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PELMANISM

The Pelman System for the Training of Mind, Memory and Personality

Lesson XV

LONDON

THE PELMAN INSTITUTE

FOR THE SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT
OF MIND, MEMORY AND PERSONALITY
PELMAN HOUSE, BLOOMSBURY ST., W.C.1.

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FOREWORD

You have now arrived at the last Lesson of the Course. Does this mean that Pelmanism is over and done with? It does not. It means that you know it as a science and have begun to practise it as an art: the art of self-realization.

This concluding Lesson contains a survey of facts and principles; it contains also some new proposals for personal application.

What you have now to do is to *use* PELMAN principles in your life; and that means the building up of habits in accordance with the teaching with which you have become familiar.

Let us now survey it.

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PELMANISM

The Pelman System for the Training of Mind, Memory and Personality

LESSON XV

Pelmanism in Action

I. TWO WORLDS—EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL

1. A commonplace is not necessarily unimportant. Indeed, it is because of its importance that it has become a commonplace. The existence of two worlds, the world within and the world outside ourselves, though it may be staled by repetition, is not falsified by familiarity. We are more apt to fall short of our life's purpose because we are not faithful to what we know than because of the many gaps in our knowledge. It is our manifest duty therefore, and greatly to our advantage, to acquire, so far as we are able, a knowledge of both worlds, and of the secret ways in which they interact.

2. You will remember that early in the Course we stated a few truths about the working of the mental machine, selecting those which were of value for the purposes of training. We made no attempt to provide an outline of psychology. What we did was to give a glimpse of the dynamic functions of the mind in action, such as interest-power, concentration, will, etc. In this way the

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world within became more real to you, and you felt the force of our contention that the excellence seen in the impressive works of man was first an excellence in the mind.

How Ideas are Realized

3. St. Paul's Cathedral and the London County Hall were primarily ideas. Then they came into existence as architects' plans. Finally, the ideas were embodied in stone and marble. An artist's picture passes through various stages ere it is ready for the public view, and a poet's poem is often a transition from thought to printed expression which involves planning and organization as well as wide knowledge and fine feeling. The main point, however, is that the idea always comes first.

Success Begins in the Mind

4. Now there are thousands of men and women in Britain to-day who have the initial idea for accomplishing great things. They have vast opportunities before them; chances of success beyond their highest dreams. Why do so many of these people fail? Simply because they have not realized that external success must first be internal success. Their ideas are insufficiently developed. Further, it is one thing to have an idea; quite another thing to make it actual. What is needed in so many instances is an increase of practical ability. There is no proper correspondence

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between the idea itself and the power to make it an objective reality. Successful men in the sphere of action are characterized by this adjustment between the world within and the world without. They have better ideas than the average man because their abilities have had a better training, and they can devise ways and means for making those ideas " go."

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Psychology and Civilization

5. All the impressive facts of civilization, its great buildings, its huge commercial interests, its science and its art, its literature and its inventions, have had their origin in the mind of man. It follows, therefore, that to increase the values of civilization we must increase the efficiency of our powers. In the development of a nation the sum-total of the progress of the individuals who compose it is the most important factor. He who would advance, must begin the advance within. A high price is put on skilled thinking. Besides, the one and only rule is to seek first the things that are first by nature; other things will be added. Therefore we now turn to those more intimate relationships out of which spring our inner conflicts.

Inner Conflicts

6. There are several kinds of conflict, but many of them imply a lack of adjustment between the facts of the world outside and the world of mind within. Very often conflict is

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due to a feeling of inferiority. Sometimes a sense of the hardness of the conditions of existence occasions a despairing attitude. Frequently, the feeling is one of an inequality which is brutally unfair, pressing heavily on the unequipped man and on those who are easily depressed. Whatever the origin, the feeling is undoubted. A conflict rages.

The "Complete" Life

7. Now one of the aims of PELMANISM is to abolish these inner conflicts, and open a way to freedom of action. It sets to work to reconstruct the student's mind by showing him how the mind operates; it reveals the need of an aim to create and develop interest; and it demonstrates the fact that achievement is first mental and afterwards actual. More than these things, it offers valuable suggestions as to the living of a *complete* life. If it is true, as Havelock Ellis has asserted, that we have mastered the powers of nature but over our own souls we have no mastery at all, it can only be because our treasure lies in some external fact rather than in some internal reality: for where our treasure is there will our heart be also. Of this more anon.

8. There is a saying to the effect that "it is not what happens that is important—it is what we think of it." Right thinking has been our aim all along; and by this time the student should feel himself adjusted to life—able to meet its demands cheerfully and con-

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fidently, and with an absence of that inward disturbance which militates against his success. At any rate once more we will go over some of the ground already covered, in order to vitalize our first impressions.

9. In this connection are the associated Lessons dealing with Self-Realization, Self-Expression and Personality, and the Use and Abuse of Reading. Whatever success there is in the achievement of fame or wealth—and they are distinctions for which a sacrificial price is paid—the success of self-realization is one which is more easily, and often more naturally, attained. The wealth is within, not so much without. Existence means a something, not a nothing. A new scale of values appears, and we no longer measure achievement solely by material or social standards but by one that is personal.

II. THE POWER OF PURPOSE

10. On the emotional side, one of PELMANISM's most distinctive features is the place given to the emotional life, particularly that connected with interest and aim. Lessons II and V, where we drive this truth home, have changed the course of hundreds of lives. Instead of mental drift, there comes a definite purpose; and instead of dissipated energies there develops a steady growth in mental powers, working cohesively towards an intelligent end. Life has ceased to be uninteresting. Work is an enthusiasm. The future is full of promise.

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11. These highly desirable results are brought about because the student finds his right position in the world; he discovers his work and is enthusiastic about it. Even difficult cases, in which the student has already considered the question of his vocation from many angles, yet has failed to find a satisfactory solution, have been successfully solved. The world within and the world without were harmonized. Life then acquired a new meaning. Mental abilities began to develop. The range of power was extended . . . . All the while the student is realizing himself. He is not a nonentity. The day is not long enough for the work he wants to do and for the pleasures he would enjoy. He knows what he wants and how to get it.

Some Searching Questions

12. This is not news to you if you have lived on right lines; indeed, it may not be news to you if you have not. You have read Lessons II and V and know their teaching. The secret, however, lies in its practice. Have you experienced the quiet joy of feeling that your energies are developing and your abilities growing stronger because you know what you want out of life, and because you are working hard to achieve it? Do you get out of bed in the morning with the feeling that life is a good thing and that you would not miss it for worlds? Do you feel an increasing sense of grip? Is there a progressive ability to master difficulties and a perpetual notion of

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"I can." If not, go through your PELMAN books and exercises again. The life described is for *you*, if you will only have it.

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III. CAPTAINS OF THE SOUL

13. We now turn to the problem of self-mastery and self-control. Between our thought-world and the world outside us there is too often antagonism. We desire to speak words and to perform actions which are against our own interests, and the desire must be quelled. We saw this fact illustrated in the cases of the men who had been ordered to give up tobacco or alcohol. These men are called upon to conquer themselves by will-power, and we found that they could do it by means of autosuggestion. They developed a new habit, the habit of "doing without."

14. Conflict calls forth the exercise of will-power as an effort to attain an ideal. The temptation not to finish a work we have begun must be overcome. The desire to stop when we know we ought to go on must be conquered. The feeling that prompts us to skip an exercise must be squashed. The best form of training the power to resolve is undoubtedly by the use of auto-suggestion. Never tell yourself you *can't*. Tell yourself you can. Submit to drill for specific habits. Every day do without compulsion some little thing that you do not want to do. It helps to strengthen your will, and it creates an atmosphere of conquest.

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15. So much for our teaching. The question now is: Have you carried it out in your daily life? It is one thing to know what to do, another thing to do it. If *doing* is your difficulty, begin to practise action in a small way. Exercise yourself in details that are not important, just for the sake of discipline, and to develop the habit. Picture to yourself the kind of man that you wish to be, and identify yourself with this image. Gain a vision of your life minus the undesirable elements, then begin to realize that life in practice. It will be hard work if you are easy with yourself; it will be easy work if you are hard with yourself. Be hard, therefore.

16. You will settle for yourself the right proportions between thought and action in your life—between "being" and "doing." Occasionally the emphasis is on doing, sometimes on being. Actually we need a measure of both: but when doing is overstressed the protest is sure to be that *being* is the more important "in an age like ours when," it has been said, "it is so fatally easy to glorify over much great aggressiveness, men of high voltage, and the efficient life." Yet life is for action as well as for reflection and aspiration.

IV. THE SECRET OF CONCENTRATOIN

17. We gave considerable space to the power to focus attention when we will, upon

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what we will, and for as long as we will. Failure in these matters is one of the greatest mental weaknesses of the age. "I can't concentrate," is a universal complaint. Attention wanders from football to the moon, from the moon to cigars, and from cigars to the origin of life. There may be no apparent connection between these things, but the mind-wanderer can generally tell you how he is led from one thought to another. The tragedy for him is that he cannot freely centre his attention for long on any definite line of thought. He is at the mercy of his momentary impressions and of every chance association.

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18. Concentration is the art of thinking about a subject or a fact in its intimate associations, to the exclusion of other and unrelated subjects or facts. It is a free movement within the circle of associated and relevant ideas. Mind-wandering is straying outside that circle. To develop this ability to concentrate we may have to employ willpower to develop interest. Thus the means are as simple as the results are profound; for the average man who can look long and continuously at a thing, and reflect thoughtfully on what he sees, may make discoveries that come as a surprise even to the expert.

Attention ! Attention ! !

19. Whatever else you learn fron PELMANISM you must learn the secret of attention, not on paper merely but as a practical art,

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which you have mastered for yourself. The repetition of the word attention at the head of this paragraph is not a mere fancy. It represents our sense of the importance of the fact that until you can concentrate you do not get the best out of your abilities, and that you are losing valuable time and opportunities. Remember that concentration means better perception, better conception, better memory, and better ability in analysis.

20. Malebranche once said that "the attention of the intellect is a natural prayer by which we obtain the enlightenment of reason." It was well said; for concentration is not itself a power like imagination, or memory: it is *control*, and must find its cause in the *will*. There is no doubt that feeling in the form of desire must be present. But essentially focused attention is a kind of will-power which thrusts out all extraneous considerations and seeks light and help from the combined use of the other mental functions.

21. Voluntary concentration tends to become spontaneous concentration, and we cease even to be aware that we are concentrating. It is only when attention is interrupted or diverted that we become aware of the fact that up to a certain moment our attention has been held. When we are deep in the mysteries of an exciting detective story, or in working out a plan, it never occurs to us to think or to say, "I am concentrating." That would be the moment when mind-wandering began.

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22. Another vital truth of PELMANISM is that all our powers can be made to work synthetically, that is, harmoniously and in unison. Mind and body interact; a nervous headache will affect the powers of concentration and memory, and a vigorous mental act of autosuggestion will bring wearied nerves into new activity. The mental functions themselves interact; a developed will can be used for purposes of perception and memory, and a resolve to concentrate, duly carried out, is good for moral discipline as well as for mental power.

23. This is the point at which the student realizes the difference between PELMANISM and education as ordinarily understood. As commonly interpreted, education is a process of *in*forming the mind. PELMANISM is a method of *forming* it. Here is a painting which represents a tall regal woman leading a child by the hand. She stands, a captive, in queenly contempt, before a barbaric Teuton Court. The focus of the picture is the woman, whose face suggests the noble superiority of a great nature that, in the moment of its abasement, rises above its persecutors. What analogies occur to the mind? One will say Galileo uttering his celebrated though apocryphal "Nevertheless it does move" to the judges who condemned him for asserting that the earth revolves round the sun. Another, John Huss at the stake. Another, the Jesuit Father Campion before delivering

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himself to be butchered by the hangman at Tyburn. All these and other similar events may occur to a single well-furnished mind. These personalities and events are now keyed together to form a background to the incident actually portrayed. Whatever of value, for the work of interpretation, there may be in them is more likely to respond to inquiry than if this mental unifying had not been carried out.

24. Besides, the student's mind has had a lesson in discovering analogies: and in the process of time the *habit* is developed. From this habit in the minds of leaders have come our discoveries in science, the wealth of our criticism, and much of our commercial prosperity. That may not sound very important, but it is of the essence of mental training. The employment of comparison and contrast involves the exercise of a large group of abilities which could not be exercised in any other way with the same benefit or the same result.

25. General education comprises teaching in many subjects. Physiology and anatomy teach us about the body's structure and chemical processes; on the other hand physical culture trains it. So from psychology we learn about the mind. What Pelmanism does is to train the mind. Who carries out this programme of mental training? Admittedly, in the final issue, the student has to train himself, and if he can obtain expert guidance on methods of training, so much the better.

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26. Self-education consists in a thousand things commonplace in themselves—adding to what we are by nature something of what we are not; it consists "in learning to see ourselves as others see us; in judging, not by opinion but by the evidence of facts; in seeking out the society of superior minds; in a study of the lives and writings of great men; in observation of the world and character; in receiving kindly the natural influences of different times of life; in any act or thought which is raised above the practice or the opinions of mankind; in the pursuit of some new or original inquiry; in any effort of mind which calls forth some latent power." So in his Introduction to Plato's *Republic*, wrote the renowned Jowett of Balliol. Other aspects of self-education are plentiful in the lessons of this Course.

V. MENTAL SENSIBILITY

27. Another vital truth is summed up in the word *Sensibility*, which means quickness of understanding and response to external impressions. There are impressions coming to us from nature; from men and women individually, and in social groups; and from our general surroundings. These impressions may be lost upon us unless we train our senses up to the efficiency standard. A considerable financial success may stare us in the face and yet we may not see it. The failure to notice

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a detail may mean the difference between getting a contract and losing it. We may see and not *see*, we may hear and not *hear*; and the poetry of life is lost to us. Inability to use the senses of sight and hearing with speed and accuracy, and restriction within a narrow sphere of action, entail losses of every kind—financial, scientific, literary, artistic. But when training has sharpened the senses and made them responsive, we perceive that which escapes the average eye and ear; and, in consequence, we gain immeasurably.

28. Minute things in business, which other people thought unimportant, are seen to be items with immense possibilities; and, to speak of different things, the foliage of spring, which to most men is merely a pleasant picture of green, conveys a subtle message of joy that brings happiness to the soul. The world is a dull place to those whose mind-life is confined to a few daily and identical impressions, oft repeated. To the man who is *alive* it throbs with interest, and offers untold chances of wealth, of artistic enjoyment, and of human welfare.

Life and Opportunity

29. A jaundiced critic will say, "There's nothing where I live to attract the attention. The people are not interesting. No scenery. No life. Dullness everywhere." This man's inner world is undeveloped or he would find the outer world more interesting. He would

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discover something to think about even if there is nothing but space to look at; if there is a village or a city, he has so many sights and thoughts that he can afford to select the best from among them; if there are other men and women to talk to, he can discover new depths of consciousness, particularly if the persons concerned have been educated to a great degree by experience.

30. The alert business man is never far away from opportunity. He sees it in places where the average man sees nothing. Proper training has imparted mental sensibility, and the chances to which others are blind display themselves invitingly. These descriptions of character are no fancy efforts written to whet the appetite for achievement. They are limned in from the confessions of those who have thankfully contributed to our records of success.

31. At the same time we must not forget that the mind may be made as sensitive to *ideas* as the senses are to the sights and sounds of Nature. In fact, we may sometimes permit ourselves to dispense with the life of the senses and commune with our minds and hearts. "Close your eyes that you may see," said Joseph Joubert, a famous French philosophic writer. In other words, *Think* and the light will come. The thinking may be the solving of a problem, or an effort to discover a new idea; but to think about a subject and to wait for light upon it is a

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"wise passiveness" with which the modern world has few sympathies. And yet it is an important element in the intellectual life.

VI. THE ART OF THINKING

32. The material that we gather by means of the Senses, especially sight and hearing, must be rightly understood, properly classified and correctly judged in its relation to other material. To judge correctly is to think about facts or ideas without straying from the truth concerning them. The tendency to stray is so strong, owing to the influences of temperament, nationality, education, and chance events, that if the student desires to make some progress in the art of thinking, he must first obtain the detachment of mind and the mental adjustment referred to in a previous Lesson ; then he must master the elementary principles of evidence, and acquaint himself with the scientific method.

33. We do not say that no man can think rightly who does not follow our instructions. Persons who have never been to school at all have been able to think and to reason correctly about many things ; from which it is clear that there is a natural ability to arrive at a certain kind of truth. But here we are referring to the difficulty of finding the truth about higher things—things in which we are deeply interested for their own sake. To reason rightly about such matters it is necessary to overcome prejudices and to acquire the technique of reflection. If you wish for

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something over and above success in business or professional life, begin to re-educate yourself forthwith. You know the details of your business very well: then resolve to know also some other subject equally well; and to know it for the sake of knowledge, not for what you can make out of it. You will be no less keen at making a bargain for feeling that, after all, making bargains is not the sum-total of existence.

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VII. IMAGINATION AND ORIGINALITY

34. Imagination and originality now come into the picture. Imagination is the power of picturing "what might be"; and the result of its exercise is often an original and perhaps highly remunerative idea. The world is crying out for ideas. There is scope everywhere for the advantageous use of imagination. You can see it in deciding the broad issues of your own career. Witness the question: "What may I become?" It is evident in the improvement of small things, such as a door lock, or in the planning of a vacation; but it is more dramatically evident in a new method of bridge-building or the shaping of a political policy.

35. The men who have made their mark as constructors of the thought and work of civilization have necessarily been men of imagination, and we give prominence to the

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fact here in order to impress upon you the great importance of following in their footsteps so far as you can. Three hours spent in true imaginative effort may bring more grist to the mill than three years of dull "slogging." To perform conscientiously and uncomplainingly the daily round and the common task is doubtless meritorious, and we should be the last to decry it; but it is not a condition that satisfies the progressive mind. Venture beyond it. Create new conditions in affairs, then begin to translate the thought into action. Allow no temporary disappointment to change your purpose. Go right on until you succeed.

Originality and the Future

36. "All very well," objects a reader, "but there is so little originality possible in this advanced civilization." On the contrary, as the complexity of life becomes more pronounced, originality finds a wider field. When primitive man first discovered the use of metals, a whole new world of advancement was opened up. When the brothers Wright invented a practicable flying machine, unnumbered possibilities of further originality were placed before us. If you cannot discover the epoch-making idea, get into line with the originators of developments. Nearly everything new occasions astonishment that it was never thought of before. Look at the world with your own eyes, and think out its problems with your own mind.

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VIII. THE DESIRE FOR PERSONALITY

37. "Everybody wants to be somebody." This colloquialism expresses a truth that is very active in the minds of the majority of men and women. It means that few people, if any, are content to be ciphers, nonentities, nobodies : all want to have personality and to be of some consequence. There is a vein of self-importance in all of us, even the most modest. This is quite right, for it is the basis of self-respect.

38. With some people, however, there is a strong desire for great distinction, and, although the desire may be achieved eventually, without harm to the individual or injury to the community, there is always a possibility of serious mischief. Words may be spoken and deeds may be done for the sake of impressing the public, rather than for the good that may be accomplished or the genuine interest that may be aroused. Some people love the limelight, and are never happy unless its beams are focused on them amid the plaudits of the crowd.

39. Admittedly, there are cases where the whole thing is so natural that no harm is done and we look on with amusement. But in many other cases the desire is morbid. It is self-consciousness as a form of self-worship, which is a disease. That is where the evil resides. In the Lesson on Self-Expression

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and Personality we saw that self-forgetfulness is the way to naturalness, and that this is essential to charm. You would do well to refresh your memory of this Lesson VIII on the evening before the day fixed for an important interview, or for some other event which demands that you should show yourself at your best.

Be Yourself

40. If you would have personality you must be yourself. You may not care for that self very much—for nearly everybody likes to fancy himself somebody else, temporarily anyhow (until he realizes that the idea is a meaningless one)—but you have to live that self just as you have to live in your own body. You cannot borrow another person's good digestion, neither can you borrow his mind, although you might like to do both. Your personality may not be as impressive as you could wish, but you cannot improve it by borrowing plumes; and to imitate is to borrow permanently. What you *can* do is to learn from others. This is not borrowing: it is adaptation. You improve the self from within instead of adding to it from the outside. The one is an evolution; the other may be no more than a trick of manner. Remember Walt Disney's story of the mouse who got wings because he wanted to fly, but was glad to return to earth when the birds and the bats chased him away as a *nothing* and a *nobody*. There is a story about a would-be genius who

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aped great men in order to be considered great himself. He "held his head on one side like Alexander, invariably had some ornament nestling in his hair like Cæsar, could drink coffee like Leibnitz, and when he was once settled in his armchair forgot all about eating and drinking—like Newton, and, like him, had to be awakened; his wig he wore in the manner of Dr. Johnson, and always left one of his buttons undone like Cervantes." Do we not all of us know at least one person who is not himself but a composite of others whom he admires?

Conditions of Personality

41. Personality will take care of itself, if you will take the trouble to observe its conditions; which are purpose, enthusiasm, sincerity, courage. Develop on these lines and the natural self will express itself in a natural way, rather than in the manner of the *poseur*, whose sole anxiety is to create so favourable an impression that the claims of other persons to the notice of the public are rendered insignifcant.

42. Avoid artificiality. If the world pays more attention to somebody else than to you, there must be a reason for it; perhaps a bad reason, perhaps a good one. What must concern you is not the attention of the world in which you live and move and have your being, but the honesty of your inner life. To wear a sham diamond because it impresses

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other people (who think it is a real one) is to introduce the shoddy element into your character. Many people obtain public attention by false pretences, but they are usually found out. There are even individuals who talk immorality in their speeches in order to obtain notoriety and a reputation for daring, while they are careful not to carry out any of their suggested social irregularities. Hyprocrites are not all of one die.

43. Personality will develop itself if you keep to these conditions, just as a boy will grow up strong and manly on plain food and plenty of exercise. The more unconsciously you develop your personal characteristics the more likely are they to be sound and attractive.

IX. BOOKS AND READING

44 The Lesson on the Use and Abuse of Reading is one of several indications that PELMANISM appeals to every side of the mind's activities; not the money side only, although it does not overlook that. To know something of the history of men's thoughts as recorded in all kinds of books is to have inspiration for business, as well as solace, and even happiness, when the skies are dark and dreary. The story of the stars and the mystery of the atom are more romantic than a novel, and the biography of a merchant may be more entrancing than a play.

45. Room should be made in your life for

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the helpful friendliness of books. You will then never have to look for a means of killing time; which indeed is a kind of intermittent suicide. You will never have time enough for all the books you wish to read, for this is one of those higher pleasures which do not stale with use. The real gain, however, is in the broadening of your mind, the increase of its range of ideas, and the ability to assess their comparative values. You will be able the better to create new ideas of your own, and will think more deeply and comprehensively about your business and professional concerns, while mental poise, courage and contentment are increased.

X. THE SUBCONSCIOUS

46. The deeper life of the mind, hidden away in the Subconscious, is always a topic of interest to thoughtful people. Its mystery is part of its attraction, and its ungauged powers, as they reveal themselves in various phenomena, normal and abnormal, make an exciting appeal to the imagination. It is, however, an appeal that needs safeguarding.

47. In discussing the question of personality, we saw that extreme attention to self may be an evil and result in self-conscious display and artificiality. So in regard to the subconscious life: perpetual introspection will do more harm than good. There is a further analogy. Just as personality expands more naturally and safely the less we trouble about it, so the subconscious life will act more satis-

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factorily the more we forget it and concern ourselves with the right conduct of our conscious moments.

48. The danger we have to avoid therefore is that of forming a *habit* of introspection—a habit of peering inward in order to discover evidence of subconscious influences. Nor need anyone plume himself that he can educate his subconscious by direct effort so as to increase his mental ability or his chances of achieving success. The only effectual method of getting the best out of the life below the level of consciousness is to make our conscious operations increasingly efficient.

49. On the other hand, where there is reason to suspect the existence of definite mischief manifesting itself in neurotic habits and conditions, it is in the subconscious that the root of it should be sought. The individual may be incapable of discovering it for himself, and in such cases it is wise to have recourse to the guidance of those who, by special study and experience, are qualified to give it.

XI. VITAL TRUTHS OF PELMANISM

50. A review of the past pages gives us the following principles of guidance:

1. That the success we desire must first exist in the mind. Develop the needed mental ability and success is assured.

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2. That we must use all our powers together in a kind of mental team-work.
3. That without aim or purpose we cannot get the best out of ourselves. We drift.
4. That to be mentally alive we must have trained senses, especially sight and hearing.
5. That the will-power to guide and control our abilities should be one of the first aims of mental training.
6. That to focus attention at will is the chief condition of synthetic ability; that is, the whole of the mind's powers working together.
7. That in the pursuit of Truth the love of Truth is the supreme need.
8. That if the conscious mind is properly trained all the subconscious elements will naturally reap the advantage and follow the lead thus given.

We ask you to test yourself from time to time by reflecting on these truths. See how far you are conforming to them, and where you are astray.

XII. GOVERN YOUR RHYTHM

51. There are one or two aspects of life and action which we should like to discuss briefly ere this course is brought to a conclusion. If we did not think they were important, we

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should not invite attention to them. The first is in reference to those elusive feelings which, because of their rising and falling temperature, have a definite although temporary effect on our abilities and on our happiness.

52. There are three possible feelings open to us every day, especially in the morning when we rise from our beds. They are (*a*) what a student rather aptly described as "the usual feeling of everydayness"—what might be called the routine feeling of the average citizen faced by the duties of another day. Next comes (*b*) a somewhat depressed feeling, arising from loss of physical and mental energy—depleted resources due to overwork, anxiety, or ill-health. The third type (*c*) is very different, being optimistic. It may persist in spite of a headache, or the spectacle of a misty rainy morning, or the prospect of a trying day in office, ward or factory. We do not affirm that there are not shades of feeling which can hardly be classified under one alone of these three general heads. All we claim is that one or other of these three is indicative of our prevailing mood.

53. Now one fact about them which we all know very well is that they are constantly interchanging. In one week, occasionally in one day, we can have doses of the second in quantities which we do not relish, and of the third which we welcome heartily. But what we aspire after is a *permanency* of the best and

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happiest feelings. Yet such are the fluctuations of feeling that we despair of ever attaining any such condition. The rhythm between exaltation and depression, anxiety and peace, worry and felicity, seems to be unalterable: and we think we can do no more than moodily settle down to accept the inevitable, remarking, "Well, such is life." Moreover, if depression or anxiety in one of its many forms is predominant we may be tempted to oust it by recourse to temporary distractions which alleviate it for the moment at heavy cost for the future.

The Life Invulnerable

54. We declare emphatically that it is possible to attain a condition of the inner life which in a great measure makes us independent of the rhythms of feeling. This condition may be due to one particular and significant fact, or it may be due to the combination of several. Listen to the testimony of a man who was fortunate in this respect :—

> You can't sink me. Nothing can. I've a something within which enables me to go ahead, no matter what happens. I don't say I never feel troubles or a big happiness. I do. But when they come I accept them, and push ahead. People have asked me about that *something*. It's real enough, but hard to describe. I suppose it is made up of several interests

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I follow, which are life itself, and of the hope that one day I shall make the great discovery in electricity on which I have set my heart.

55. Actually, this man with a quality which makes rhythm no more than the wash of the waves on the rocks, is a conqueror because he has aims, plans, schemes, and researches which are so engrossing as to impart an immunity from the destructive effects of adverse feeling. Even joys are "accepted" and then lost in the greater joy of pursuing an ideal. . . . It will be said that his is a special case. Not necessarily. There is nothing in his method which is not open to the majority.

56. We have met men and women of every creed, and of no creed, who have refused to go under when assailed by alien emotions and vindictive circumstances. A few of them were even able to hold the emotions at arm's length, so to speak—they did not allow an entry. . . . And we have met men and women who accept life as they find it, and who because they ask little for themselves are less inclined to criticize adversely that scheme of things which we call an earthly existence. They welcome pleasure, and complain when the opposite element attacks them; but they have evolved from experience a kind of dull and negative creed, the chief clause of which is, "Don't expect much, and then you will not be disappointed." But this does not satisfy an alert and sensitive mind—the mind

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which asks more of life than mere existence, and which would like to pursue its course with greater independence of rhythmic emotional effects.

Proportions in Pleasure and Pain

57. An investigation into the proportion of pleasure and pain in human lives, conducted by Dr. J. C. Flügel, produced the following result: "Nine subjects kept a detailed record of their affective life for 30 days or more, entering in this record the intensity of the feelings that were experienced and the qualitative nature of the chief affective mental states. The results show in every case a predominance of pleasure over un-pleasure, the degree of this predominance varying considerably, however, from one subject to another." It would appear legitimate, therefore, to expect that pleasure waves will be more numerous, and will last longer, than the waves of the other kind. This being the case, the chief problem is to overcome the effects of worries, fears, anxieties, sufferings, and all adverse feelings. Can it be done?

58. There is plenty of evidence to justify an affirmative—as we have already suggested. What we have to do now is to point out the way in greater detail. And, at the outset, the student should seek and find a centre of certainty in himself. This means that he can possess convictions, beliefs, interests of such

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an intense character that they, more than anything else, constitute his real self. This is the something *untouchable* by fate or fortune. It may be religious conviction; it may be the interest of a life's aim and purpose; or it may be simply the will to survive until a plan has been achieved. Whatever it is in its nature, it must be a something that is treasured above all else, and characterized by such words as highest and best: that which is truly superlative.

59. Its special forte is *resistance*. It can rise above every adverse circumstance which seeks to destroy. When Henry Ford, in his early days, failed to achieve his plans, it was expected that he would "quit"—to use a brief Americanism. On the contrary, he said in later years, "I was not even discouraged." And while we who pursue smaller enterprises may find ourselves quite naturally and properly declared vulnerable at the bridge table, we ought to be invulnerable when

In the fell clutch of circumstance

the approach of what looks like disaster sets the imagination at work conjuring up pictures of a dark destiny a week or two ahead.

60. Resistance, developed into a habit, ultimately produces an *attitude*: that is, it is not our custom to yield weakly to an overplus of any kind of feeling. Needless to say the possession of such a centre of strength within mind and soul is an asset which every student

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who is without one will covet with all the earnestness of which he is capable.

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XIII. ABOLISH FEARS

61. Fears, although they assume definite shape in consciousness, are often traceable by analysis to the subconscious. We are not advocating the undertaking of such a task. As a matter of fact most of the fears which have been dealt with at the Institute are *baseless* : that is, they have no real foundation, and are imaginary in origin. "I fear failure," confesses a student. Why? He has no ready answer. And reflection supplies him with answers that are feeble, such as, "I don't somehow see myself succeeding."

62. We admit once more that some fears are tenacious, and need expert psychological treatment. But the majority of fears can be self-cured. Analyse them first. Ask, "What *is* this fear of mine . . . ? Why do I put up with it . . . . ? If I know it is foolish, why do I not devise some method of ousting it . . . ? Cannot I displace it by defying it, or circumventing it, or developing an opposite quality ?" Then begin a course of action in direct opposition to the fear. The first and second successes, by way of conquest, will impart a fine sense of freedom, and if a failure should supervene, forget it and press forward to further victories.

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63. If there is one word which sums up the various aspects of this course, now nearing its conclusion, it is the word *Whole*. You will remember how significantly some of the poets and writers have used the word. "A whole is planned," says Browning; and, against this, men persist in glorifying a part. Goethe had previously urged the world of men to keep the Whole ever before their minds; and his strongest imperative is, "To live resolutely in the Whole, the Good and the True." What did he mean? He meant, in the first place, that the ideal life is the complete life, not the life devoted to a single idea and therefore neglecting utterly values of a different kind. In the second place he meant that we should see the whole in a part, an enterprise of mind and soul which we cannot undertake here and now.

64. If we clothe these bare terms in garments which will enable us to recognize them more easily, we get something like this: that as practical men and women we must first be realists. We need not pinch ourselves to prove that we exist, or kick the stone as Dr. Johnson did, *i.e.*, vainly—to prove the reality of matter; but to qualities that are guileless, harmless and honest we are expected to add the wisdom of the serpent. Honesty is not the sum total of the attributes which fit us for the struggle. There are others. And for want of these it sometimes happens that honest

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men end their lives in penury. Their preparation was incomplete. Well defended and well armed on one side, they lay open to attack on the other.

65. Next, we must be idealists, for the *Whole* includes the real and the ideal. We have an inner life with illuminations and joys, sorrows and pains, exaltations and depressions: and the whole of these experiences, being more intimately concerned with the self than any other of our experiences, are thus of more grave concern. Real happiness is within, and the better the soul is prepared and disciplined, the higher is the quality and permanence of our satisfactions. To live in the Whole therefore is to accept and profit by the ministry of all those influences which are immeasurable, like the effects of the varying spectacle of Nature in all her moods, the appeals of poetry, of the arts, and of devout aspiration.

66. In the fifteen Lessons of this Course, we have endeavoured to maintain the balance between the real and the ideal; and if we may offer a final counsel, it is this: that the student should abstract from the Lessons those thoughts and expressions which he desires to remember habitually; then those which may serve him during seasons of special difficulty. For so long as life lasts, the struggle continues. What special training does is not to abolish the struggle, but to prepare us to meet it with confidence.

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67. Not to be forgotten is the idea of service to others ; and, for most students, that is best realized as service to civic welfare and the State, especially in seasons of stress or danger. The object of this course is first the promotion of the Self : so that a new and better self may be available for social and national obligations. Our students are found in all the nations of the earth, and we are happy in the knowledge that PELMANISM has been, and still is, fostering in them the qualities which make of them good citizens of the world.

A Parting of the Ways

68. When a student has finished his formal course of training with us he goes his way and we bid him farewell ; but with no implication of final severance. For we want to keep in touch with all PELMANISTS, in whatever part of the world they may be found. Many of them write periodically to the Institute with reference not only to their difficulties but also to their successes. The Staff is ever ready to advise in regard to the former, while from records of achievement on the part of former students it draws courage and inspiration of persevering effort.

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NOTES ON LESSON XV

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FINAL NOTES ON LESSON 1

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FINAL NOTES ON LESSON II

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FINAL NOTES ON LESSON IV

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FINAL NOTES ON LESSON VI

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FINAL NOTES ON LESSON VII

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FINAL NOTES ON LESSON VIII

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FINAL NOTES ON LESSON X

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