice of that inner, diviner self which is always striving to make itself heard above the world's din and clamor. That voice will tell us to do many things that will war with our lower nature, that animal part of the human being which seeks to be master.

This is really the only thing we have to be afraid of in this world. Our own selfish desires, our passions that hold us in their grasp with a grip of steel and forever demand satisfaction, make up all there is to fear here or hereafter.

In one of Rev. Charles G. Ames's sermons is the following: "Nothing in heaven is so good that we might not have it here. The earth is the home of God as truly as it is the home of man. Heaven means a higher condition of mankind. There is no heaven until we rise out of folly, selfishness, and sensuality; no heaven so long as money stands for more than man, so long

as any are willing to be rich by keeping others poor.”

This is only another way of stating the same truth—that into our everyday lives we must bring the consciousness of the presence of the Infinite Good, and endeavor to lift ourselves “out of folly, selfishness, and sensuality.” Does this seem a hard thing to do? Granted. And yet there is not one who may not, little by little, come sometime into the higher condition that means heaven. Little by little! That is the encouraging part of it, that we are not required to reach it at a single bound. Each day something done towards overcoming a fault; the bonds of some vicious habit weakened; the love of the true and the beautiful strengthened; service to others becoming the law of our actions—these are the possible things which advance us towards the heavenly condition.

We do not need, in working thus for spiritual growth, to allow ourselves to be terrorized by any stories of a personal devil created by a loving Father to rage up and down the earth seeking whom he may devour. There never was—and there never will be—one single pain, because of wrong doing, that faded into the joy brought by

obedience to Divine Law, when that obedience was the result of fear. There is no devil save our own unchecked, uncontrolled passions. These are what we have to fight and conquer.

Nor should we be forever straining toward a reward for right action. The heavenly condition of which Mr. Ames speaks does not admit of selfishness, and that work which looks solely to a personal gain, even though it be the happiness of life after death, has in it what is far from Christ-like self-forgetfulness.

The way to live—the only right way to live—is to put away that overweening sense of personal rights and merit which we all have more or less, which is the motive power of much that we do, and which makes the struggles that turn life into such a weariness, if it does not reach a misery. We can, if we will, bring into each day the higher thought, and dwell in a spiritual atmosphere of love and joy. When, each morning, we open our eyes to the light of the new day, we may open our hearts also to the inflowing of the omnipresent good, shutting away, if only for a few moments, the thought of the cares, the perplexities, the pains that are to be met and endured later. Endurance will then be easier, for in that omnipresent

good is a vivifying force, a light of love that strengthens and energizes heart and hands, and drives the clouds away.

You see the present is, humanly speaking, all that we have in which to enjoy, or to suffer, or to work. And there is never an hour which passes out of which we may not gain something of pleasure upon the physical and mental planes, or of growth upon the spiritual side of our natures, the latter, of course, being by far the most important.

The present hour is the time for character-building. We do not, in one sense, need to look beyond it, for if we do its duty, whatever that may be, we are prepared for the duty of the next, and the next, and so on, until, no matter what may come, our strength is equal to the need. I do not mean that we are to lay no plans for the future. That would be the sheerest folly, and, indeed, it may form the largest part of the duty of the present hour. After we have laid them, however, it is worse than useless to worry over the chance of their miscarrying; to cloud the sunshine of the day with apprehensions lest misfortune come. Many people invite failure by this darkening of their mental aura with doubts and fears, diminish-

ing their power to meet and overcome difficulties which might never have appeared had they not been so invited.

When we find ourselves fussing and worrying over the future, a wise thing to do is to remember that right here and now, in the hour that is passing, perhaps lies the great opportunity of our lives. If we are looking ever beyond, ever forward to other hours that may or may not come while we are in these physical bodies, this opportunity perchance will slip by us unperceived. And no doubt many that would be worth much to us are lost precisely in this way. The fact is, there is never a moment that is not crowded with opportunities of some kind, which will mean much or little to us according to our reception of them. They may seem the veriest trifles to be seized or let alone as we fancy without producing any lasting effect, but this is not so. "Do little things now," says a Persian proverb, "so shall big things come to thee by and by asking to be done." It is the "now" which may color our whole future.

The present moment, the present opportunity, the present surroundings are those that we are to make the most of. There is as much chance to build character, to grow spiritually—the most im-

portant thing in life—in washing dishes, if it comes to us to do, in darning stockings, in sweeping out a store, as in leading an army. The homeliest task of the hour may be glorified by the way in which it is done, by the spirit exercised in its doing.

There is a little verse running in this wise :

“ It was only a glad ‘good morning’
 As she passed along the way,
 But it spread the morning’s glory
 Over the live-long day.
 Only a thought in passing—a smile or encouraging word—
 Has lifted many a burden no other gift could have stirred.
 Only ! But then the onlys
 Make the mighty all.”

It is indeed the “onlys” that make up the mighty all, and they come to us every hour.

The flowers blossom at our feet, and we do not notice them. We have loved ones, a comfortable home, power to work, and we turn our eyes away to look into next week, or next year, for what may be stored therein. And we never know what they may be bringing to us, whether of good or ill, and so the true wisdom lies in gathering the precious things out of each hour as it goes by. Work in the present; enjoy the present.

Do not shut the eyes to the gold of to-day's sunlight because that of the morrow may be brighter. Speak the good word ; think the pleasant thought ; do this hour's whole duty, and the next, with all coming ones, will take care of their own.

CHAPTER III.

TO GAIN LIFE'S PRIZES.

"Life will yield its own to each,
Let nothing slip beyond your reach."

AND what is our own? It is the very best that life offers upon both the material and the spiritual plane. It is ours if we bring to its seeking the right spirit and keep fast to the determination to win. It is the attitude of mind which we hold in our efforts that attracts the elements of success or failure.

A bright young woman said to me not long ago with regard to something she desired to accomplish: "I shall do it. How, I do not know yet, but all the same it will be done." And I have not the slightest doubt as to her success. The very tones of her voice in speaking these words showed that she possesses the key which will unlock the door of opportunity and disclose the way.

A truth which bears upon what I am saying is

told under the guise of a fairy story. A child was christened and the fairies brought to him gifts. "He was endowed with a creative mind that should conceive great works, and with patience to work; with an eye to recognize beauty and a judgment to discern truth; with gifts of mind and heart that should win friends, and with loyalty that should keep them."

Then came a spiteful old fairy, chagrined that she should arrive late, and, angered by the exclamations of the good fairies that she could not hurt the child, because they had given to him so much that he would have nothing to fear, she advanced to the cradle and waved her stick over it, saying, "Here is my gift. He shall never be able to believe in himself."

It is the one thing of all that makes his life a failure. It blights all his other possessions. "Daily he sees other men with half his gifts pass him and go forward toward the prizes which might have been his too; while he stands bound fast in the web woven by his enemy, only a looker-on at the life in which he thinks he is unworthy to take a part."

He fears defeat, and thus invites it. He doubts everybody, and his doubt is repaid by

deceit and disloyalty. And it all comes from a lack of faith in himself, in his own power to accomplish, in his own possession of the qualities that will make and hold friends. The bad fairy is at his elbow always, to compel the use of her gift.

We sometimes wonder why one person, with apparently no more ability than another, and with outwardly equal opportunities, is so much more successful in what makes up material prosperity. Without going any deeper into the philosophy of the difference—for there are causes that reach far back of the present—in nine cases out of ten this will be found true: The one is sure he can carry out his undertaking; the other fears failure.

It is temperament, say you? Well, then, the fearful individual must overcome temperament, for it is certain that as he allows doubt and fear to hold his thought, by so much their essence enters into his action and diminishes his chances of success. It does not all lie in the outward act. There is an unseen spiritual force that pervades everything we do, and it rests with ourselves to decide which way this shall operate. Faith, hope, courage, give it the impulse by which

it helps our efforts. Fear, doubt, discouragement, change its tendency and bring us weakness instead of strength.

Trace any great enterprise to its first beginnings and it will be found to have been conceived by one person who had all confidence in the outcome. If he took what men call chances, they were not chances to him, in the sense of involving fear. He believed in himself, in his own judgment, in his power to succeed, and while he did not despise the opinions and experience of others, they did not control his action against his own conviction.

“Life will yield its own to each.”

The trouble is we do not know how to take what lies within our reach. The beauty and glory of the world are close at our hand, but we see only the clay. The present is full of a potency that we do not grasp, because we are looking doubtfully forward into the future of may-be. Could we only seize the opportunities of to-day, utilizing them to the utmost, leaving to-morrow to take care of itself, there is little worth having which we might not make our own, if we so desired.

This hopeful, courageous attitude is the one

for us to assume in our daily living. We should hold fast to it, even when it seems as if there were not a ray of light to gleam through the darkness anywhere; hold fast though it appears as if the very heavens turn a brazen face to our pleadings for help.

“But it is beyond our power,” cry one and another who have been called to wade through the deep waters. “It is not possible.”

Ah! yes. Hard it may be, but not impossible. Perhaps this thought may help such stricken ones. We are told, and it is certainly true, that none are tried beyond their strength. If your burdens are heavy to bear, it is because you have earned the right to the higher lesson designed to be taught. The advanced scholar is always given the most difficult problems to be solved, and as courage, and patience, and hope endure, so is the student's mental progress made greater. The same law obtains as to spiritual growth. Recognizing this as a truth, and to bear grows easier.

The power which mind may be made to exercise over what is called matter, is coming to be more clearly understood, day by day, as being under the government of law, and to a far greater extent than has been imagined. What I am

talking about as to the influence of a hopeful attitude persisted in, in bringing good results, is not a mere belief, the child of a vivid imagination, but something that is being constantly demonstrated as a law, the observation of which is rapidly growing.

Believe in yourself, not with a selfish egotism that decries all around you, but with such reverence for the "god that is within you" as to render failure impossible. Man's undeveloped forces which evolution is gradually bringing to his knowledge, are many times greater than those which are developed, and the future will tell a wonderful story. But to-day, with fear dismissed, with faith in yourself and the good, with hope and courage, there is scarcely a limit to your possible accomplishment, even in a material way, and none whatever to a higher spiritual advancement, which is above all, and beyond all, most worth striving for.

CHAPTER IV.

TRUE LIBERTY, WHICH IS SELF-MASTERY.

“ He who, while living in this world and before the liberation of the soul from the body, can resist the impulse arising from desire and anger is a devotee and blessed.”—*Bhagavad-Gita*.

“ THERE is no outer liberty apart from inner liberty; control of affairs is first control of self, and ungoverned passions must forever mean shipwreck of life, destruction, and death.”

In this expression from the pen of a philosopher is embodied a lesson which the world is ever being taught, which it is ever forgetting, but which must be learned and acted upon ere mankind, as a whole, can reach any higher plane of real attainment than it occupies to-day. There is no outer liberty apart from inner liberty—that is, the nation which is dominated within itself by unworthy ambitions, by disregard for the rights of other nations, contains the seeds of inevitable decay and disintegration, in the not far distant future. The “inner liberty” means the life of

the soul as a controlling power, the soul which may be scoffed at and disregarded and yet which speaks at odd moments until its voice is lost in the rush and roar of the battle for purely material advantages. And this is as true of the nation as of the individual, for the soul of the nation is formed by the union of the souls of its units, and in proportion as the latter are controlled by the higher self, so will the nation progress to better and purer conditions.

It is because of this interweaving of the lives of the people into a unified whole, that the responsibility of individual action becomes so great. We are, each one of us, in this sense, our brother's keeper, and just so far as we allow ourselves to become the slave to ungoverned passion of any kind, just so far are we injuring every other member of that body of which we form a part. There is absolutely no such thing as *separateness*, prate as we may about independence. The only independence that we have, and even that is but partial, is that of the bodies which we, our real selves, are using as instruments during our physical lives. Nations whose policy is wholly selfish injure each other as individuals do, and their need for freedom from ungoverned passion lest they shipwreck

themselves is just as great. The same law applies to a municipality or a community.

I was not, however, thinking so much of the "ungoverned passion" of a whole people when I quoted the opening paragraph, as of it as applied to our own personal lives day by day. This necessity of being master of one's self, of controlling the passions of the body, is a law as old as humanity, and is always presented as that which is as necessary for material advancement as for spiritual growth. Yet knowing all this we go right on ignoring the inner voice, the voice of the soul, which is seeking to dominate the body, and allow the latter to tyrannize over us to our own undoing.

Perhaps no writer has ever taught this so clearly as Shakespeare in his tragedies and historical plays. With this thought in the mind, let the reader follow them through and see how one and all show that an "ungoverned passion" brings final shipwreck to the outer life, as well as present moral ruin.

Take, for instance, the lesson taught in the life of King John. Gradually, through the ever-strengthening lust for sovereignty and power, he left behind him every noble impulse, every heroic

quality that belongs to the nature of a man that is not wholly surrendered to the dominance of the lower self, and became the cruel, tyrannical character which the poet represents him, as the outcome of this surrender. The gradual development and growth of the worst passions as a result of their indulgence are painted with the touch of a master who understands human nature.

Then there are Lear, who is the victim of un-governed rage ; Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, who let ambition run riot and overmaster their sense of duty, even to the extent of forgetting the sacredness of human life ; Othello, whose jealousy grew and grew until he was its slave—all of these and more, Shakespeare used to emphasize this lesson, that, once wholly learned, places the prizes of life within easy reach.

To bring this thought into our own daily life : There be many who will say, " This does not apply to me, for I have no un-governed passion which needs to be overcome." Are you sure ? Have you attained that inner liberty of the soul which makes it the master over the desires and tendencies of the animal self ? Have you sure control of the quick temper which is ready to flame into anger at any encroachment upon what you believe

to be your rights? Have you gained that higher patience, that resignation of self, which prevents the seeking of revenge for real or fancied wrongs? Do you always guard the speech that may injure another through a repetition of what may be unfortunate fact or wholly untruth? Can you keep your integrity, you who are in the business world, under the temptation to get the advantage of your fellows in order to add to your own material prosperity? Do you hold fast to your duty against fear or "the speech of people?" If not, inner liberty in its fullness is not yours, but something to be striven for.

Of course, I do not mean that he who has not gained perfect control in all of these things is wholly ungoverned. We should, most of us, be in a sorry plight if that were true. This "inner liberty" is something of slow growth. Many are the steps of the ladder by which we climb heavenward. As individuals, however, there are few who have not some side upon which their moral defences are weak. Self-examination will show this to be true; that is, if we look into our everyday lives with the purpose of being honest with ourselves. To deceive one's self as to the stage of goodness reached is very easy, especially in

those passions whose outward expression seems harmless and sometimes interesting, such as evil speaking of others in what is sometimes termed friendly gossip.

There are those, however, that we know are wrong, that are never harmless, and yet we go right on reckless of consequences. Nothing, for instance, makes such havoc in the lives of ordinary men and women as the yielding to sudden fits of anger. Indulged in, and they weaken the character; they take away the power of influencing others, for angry words have small weight; they impel to actions which are often sadly regretted. The effect of a passion of anger goes far deeper than is often realized.

Considering all these things carefully, looking upon life as we see and know it, studying results from the standpoint of the poet with his insight into human nature, we can well understand that there is indeed "no outer liberty apart from inner liberty"—the control by the soul of the physical body, its instrument.

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CHAPTER V.

SELF-DEPENDENCE.

“Are you in earnest? Seize this very minute.
What you can do, or think you can, begin it.”—*Goethe*.

THE very first lesson for boys and girls to be taught is self-dependence.

The second one is, that in their own hands lies largely the measure of the success which each may attain.

I say boys and girls, although as a fact, boys do not need training in this direction to the same degree as do girls, because men are supposed to be the breadwinners of the family, and the women the home-makers. It has never, therefore, until recently, been thought necessary to give the latter this teaching. Pecuniary dependence upon father, husband, brother, son was considered natural and proper, and so ingrained has been the idea that even when this has failed them, the hardships met with in gaining enough to keep soul and body together for herself and children taught woman no lessons. She still went on

making all sorts of sacrifices that her sons might be put in a way to a comfortable living, if nothing more, and leaving her daughters to the chance of marrying and being taken care of by the sons of other women. And yet the iron has entered into the soul of many a wife and daughter, who has come to a realization that she was a pauper in the house of husband or father.

Times have changed. Over the country has swept a wave of thought which has transformed many of the conditions of life. The opening of the avenues of industry to women has been followed by so great a rush therein as to show that the necessity, if not the desire, for self-dependence has come. Yet there is still altogether too much of the feeling that the place for woman is at home,—and this, whether she has one or not,—and that her whole duty and her pleasure lie in making herself attractive to men through her weakness and her dependence upon their strength.

This idea is false from beginning to end. Side by side she stands with man, responsible for her own self-development, for her own character-growth. She must shape her own destiny, not as a woman, but as an individual upon the path of evolution towards the Divine. Anything

which tends to dwarf her powers, to make her habitually lean upon others instead of upon herself, hinders her own progress and takes from her the ability to help others. Self-dependence, even though it may seem to lead her into hard pathways, is only the means to a higher end. I believe with the author of "Women in the Business World," that "the woman who is and always has been sheltered and protected from all knowledge of the struggle for existence, has missed something which would be of inestimable value to her to know. Every experience enriches one. The woman who has been forced out into the thick of the battle for bread has been more blessed than her sheltered sister, if only the experience has taught her to stand alone."

Parents make the greatest possible mistake when they produce weakness in their daughters instead of strength, by fostering the idea of dependence, and this they do when they fail to train them so as to develop the ability to stand alone; when they establish for them a sex-limitation by leaving them unprepared to battle with the world should the need come. And in these days, when changes follow each other so swiftly, no one is secure in prosperity.

Some one has well said that to a sensitive woman there is no terror equal to the approach of poverty. I believe it. One may be moderately poor and yet walk onward undaunted, but to be absolutely penniless, unknowing where to turn for the next meal, or the next garment to cover the body's nakedness, must destroy self-respect if it be continued. You see, such poverty is a confession of weakness. It is, as some one has said, a mark of ignorance—"ignorance of one's value, powers, talent, strength, and right to joint ownership in the best the world has." And the best which the world has belongs equally to all if they can take it. I do not mean by that, the wresting away by force what another has obtained, but gaining like prizes by a rightful use of the powers which all possess, and may use if they have been properly trained.

Now this is what I mean by being self-dependent: It is attaining the consciousness of being master over circumstances, and able to mold them to our will. Boys and girls come into the world with the same ray from the Divine in each, in which exists the same potentialities. But boys are taught as soon as they can walk that they must carve out their own future, and so they

make these potentialities realities, upon the material plane at least, to a greater or less degree. Girls, on the contrary, see that their parents, their friends, and society expect that their future will not be of their own shaping, but will rest in other hands than theirs. Until within a few years these conditions have been passively accepted, but the world moves, and women are beginning to perceive that pecuniary independence means for them just what it does for men, greater strength, greater influence, greater means for self-development, and greater self-respect.

To win this they must be prepared just as boys are expected to be prepared. Then they can stand alone, and even though the waves of sorrow and adversity beat upon them, they do not fear, because they know that they can conquer a place for themselves in the world.

They do not fear. In that one sentence lies the key which will often unlock the door to success. Men fail in this respect as well as women, and it is because there is so much false teaching. In reality, failure should never be thought of, not even its possibility admitted. If difficulties arise they will vanish away if faced boldly, or grow apace if one tries to shrink out of their

sight. "Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall," but we cannot rise if fear takes all of our strength away. Charles Sumner once said that three things were necessary in life: "First, backbone ; second, backbone ; and, third, backbone," and he was altogether right. You see it is just as Robert Herrick declared :

"The wise and active conquer difficulties,
By daring to attempt them ; sloth and folly
Shiver and sink at sight of toil and hazard,
And make the impossibility they fear."

Courage is what is needed, that kind of courage which the knowledge of the possession of power gives to the individual man or woman. And every one has this power, only that he does not recognize it. He does not know that there is within him that which makes him the king over circumstances and environment, if only he seizes the chance for its exercise.

Teach boys and girls the beauty and the glory of self-dependence. Teach them that the disappointment of to-day is to give strength for the morrow, and therefore not to be groaned over. "Every time the sheep bleats it loses a mouthful, and every time we complain we lose a blessing." Teach them that they control their own lives ;

that each must work out his own destiny ; make his own success ; reap his own harvest. And happy the man or woman whose success lies not alone in material things, but in the spiritual growth which is the true object of all living ; whose harvest is that of good deeds, of unselfish work for humanity, of the fulfilling of the law of Universal Brotherhood. “ Happy then is the man who has that in his soul which acts on others as the April sun on violets.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE VALUE OF CONCENTRATION.

“ Shun passions, fold the hands of thrift,
Sit still and truth is near ;
Suddenly it will uplift
Your eyelids to the sphere.
Wait a little, you shall see
The portraiture of things to be.”—*Emerson.*

AN ancient Chinese sage once made this caustic remark : “ He looks at an egg and expects to hear it crow.”

This might in truth be applied to most of us in the present day and generation. The spirit of the age is rush and hurry. To go beneath the surface of things ; to be content with slow advancement ; to patiently strive and struggle with concentrated purpose for what seems a goodly possession, has come to be looked upon with distaste and disapproval, as belonging to the methods of a slow-going past with which the present has nothing in common. Quick returns for all investments, whether of time, labor, or money, are

what are demanded, and with nothing else are we satisfied. So we rush onward, falling over each other in our eagerness to attain, and paying little heed to the fallen, not so much because of real hardness of heart, but that there is no time to pause by the wayside when the prize is still glittering in the distance.

Rush and hurry have begotten a habit of mind which is an enemy to all permanent and valuable advancement. "Nature is too slow for us, and we forget that what we gain in speed we lose in depth." This loss is the key to the intense dissatisfaction and weariness with life which is so general with those who have been long enough in the race to diminish the vigor and dim the enthusiasm of youth, a natural result when the building up of mind and body does not keep in advance of, or remain equal to, the tearing down.

How are we going to change this condition? ask those who feel the truth in what is said here. We can only change it by altering our habits of mind; by learning to concentrate our thought and our effort instead of scattering one and the other here, there, and everywhere. Concentration, the power of holding a single mental attitude

for as long or as short a time as the mind wills, is the secret of all success. It is the gathering together of the unseen forces, which will bring a power that cannot be gained in any other way. There was never a human being who controlled great interests, who was at the head of great movements that affected the world, who, consciously or unconsciously, did not obey this law.

All had their seasons of thought when they held themselves steadily to meditation upon the one thing in hand, until the mists of doubt as to action cleared away, and they were ready to take the next step forward. There is good reason for this. "Thought has a self-reproductive power, and when the mind is held steadily to one idea it becomes colored by it, and as we may say, all the correlates of that thought arise within the mind." That is, all that has a bearing on that idea is attracted to it as to a center, and can have its due influence upon its decision. It is this power of concentration that makes the great painter, the sculptor, the writer, the financier; and it is the lack of it that so often brings failure to undertakings that seemed to have in them every element of success.

Thought is a creative force, but when it is sent

from place to place, scurrying hither and thither, it can only make confused images which add nothing to the mental power. Edison could never have accomplished what he has, had he allowed his thoughts to rush off to things other than what he had in hand. While trying to discover some new phase of the law governing the subtle fluid with which he was dealing, he did not turn away to study the philosophy of the tides, or any other problem, but simply fixed his attention steadily, unwaveringly upon the one object.

Somewhere I have read that upon the prairies of South America grows a flower that always points in one direction. Travelers who have lost their way and come upon this little blossom have as sure a guide as chart or compass could give them, for no matter how the winds may blow, still the leaves point northward. It is one of Nature's examples of a fixedness of aim that knows no change under difficulties.

One supreme purpose is a necessity to a successful life, to which purpose, within certain limits, everything else must be subordinated. "Concentration alone conquers." "Genius is intensity." It is absolutely true that the man or

woman without a definite aim, one upon which the energies are concentrated, never accomplishes much in the world. Even if one be compelled at times to turn the action away from the purpose, still must the thought be held as an undercurrent of force tending to its carrying out, and thus the final result is almost sure to be victory. Columbus wrote in his journal time after time, "This day we sailed westward, which was our course," showing how his whole thought was so concentrated upon the one thing that nothing could turn or swerve him from his purpose.

A recent writer has said : "The weakest living creature, by concentrating his powers on one thing, can accomplish something ; the strongest, by dispersing his over many, may fail to accomplish anything. Drop after drop, continually falling, wears a passage through the hardest rock. The hasty tempest, as Carlyle points out, rushes over it with hideous uproar and leaves no trace behind."

This is true. And this is why I spoke in the beginning of the weakness that lies in rush and hurry.

I have talked this far more particularly of the concentration upon one great aim in life, making that the purpose of every effort. This habit is,

however, just as necessary in the accomplishment of what we are apt to consider the smaller and unimportant things that go to make up our daily duties, and for this reason: We dissipate our forces, we scatter our energies by letting our thoughts fly from the thing we are doing to those that are to be done, impatient of hindrance or delay, when in reality that is of minor importance. Purposes that are not wandered from until worked out, even when they seem to be trifles, help to bring an inflow of force that makes the larger aim a nearer possibility.

Besides this steady direction of the mental forces, there is a spiritual concentration that is, beyond all, necessary to the harmonious development of every life. It is the holding fast to one purpose, of so molding the character by daily thought and deed that, by and by, the lower self shall be lost in the higher, divine self that is ever beckoning each individual one of us onward. It is the constant turning of the consciousness inward to listen to the voice which forms no part of the noise and rush and turmoil of the outer world. Thus self-centered, the care and fret, the toil and anxiety of this same outer world lose their power to disturb and to make afraid.

This is no flight of fancy. The life in the spirit is one to be lived daily, for we are a part of the Divine, which constantly awaits recognition. And just in proportion as we make this recognition a steady and persistent purpose, so will be the growth of a spiritual force and energy that will vibrate through our whole being, and finally render what was but potential in our character, a present reality. This concentration of spiritual force, this drawing nearer to a realization of the divine part of our nature, which makes life so much better worth the living, cannot come to flower and fruitage without effort. The same law holds good as with mental aims and purposes. "Concentration is the entire life-tendency to a given end." If that end be spiritual growth, it must be held in view every moment of the day. It must be the underlying thought regulating every action. And it is, in reality, the only thing worth struggling for, all other prizes in life being mutable and transitory.

CHAPTER VII.

A PURPOSE IN DRUDGERY.

“A man enjoyeth not freedom from action from the non-commencement of that which he hath to do, nor doth he obtain happiness from a total abandonment of action.”—*Bhagavad-Gita*.

“I HATE this drudgery.”

The words were most emphatically spoken, the tone one that did not admit of any doubt as to the feeling which lay back of the utterance of the speaker.

And what was it that she so hated? Her everyday duties; the routine work which was necessary to be done as often as the new day came; duties that seemed never to lose the insistence which they possessed from the beginning. The comfort of several persons depended upon their careful performance; nay, more than comfort; their well-being in many ways.

They were homely duties. No wealth, no fame, could come from their doing to the doer, and they had grown so monotonous. She felt, as

many another feels, that she was in a vise from which there was no possible escape. The rut in which she walked was growing deeper and deeper every day, and she saw, or believed she saw, all of the possibilities of a freer, broader life passing away from her. She could do so much more, she thought, could she get away from this drudgery, this endless round of work in which there was no element of freshness, nothing to invigorate her with a sense of newness, of something to be learned.

I imagine that to all of us comes at times this same feeling—this weariness with what we have to do daily, from one year's end to the other—and we long to escape from our environments and to enter new fields which seem covered with pastures fair that we might harvest, if to us were given the opportunity. The business man hates figures and wants to live upon a farm ; the farmer would give his fertile acres gladly for the chance of the merchant. The mother loves her family, but she grows weary of the patching, the darning, the makeshifts, the limitations which hedge her days about on all sides. The wage-earner gets tired of the labor that knows no ending and small variation ; and so on to the end of the chapter.

The life-occupation of the major part of the world, looked at from one side, is drudgery first, last, and always.

But is there not another side to the matter? May not this drudgery, from which there seems to be no escape, be made to yield to us something of lasting value; something that shall inhere in us through all the lives we shall hereafter live here or elsewhere? I think about this there is no manner of doubt.

Character is not made by the easy, pleasant things that come now and then in accordance with our desires. We do not become strong by an occasional putting forth of power, but it is the day-by-day doing of what we have to do, through all discouragements, through all distaste, through all weariness. It is the being compelled to accomplish things on time; to do them carefully; to be accurate; to hold ourselves in check when dealing with others—it is these things which give what we may call the fundamentals of character; which educate us into habits of attention, of self-control; which make us patient and self-denying, not just for to-day or to-morrow, but ingraining these qualities through constant repetition of the according action, until they become a very part

of ourselves. They are the result of what we call drudgery. They are what finally make the power of achievement sometime and somewhere, if not just here and now, for it is absolutely true that no effort can be lost or destroyed.

It is drudgery, that which we grow weary of and hate, that makes great men and women what they are. Charles Dickens once said, "My imagination would never have served me as it has, but for the habit of commonplace, humble, patient, daily, toiling, *drudging* attention." And when Mr. Edison described his repeated efforts to make the phonograph reproduce a sibillant sound, he concluded with "From eighteen to twenty hours a day for the last seven months I have worked on this single word 'specia.' I said into the phonograph specia, specia, specia, but the instrument responded pecia, pecia, pecia. It was enough to drive one mad. But I held firm and I have succeeded." That was drudgery, pure and simple, but it had its results in achievement.

It takes what we call "drudgery" to do anything well. Think of Bancroft spending twenty-five years in writing a history; of Noah Webster taking thirty-six years to make a dictionary; of

Stephenson working fifteen years upon a locomotive ; of a Watt laboring twenty years upon a condensing engine—all of them doing the same thing over and over again to the end.

It is true, there is drudgery and drudgery, that is, there is the kind that is hopeless from first to last because it has no aim, and because no lesson is learned from its doing ; and there is the other which is regarded only as the means to an end, and is therefore accepted in that spirit and made the most of. It is the first that comes to be hopelessly hated ; it is the last which leads to “pastures fair.” If we do not put a meaning into our lives, then we might just as well not have lived.

“How *can* I put a meaning into such a humdrum work as mine?”

My friend, there is absolutely nothing in this world of work that cannot be made full of the deepest significance if so we will. There is a perfection to be reached in the homeliest task which is worth striving for, as when it is gained the result is so glorified that the homeliness is forgotten.

In the Louvre is one of Murillo's pictures showing the interior of a convent kitchen, but the workers therein are beautiful, white-winged

angels instead of ordinary mortals. "One is putting the kettle on to boil, and one is lifting up a pail of water with heavenly grace, and one is at the kitchen dresser reaching up for plates." I think the artist must have meant to show how the commonest things of everyday life are worthy of the attention even of the angels, and that it is the spirit of the act, and not the act itself, which gives it character. And if it be humdrum, it is because we make it so in the doing.

We may feel the weariness of what we are obliged to do, may believe that we are worthy of better work—work which is more in consonance with our wishes, but there is one thing certain—if we despise the drudgery of the present duties, those that lie nearest to hand, despise it so much that all of our effort is without heart or vitality, nothing better will come. We are dissipating our forces. We are building our characters not to strength, but to weakness. Aim to make the drudgery a factor to carry us forward, and it will surely, in some way, do so.

It is said that Lincoln was once asked what he would do if, after three or four years, the rebellion were not subdued, and he replied, "Oh, there is no alternative but to keep pegging away."

It is this "pegging away" that is the secret of all growth, all accomplishment. Nature works slowly. She does not hate drudgery, but she makes it serve her purpose. And this is what we must do if we are to render life successful upon either the material or the spiritual plane.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT IS SUCCESS ?

We see but half the causes of our deeds,
Seeking them wholly in the outer life,
And heedless of the encircling world
Which, though unseen, is felt, and sows in us
All germs of pure and world-wide purposes.

--James Russell Lowell.

A SUCCESSFUL life !

We hear so much about it—we use the term so frequently, but we do not stop to question what really makes a successful life.

What does it comprehend ?

A large majority of people would say that the man who is making money is successful, and the greater the amount he is piling up, the greater his success. If he wins fame, if his name is upon men's lips, that, too, is counted as an evidence of his superiority over his fellows. To gain money or glory is to be credited with a larger degree of brain-power than are those who fail in the race for these things.

They are the successful people in the world's estimation.

Considering the two prizes, wealth is the one which is thought the most desirable by the greatest number. Wealth gives power. Wealth permits travel, a fine house, elegant furniture, carriages and horses. All of the luxuries of life it insures, though it does not make sure health or happiness. These are not the products of either riches or poverty. Yet money makes possible what are looked upon as enjoyments, the absence of which brings restlessness and discontent. And this discontent, in these days when one man has his millions while another has nothing, is increasing, until the finding of a remedy is one of the vital questions which insistently demand an answer.

Fame comes next, and to a minority is far dearer than an excess of dollars. To have an admiring crowd "toss ready caps in air," is to have lived a successful life. It is to have won what is worth years of striving, of weary, unceasing effort. Into such a life the world cannot see enter any thought of failure.

Back of all these material possessions, however, back of all of these outward results, lies the true

answer to the question of what makes success, and whether it has been won with the wealth or the fame which people prize so highly.

Does wealth give happiness? We all know it does not. It affords means for the gratification of the senses which are always clamoring to be satisfied. It brings beauty to the eye; harmony to the ear; flavor to the taste; fragrance to the nostrils; softness to the touch; but to the inner self, to the soul, it mostly brings nothing. It is said that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. This is not because wealth of itself is an evil, for it may be made of the greatest good to its possessor. It is possible for it to be so used as to give him a spiritual growth almost beyond measure, but, too often, there is no sense of the responsibility which it brings; no thought that with every dollar or increase comes a greater duty to his fellows because his power is greater.

The same is true of fame. When a name is gained that carries with it a wide influence, then the responsibility for the way in which that influence is exerted is increased. It cannot be otherwise. Honor, truth, integrity—all that goes to

make up a clean life, when made synonymous with a name, have a greater power over the multitude than when looked at abstractly.

In reality a successful life should mean none of these things exclusively. They are pleasant to have, and regarded as means to do greater good to humanity are worth striving for, but in themselves, and considered only in the light of self-gratification, they deaden the moral sensibilities, and check the evolution of the soul upward.

Our way of considering the matter is all wrong. Emerson says that "Every man takes care that his neighbor does not cheat him. But a day comes when he begins to take care that he does not cheat his neighbor. He has changed his market-cart into a chariot of the sun."

Here is the truth in a nutshell. So strong has grown the habit of identifying success with the getting of money, that not to get it means defeat and failure. Into its pursuit has come a suspicion that all men are robbers and cheats, so that the attitude of everybody is one of watchfulness that he be not cheated by his neighbor. But when the time comes—as come it will, for a higher sense of the meaning of true brotherhood is awakening—that he takes the greater care not to cheat his

neighbor, then " a successful life " will be judged from a higher standpoint than it is to-day.

I was thinking the other day of Phillips Brooks, and of the wonderful vitality of his influence, even now when years have passed since he left the body. I believe it grew out of his recognition of the unity of the race, and therefore of the interweaving of the individual life with that of all others, with the interdependence which that involves. He had the "widest vision and the largest love"—a vision which saw and felt to the utmost, man's weakness and man's needs, and a love that included the largest charity, the broadest tolerance, and an unceasing effort to show the ways to better and stronger living. Love for his fellows was his watchword. "Love," he wrote to little Helen Keller, "is at the soul of everything. Whatever has not the power of loving must have a very dreary life indeed. We like to think that the sunshine and the winds and the trees are able to love in some way of their own, for it would make us know that they were happy if we knew that they could love." Simple, beautiful words written for a child's comprehension, and yet showing the motive power of his grand, beautiful life.

His was a fame of that better kind which does

not die in a day. It was won, not by great deeds such as usually attract the attention of the world, but through the impression which his presence and actions always conveyed, that he was inseparable from "all that was best in his generation, its courage, sympathy, faith, and unquenchable hope." In all that he said and did there was a vitality of good that few, if any, ever felt like denying.

Success, in its best sense, does not lie in the gaining either of much money or of the fame which comes only from the gratification of a vaulting ambition. The reasons for a failure to obtain either the one or the other may lie farther back than lack of mental gifts or energetic effort upon the part of the one who fails. I have seen many a man who was shrewd, industrious, and honorable, and yet every plan seemed to go awry. At a critical moment, without any volition of his own, some complication would arise and sweep away the edifice that was builded with such care, and the unknowing world believed it some present lack of effort or judgment. In reality it was neither, and, judged from the standpoint of character, his may have been a successful life, for if he had won self-mastery he had gained what will be of value through all the eternities.

Self-mastery means so much ! It is attained by so few !

“The bravest trophy ever man obtained
Is that which o'er himself has gained.”

If self-control has come to be a possession of man or woman—for what is true of one is true of the other in this respect—life is a success even if money and fame are both lacking. The two latter, pleasant as they are and potent for good as they may be made, are only transitory, but the former is a part of the character which endures. “A self-controlled mind is a free mind, and freedom is power.” Not necessarily power over dollars and cents, though he who is self-mastered is far better equipped for the race after material possessions than the individual who is a slave to his passions and ruled by his chance surroundings. “He cannot lead who is led.”

I would call, therefore, a successful life, that one in which the greatest strides have been made in overcoming—overcoming the difficulties which arise in the pathway ; overcoming that one of the two natures which we all possess which is ever pulling downward, determined to make the better self its servant ; that life which has been lived honestly, courageously, temperately, serenely ; that life

which has had for its aim the helping of humanity. It does not matter whether one who has lived like this, doing what was brought to his hand to do with all his might, dies out of the physical world worth one dollar or a million, he has won the truest success which it is possible to win in this world.

CHAPTER IX.

POTENT ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS.

"To the persevering mortal, the blessed immortals are swift."

IN this one sentence is held a meaning the potency of which, understood and acted upon, is beyond measurement. It will make the success, the prosperity, of the whole life. It lies at the root of every great accomplishment, whether for the good or the ill of humanity. It is power; it is strength; it is a key to growth, material, intellectual, spiritual.

Everybody knows, in a way, what the word "perseverance" signifies, and everybody also, in a dim sort of manner, realizes its necessity in the work of life, but not one in a hundred really gathers in the length and breadth of the expression, and the part which it plays in all that pertains to successful accomplishment. To persevere means to fix the will upon some desired end, and then unwaveringly to walk forward towards that end, unheeding all discouragements, undismayed

by difficulties, full of faith in a power of overcoming. It means not to allow the mind's eye to be swayed away from that line of sight which goes straight to the goal; not to be drawn, even for a brief moment, from a fixed belief in ultimate, if not speedy, victory over all hindrances.

“To the persevering mortal, the blessed immortals are swift.”

The individual who directs the energies of his thought and action towards one purpose, and *holds* them there unswervingly, gathers to himself the help of those unseen forces which are none the less real because unseen, and which give to him a sense of power over obstacles that rise to hinder his progress forward. He attracts the current of successful thought to meet and mingle with his own, thus rendering the latter doubly potent in its inspiration, and effective in its strength of accomplishment. Before such thought, difficulties heaped up until they overtop the vision go down like giant snowdrifts under the heat of a summer sun.

Bonaparte once said of himself: “When my resolution is taken, all is forgotten except what will make it succeed.” For years, as we all know, he never met failure, and the fixing of his will in

the one direction and holding it there was the potent element in his success. Irresolution paralyzes effort, and weak effort is a sure guaranty of the non-accomplishment of anything important.

All people do not possess this power of concentration and perseverance, this ability to fix the mind unfalteringly upon one object and hold it there, say you? I know it well. I know how the doubts and fears creep in to whisper of defeat. I know how, in the dark hours of the night, when the world is asleep, into the stillness come voices that taunt us with inability to perform. I know, too, that it is fear which makes us listen, and it is fear that prevents our hearing those other voices of inspiration and encouragement. Close the doors of thought against doubt and apprehension, and the music of the latter will swell into fuller, rounder tones until all else is shut away from our consciousness.

This is no fairy story. It is a truth, proved daily, if we but open our eyes to see. The potency of man's will put definitely at work is but half understood, because his wonderful possibilities upon the mental plane, in its turn acting upon the physical, are not recognized. It is because

of this failure to perceive its value that I dwell so persistently upon the power this fixedness of purpose enfolds.

Closely connected with it, and necessary to rapid accomplishment, is the habit of quick decision. A moment's irresolution, with its consequent hesitation, has lost many a life, has caused defeat and disaster times out of mind. Most of us allow ourselves to be swayed one way and another in little things, even though in the greater we stand firm.

Sometimes hesitation in trifles comes from indifference; sometimes from an amiable desire to please; but the result is the same. Blown about by the winds of indecision in unimportant matters, there will finally be a growth of weakness in character, and, in more momentous things, when much depends upon rapid action, the same quality will appear, paralyzing the will until crucial moments have passed, carrying a failure that may involve the saddest consequences.

To train one's self in this direction is possible. Begin by deciding quickly in the little everyday things of life that principally affect ourselves. Suppose we do make mistakes—and we inevitably shall—then we can suffer the consequences,

but a step forward in the right direction has been taken.

I have known people to stand for hours in stores, trying to decide what they want, and getting with each passing moment more and more hopelessly entangled in doubt. There are nine chances out of ten that the wrong thing is finally taken, through the very desperation of indecision. The power of quick decision would have so trained the faculties as to render all this doubt and perplexity impossible. These are only trifling things, but they illustrate my meaning. Such a habit once formed makes life easier in every way. Difficulties move out of the path of the individual who shows no hesitation about walking directly forward despite their presence.

It might seem that the inflexible exertion of the will-power in carrying out a purpose, and this habit of quick decision, both of which I am urging as a part of success, would be sure to make us trample upon the rights of others; that they would cause us to forget justice; that the law of human brotherhood could not be made to govern our lives.

This is by no means necessarily true. Everywhere and always our aim should be to make

thought for others, self-abnegation, the basis of our conduct. It is a hard thing to do, and we slowly progress in that direction. "As soon as sacrifice becomes a duty and necessity to the man," writes Ernest Renan, "I see no limit to the horizon which opens before him." Well may he say that, for there is no limit to the glory which a people thus governed may reach.

Unselfishness, I repeat, may be made the rule of daily living, and yet the will-power be used for accomplishment, while the habit of quick decision governs the conduct. The purposes of a life so controlled and directed cannot be such as will war with the rights of others. To be firm, to be resolute, to be decided, is to be strong, and this strength may be used beneficently always. Weakness and indecision, doubt, fear, and hesitation do not make for good. Rather they bring suffering, not only to the individual, but to all with whom he is in any way connected. And so I repeat to you with all earnestness, those pregnant words with which I began :

"To the persevering mortal, the blessed immortals are swift."

Bearing this thought with us as we move onward, and success in all ways is far more likely to be the guerdon of our efforts.

CHAPTER X.

A SAVING POWER.

“The fruit of labors, in the lives to come,
Is threefold for all men,—desirable
And undesirable, and mixed of both ;
But no fruit is at all where no work was.”

A GREAT truth lies in these four lines, especially in the last one. We are all apt to look at persons, who, apparently, have not a great deal to do, with a sort of envy, as if they are the chosen ones of earth, upon whom the golden sun of prosperity is pouring its fervid rays, leaving us in the cold and shadow, compelled to use our every energy to keep moderately warm and comfortable. We do not exactly see why the difference, and would gladly be relieved of all necessity for work, nay, even of the opportunity, if in no other way can we gain longed-for leisure.

I think that is a great mistake.

Work is really a saviour. The life that holds in it no great purpose for which effort is needed,

neither any necessity for exertion, is full of barrenness. It may look flowery and fascinating when viewed from afar, and with every faculty of the mind, every portion of the body of the onlooker weighed down with weariness, but in reality, there are no more wretched people in existence than these envied do-nothings. I remember well, when, in my childhood, a fit of naughtiness seized me—as it often did, and indeed has not failed to do sometimes in these latter days—and I was not allowed to help in the doing of a piece of work that had fallen to the lot of my sisters and myself to accomplish by a given hour, that the time was a torture in its passage, for I was obliged to sit in a chair with folded hands, and *rest* while the others worked. And what ugly things I thought of, and what mischief I would have done had not a stronger will than mine held me quiet in my place!

The experience of maturity is the same in kind as that of the child. If the head and hands be not employed, the voice of tempters becomes very loud and insistent. Mostly its seductions are yielded to, and the old, old story, full of pathos, crowded with misery, is told again. Occupation would have left no opportunity for such betrayal

of the higher impulses ; for the dragging in the dust of what is best in human nature.

Of course there is work and work. It is not always possible to choose what appeals to our belief in our power of accomplishment. The homely things of every day's "must-be-dones" often repel and weary, checking our ambitions with a bitter sense of being compelled to spend energy upon what is not worthy our effort, because we believe so much greater accomplishment for us is possible. And still in the doing of these things wisely and well, in the patience and courage which they demand day by day, there may be a mental and spiritual growth that is far beyond what is more congenial. Yet because we so often fail under great trials of fortitude, because the pin-pricks of life play so large a part in the making of character, I would not advise any one to purposely seek a labor, the doing of which is hateful.

Hard work always tells. Of course it depends upon the honesty of purpose back of it as to whether good or bad is accomplished, but it never fails to have its effect, and if the will is strongly infused in the effort, that is, if the work is not coerced, the results will usually be in the direction desired.

We are too apt to be discouraged if success does not materialize immediately. There is where we often make our great mistakes. We forget that there is a world of thought around us in which we are building, but into which we cannot see with our physical eyes. Yet here live and work the mental children to which we give birth, and by and by their labor makes itself visible.

Work for the work's sake.

Do not stop always to ask how much or how little personal benefit is coming to you. The "fruit desirable" of which the poet sings, is for labor done for other than self-advancement. It is that entered into, not because it will pay in fame, in money, in position, but that it will help to carry forward some movement for the betterment of humanity. Something of this kind comes in the way of each individual, and the fruit is, indeed, worth the labor.

Aside from this, however, the doing of every-day tasks in the spirit that throws into it the best thought and the best effort of which we are capable, no matter how homely the work may be, is the one to encourage, for it brings the "fruit desirable" in all ways. No one has a right to

accept work to do for others, and think only of the easiest way of getting through it to receive the returns. "It is not," writes Lillian Whiting, "what one can get out of a work, but what he may put in, that is the test of success." And this is as true in a material sense as in the spiritual. It is a very shortsighted man or woman who gauges effort in any position by the exact dollar-and-dime measure. The fruit is most undesirable in all ways. Not only is spiritual growth, which is of the greater importance, hindered, but the vitality of the mental powers is impaired and progress rendered impossible. If you look around you with observant eyes, this truth will become very plain. The worker who shirks all that he may without losing the place to work, is the one who is at a standstill. Afraid that, perchance, he may do something for nothing, he effectually bars himself from any advancement that depends upon his own merits. If the young were always made to understand this fact, there would be less eye-service in the labor-field, and humanity would be the gainer.

I know well that there is a "labor which enslaves the laborer"; that there are many whose mental and physical being is so overtasked that

life does not seem worth the having. To change such conditions—conditions that lead to misery and demoralization—is the problem with which the next century has to grapple. There are many more who dwell upon intermediate ground, to whom the real significance of work is yet unknown. They do not perceive that it is the opportunity for the upbuilding of the human being—the strengthening of the moral and mental nature of the individual.

To us all come seasons of weariness, when our daily tasks are monotonous and well-nigh unendurable. It is a mood of mind which we must resist. The duty of the hour, however unattractive it may be, is the one which, because it *is* duty, we must vitalize with our best efforts, so far as it is needed. There can be no question of the return of “fruits desirable” if this is done. It may not be to-day or to-morrow that we recognize them, but they are as sure as the shining of the sun in the clear noonday sky.

“There is a saving power in work.”

I repeat it—let no one mourn if necessity compels an exertion of the powers even though it may not be exactly in the line of his desires. We are all apt to look out into the world and

think that the lot of some other is preferable to our own, that if we could choose some other line of labor we should be better satisfied. The truth is we might fail utterly elsewhere. The need is to put a cheerful spirit into our work, whatever it may be, and then it will either be glorified in our sight, or the doors will open to something better. The saving power is always there, but how far it shall operate in the uplifting of our lives rests with ourselves.

CHAPTER XI.

DO HONEST WORK.

“So many things would be impossible to us were we more aware of God; that is, more conscious of our being co-workers with Infinite Law and Infinite Love.”—*Letters from an Unknown Friend.*

TWO men were talking.

“Oh, that is good enough! It looks just as well as if you did it the other way, and takes less time. Who is going to know the difference?”

“I know it myself,” replied the other quietly, “and that is enough. It would not last any time.”

“Then we should have another job,” chuckled the first. “What is the use of being so particular? Nobody is nowadays, and nobody will thank you.”

“Can’t help that,” was the answer; “I believe in honest work, and if I didn’t do it, I’d feel ashamed of myself. Why, man, it is just the same as stealing to take a job, slight it, and then get the same pay as if it was done right. No,

sir. I want to respect myself, whether anybody else does or not."

"Well," replied his companion, "all I've got to say is you are a fool. The world don't wag that way, and you'll get left if you carry out a plan of that kind. Get the most money for the least work is my rule, and I make money, twice as much as you do."

"That may be," said the other, resolutely ; "and you can go on making it, while I do good jobs and get less pay, perhaps ; but I'll like myself better, and that's more important to me than the money."

So they parted, and each went his way. Each had voiced the sentiment, the one of a great majority, the other of a small minority of people engaged in the struggle for the good things of life. To those who are out in the world, the fact is not a disputed one, that, consciously or unconsciously, the majority make their rule of action in accord with the man who believed in the most money for the least work. "Every one else does the same thing, and I am no better than my fellows," is the spoken, or unspoken but felt, excuse for slighting work, which should be done upon honor always, and especially when the em-

ployer is unable to know, until later events tell him, that it is not what he expected. The feeling unfortunately seems to rule that the disgrace in getting the better of another, either in work or in a money way, lies in being found out rather than in the deed itself. That a man or woman who, knowingly, does a poor job when receiving pay for a good one, is as much a thief as if abstracting money from another's pocket-book, is a truth that does not appear to strike home in many cases. This carelessness, this disregard for the rights of others grows out of the failure to recognize the law of human brotherhood; and also a failure to understand clearly that the one who thus refuses to do his duty, really hurts himself, shadows his own soul, in a way that no money gained for the moment can at all compensate for.

In thinking about this carelessness often exhibited where there seems no real intention of doing wrong, I have come to believe that it has grown partly from the way we have of *making things do*. Instead of always insisting upon the best and highest accomplishment of which one is capable, most of us accept the mediocre both in ourselves and others, because it is too much

trouble to do anything else. When we do it in ourselves, we are weakening our own character ; when we allow it in others simply because it is easier, we are helping them to be dishonest, for this is what it comes to finally.

There is a great lack of a feeling of responsibility on the part of both employer and employed, but at present I am speaking principally of the latter. This lack is not always in proportion to ignorance, for intelligent service is often that of the eye, if there is no danger of a reaction upon the server, and not a thing of the conscience.

The individual, whatever may be his place in the world, who does as little as possible in return for what he is to receive, makes a great mistake. In his essay upon Worship, Emerson says : " The man whose eyes are nailed, not on the nature of his act, but on the wages, whether it be money, or office, or fame, is almost equally low." It cannot be otherwise, because such a man simply expresses what he really lacks of integrity by this devotion to what he is to get, without regard to the quality of the labor performed.

The highest success never comes from this kind of service, and the sooner young people get rid of that idea, when they have it, the better for

their future. When parents set the example of carelessness with regard to their own duties before their children, they are doing a harm which is almost incalculable. The true teaching is that whatever comes to any one to do, should be done in the spirit of determination to do it well, whether or not the returns are in proportion to the effort demanded. When it is otherwise, when the energy put forth is measured by the immediate good which is expected to be gained, it is as certain as anything can be that the life governed by this rule will be a failure. This withdrawal of the best of one's self from the work to be done is sure to bring final disaster. The men who have made the most money, the artists who have won the greatest fame, the writers who have gained the world's ear, never "made things do," in the beginning of their career. They were not satisfied with just *doing* without regard to the quality of their work, even though that work were done for others and not half paid for. They recognized the fact that the effect upon themselves of careless accomplishment was far more harmful for their future than any possible present material good to be derived from such action.

When I hear a young man or a young girl,

whatever their work or position, say: "I am not going to worry myself to do that any better till I am better paid," the fact is at once borne in upon me that their ideals in life are very low, and that they will live and act accordingly. The man who was sure he would "like himself better" for doing honest work was the one who might be trusted to be true to the best he knew under all circumstances, and his thought of the best would become constantly higher. For we never stand still. Either we grow better or worse, and if we hold fast to the plane of selfishness it will be, it *must* be, worse.

Let, then, the aim of each and every one of us be to do honest work whatever the work may be, remembering always that any present material gain is, in no possible way, commensurate with the loss to the character which intentional dishonesty in this respect will bring.

Then another thing. The object that is of the most worth must be obtained at the greatest cost. A high ideal, whether for material or spiritual good, can only be approached by continuous struggle. Great accomplishments may seem to the looker-on to have been easily reached, but outside of rare instances there are always difficult

steps to be taken, even if they are hidden from sight. I fully understand that no one can be happy who feels that he is not putting to good use whatever ability in any direction he believes himself to possess. Herbert Spencer says what is true, that every creature is happy when he is fully using his powers. Not that anybody in one short life reaches the limits of his possibilities, because powers of which he is not conscious are surely his, but if he feels that he is giving expression to the best that is within him on the plane where he is working, there is a fullness of satisfaction that nothing else brings. It is true, if fame, or money, or pleasure be the sole object, the satisfaction is not lasting. The unhappiest person I ever knew was one who seemed to have attained everything in a material way that a human being could desire. That was because the whole effort had been selfish from the beginning. There was no greater aim than to succeed for what success was to bring him in a personal way. There was no thought of humanity's needs, no aspiration to be humanity's helper.

The sum and substance of the matter is this: The purpose of our lives is growth in character, and every trial that comes to us is simply an

instrument put into our hands with which to work our way onwards. We may turn it upon ourselves to our own undoing, or we may make it potent for a good which, in its ultimate, cannot be measured.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RIGHT ATTITUDE.

“ All things are good. To use aright
Is the true secret of the master's might;
And he who with sincerity
Still follows well the light within
Shall make and shape the greater light
For which we wait. The grander day
It is for you to usher in.”

I WISH that I could impress upon all young people just starting out in life, boys as well as girls, that there are two ways of doing work, the one bringing almost certain success, the other almost as equally certain failure. I think it was Tennyson who wrote :

“ Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.”

Too many start in the pathway that leads upward or forward with small idea of all that is involved in the attitude that is taken towards labor. They do not seem to understand that its mean-

ing lies far deeper than mere accomplishment, that it is the opportunity offered for the cultivation of the qualities which do indeed lead to "sovereign power." The poet would have the worker revere self, because, in so doing, he makes his life morally clean and white. None who realize that they are indeed made in the image of their Creator would wish or dare to defile themselves with what belongs only to the life of the animal. He demands self-knowledge because thus only will the boy or girl, the man or woman, realize in any degree their weakness and, at the same time, their strength ; they learn thus the possibilities of their mental and spiritual being, and in what way they may individually reach the heights, or how they may be debased to the depths, both in the present and in the future. Self-control the worker must have, in order that he may see clearly and hold himself well in hand whatever the circumstances which may arise to arouse him into fear or indignation.

These qualities must be possessed in order that labor in any direction may bring the highest results. Of course, they are obtained only by effort, that effort directed to a clear perception of necessity.

The work itself, however, must be entered into in the right way. And there is where so many fail. Labor is too often looked upon as one of the disagreeables of life to be submitted to because inevitable, when, in reality, whether a "must-be" or not, it is a blessing. It is a physical and a mental stimulus, a means of growth, a hindrance to that satiety with life's pleasures that opens the door to temptation in order to secure variety. Of course I know well that there may be labor prolonged to exhaustion, and even to demoralization, for anything which goes beyond the individual power benumbs the brain and dwarfs the faculties. My words do not apply to an excess of labor, but only to the industrial efforts which the young ordinarily seek to put forth, and by which they hope to win what they consider the prizes of life.

Somewhere I saw these lines :

"Some sow the seed, then sit and wait
 For suns to shine and rains to fall,
 And mourn the harvest comes so late,
 And fear it will not come at all.

"Some, single-minded, still work on,
 Nor stop to understand ;
 The rose-bloom of success is won,
 And harvests ripen at their hand."

Herein is contained another bit of philosophy which those who are beginning their life-work would do well to take to heart. The highest success will never come to spasmodic effort, or to that in which the element of doubt and fear enters largely. Simply sowing the seed, making a beginning, is not enough. It is the conscientious, continued doing of the work for the work's own sake that finally brings the reward. The ambition may not be of the highest quality, but there must be enough pleasure in the exercise of the skill demanded to make the results satisfactory, in order to cause prolonged effort. "Some single-minded still work on, nor stop to ask or understand." The best work is done under this condition, for, you see, it is then "for the work's sake," with much of the element of self left out during its doing.

And this brings me to that other thought, which is, that we largely make or unmake our own lives; that in a great measure, it rests with ourselves what we shall do or be in the world. I do not cast out of the reckoning the difference in natural endowments, but, after all, they have much less of a determining influence than we are apt to imagine. The most potent factor is our

own attitude of mind. See nothing save success following our efforts; admit no possibility of failure; draw to ourselves the magnetism of hope; make our opportunities, rather than await them—do this, and we go far toward winning our wishes.

It is especially desirable that the young form early this habit of thought, and then by the time middle age is reached it has become fixed and potent. It is, however, well for everybody, no matter at what time of life, to cultivate the thinking of prosperity to himself. Whether we recognize the truth or not, it is sure that all things work from within outwards.

It has been well said that “nothing of any importance is ever wrought without until it is first wrought within.” And it is “wrought within” by the power of thought. In the quiet hours of meditation it is shaped into beauty and symmetry ready for the hour of action which is to transform it into reality. Give ten minutes each day, if no more, to this silent communion with the inner self, and the effect it has upon the outer life and action will soon be readily perceptible.

Another great element in the success of any undertaking is the enthusiasm that is put into it by those who are endeavoring to carry it forward.

It does not matter what the object is, whether for the benefit of others or for one's self, so far as the effect of this mood of mind is concerned, for anything that will produce enthusiasm will produce also that exhilaration that nerves all effort to accomplishment.

Of course I hold always that it is the unselfish labor, that which is done for others without thought of personal advantage, which brings the loftiest enthusiasm, and, therefore, the best results. And yet it is wholly true that a business or profession entered into as an occupation, and meaning the supplying of the daily needs of life, will not be really successful unless a spirit is put into the labor that is apart from the mental or physical action. From the baking of a loaf of bread for the family to the law-making of a statesman for a nation, there must enter in this vivifying element that electrifies and makes potent every effort. Just as soon as this dies away, then, no matter what success has been attained in the past, a season of dry rot sets in, and the end is death to further accomplishment.

This enthusiasm lies oftener within our own power, is more of our own making, than we are willing to admit. It frequently is a thing of

growth out of absolute indifference. Necessity, perhaps, demands an effort to be put forth, and the fruit of that effort arouses a subtle sense of power, and a desire to go further and accomplish more. It may, on the other hand, be something which, from the beginning, enlisted our sympathies, provoked our courage, determined our labors, until it entered the very fiber of our natures. Under such conditions there could be no such thing as failure.

Enthusiasm is potent everywhere, and is often, as I said before, a child of our own cherishing. We may put it into our daily life, into the work that wearies with repetition, and it acquires a new meaning. "Even washing the dishes has taken on new and pleasant features," said a bright-eyed woman to me one day, "since I resolved to cultivate a pleasant interest in the occupation, and do not look upon it as drudgery pure and simple." If this spirit be carried through all the purposes of her life, it will, in many things, develop into the enthusiasm that conquers.

It is this most potent factor that is present in all accomplishment which is of value. Does a speaker thrill you with the magic of an eloquence that seems to carry you out of your ordinary self, and

sometimes to lead your very convictions captive? Be assured that it is because the speech is vitalized with the enthusiasm of an earnest belief which knows no doubt or hesitation. It enters into every invention, every masterpiece of painting or sculpture, every great poem, essay, or novel that holds the world breathless with admiration.

And it is a spiritual power. It has its birth among the higher potencies. You never find true enthusiasm in those people who are always groveling in the dirt at the feet of the senses. In its very nature it is uplifting. I do not mean by that, that anybody who is enthusiastic is necessarily of a highly spiritual nature, but that the ability to rise into a condition which makes a possibility clothed in such beauty as to render work for it a pleasure, shows that the individual has passed beyond the sensual and sensuous condition which is all selfish, and has developed a capacity for the better things.

Do not be afraid of an enthusiasm. Never mind what people say to you in this regard. Let them call you an enthusiast with an inflection of pity or half-contempt in the voice. If a thing seems to you worth working for at all, if it appears to you of moment enough to challenge

any effort, then put into what you do all the enthusiasm of which you are capable, uncaring for adverse criticism. He laughs best who laughs last. It is never the half-hearted, the coldly critical, the doubting and fearing that accomplish the most.

No, do not, I repeat, be afraid of a real enthusiasm. It will steady the heart and strengthen the will; it will give force to the thought and nerve the hand until what was only a possibility becomes a reality. If you believe anything is good, is true, is desirable, then work for it, wisely but faithfully. Put the very best of yourself in your effort, and final victory will be yours.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DAYS OF SMALL THINGS.

“ I feel that I need to keep in mind the true value of things. What is worth so much to me as serenity of spirit ? How many things about which I grow disquieted will seem of little value to-morrow even, and surely I would not lay my tranquillity on the altar of false gods.”—*Letters from an Unknown Friend.*

THE day of small things !

I sometimes think there is no other kind of day for the most of us, so ruled are we by what, at best, are but trifles. It is true, and pity 'tis, 'tis true, that the endurance of petty vexations, the pin-pricks of each day, so to speak, often demand greater strength than some overwhelming misfortune, but our effort should be to acquire that power over one's self which will prevent the discord and inharmony within, that wear us out physically and mentally. Not but what we call small, commonplace duties are to be done with the same devotion to their right accomplishment as the greater ones, but there is no need for dwell-

ing in them, for worrying over them, for letting insignificant failures and disappointments vex and worry to such a degree that life itself appears a burden too heavy to carry.

This letting the small things have so large a control over our lives is almost universal. Those of you who have ever read that amusing book, "The Swamp Angel," written by Prentice Mulford, a book, by the way, that contains much shrewd philosophy, may recall what he says in this direction. He had gone down into the Jersey wilderness and built him a house in order to be free from the world, and yet its cares invaded, conquered, and held him captive even there.

"Despite all I can do," he writes, "the cares of the world will invade the house of refuge I have built for myself in this Jersey swamp, of which a very large portion are not worth being cares at all. They run thus: Whether I shall have my leaky roof covered with tin, or cover it myself with tarred paper or oil-cloth; whether I shall put up some more shelves in a certain corner, for what purpose I don't exactly know; whether I had better for next summer buy the \$7.50 handsome nickel-plated stove or a common tin one, or no oil stove at all; whether I shall buy a hoe or

borrow one of my neighbor ; whether I shall plant corn or potatoes ; who will care for my chickens when I go to Boston ; whether I shall have toast for breakfast, or egg and toast ; whether, in a thousand things of everyday thought, which I am, indeed, ashamed to tell anybody else, I shall or shall not, or might or might not,—all these thoughts, plans, speculations, wishes, anxieties, whims, notions, great and small, needless or necessary, often come in a crowd and mob my brain, within the space of half an hour, while I am trudging from the swamp to the station, while Deity is doing his best to amuse me by the splendors of a sunrise.”

Then he goes on to tell how he coquets with these things ; how instead of deciding then and there about matters of such small moment, he deals out indecisions, saying to himself, “I’ll wait a while and see,” thus giving a chance for them to enter in and again occupy his mind to the exclusion of what would be a benefit and a pleasure if allowed a hearing.

There is no doubt but the Bible story of Mary and Martha had a bearing upon just this thing, though I have always felt that Martha has not, perhaps, received her just dues during these eight-

een hundred years. Like ourselves, she was "cumbered with much serving," and could not see how her anxious absorption in household cares was hindering her soul's growth, by preventing her from hearing the words of her Lord, to which Mary was listening—words that were of such infinite importance as to transcend every other consideration. Martha utterly failed to appreciate this. Her mind was filled with anxiety as to the passing duties of the hour, and she was in no condition to gather the knowledge which would grow into a higher wisdom, and place life upon a broader basis.

Sometimes it seems to me as if we act just as a man would who sits down to a table loaded with good things, feeling that desire and duty, one or both, demand that he eat of everything before him and that within a given time. He takes a little of this, more of that, some of the other; and so hastily on through the list, deriving but a limited enjoyment from anything, and overtaxing his digestive powers so that weakness rather than vigor will be the result. He really is not obliged to eat of all that is before him. Duty simply demands that he shall take what is pleasant and needful for keeping the vital processes of the

body in harmonious action. All of the rest is not only unnecessary and superfluous, but absolutely harmful.

Do you see what I mean? It is a homely illustration, but it answers my purpose, which is to show this: We make our lives complex by endeavoring to force into them so much that is really trivial and needless as to shut out the opportunities for the real things, the true things, that make for the soul's growth into the finer realities belonging to the eternities. And it is these which are all-important, and yet it is just these which we put away in our overmuch care about eating, drinking, dressing, and working, wearying body and brain with what is of no permanent value.

It is not that we are to fix our eyes upon the stars and forget that our feet are yet upon the earth. We may not pass by the present duty, however homely it be, but do it conscientiously when the moment comes, and then let it go. It is this getting tangled up in little affairs, this making a needless ado over trifles, that prevents us from seeing how many really beautiful things there are in the world about us. I do not refer to the great sorrows that sweep down

upon us to try our strength and help the soul to grow.

The other day I went down town to attend to some necessary shopping. It was towards the close of the afternoon, but there was sufficient time and more to accomplish all that I had to do. In some way the demon of hurry and unrest had entered into me, and my condition of mind affected my companion, so away we went as if all the furies were in our wake prodding us on. We bought what we did not want, and did not buy what we really needed, and finally wound up by rushing frantically after a street car, tumbling in, breathless and exhausted, when the next one five minutes after would have answered the purpose every whit as well. There was a magnificent sunset, but we caught only a fleeting glimpse of its glory ; the stars were peeping out one by one, but there was no moment of pause to wonder at their beauty and their mystery. And if we had only remembered realities, there was not the least need of all this hurry. Yet most of us are doing the same thing every day of our lives, thus putting out of our reach the substance of what is most to be desired. The material life should be lived at its best in order to fulfill its purpose,

and that best may be made to so interweave with the spiritual life which is to endure, as to make the shining of the spirit visible in every act. It cannot be done, however, by hurry and worry over the "things of a day." It cannot be done by crowding every waking hour to the brim with duties, either pleasurable or painful, leaving no time for communion with Nature or with the wiser Divine Self that is always awaiting recognition.

I think there is a way in which earnest women often deceive themselves, and it is a most subtle form of self-deception. It is in undertaking to do more than they have time and strength for, first in charity and church work, this being looked upon as a duty to humanity ; then in belonging to literary clubs and reading circles, considered necessary for improvement. Little is gained and much is lost by overdoing in such matters. There are all kinds of organizations for helping those who need help, each one excellent in its own way, but the individual who attempts to do good work in more than one or two, unless the whole life is given up to it, makes a great mistake. Yet it is so made constantly, and added to by an additional effort in literary clubs, by lessons in art,

and other things that demand both physical and mental exertion. It is no wonder that the conviction is abroad, especially among women, that life has become a complex thing, but it is the people themselves who make it so.

The best of which we are capable can only be done within limitations. Going outside of these, spreading ourselves over a larger field than we can cover, and the consequence is failure in the highest accomplishment, while there is always a consciousness of hurry and confusion, a feeling of being constantly pushed beyond our limit of strength.

In the Bhagavad-Gita, one of the Eastern books of wisdom, it is said that he "who is of equal mind in pain or pleasure, self-centered, to whom a lump of earth, a stone, or gold are as one ; who is of equal mind with those who love or dislike ; constant, the same whether blamed or praised," —such an one has surmounted the pains and difficulties of life. Of course this means, even in its lighter sense, that we are all to aim to reach a tranquillity that will hold us above petty cares and worries, since they weaken our powers and prevent the soul's growth into that larger strength that will make us the rulers over circumstances,

instead of their being their slaves. That we can at once bound to this condition is, I know, impossible, but the pathway thither is open, and we may at will enter in. If we fight the good fight every day and every hour, we shall some time approach the condition described by Walt Whitman thus :

“ I know that I am deathless.

I know that this orbit of mine cannot be swept by a carpenter's
compass ;

And whether I come to my own to-day, or in ten thousand or
ten million years,

I can cheerfully take it now, or with equal cheerfulness I can
wait.”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE GREAT PROCESSION.

The fever for possession, of money, of another's affections, thought, time, and exterior life,—this it is which begets a frenzy and destroys poise, harmony, temperate thought and feeling."—*Lessons of the Day.*

MOVE on.

This is the spirit of the age, the voice that, without articulation, speaks in tones so loud as to be deafening to those who are world-weary, whose strength is exhausted, and whose ambition is laid low.

Move on.

No matter how much you may have done for humanity, individually or collectively; no matter if you have made the hearts of thousands to sing for joy; no matter if you have lifted burdens from the shoulders of the weary when the weight has threatened to crush and destroy; no matter how exhausted and breathless you may be, there

is no pause for rest possible, for the Juggernaut of competition is rolling toward you, and you must up and onward.

Move on.

It is in the air everywhere. Nothing stands still; nothing may, for the whole tendency is forward. Not always to good. If it were, then we might well rejoice and be glad. Alas, no! Selfish greed is too often the key to the movement, the forcing power that drives and drives and never stops.

Move on.

Crossing the track of the street railway with hasty step before an advancing car the other day, I could not but think how the age was reflected at that moment. Along the street till it turned from my view were electric cars, one after another moving forward, coming with irresistible force. Men's hands were upon the brakes, it is true, but their whole thought was to rush each car through its course as rapidly as possible. Let a single obstacle stand in their pathway, and destruction was inevitable. To the unhappy one who might miss his footing through mistake or weakness, these cars, propelled by the chained lightning, would be monsters without ruth, crushing, grind-

ing, destroying. So with the unfortunate who does not keep up with the rushing tide whose deafening roar is ever in our ears bidding us onward.

Move on.

We may not pause. Whatever we think of doing must be done to-day. To-morrow will be too late. Some other hand will have planted the roses and plucked the blossoms, leaving us not even their fragrance. The brilliant invention, the business enterprise, the artistic creation must leap, fully armed and equipped from your brain, or another will seize it and clothing it in different vestments, hold it in ownership. We see instances of this every day, and men are beginning to so well understand this result, that they try to keep their expected ventures secret until fully ripe for action.

Move on.

Only among the granite hills, the towering mountains, far away from the city's turmoil, may we find surcease from this restless striving. Where the trees whisper together beneath sunny skies; where the sunshine kisses into brightness the meadow's green; where the flowers bud, blossom, and bear fruit undisturbed in their cov-

erts, where selfishness is not because man is not ;
—there only is pause.

Move on.

Hurry is in the air. It is everywhere. The currents of hurrying thought that are sent forth unceasingly must have their reflex action. We feel it. Everybody feels it. It is imprinted upon the faces of nine-tenths of the people whom we meet.

If only this forward rush were to broader and more generous life ; if it were animated by love of each for the other ; if it were a growth toward better things for humanity, and not for the carrying out of individual purposes, then it could be watched with rejoicing, for the millennium would soon be reached.

Writing of this and thinking of the necessity of urging the cultivation of a restful spirit, I chanced upon an article by Katherine Hilyard in *The Path*, upon this subject, and the necessity of greater repose. She says: "Nor does the quietude necessarily involve idleness. Without haste but also without rest is the watchword of the stars, and the elimination of hurry does not imply inactivity. It is always better to do three things well than to do thirty things badly, and if we wish

to purge our lives of the element of hurry, we must take as our rule two golden maxims: Never to try to do more in a day than we can do well; and when sure we can accomplish a thing in half an hour, always to allow ourselves forty minutes. Then we are able to move serenely through the bustle of life, and although each day we seem to have accomplished little, and to have relinquished very much, at the end of many days we shall find that on the whole we have done more and done it better than when we grasped with both hands at the hedge of flowers, and tore away few blossoms and many thistles."

There is nothing truer than this. We not only accomplish less by this hurry, but we are making pain and unrest and dissatisfaction possible for the future. We must remember that we are spending force and thought in every movement of our bodies, and when this movement is made with needless haste or with impatience, there is so much force gone out of us that must be replaced or it will be the worse for us in time to come.

Repose, then, is what the whole people of the United States needs to cultivate; repose of mind, repose of body. Of course this almost resistless energy, this apparently tireless activity, brings

great accomplishments, but such reckless expenditure of force must be paid for, and it is, in shattered health, weakened, nervous, shortened lives ; and the cause few recognize.

The nation will be cured of this hurrying mood only as individuals cure themselves, and then help by sending out reposeful thoughts to counteract those of the opposite kind. Men and women both need to learn the lesson, and it is just as vital in the home as in the counting-room or place of business.

Prentice Mulford said : " It is the half-frantic dusting of corners, the spasmodic sweeping, the impatient snatching or pushing aside of obstacles in the room, the hurrying and skurrying upstairs and down cellar that aids to exhaust the force of so many women. It is not that the acts or work exhausts. It is the mental condition they are continually in, that makes so many old and haggard at forty."

We fill our lives with so many things. We are sure we cannot help doing them. They are duties that bind us to performance. Perhaps, by and by—we are always looking forward, you know—they will drop away from us, and we shall find leisure and repose. They never do thus drop

away. The repose must be of our own making. It is to be held in our thoughts while we are working, walking, talking. Then, perhaps, we shall be able to walk with head erect, upon unhurrying feet, with eyes open to see all the beautiful world around us. And what we do will contain no element of unrest in its doing.

8

CHAPTER XV.

DO NOT LOOK BACKWARD.

“ What if the battle end and thou hast lost ?
Others have lost the battle thou hast won ;
Haste thee, bind up thy wounds, nor count the cost :
Over the field will rise to-morrow's sun.
'Tis all in a lifetime ! ”

THE years come and vanish into the past.

How swiftly the months swing themselves away, one by one, to give place to those which are coming, big with the events that are to make for joy or for sorrow, for strength or for weakness in each of us individually, in all of us as a people !

Into the past each year fades to give place to the New one which comes to the world that believes itself in changing Time, but which is really an eternal Now, only our spiritual eyes are not opened to see and understand.

When the Christmas bells have ceased their ringing, when the season's inspiration brought by

the Christ-thought and the wonderful possibilities of growth towards the Divine which it holds, has faded, then the beginning of the end of the year is here.

Then we stand facing the New Year, which comes with noiseless, swift-footed pace out of the future.

What it will bring to us we do not know. Whether we shall watch the falling and the melting of the snows, the springing forth of the leaves, the grass, and the flowers in response to the beating of the heart of nature, whether we shall see the summer's flowering and the autumn's harvesting with the light of gladness or the shadows of grief in our eyes, we cannot tell. There is but one thing certain—that in our own hands we hold the power to make the year that is so near its dawning one of such character-growth in the right direction, that all of the ordinary disappointments of life shall seem of little moment. Even the great sorrows, the bitter anguish, the grinding pain, may be to us only the opportunities for a long stride forward. It is the attitude we take toward them, the thought-world in which we hold ourselves, that will decide the matter.

“There is no use. Everything I have under-

taken the past year has proved a failure," do you say?

In what way? Have you failed upon the material or the spiritual side of life?

Perhaps your business schemes have come to naught. Perhaps your neighbor has won where you have lost, and you cannot see why. Perhaps all of your efforts, all of your work, have seemed to be of no avail. You have not succeeded in bettering your condition in any way.

What of that? With the New-Year the tide may turn. Your failures may be the stepping-stones to a coming success. They may open the door to a new endeavor, which will bring to you what you are working for, even in a material way. What troubles you now may one day be a cause for gladness. Not, however, if you wrap yourself in gloom and discouragement. Discouragement produces fear, and fear palsies effort. Shut out dark thoughts. You can if you will. Fill the mental plane with the thought-forces of hope and courage, and faith in ultimate good. Leave no room for weakening doubts, for, remember, every human being has within him the potentiality of a god, and it is for him to develop the power which that potentiality gives. This is no

idle imagining, but a truth. "As a man thinketh, so is he." Hold this in your thought, for there is a deeper philosophical meaning in it than appears upon the surface. It means that not only can you shape your own inner spiritual life, but your outward material one also.

Yet the latter in reality is as nothing to the former. "The only success in life," writes Lilian Whiting, "is to grow more sympathetic, more helpful, more earnest, more sincere in all loving effort. The true ideal is to grow out of all self-consciousness, and to do bravely and simply the best one can; give constantly of one's best, however poor it may be; to take the good of others to be our own, as George Eliot so well says; to thus live, harmoniously and helpfully, in touch with all that makes for righteousness. What matters it though one be unappreciated, undervalued, misunderstood, if he is really setting his course by the stars and working toward the higher life?"

Here is a thought which is worth considering. Too many of us measure our effort by what the world says of it. In reality it is only a proof of selfishness when we are angry because due credit has not been given for what we have done or

tried to do. If the object was to help some portion of humanity to better things, why should we be unhappy if the trumpet does not sound our praises? The thing is to give help when and where it is needed, and it does not matter by whom it is given. The purity of a motive may be gauged, the unselfishness measured, by the tranquillity with which this undervaluation of efforts is borne.

To return.

Is it on the spiritual side of life that you have failed? During the year now almost gone, have you fought some battle with self and lost? Is there some special weakness of character which you have not succeeded in overcoming? Does it seem as if you just as easily yield to the dreaded temptation as before you began the struggle? Let me recall to you the poet's words with which I began this article :

“ What if the battle end and thou hast lost ?

Others have lost the battle thou hast won ;

Haste thee, bind up thy wounds, nor count the cost ;

Over the field will rise to-morrow's sun.”

In very truth, however, you may not have failed. The recognition of the fault or weakness; the resolve to attempt its cure; the effort made

to overcome, even though the effort seems unsuccessful—all these prove that a step forward has been made from the old condition.

There is another thought: Spend no time in mourning over past mistakes, follies, and failures. Read their lesson carefully, then dismiss them all. In "Letters That Have Helped Me," are these words: "Never regret anything. Regret is a thought, hence an energy. If we turn its tide upon the past, it plays upon the seeds of that past and vivifies them; it causes them to sprout and grow in the ground of the mind, from thence to expression in action is but a step." You see what is meant, that whatever we dwell upon in thought becomes a possibility in action. Hold the thinking, as well as the doing, away from evil even in retrospection. The past is gone, but we have the present in which to work.

And in that one word "work" lies the secret of it all. Do the duty which comes to you to-day with all of the energy there is within you. Into the effort do not bring anxiety for the morrow, for next week, for next year. That anxiety will only weaken you. Conquer difficulties; do not let them conquer you. Hold fast to the thought that you possess within yourself a potency through

soul-development to which there is no limit. And this affects the material experiences as well, for, as said before, individual success and the world's progress depend primarily upon the way in which man transforms and transfigures difficulties and obstacles by the alembic of energy, and melts them in the crucible of exalted purpose.

Right here in the last words lies the real thought which I want to leave with you. It is the exalted purpose with which things are undertaken and which runs through all effort that brings the highest success. In proportion as it is cleansed from self-advancement, self-gratification, in proportion as it lifts proposed effects into thoughts for the good of others, so will the results bring joy and happiness to one's self and contribute to permanent mental and spiritual advancement.

CHAPTER XVI.

CHANGE MEANS GROWTH.

Which way are my feet set ?
Through infinite changes yet
Shall I go on,
Nearer and nearer drawn
To thee,
God of eternity ?
How shall the human grow,
By changes fine and slow,
To thy perfection from the
Life-dawn sought ?—*Maurice Thompson.*

ALWAYS changing.

There is absolutely nothing fixed in this world, nor do I imagine there can be in any other. Every atom that exists is constantly changing its conditions, moving onward according to law, varying its position with respect to all other atoms, and by new associations making new forms to carry out the Divine idea. It would be an absolute impossibility to find one thing which is not subject to this fiat of the Universal Mind.

Always changing.

Two mornings or two evenings will never paint the sky with exactly the same coloring. The clouds that float from horizon to horizon are constantly taking on new shapes that have no resemblance each to the other. In the whole vegetable world there is a never-ceasing variety. No two blades of grass are exactly alike ; the leaves upon bush and tree differ in shape, in size, and in color, and the differences are constantly perpetuating themselves. Go where there are hundreds of blossoms belonging to one family and they never bud and bloom in exactly the same way or with the same results, nor does each individual even retain its appearance to the eye. A bud to-day, a blossom to-morrow ; anon, the fruitage, and then it is gone to reappear again when the germ receives its awakening touch from the angel of life. This is the story of everything that lives in the vegetable world.

Always changing.

Did you ever stand by the side of the sea and watch the waves as they came rolling in to the shore, washing now far up on the shining sands, then falling back, again advancing, but with a lesser impulse that brought them to a pause as if

strength had failed before the same high line could be reached? Did you see them recede in long, pulsating lines to return again and yet again with ever renewing effort to the charge, and mark that never at exactly the same place began their recession; that never were those incoming waves of the same height, nor their white crests shaped as before? In their brief passage out to what seemed a shoreless deep and return again, change was written upon their every part, and we knew them not.

Always changing.

To-day the ground is white with snow; the trees shake and toss their bare branches in the wind; while only in the humid atmosphere of conservatories and hot-houses, or in the sunny windows of the home under the loving care of its mistress, are fragrant flowers unfolding to the light and breathing forth their sweetness. It will be but a few days, almost it might be said, to-morrow, when the snowy robe will have vanished to appear no more for long months, but, in its place, the soft green of the upspringing grass will clothe the earth in beauty. Out from the swinging branches tender buds by the thousand will push forward, and drape a soft greenery over their nakedness, while starry-eyed blossoms everywhere

tell the story of the new awakening. No one dreams of reproaching nature for these changes of temperament, all in accordance with the law of life, and all in the end to subserve evolution into better conditions.

Always changing.

Our bodies that we live in, that are the instruments with which our real selves are doing the work of life, are never the same for two succeeding moments. Physiologists demonstrate to us that every particle of substance in them to-day will, in seven years, have given place to a different one, going forth to enter into other bodies, and—mark the thought—carrying the impress of physical, mental, and moral health which we have given them into the new combination. And the change goes on ceaselessly.

Always changing.

In the intellectual world the same great law is at work. New theories are put forth ; new discoveries are made in accordance with them, completely upsetting the old ideas ; and by and by the thinking world adjusts itself to the change. Not that there is in reality anything new in the world ; it is only new to our apprehension. The earth surely no more revolved around the sun

after Galileo's assertion than it did before, only the humanity of the period had not reached a knowledge of the truth. The law of evolution—development—call it what we may—brought the change of thought, which was growth.

This, too, is true in the world of spiritual thought. Ideas may crystallize in what seems adamant hardness, and there seems no change possible. And yet it never stands still, for where there is a desire for truth, the "heavens unroll as a scroll," and as much as the human intellect, as the human heart, is ready to receive may be read therein.

Katherine Pearsall Woods well says: "There have been periods in the world's history ere now when some truth, hitherto overlaid and obscured by the traditions of men, has started out upon the palimpsest of history with such youthful freshness and vigor as to be appropriately called a new birth. This new birth comes to an individual at a time; then suddenly it is found to be a part of the conscience of the race; so that it has been said that in every reform there has been three stages: In the first, people say 'it is absurd'; in the second, 'it is irreligious'; and in the third, 'everybody knows that.'"

Look over the history of all the great reforms the world has accepted, and see how true this is. I need only to mention the one of human slavery. It does not seem possible that the time was, and not so long ago, when the Bible was used in the pulpit and out of it to prove the right of one man to hold another in bondage, and that men were mobbed for denying this right.

A certain degree of conservatism in accepting proposed changes is wise always, but hospitality to what is called new thought should never be denied. Angels may be entertained unawares in this direction as well as in any other. And there is nothing more unjust, nothing more unlike the Christ-spirit, than to condemn unheard, or unexamined, whatever has vitality enough to make its way and be accepted by even a small part of the thinking class in the community. And more especially is this true, when it is seen that this acceptance has, in no sense, degraded the mental or the spiritual life of those who believe that they are thus taking a step forward. To be tolerant does not involve the giving up of sacred convictions. It only permits freedom to the individual to think for himself, with the certainty that what there is of error in his thought will surely some-

time drop away, leaving whatever of truth it may possess.

There can be no growth without change might almost be said to be a truism. If this be so, then there may be a better even to a good thing, or, at least, a better understanding of the good, and hence a wiser action. We know that there are infinite possibilities to life ; that if humanity has evolved to this stage, there are numberless stages beyond for it to reach, and that it can only come to each by patient climbing. As the multitude is made up of individuals, individual growth becomes of paramount importance, and that can only be made through independent thought and freedom of opinion.

The gist of what I want to say lies here: If your neighbor who has hitherto walked by your side believing what you believe, passes away into another path once, twice, or thrice, do not condemn him as a changeling ; do not hold him to be utterly depraved ; do not treat him as unworthy of respect ; do not shut him away from your brotherly love and offices, but hold him, until he proves otherwise, to be actuated only by a desire to reach the highest ideal of life. His way may not be your way, but it may be a good way

for all that, and quite as likely to bring him to the beauty and glory of the at-one-ness with the Divine which we all hope to reach. Should he be mistaken, his will be the loss.

Then there is but the one course to be taken by the individual who leaves the beaten path for one which seems to offer him more of the higher realities for which his earnest soul has been seeking. With patience, with gentleness, but with firmness, he must meet and bear whatever of ridicule, of contumely may be heaped upon him for his departure. If his thought leads him upward ; if it helps him better to bear misfortune ; if it gives him more strength to carry life's burdens ; if it better satisfies the hunger of his spirit, he can well afford to smile at those things and let them pass by without regard. It is not creed, not belief, not opinions that matter, only so far as they shape the life that is lived ; so far as they lead him to be true to his higher, better self. That is what tells the story.

Always changing.

Oh, blessed law that brings the promise of an endless variety of experiences, of an eternity of progression ! For it must mean that ; it can mean nothing else. It tells us that no pain can

last forever, that while we may not forget, time will surely sometime bring a softening of the greatest sorrow. It declares that the misfortunes that overwhelm us to-day may pass on and leave the sky unclouded to-morrow. The burden that seems beyond the strength to carry, it will surely lighten or lift away entirely. It places before us wonderful possibilities of growth, of advancement. If we may not now possess that which we long for, it whispers that somewhere in the path of our future the gift awaits our coming. It says that if we fail in our efforts once, twice, thrice, many times, at last other conditions will bring success. We may stumble and fall into the depths of shame and despair, but time and patience and right living will bring the blessed change that works surcease of misery and regret.

“Let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of change.” It is a blessed, blessed truth that change is written on all things material. Only the Infinite Love is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Only Infinite Goodness knows no variableness or shadow of turning. And it is because of this grand certainty that another thing is true. I have spoken of it

often before, but it can never be repeated too often. Into our own hands has been placed the power of ruling to a large degree these changes for good. In every human being are the potencies of a god. That is, there is that within every individual, which, if permitted, will open the door to the influx of the higher spiritual forces, and make possible what has seemed but an impossible dream. Most of us have had moments when we were conscious of a longing to do and dare all things that were difficult ; when to overcome appeared easy. And for the time it *was* easy, because we were conscious of this higher spiritual force, which might be with us always if so we willed. Doubt and fear effectually shut it away, and these are generally in control.

Some one has well written : " Character is a loving process, an endlessly varying movement, a continuous new creation. The unity of character is never broken, but it is never fixed. Nothing can be said to be, but all is becoming." This truth enhances the importance of holding ourselves through all uncertainties, all changes, steadily in the life of hope and faith, refusing to be afraid, refusing to doubt that all things come to him who believeth.

CHAPTER XVII.

HELP YOURSELF.

“The golden opportunity
Is never offered twice ; seize then the hour
When fortune smiles, and duty points the way.”

EVERYBODY is the architect of his own fortune.

This is a truth which ought to enter into every lesson taught to the young from the earliest beginnings of education. They should be made to rely upon themselves, to stand by their own strength, at the earliest moment possible. The story is told that Beethoven found at the end of Moscheles' work which he was examining, these words written: “Finis, with God's help.” Instantly he took a pen and wrote under it “Man, help yourself.” He meant no irreverence, I am sure, but simply intended to convey the idea that man must find within himself the strength and power which he needs in the battle of life, and not depend upon anything, even the Divine, if he feels it is wholly without his own being.

Emerson puts it in this way : " Take the place and attitude which belong to you, and all men acquiesce. The world must be just. It leaves every man with profound unconcern to set his own rate." That is, the world never troubles itself to provide crutches for those who cannot stand alone, but calmly looks on while they go down before the rush of hurrying feet in the pathway which they are treading with trembling, uncertain steps. By the power of their own will they must put aside doubt and fear, and then the trembling will subside, and the step grow firm and elastic.

Whatever you demand of the world as one having a right to the thing demanded, that the world will give you. There is no doubt about it. It uses your own measure to gauge your place. That is the reason why some people—you can all think of instances—climb to positions which may seem far beyond their ability to fill. They reach such places because of the belief that they are theirs by right. Whether they retain them or sink back into obscurity depends upon their fitness, and this fitness again is the result of the character which they have made in the past. If they have the true staying-power they will not fall back, or, if they do, it will be only to rise again.

A young man, a day-laborer in a factory, criticised the management, remarking finally, that when he was at the head of affairs he should do differently.

“*You!*” exclaimed his companions; “that is a good joke!”

“It may look like a joke to you,” he responded, unmoved by their laughter, “but I shall get there.”

And he did.

It is said that Grant before he invested Vicksburg—the latter a proceeding contrary to all military rules—deliberately cut off every communication with the Mississippi river, so that no orders from General Halleck, then his superior officer, could reach him. So strong was his conviction that he could win success in this way, that he would run no risk of interference. He believed in himself rather than in military theories. It is true that he took a great responsibility, because it was not only his own life and fortune that he held in the balance, but the lives of thousands of fellow-men, yet the end justified him and showed his greatness.

There is a poem which I cannot now recall clearly enough to quote, that is an apt illustra-

tion of this power of creating our own success or failure. In musical cadences, it tells of the sculptor who stood before the block of uncut marble with his chisel in his hand, and with a glorious ideal in his thought which he was determined to carve out of the stone. Day after day he patiently toiled on. Slowly it grew into the thing of beauty which he had dreamed of. Sometimes the tool with which he worked slipped, and the toil of days would seem undone, but still he wrought, until, at last, his vision was fashioned into a reality. He believed from the beginning that this ideal might be brought from the unseen into the seen, and that he could himself work the marvel. His faith in his own power, his belief in the possibility of accomplishment, and his patience in effort compelled success.

The ideal became the real.

Have, then, environment and opportunity nothing to do with success? They certainly have, for both are important factors, but they are by no means the sole determining ones. Environment may be changed, not to-day, perhaps, nor to-morrow, but when the right moment comes, that moment which you have, with unvarying resolution, worked towards, making it the basis of effort,

though always without neglecting present duty. Opportunity for progress comes alike to all. What is needed is watchfulness that it may not slip by unheeded, for

“The golden opportunity
Is never offered twice; seize then the hour
When fortune smiles, and duty points the way.”

Yet, do not misunderstand this quotation. Do not imagine that, because, in looking backward, you see some chance lost which, taken by another, has brought to him prosperity, therefore, further effort on your part is useless. That might have been his “golden opportunity,” but not necessarily yours. You might have failed, and probably would if your way was not clear without neglecting duty, for you notice the latter must *point the way*. No doubt, however, many of us do let the “golden opportunity” slip by unnoticed and unimproved because we allow fear and timidity to rule our lives and cloud our judgment.

Whittier puts the thought I want to convey in verse :

“The tissue of the life to be
We weave with colors all our own;
And in the field of destiny
We reap as we have sown.”

It is the same truth that the lives we live to-day are the result of the past, and that in the time to come we shall reap what we are sowing in the present. And this is true of the material as well as of the mental and the spiritual.

Impress the young, girls as well as boys, that they are the architects of their own fortune, that self-reliance is the key to success, and the future will show fewer men and women who have slipped into the wrong groove because that was the nearest, and therefore necessarily to be taken. Teach them, too, that no mistake is irretrievable so long as life lasts. The struggle required may be a tough one, but the difficulties, met bravely, develop in them a strength that will do good service always.

Parents make a great mistake when they toil and grind, scrimp and save, in order that their children may commence where they leave off. It is necessity that develops the wings with which to fly to lofty heights. This shutting out of your own life all the light and beauty of the world, in order to flood theirs from the beginning, is to make a wide difference between you which often produces bitter sorrow, even if it does not bring to them failure or a dwarfing of their powers. If

life gives them ease and comfort without effort, there are nine chances in ten that no effort will be made, and hence no true growth in character. Rather make them understand that they are and must be the architects of their own lives, and that difficulties make the ladder by which they may the higher climb.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A SOURCE OF WEAKNESS.

All experiences are valuable for the wisdom they bring or suggest. But when you have once gained wisdom and knowledge from any experience, there is little profit in repeating it, especially if it has been unpleasant.—*Prentice Mulford.*

KEEP your troubles and discouragements to yourselves.

Does that seem hard and unsympathetic? It is only a lesson which it is well to learn so perfectly that it cannot easily be forgotten. And this is the reason. In this world, beautiful as it is, full of the glory of the sun and the moon and the stars, of the trees and the grass and the flowers, full of the songs of birds, of the laughter of children, of the sweet tones of love and friendship, there is yet a strong undertow of sorrow, of pain, of misery, of which no human being escapes a share. It is not pleasant to have the heart wrung, to endure discomfort, to meet disappointment. We have not yet, many of us, arrived at the

point where we recognize the ministry of pain, and realize to the extent of making it welcome, that it is the source of the greatest spiritual growth, which is the real aim of life. We "kick against the pricks" instead, and get as far away from them as possible.

This effort grows out of a law of life, although it may be recognized only as a desire to be comfortable. Everything, however, gains by what it feeds on, and a continued dwelling upon a pain, whether it be physical or mental, only intensifies it into greater proportions until it shadows everything. It is natural that it should, for we attract to ourselves those thought-currents from without which harmonize with our own. If we hug misery to ourselves, by unerring law the tides of weakening, unhappy thought set towards us, flow into our being, rising higher and higher until we are submerged. Like seeks like everywhere; and because thought is unseen, it does not follow that it has not vital force and power. So is electricity unseen until its effects are made visible.

Naturally, hopeful thoughts open the door to their kin, and the effect is to lighten pain and to put the giant Fear to flight. Then our mental

skies grow brighter, discouragements fade away, and we are ready to exclaim that this world is not so bad a world after all as some would like to make it. This attitude of mind works wonders, as is demonstrated every day, though the law that governs it has only come recently to be better understood. We have no right to load our pains and discouragements upon other people, even when they seem to be willing. And not only is it a wrong to them, but a wrong to ourselves as well. We are weakening our own powers of resistance every time we go over our list of ills. Instead of gathering from that which has come to us the best of what there is in it, being sure that it contains a lesson for our learning which is needed for the growth of the soul, we are too apt to call in our friends and neighbors, pour into their listening ears the tale of our woes, and when we have finished find our burdens increased. The fact that if "you laugh, the world laughs with you," while it turns away when you weep, is not so heartless as it seems. It is really only Nature's protest against feeding pain, and I tell you we have no right to do that either to ourselves or others.

Then another thing about this seeking for

sympathy. With it for a pretext, some people not only make their own affairs public property, but everything which chances to come to them of their neighbor's is projected upon the attention of the people they meet, carrying with it the coloring of their mind through which it has filtered, and thus often bearing a meaning that is far from truth.

I am not now speaking of gossip pure and simple, but of that disposition which is constantly seeking to make confidants, to get help in keeping one's own secrets, or those of friends that have happened to become a possession. An open confession is good for the soul, says an old saw, but there was never one more untrue if taken literally. Unless there is some wrong which can only thus be righted, there is absolutely nothing more foolish than to pour into ears, however friendly, the tale of one's own wrongdoing. It is not only foolish, but often it becomes a sin, because it hurts people needlessly. No one stands absolutely alone. Either directly or indirectly our lives and actions are interwoven with those of others who are affected by what we do. And so when we are moved to seek sympathy by confession, it is wise to stop and think whether

silence, after all, will not be golden, and a quiet endurance of this humiliating self-knowledge a duty.

Another thing: Nobody need expect that other people are going to keep secret what one cannot keep one's self. Why should they? Why should you or I expect them to do what we are unable to do for ourselves? Each one has, without doubt, some intimate friend to whom it will be no sin to convey *in trust* what we have proven our inability to hold, and so it will go on until it becomes common property, and that, without a disposition in a single person to betray or injure any one.

So much for confessing personal sins and infirmities to others. It needs but simple logic to see that if it be wise to keep our own counsel with regard to shadows, faint or strong, that may have fallen upon our lives, the law of love, the law of justice, demands that the neighbor's secret which has come to our knowledge shall be held equally sacred. If everybody fulfilled this law, fewer would be the darkened homes, the desolate hearts, the broken lives.

Unfortunately there are too many who are like sieves so far as keeping secret aught concerning

either themselves or others. They enjoy telling something new—something that will draw forth exclamations of wonder, or make the eyes of their hearers grow big with amazement. They may have pledged their sacred word of honor to secrecy, but memory lapses under the stress of temptation, and the news finds another keeper. There is no malice in the telling, no harm intended, but there is what sometimes proves worse, an absolute carelessness of consequences. When you come in contact with such people, no matter how winning they may be, how rich in sweet and tender sympathy they appear, no matter if you know them to be full of the milk of human kindness, if there be anything which you do not want the public to learn, or which you hold in trust, put it forthwith under lock and key, and give the latter an extra twist to guard it against picking.

What I have said may seem like advice not to trust anybody, because there is no one who is true. I do not mean it so. I believe that there are those who would sooner cut off their right hand than betray a trust or break their word once given, but their number is not legion. For the greater part, secrets incidentally told are not

regarded as trusts even if accompanied by a request that they shall not be repeated. The request is looked upon as a sort of preface to arouse interest and whet curiosity. So common is this way of viewing it that the best of people, in nine cases out of ten, are not impressed with any sense of its real importance.

If there is anything which you do not want the world to know, I repeat the advice—lock it in your own heart and throw away the key. If another's secret has come into your possession, and you think its telling in the community might work injury, treat it as if it were your own or concerned your nearest and dearest. Reticence may be carried to an extreme, but that is better than being a sieve. If any one is in the habit of telling you other people's secrets because she can trust *you*, then beware, take care. You are only one of many confidants, and, whatever you give out of your own life will soon be passed on to others.

Then, again, things are rarely repeated as they are told, and this not because of a desire to misrepresent, but that words are many-sided, as are minds, and are apprehended according as they touch. What starts out as a story innocent in it-

self may be transformed by and by into a blasting lie, and there is no redress for the sufferer.

Tell no secrets then from a weak desire for sympathy, or for the pleasure of telling. Hold them fast unless help is needed that cannot be obtained by silence, or others are to be thus assisted or justified. If by your own act suffering has come to you, bear it without flinching, but do not lay its weight, by needless repetition, upon others. Let the dead past bury its dead, and keep its ghost out of the consciousness of those with whom you come in contact. And above all let the silence that is golden fall upon you regarding whatever confidence you may receive from friend or neighbor.

CHAPTER XIX.

POWER OF FAITH.

“ What a man does, that he has. What has he to do with hope or fear ? In himself is his might.”

EMERSON preached a whole sermon in the few lines quoted above. There is in that, as in everything that he wrote, a positive and magnetic belief, if read aright, in the possibilities belonging to every being that lives. “ In himself is his might.” The trouble lies with the hope or fear that rules the self, varying from one condition to the other, and with which conditions, in reality, he should have nothing to do.

Nothing to do with hope ! you exclaim.

Absolutely nothing if for the individual self we hold ourselves in the right spirit. Hope is a good thing only because of the small amount of vitality contained in our beliefs. That “ faith is the gateway of all the glory and the power of the spiritual world,” is true. “ The one barrier to all progress, individual and universal, is the partial

and fragmentary way in which people accept the great truths of spiritual life." True again. We say we believe a thing and then go straightway about our business in the home, and in our places of labor, as fearful and doubtful as if there were no divine promises, and the things we have affirmed were untrue. If Christians really had faith in what they utter with their lips; if they really held fast to the declaration that, as a man thinketh so he is, and acted accordingly, the world would be a very different place to live in. "Gloom would give place to gladness; depression to exaltation; inertia to energy; halting effort to greatness of achievement."

We must have faith in the power which lies in each one of us individually, if we are to bring anything we desire to pass in our limited world. This halting, stumbling, fearing, half-hearted way of attempting anything, in itself brings the elements of defeat. Through faith in ourselves and in our own ability to reach certain accomplishment, and with confidence in the truth that there is a divine nature within that will guide us to the right place, the right work, and the right enjoyments, we shall be able to lead successful lives. "Place yourself in the middle of the stream of

power and wisdom which animates all whom it floats, and you are without effort impelled to truth, to right, and a perfect contentment," is another bit of wisdom which Emerson has put in a nutshell. The "perfect contentment" of which he speaks is the enjoyment of a life in harmony with its environments and its accomplishment.

Doubt and fear paralyze effort, and that is one cause of so many of our failures. "The man or woman who succeeds must always in mind or imagination live, move, think, and act as if they had gained that success, or they never will gain it," wrote Prentice Mulford. It is the silent force of the mind, the quiet mood of resolve firmly held to, that makes people gravitate to whatever place they seek.

Children should be taught to take this attitude from the very moment they begin to think for themselves, and that is very early. The old idea that their wills should be broken is absolutely wrong. A strong, determined, persistent will is a blessing and a great factor in attaining success in any path. The thing is to teach them to control and to direct it, using it as a spiritual gift of the highest value. Help them to employ it in developing whatever other gifts they have which

may be seeking expression. And if this one is latent in a large degree, if they seem easily swayed to and fro, then the effort should be directed to its cultivation; to making them see that in order to live in any degree successfully, they must learn to select what is fit for them and to reject what is unfit, and to do it determinately. Nature will tell the story unerringly, and if listened to, it will be a certain guide to the parents as well as to the children themselves.

The trouble with the present methods of education is the small regard paid to the individuality of each child. We lay down lines by plummet and rule; we cut and prune according to some preconceived idea of what will make good citizens in a general way, with little attention to the soul within that is struggling for a chance for outward expression. Children should be "guided into symmetrical action toward the higher ideals," following, however, that path which they will inevitably seek if not placed in bonds to other wills, that will bring them soonest to the desired goal.

The importance of "symmetrical" or harmonious action cannot be overestimated. It is only by this that the natural unfolding of the mind and spirit can be carried out. If a boy wants to

be a carpenter and he is made a minister, all of the devoting him to the Lord's service of which the parents are capable, will not bring him to symmetrical action. He will be forever struggling, forever beating against the stream that is carrying him forward, forever finding, when he needs them most, his hands glued to his sides or beating his own breast. It is the old story of trying to fit a square peg in a round hole ; it cannot be done until the peg is beaten and bruised out of all semblance to its original self, and then it is very likely to " wobble " in its place.

The true education must also comprehend the teachings of the relative value of things. The whole nature is often warped by the example—if not the direct instilling—of over-care for trifles. People fret and worry needlessly about what amounts to so very little in the day's living. Children see this, and they learn to fret and worry over little things, too, expending force for which there is no return. If they could be taught that what is done, is done, and all they have now to do with it is to read its lesson and let it go ; if they could be made to see that to-morrow will take care of itself, if they but live to their best to-day by doing its duties conscientiously, life

would be much easier and more harmonious to them than it is to most people now. "Nature will not have us fret and fume." She wants us to live in accordance with her laws, and if we do that we are sure to find that her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

If children are only taught to believe in themselves, and "to learn to trust to their own power to do anything, and while accepting helps from others, regarding always the helps as secondary to their own power of pushing things ahead," then they have conquered a lesson of vital importance. A boy or girl trained from the beginning in this faith in the good that is within them, for this is what it is, will never stray far from the paths of righteousness. They will not be intemperate; they will not be vicious. The whole spirit of Froebel's kindergarten teachings is in this direction. It is not egotism, the *I-am-I*, and therefore smarter than thou, but the *I can*, because of the potentialities of each human being, to the development of which by faith there is no limit.

"And all that Nature made thy own,
Floating in air or pent in stone,
Will rive the hills and swim the sea,
And like thy shadow, follow thee."

Well indeed for us, this being true, that we follow Nature's laws, which are always and ever harmonious, so that when our own comes to us there will be a happy recognition.

CHAPTER XX.

UNWISDOM OF ANGER.

“The soul raised over passion beholds identity and eternal causation; perceives the self-existence of Truth and Right, and calms itself with knowing that all things go well.”

“Do not write it.”

“Why?” and she whirled in her chair, flashing out the question with eyes aflame with anger, while the hand that held the pen shook with excitement.

“Because you will be sorry when your anger has passed,” was the reply.

“But it will never pass,” she affirmed with conviction. “I will never forget or forgive this injury, and I want to put it down in black and white that she may know how I feel.”

“And yet I repeat, do not write it. Wait until the heat of your anger is gone, and then go and say to her whatever you wish her to understand. By and by you will be glad that you never sent such a letter as you now think of writing.”

“But why?” she persisted. “There is nothing,

nothing that can ever make me feel differently, and I can say it now in a letter so that it will hurt."

Did she send the letter?

I do not know, but I hope not, for surely if she did the time will come, if it has not already, when it will be a matter for sore regret. Words spoken in anger may be atoned for, but written, they stand as witness against the writer under whatever new circumstances may arise to change the feeling that called it forth. Time may dim the memory of the bitterness, even if it be certain that it had foundation; and if it had none, it will fade away utterly. Perhaps you who read what I am saying may remember Christina Rossetti's beautiful poem :

" Looking back along life's trodden way,
 Gleams and greenness linger on the track ;
Distance melts and mellows all to-day,
 Looking back.

" Rose and purple and a silvery gray,
 Is that cloud, the cloud we called so black.
Evening harmonizes all to-day,
 Looking back.

" Foolish feet so prone to halt or stray,
 Foolish heart so restive on the rack,
Yesterday we sighed, but not to-day,
 Looking back."

“Distance melts and mellows all to-day, looking back,” and so I say, put no angry words on paper; say no bitter thing with pen and ink that may rise up in later days, to remind you and others of a time when anger shut the door upon that Higher Self that ever stands ready to lead you aright.

Yet, if you must shape these words either with voice or pen; if thus and thus only may the tumult be calmed, write them down and then destroy them. This was the rule of one warm-hearted, quick-tempered woman whose besetting sin was sudden and sweeping fits of passion. She would rush away to her room and pour out a torrent of angry denunciations upon paper, but she never sent the document to the offender. She had learned by sad experience that the time would come when the cloud that to-day looked so black would “fade into silvery gray,” and then shame and regret would take possession of her spirit.

I remember reading a story somewhere of a man who received an angry letter from another believing himself injured. He read it, and though moved to bitterness, laid it away in his desk without making a reply. Time passed. When dis-

tance had mellowed the memory, the writer of the letter came into his power in an unexpected way. He held in his control what was almost a matter of life and death to the other. Moved by sympathy he was about to act the part of true brotherhood, when what men miscall fate led him to the reading again of the angry letter written years before. The bitterness roused by the accusations revived, and he turned away from his fellow-man, leaving the latter to reap a quick harvest from what had been sown in passion. Neither the one nor the other had learned to overcome the hurt self and hold it in abeyance.

Do not imagine for one moment, however, that I believe the immediate destruction of the written words to be the true way, the best way of all in such moments of overwhelming passion. The wise thing is to begin the work of overcoming the tendency to lose self-control because some one has injured you, or, at least, you think he has done so ; the tendency to become temporarily insane, subject to the waves of discordant thoughts which then sweep over you. Prentice Mulford wrote these words of truth :

“ Our minds do literally feed our bodies with the thoughts in them. All thoughts are things

sent from the mind to the body where they are crystallized or materialized into the visible substance of the body. Your body is a thought expressing in visible substance the mind that makes it. If our minds in ignorance try to build an untrue thought into the body it cannot last. It proves itself an untruth by decay. When true thoughts are sent from spirit to body they will prove themselves by making life everlasting for the body, as life is everlasting for the spirit."

You see what he means by untrue thoughts. They include the thoughts which anger brings, even if the latter seems to have just provocation, for, as I said before, anger is insanity. And when such thoughts become "visible substance," that substance must be without health and without strength, for it is built of inharmonies.

To overcome! To make ourselves channels for the Infinite Good to work through! This should be the end and aim of life; but small progress can be made when the passion of anger so dominates our powers that any chance word of others may sweep us away from our spiritual moorings, rob us of self-control, weaken our forces, and shut the door against the current of Good that is ever setting toward those who hold them.

selves in serenity. The law of all being is harmony, and whoever creates discord, must, in some way, suffer until it is restored. "Every pain, every uneasiness of mind or body, great or small, is a judgment entered up against us, but only with the aim of keeping us where we shall grow into ever increasing happiness."

It is not punishment, remember, as we use the word. It is simply the tendency of a universal law which has been broken to restore the best and highest conditions, those which will bring health and happiness to humanity as a whole. It is the Infinite Good working itself out in its own way through all manifestation, and that way is the one to bring final harmony to all life. It is the way of love universal.

CHAPTER XXI.

BE NOT SELFISH IN LOVE.

“You shall overcome the world with all its dangers and trials by love. Let us learn *how* to love.”

ONE of the most subtle forms of selfishness is that which masquerades under the title of family love, or of friendship, and assumes absolute authority and proprietorship because of such relations. That kind of affection which expresses itself constantly in exactions, which demands of the loved one a continual yielding up of the individuality to accord with the will or judgment of another, lest that other feel injured, is, by no means, a sentiment that has an uplifting power, or that will help make either one strong in character or fine in purpose.

Dr. George D. Herron says that “the affections are the social energies which are working out the unity and harmony of human life,” and it is true. It is, therefore, a necessity that they be divested, so far as possible, of that selfish quality which

makes of love "private property to be held for the gratification of one's self." They must be consecrated to the good of all, first to aiding in the development of the loved, and then to making them subserve the good of society.

Let me make my meaning a little clearer. In a family are several children, bright and active, but differing widely in temperament and in their tendencies. The parents love them devotedly. They are willing to work night and day to keep them comfortable, and to afford them every advantage for their future lives out in the world. They sacrifice their own pleasures to give them pleasure ; often go shabby that they may be well dressed. All this they may do, and do gladly. In the hearts of this father and mother, however, is a strong undercurrent of conviction that these children are "*our* children, and therefore they must think as we think ; must tread the path we desire them to tread ; must find their happiness where we direct them to look for it ; must believe as we believe, or they do not appreciate what we have done for them and fail utterly in their duty."

Now this is all wrong. It is selfishness pure and simple. Each child is a soul struggling to raise itself to higher conditions, and the parent's respon-

sibility begins and ends in directing it wisely through those days when it needs such direction, but never compelling it to go wholly their way, against the tendencies which lead it by a different route to its own line of expression. No boy should be obliged to study law when his tastes lead to a commercial life, nor to enter the ministry when his greatest delight is in the handling of tools. No girl's taste should be repressed because its indulgence will lead her out of the home, and cause her to disappoint fondly cherished hopes for the future. The result of this course upon the part of parents must bring open rebellion and consequent suffering, or an obedience which will result in stunted or broken lives. Individuality must find expression, and it is the part of wisdom to let it take its own way in the main, under the loving, helpful guidance of the parents.

I am sure that no one will understand me that obedience to parents should not be required of the child. That is part of his training for future usefulness. It is a lesson that we all have to acquire at some time—that of yielding up our wills when it is right so to do. And it is so much easier, it will save so much suffering, if, in earlier years, the boy or girl learns pleasant submission

to rightful authority ; but that authority should not be carried too far. You see, the whole matter does not consider only to-day and to-morrow, simply the success or the failure from the material, or what people falsely call the only practical, side of life. It means something of infinitely greater moment than this, important in many respects as even this is. It means the building of character for all eternity. It means growth on the spiritual side of life, the gaining of strength, the development of power, the bringing of harmony to the whole being. If boys or girls, standing upon the verge of manhood or womanhood, or just beyond the threshold which they have crossed, find themselves hampered, or compelled to wholly give up what seems to them a desirable purpose to work out, in order to follow the will of others, even if those others be their own parents, there will be an inner resentment always warring against accomplishment, whether they are conscious of it or not.

I said a little way back that people falsely call material success or failure the "only" practical thing to be considered. I mean this : that spiritual growth is apt to be looked upon as something outside of daily and hourly thought. On the

contrary, it should be the basis of every action. It should enter into the doing of every duty, of every task, no matter how trifling. It is in the small things that lie the real means of progress. Most of us can summon strength to meet the great crises with some degree of courage; but it is the endurance of the little pin-pricks inflicted upon us which demands the real fortitude; it is the doing day by day, over and over, of the homely things which seem so meaningless and so without any lasting purpose for which we need spiritual force. And so its winning, even for the present, is in the highest degree important.

This brings me to another thing regarding the selfishness of exclusive love, and I will again quote from Dr. Herron, who speaks from such a wide outlook upon life. "Delight in any human relation or affection, chiefly for the happiness it brings to one's self, is a perversion of love, and the reversion of the force that is working out the social evolution. Humanity is one body, of which each individual life is a function; human society is one development, of which each individual is God's organ; human life has one immortality, which is to be gained through each individual affection becoming at last a social energy."

Here is an expression of the unity of all life and the responsibility which that brings. The love which only regards the return love and the gratification of self, be it that of family or friend; which only looks to the well-being of the loved to the exclusion of all others, perverts a law of life, obedience to which will bring an uplifting of all life. The deepest affections of the human heart suffer no diminution in their strength, when their light and warmth are made to enter in and pervade all the relations of the individual to society and to humanity.

I have dwelt more particularly upon one side of the family relation, that of parents to children, but the same thing is true of all, in all places and under all circumstances. The friend who demands the exclusive devotion of the friend, who desires to absorb the whole of his love without regard to others, is ministering to a selfishness that often defeats its own dearest hopes and wishes. What we should aim to do is to love family and friends not for what they may do for our gratification, not because they are *ours*, but for what we may do for them to make their life-lessons easier to learn, and the world a more beautiful place to live in.

CHAPTER XXII.

A WORD TO GIRLS.

**"An honest man, close buttoned to the chin,
Broadcloth without, and warm heart within."**

GIRLS, I have a word for you.

Before you decide to give your fair, sweet young womanhood into the keeping of that young man who is so eloquently suing for your love, make sure by every test which you can apply, that he has lived and is living a life that is morally clean and upright. If you know nothing of his antecedents, as you value the happiness of your whole future, obtain that knowledge ere you go one step farther. Do not feel that you are cruelly doubting him, or casting a reflection upon his honor, by demanding these proofs of his worthiness to become your husband. If he be a true man, he will rejoice in the opportunity of showing you the truth in regard to himself. Hesitation, or anger, or wounded feeling on his part should only make you more decided to read the

record of his past life, as he is reading yours. Girls often have a great deal of foolish sentiment in regard to this matter. They fancy that it shows the depth and strength of their love to ask no questions which seem to admit the possibility of deception. This blind faith may be very beautiful after a man has once proven that he is worthy of its bestowal, but it is the height of folly to give it until you have made sure that he is really your "prince."

An honest man with a warm heart. That is what each one of you should try to make sure of when you promise to become his wife. Perfection is not possible here and now, and if it were, for the ordinary mortal it would not be pleasant to live with ; but a good, clean, capable man who means to be true to the God that is within him, his own higher self, is not so rare that a woman need give her life into the keeping of a husband who has tarnished his manhood with vicious indulgences. Though the man who is suing for your favor have the mien of a prince, if his voice be set to sweetest music, if his hands are full of gold, be sure that he is not a moral leper before you take the irrevocable vows that are to make or mar your whole future.

It is a great pity that the same law of moral cleanliness is not binding upon man as upon woman. There is no reason why it should not be. Granted what is claimed, that a young man's passions are stronger and his temptations greater than those of a girl, yet as he credits himself with greater strength, he should not seek to excuse his sins, or, after the fashion of all cowards, hide behind a flimsy plea like that. Society is to blame for this, however. It smiles indulgently on the young fellow who is debasing his manhood, invites him with pleasant words into the parlor, and leaves him to win, unchecked, the love of the fair young daughter, who has been so sedulously guarded from knowledge of evil. Time and again the same tragedy is played out that these lines of Boyesen's so well describe :

“ He sat in honor's seat,
 And rapturous ladies gazed into his eyes.
 She stood without, beneath the wintry skies,
 In snow and sleet.

“ He spoke of Faith's decay ;
 The ladies sighed because he spoke so true.
 She hid her face in hands frost-numbered and blue,
 But dared not pray.

“ In church, in court and street,
Men bowed and ladies smiled where'er he went.
She stole through life, by shame and hunger bent,
With bleeding feet.

“ Upon his wedding day
She stood with burning eyes that fain would weep,
And heard the dancers' tread, the music's sweep,
Sound far away.

“ The bride so pure and true
He took unto himself with haughty mood ;
And all the paltry world applauding stood,
Though well it knew.

“ The while in frost and snow
Half clad she stood, upon whose maiden breast
He pledged his faith, for love's supremest test,
In joy and woe.”

Parents are more to blame for this state of things than their daughters, inasmuch as they know the misery inflicted, and yet honor the wrongdoer by giving to him their choicest treasure. If they do not know it, in nine cases out of ten it is because of neglect and carelessness in their endeavor to learn. I heard of a case within the last few days where a girl was about to be wedded to a man from a neighboring town, when, by merest accident, it was learned that he was already married. Only think of it ! A ride

of a few miles and a little inquiry by that father and mother, when the first evidence of a deeper than ordinary interest in their child appeared, would have saved them and her this bitter humiliation. He was a fair-appearing stranger giving a plausible account of himself, which was accepted without question as true. It was not strange that an inexperienced girl, won by a smart appearance and well-told story, should be satisfied, so long as her parents seemed to accept his interpretation of himself as true.

Such a thing as this, which is nothing new, as records show, could not have happened in any other country in the world, for nowhere else are young girls allowed such absolute liberty to order their own lives, and nowhere else would parents so often look blandly and consentingly on, while their daughters wed husbands of whom they know nothing.

It is because you have such freedom, girls, that I am talking to you. You have decision of character enough, when once you understand how much is involved, to take care of your future. Remember, as I said before, that you have an absolute right to demand the moral cleanliness of your lover that he requires of you. If any one

tells you that it is not a girl's province to think of these things, do not believe it. Ignorance is not innocence. At any rate, if you are old enough to consider the question of marrying, you are old enough to decide upon the character you wish the man of your choice to possess. You want him to have held, and to still keep, such a reverence for true womanhood in his heart that disloyalty is impossible. You desire to feel that through all the years you may walk by his side, come weal, come woe, from other sources, you may count upon his love as forever steadfast and enduring.

"And to his eye
There was but one belovèd face on earth,
And that was shining on him."

It is impossible to know all this, do you say? Perhaps you cannot absolutely *know* it, but you can take the wise precautions which I have pointed out, to learn, at least, that you are not giving yourself to a man void of all honor. You can find in what estimation he is held by those who have known him longest. You can hold yourself free until you have had an opportunity to study his habits of thought and action. You can see whether they are generally pure and clean;

whether he holds his passions with the leash of self-control; whether he is gentle, kind, and thoughtful. Girl as you are, you can, if you will, know all these things before you give your promise.

I have written of these things to-day because of a letter containing an earnest request that I would do so, and as I wrote, memories of those who took no heed of these matters, and in a few short years came to bitter grief, clustered thick upon me. They move me to repeat with greater urgency that no man is worthy to be your husband, to take your pure young womanhood into his keeping, unless he can show to you and your parents a clean life full of good purposes.

One word more and I am done. I was reading the other day about the decision of a judge to whom an application for divorce had been made upon the plea of habitual drunkenness upon the part of the husband. The divorce was refused, the judge stating that the evidence showed the possession of knowledge by the woman of his habits before she married him. She voluntarily chose to become his wife, and therefore could not put away the responsibility assumed, even though he failed to keep his pledge of reformation.

Did you ever think of this phase of the subject, girls, when you were meditating marriage with that pleasant young man to reform him? No doubt you have a great deal of influence over him now. No doubt he means what he says when he promises to use self-control, and to do no more what is debasing his manhood and would render a wife utterly miserable as the years went by. Remember, however, while drinking in his earnest words, that at present you stand for him as the one thing above all others in the world which he desires, and that you are yet classed among the possible unattainables. There is something in human nature that always renders what we may not have the most attractive and valuable of treasures, to be gained, if we have will and patience, at all costs. Unfortunately, there is another trait in this same human nature that often makes possession strip of its value the possessed. Women who marry men to reform them come too often into this category.

The other side, however, which was presented by the judge aforementioned, is the one for you to think of. Of your own free will you marry this young man, knowing when you do so what may be the consequences. You are well aware of

his weakness, and that even if it be not overcome, he will still be your husband and the father of your children. You deliberately choose to take the risk. Doing so, you will have no right to withdraw from the responsibilities thus assumed. You must bear the burden to the end, however distant that may be, or otherwise fail utterly in doing your duty.

Remember this truth—for truth it has proved to be in almost countless cases: if he reforms only to win you for his wife; if there is no deep, inner conviction that for his own manhood's sake he must resist temptation, the chances are, nine out of ten, that once you are won, he will go back to his cups, and you will be called upon to endure tortures that you wot not of.

Remember that reform must come from a conviction that it is a thing apart from love or marriage as its mainspring. You have to consider, not your lover alone, not yourself, but the children that will gather round you, for whom you will, to a degree, be responsible.

For those girls who deliberately give themselves to men because of the possession of money, there is little to be said. They must reap the bitter fruits of utter selfishness. They sell their bodies

for gold, making it respectable by summoning the church and society to support the act. The children thus fathered and mothered will inevitably bear witness of the sin by which they are brought into the world.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MY FOREST FRIEND.

“The elm that in summer was sweet to hear,
And rustled its leaves in the fall of the year,
And whistled and roared in the winter alone
Is gone.”

GOOD-BYE, my dear old friend !

I had no thought our parting was so near, no vision of the doom impending over your vigorous life. I have watched the shafts of light that quivered athwart the eastern sky and shot through your tender, trembling leaves, which thrilled with joy at the coming of the beautiful morn ; I have seen you nod and whisper to your family group of your delight when the last rays of the setting sun sent their kisses back to brighten you into greater loveliness ; in the still watches of the night when the stars looked silently down upon the sleeping world, I have hearkened to your murmuring in an unknown tongue of Nature's secrets ; I have seen you bend low before the mighty breath of the winter's storm, then straighten up

again as if defying the tempest's power; and I have gloried always in your beauty, your strength, and your undiminished vigor.

And now you lie prone in the dust !

I heard the blows that were struck at your heart, and as each one fell, it seemed as if they were struck at my own. I knew that your life, the same in character with that which informs my human body, only less in degree of consciousness, was ebbing away and that you would rejoice my eyes with your glory no more. One by one, each swift following upon the other, came the sounds that told how fast the work of death was going on. Suddenly there came a pause ; then a mighty crash as if the tempest god had broken into fury ; a rush through the air with a sound that seemed fraught with agonizing protest ; and then you lay there, a fallen monarch shorn of your majesty and your power, dying by inches, and soon to disappear from my sight forever !

If I could have understood your language during the last moments of your life, how much of interest you might have told me. For many years you have stood there with your brothers and your friends watching the tide of events that flowed ever swiftly by. You have seen the

forest's primeval solitudes, of which you formed a part, invaded and destroyed, as man came with his desire to conquer and to use all that is best in the world for his own comfort and enjoyment. You have heard from afar the sounds of strife and tumult which drew nearer and nearer, surrounding and hemming you in ; and yet the unconscious lesson that you have taught has been always tranquillity and strength, both untouched by fear.

And then another thought you have conveyed is that of always looking upward, of aspiring to the best, of trying to reach our highest ideals. That is what you have done, what every tree does when left to Nature's own methods. You were a part and belonging of the Infinite Mind, just as we are, only that our share is far greater and capable of a swifter expansion towards a union with the Divine.

I believe that you had a spiritual part, a force, a power, which you were constantly giving forth to those who loved you. It is this subtle, silent force which enters in and invigorates those men and women who love the silent woods, and seek there rest from weariness which worldly struggles have brought to brain and body.

I have wondered since you fell whether you did not yield to attack more easily than you would have done before your companions went down before the same destroyer. If you were a manifestation of Universal Love, as everything beautiful and strong and vigorous is declared to be, why may we not believe that love was a part of your nature, and the mainspring of that healing force of which I spoke before? I believe it was, and I believe further that whoever goes forth into the woods with a spirit attuned to nature will always feel a sustaining force entering in to make him happier, stronger, and more content.

And so in losing you I feel that I have lost a friend—a friend who was firm, enduring, steadfast—a friend who returned to me as much as I gave. And though to people who look upon trees as fit only for lumber and firewood, my words may seem strained and fantastic, I do not fear that judgment from those who love the trees as I do, and who find in each and all a something that is akin to themselves in their better moods. To them these words from "The Infinite Mind in Nature" will bear a double meaning :

"When we come really to love God or the Infinite Spirit of good, we shall love every part

of God. A tree is a part of God. When we come to send out our love to it, it will send its love back, and that love—that literal mind and element coming from the tree to us—will enter our beings, add itself to them and give us its knowledge and power. It will tell us that the mind and force it represents of the Infinite have far better uses for man than to be turned into fuel or lumber. Then love will tell us that the forests piercing the air as they do with their billions of branches, twigs, and leaves, are literal conductors for a literal element which they bring to the earth. This element is life-giving to man in proportion to his capacity for receiving it."

Believing this, and having that personal love that comes from the intimate, if silent, communion for months that have grown into years, it is small wonder that I grieve for you, my friend, whose body while I write is being dismembered and borne away. I grieve and wonder why Nature's glorious achievements must always make way for man's desires.

CHAPTER XXIV.

GLORY OF THE SPRINGTIME.

“Oh, come, then, quickly come!
We are budding, we are blooming;
And the wind that we perfume
Sings a tune that's worth the knowing.”—*Emerson.*

OVER the beautiful elm tree that stands in view of the window at which I write has been thrown, within the last few days, a misty, shadowy, veil of green, so light and airy that it is only when the sun is shining that it takes on a look of reality. Through it the blue sky gleams with a glory beyond expression. Beyond the tree I can see the grass beginning to show the exquisite coloring of the emerald when the light shines through, and I whisper gladly to myself, “Spring is here! The long, long sleep is over, and the tree-world and the flower-world have wakened to objective life and work once more. Oh, the beauty and the glory of this awakening that clothes the earth in such resplendent garments, and thrills our hearts with gladness!”

Sometimes, after this awakening, the gray days come; the clouds shut the sunshine away, and the cold winds sweep down mercilessly, so that it seems as if all of this new-found glory of bursting life must be indrawn again and disappear. But they pass away, these seasons of gloom, and we find that there has been no cessation of growth. Nature seems so glad to again express her inner self in outward form that she cannot easily be discouraged.

Is there ever a time when the flowers tell such a delightful story as in the early springtime? Passing along the street within the last few days, I have seen here and there great beds of the crocus arrayed in a glory of blossoms. They looked as if they were visiting with each other and rejoicing over their reincarnation into physical life. The sturdy little creatures stood arrayed in their brilliant coloring, bidding defiance to storm and cold, delighting the eye with their own beauty, and making a promise of that which is to come when their more delicate sisters and friends are moved by the sunshine's warmth to seek the outer world. As I looked at them, I could see in fancy the violets and the bluebells, the anemones and, a little later, the glorious roses bursting into

bloom and making in all their exquisite lives a song of rejoicing that as yet our inner senses cannot hear, but which we may feel to our heart's center.

To me the spring is a perpetual Easter. It tells always a beautiful story of immortal life, of the renewing of the spirit—a story that never loses its significance. Out of the crucifixion of self will spring the glory of the higher life ; and its blossoms of love, of charity, of kindness, will make all life more beautiful.

And there is another thought : If to the vegetable world the spring brings such a renewal of energy to be manifested outwardly, why should not the same be true with regard to human beings ? Why should there not be an answering thrill when the great pulse of Mother Earth begins to beat as her life-tides resume their flow, and humanity be aroused to more energetic action ? I think we do feel its effects, although all unconscious perhaps of the cause. Did we live nearer to the heart of Nature, the change would be more perceptible, but even now we are conscious of the magnetic currents propelling to action in all business centers. New undertakings mark the coming of the season ; there is a propelling ten-

dency towards putting off the old and putting on the new which is shown in a thousand different ways. It is the springtime of effort, the season when the body should receive vigor and health, and through that health the mental and spiritual become stronger in power of expression.

And this brings me to the underlying thought of all that I have said. The renewal of the freshness and the beauty of the plant world in the spring is emblematic of what is possible with us all—that we may so renew ourselves, so to speak, that life may take on a meaning which is full of perpetual pleasure. Just as the plant uses its intelligence—an intelligence proportioned to the development of its consciousness—in seeking the highest outward expression possible to it,—for this is what it does,—so should man, who has reached self-consciousness, constantly renew both body and mind, bringing a blossoming into a more vigorous life.

How may we do this, do you ask? First, strengthening the body by healthy thought. Put away from you, as far as possible, visions of sickness, of disease, of death. While we know that in reality there is no death, only the giving up of the instrument which the self is using upon

the physical plane, yet we have no right to weaken that instrument by currents of thought that contain in them the elements of disintegration. Thoughts are things, and they possess a power and a force to build up or to destroy which it is hard to measure. That which gives vigor, which changes disease of body into ease, is a flow of pure, cheerful, determined, and decided thought, which is full of good will to the whole world. That which weakens is the depressed, fearful, gloomy thought ; thoughts of anger, of envy, of selfishness, of jealousy. It is the latter kind which brings sickness and suffering to one's self and to others, for they go forth in a stream that may strike, all unseen, one who has no power of resistance. Think the cheerful thought always, for in so doing it is not only drawing health to you, but it is helping everybody with whom you come in contact. And more than that, it will go forth a healing power to do work of which you have no conception. "Good will to others," wrote Prentice Mulford, "is constructive thought. It helps build us up. It is good for your body. It makes your blood purer, your muscles stronger, and your whole form more symmetrical in shape. It is the real 'elixir of life.' The more of such

thought you attract to you the more life will you have. You draw, then, the best elements from all with whom you associate. If you send out a contrary order of thought, you draw to you from them the poisonous and destructive elements. These will hurt your body. Persons in this way are literally hated to death."

These are strong words but true ones. They express a law which is absolute in its workings and as sure as any physical one. Upon the thought-plane are these forces for destruction, and they can only be successfully opposed by thoughts of good will, of a desire to do justice to all, of love to humanity. Such have a healing power far beyond any medicine that can be taken. "This is no myth of sentiment. It belongs to the same system of law whereby the sun gives heat, the winds blow, the tides move, the seed grows. In whatever mood you set your mind does your spirit receive of unseen substance in correspondence with that mood. . . . The Christ injunction, 'Do good to those who hate you,' is based upon a scientific fact and a natural law. So to do good is to bring to yourself all the elements in nature of power and of good. To do evil is to bring the contrary destructive elements.

When our eyes are opened, self-preservation will make us stop all evil thought."

Perhaps you will not believe this. You may think it overdrawn, but watch yourself the next time when you let anger hold sway over you, and see if, when the storm has passed, you are not weaker in body. See, too, when you spend a day overcome by discontented, gloomy thought, if you do not feel ill and less able to cope with the difficulties you are constantly meeting.

And now to return to the spring. It seems to me that when everything is bursting forth into loveliness, when even the plant and the tree are endeavoring to obey harmoniously nature's bidding, it is easier to bring about the renewal of healthy thought—this thought full of good will toward friend and enemy alike. It is easier, too, to face discouragements bravely; to feel that they come but to try the strength. It is easier to bear disappointment and to realize that it is only to make the spirit stronger for its upward climb. And no matter what your trial may be, that of your friend, your neighbor, is, perhaps, far harder to bear.

"As the days pass swiftly onward one by one,
Leaving all you've hoped and planned for still undone ;

As you see the shadows gather
Thick before your hurrying feet,
And the way seems very lonesome,
And the path grows very steep,

“Courage, friend, be not disheartened; lend a hand!
And the faltering brother near you help to stand!
Just a little heavier, maybe, than your own,
Is the load which he is bearing all alone.

“Yes, the days are passing swiftly, but we may
Find a ray of light to cheer us on our way
As we journey up the hillside,
Shadows come but need not stay
If we look for gleams of sunshine
When the cloud has passed away.”

THE END.

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