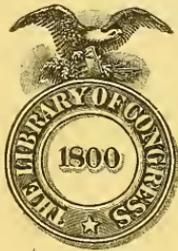


TRAINING OF CHILDREN
IN
THE NEW THOUGHT

FRANCES PARTLOW

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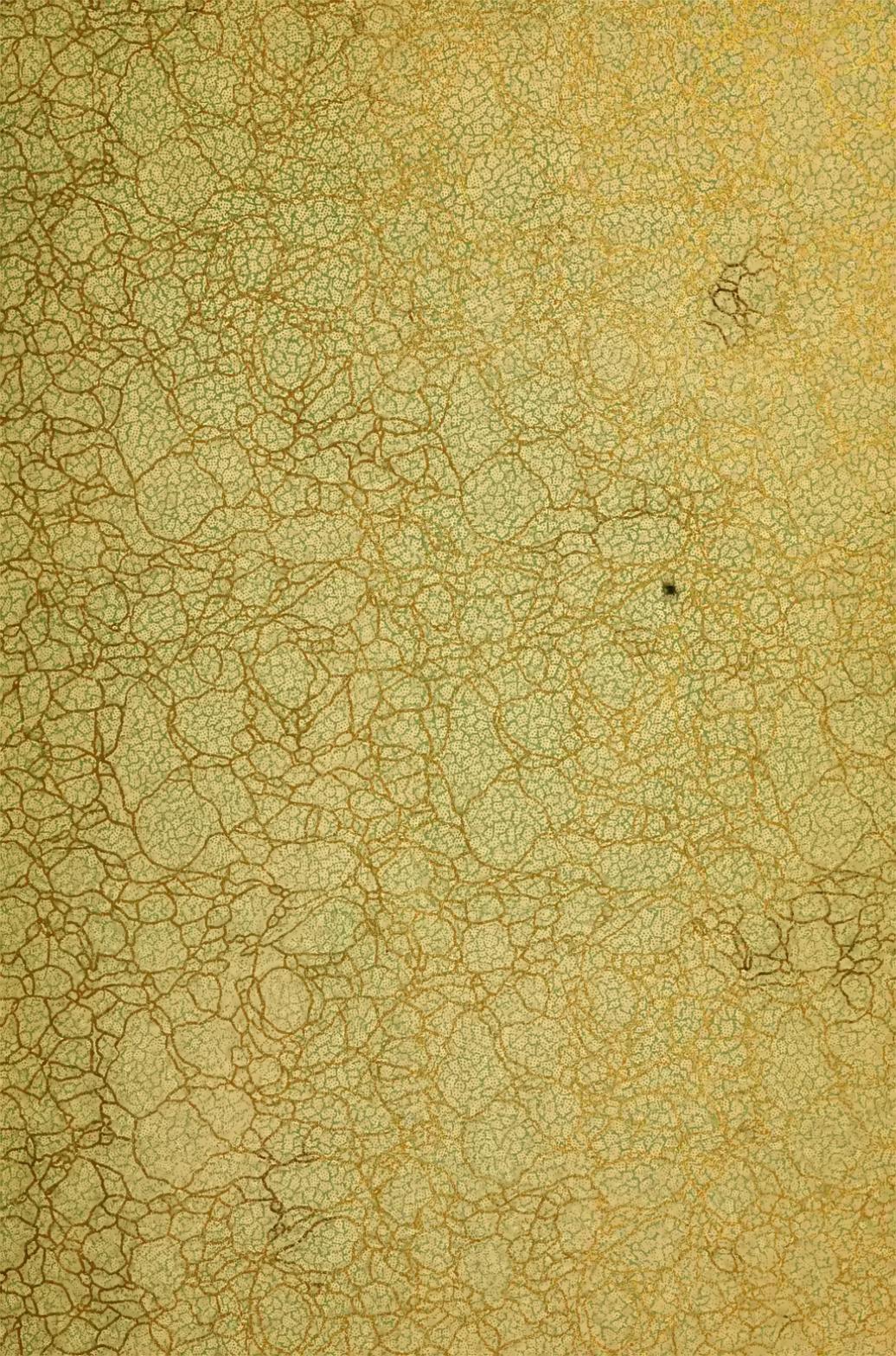


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TRAINING OF CHILDREN

IN

The New Thought

BY FRANCES PARTLOW

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Introduction

When the Psychic Research Company asked me to put in book form my experience connected with the training of my children, it did not seem to me that I could possibly have anything worthy the attention of the students of New Thought to impart. But when I reflected that nothing that transpires in our lives comes to us by chance, it seemed to me possible that I had a message to give to the world in this way, which might be the means of bringing happiness into some homes where today discord reigns; and even more than that, I became ambitious enough to hope that the few words in season here given might be of supreme advantage in the development of character of those who are today the children, but who will eventually be the fathers and mothers of the coming generation. Realizing this responsibility, I have endeavored in this little book to set forth, in the simple language of one who speaks as she feels, the rules of conduct which created and cemented the close intimacy and love existing between my children and myself; a love which has been to me so great a consolation that in the darkest hours of affliction it has been sufficient in itself to stay me and support me, and has given me a content of spirit which the easiest of circumstances could never procure.

Now that my work of training and caring for these children is almost concluded I realize, as never before, that it is the duty of every woman

to separate herself in spirit to a certain extent from her children, so that her eye may ever be of clearest vision where their best interests are concerned, and that no cloud of selfishness may obscure the rays of the true mother-wisdom.

I think that the mission of the higher phase of New Thought is to bring home to the mind of every one the conviction that we are but instruments for the advancement of others, and that the more nearly we hold to this ideal, the better it will be eventually for our own spiritual enlightenment, fulfilling in this way alone the scriptural prophesy that "He that loses his life shall find it."

When my children shall have grown to an age at which they need no more my careful direction I shall hope that strength sufficient will be given me to thoroughly eliminate my personality from the atmosphere, as I might call it, of their conduct, because it is very clearly shown to me that the mother-love which protects and cares for and helps to develop character in the children becomes a weakness, rather than strength, when the times arrives for those children to develop that strength of self-assertion and individuality which fit them to take their part in the battle of life.

It has been too often my observation that the strong mother makes a weak child, but to the credit of the mother it may be said this does not come from carelessness of her offspring, but from

a too zealous anxiety to shield and protect the child from every harm, and take the burden of of its pain and troubles always upon herself.

I believe that the hardest lesson for the mother to learn is that she must, even at the beginning, understand that she can never lavish her love in unstinted measure upon her children. It must be restricted, lest it become too much a staff for the child to lean upon.

I have endeavored to make the pages which follow as little autobiographical as possible, the events of my life being my concern alone, but am conscious that to many the reading will seem trivial and of little purpose. I shall hope, however, that there will be some who will find in its pages just that word of counsel which is needed to bring to its most perfect fruition the work of developing the character of those who are to succeed us as the representative youth and manhood and womanhood of our nation.

CHICAGO, February, 1903.

TRAINING OF CHILDREN

—IN—

THE NEW THOUGHT

CHAPTER ONE

First Steps



LOOKING back to my own childhood it is almost difficult for me to recognize in the picture that comes before me of the slight girl of delicate physique, proud of her ambition, and petted and spoiled always by the indulgence of her parents, the foreshadowing of the woman grown. Responsibilities and duties were not for me. My love for my father and my church seems to have been the anchor which corrected the tendencies of a wilful disposition, made still more wilful by the indulgence everywhere showered upon me.

It really seems to me now that the consciousness of my first duty came to me at the birth of my little daughter, whom I feared even more than I loved. The immensity of the responsibility thus thrust upon me, together with my utter lack of knowledge of any thing connected with the training of children was actually overpowering. I felt the seriousness of the situation to

such an extent that I never expected to be able to smile again, and this feeling was made even stronger when I realized that here was a duty which I could not shirk, or place upon the shoulders of my father and mother. There came to me an exaggeration of the natural instinct of the mother to protect her young, and I continually hovered about this tiny morsel with soothing syrups and infant foods of many kinds, equally fearful whether it smiled upon me or cried, and fully expecting some dreadful or unheard-of fate to overtake it in the way of starvation or its reverse, overfeeding. Fortunately, however, we get accustomed to whatever condition is thrust upon us, and though my child was always a wonder to me, I am thankful to say she lived and thrived and my love enfolded her about more and more each day.

I found that at a very early age, indeed, her demands upon me continually increased in proportion as I submitted to them; in fact, she showed every indication of developing into a tyrant, and developed the propensity of bursting into tears if she considered herself neglected for a moment. I determined then that there was nothing like starting right, and resolved for my baby's sake to suppress any such demonstrations of affection on my part as were calculated to create in her this unceasing and unnecessary demand for attention from me, and so, having thoroughly made up my mind as to the course I

should pursue, I sat down, so to speak, to watch results. From that time on the baby was not rocked or attended to, except when quite necessary.

At this procedure there were of course long spells of crying to endure, and I found this very difficult to withstand. Every cry seemed to find an echo in my heart, and my conscience upbraided me with my possible coldness towards my baby in her sorrow. It is not a mere form of words to say that the suffering was much greater for me than for her, but I was fortunately able to restrain myself, and noticed among the earliest manifestations that the child would cry very much harder when she could see me. In the course of a week or so the spells of crying grew less and I comforted myself with the thought that I was following the right line of conduct for her best interests.

She very soon learned that her appeals for attention were quite useless, and she would then amuse herself by admiring her little pink fingers, at the same time crowing to herself in true baby fashion, until she happened to catch sight of me, when her little hands would flutter in an uncertain manner, and the sweet face, so lately wreathed in smiles, would bear an expression of distress. She would then utter murmuring sounds as if she reproached me for want of care and affection. I never once responded to such a demand, no matter how necessary it was at that time, and she would often fall into a sleep brought on by

exhaustion. I think that I should have yielded often at those times if unusual strength had not been given me in this, my first effort to divert the will of my daughter from her own present interest to her future good.

I noticed that as she learned to depend upon herself, she invented many little ways of amusing herself which grew more and more elaborate as she learned to creep around and then to walk.

I attach the greatest importance to this first lesson in self-control which was given to her, and have called it the first step in the building of her character. It established a confidence in her ability to take care of herself, as well as a reliance in me when she turned to me for encouragement in the important act or art of walking erect. Even then, although I knew nothing of New Thought teaching, it was as clear as crystal to my mind that the purpose of this child's advent on earth was the development of her individual character, and I felt that it was a sacred trust permitted to me to assist her to the best of my ability to do so. There were many long hours when I sat alone and planned how best to strengthen myself in the line of conduct I had mapped out.

I found on comparing notes with other mothers that it was very natural for a child to expect and receive attendance, even in its play, and I heard that many mothers would drop their own work every time an appeal of this kind was

made by their children, although they might reproach the child for interrupting them. I concluded that this taught the child to take advantage of the mother's affection, and that it developed a domineering manner and an exacting habit in the child which would certainly prove eventually of great detriment. If this line were followed it must result, in time, in allowing the child to take the control of affairs into its own hands, encouraging disrespect for the mother's guidance. Realizing this, I very early began to teach my little Harriet not to disturb me for trifles which she could herself procure, or do without until such time as I was at leisure to comply with her wants. If she whined and cried at this I never paid the slightest attention to her until she had controlled herself and had asked for my assistance in her best manner, which she learned was the only way to gain my interest. When she showed in this way that she was mistress of herself, I never failed to approach her with all the courtesy and deference due to a grown person, desiring, in this way, not only to fairly share her interests with her, but to impress upon the baby mind that the little things of life could be as courteously and properly done as the grave things must be later.

I helped her to mend broken dolls and found interest in the construction of broken houses. I seriously argued with her the necessity of being kind to "kitty." I pored over the pictures ex-

hibited in her little story books, and, in a word, never refused my whole-souled interest in the smallest thing which held her attention. It is very easy and very dangerous for a mother to push aside her child and refuse interest in the small things which constitute the baby's world, and then, as this baby grows older, complain that she withholds her confidence from her mother.

I noticed that when Harriet fell and hurt herself she seldom attempted to cry unless she was quite sure that I was near to pick her up, and at the same time tell her how sorry I was. I soon found that even that was the wrong method to follow, and as soon as I ignored things of this kind she began to pick herself up, and the tears came very rarely. If a bruise appeared, I immediately kissed it, and this was sufficient for an instant cure. She soon ceased to look for or expect any more comfort from me than the balm of this healing kiss which was as applicable to her dolly's injured head as to her own. This authority and tender carelessness, if I may use this paradoxical expression, she in turn bestowed upon her doll, doing and saying for and to her doll the very things I did or said for and to her, with a fine imitation of my manner, and with, in certain instances, the same tender interest and consideration.

So I came to understand that I was this tiny creature's ideal of motherhood, and was responsible for the creation of character in her. Child-

ren are as imitative as monkeys, and as impressionable as wax, and we cannot be too careful of the example we set before them in their infancy.

Harriet not only learned to amuse herself, but to keep herself clean, and began to offer, of her own accord, to do little things to help me, which, although they were often to me an immediate disadvantage, I welcomed and thanked her for. I encouraged the motive which prompted her to offer her assistance by telling her how very helpful she was, and that I did not see how I could do without her services. If she showed any signs of reluctance I failed to notice them always, or rather I overlooked them entirely, showing her positively that I thought my baby was delighted to be of such great assistance to her mother.

When my friends and visitors would tell me how cross, disobedient, and what a great trouble their children were, I immediately took advantage of this opportunity to say before Harriet how thoughtful and obedient she was; how she always put away her own toys, besides doing many little things to help me through the day. This was probably not as pleasant for the mothers to listen to as it was for Harriet, but I could not lose this opportunity of driving in the lesson of helpful suggestion. Perhaps the night before she might have betrayed a desire to be disobedient in some little things, such as going early to bed with an ill-grace, but always after

I had praised her in the hearing of others, on that night her little arms would be around my neck with the assurance that she would go right to bed, and would not make her dear mamma any trouble; and then I kissed her and told her how bright and happy her goodness made me. She always felt repaid then for the effort she had made, and went to sleep a very happy child, and I never placed her in her little bed without assuring her that she was the best of girls to make me happy by going to bed and to sleep without a word of remonstrance: that no one ever had such an obedient and thoughtful little girl, repeating over the many things she had done that day that were good and kind, and making no reference to anything that was not so good, in fact, that savored of shortcoming. With arms about my neck she always promised to try harder to-morrow.

It is a beautiful thing to me now to remember that my child and I have never once, even to this day, separated for a night without a good-night kiss and the spoken wish for happy dreams for both.

As her character developed I noticed a tendency towards mischievousness. I remember her downcast face when I caught her helping herself to sugar and hurrying for fear she would be caught. I picked her up in my arms and took her to my own room, where all the serious troubles of her small life were wont to be settled. I sat her down gravely before me and said; "There are

naughty little fairies who tell little girls to do things which their mammas could not love them for doing, and there are good little fairies who are very sorry and know that little girls cannot be loved without doing as their mammas want them to do. You will wish to do what the good fairies tell you always. Then when you grow to be a woman the bad fairies will all leave because you will no longer do as they wish you to do. Every time that they come to you, no matter what they want you to do that is naughty, you run right to mamma and I will call the good fairies to help you drive away the naughty fairies and then we shall all be happy." The little head nestled closer to me and she sobbed out her sorrow for helping naughty fairies who did not love her mamma, and she promised never again to listen to them.

In this way I tried to make her understand that in the conflict between right and wrong, even in the smaller things, her mother must be, and would always be, her best friend and counselor, and that she need have no secrets from her mother, or fear to tell her everything. It is best to make our children our closest friends.

CHAPTER TWO

Growing



WHEN my second child, a boy, was born, it seemed as if my responsibilities purposely assumed another form. I had become familiar enough with the usual duties of a mother, with respect to her children, by this time, but my first child was very strong and well, whereas my little son was fragile and delicate in the extreme. It was feared that he would not live, and this fear grew into a horror with me, because of the thoughtless cruelty of individuals who insisted upon what they thought to be the sure result of the child's frailty of physique. I was tortured by their adverse suggestion, as we call it now, but which, at that time, I had no name for, though I felt its full effect. However, my mother love seemed to be strong enough to battle with this fear, and I endeavored to always quiet my mind when I was near him, believing, even at that time, that whatever I felt myself must be communicated with more or less strength to the little mortal, who was dependent upon me. It is a terrible anxiety to think that the little life for which we are responsible may be crushed out by some physical condition over which we seem to have no control, and apart from the weakening suggestions

of my friends and visitors, I found that I was called upon to stand in defence of the child against many remedies, which they prescribed or wished to prescribe for him. They argued the necessity of an attending physician, and told me in confidential whispers what they would do were they in my place. They assured me that he would not live long, and tried to comfort me by saying that it was better that he should go then, than that he should grow into a man, possibly to be a disappointment and anxiety to my heart.

I am thankful to say, however, that their surmises were not fulfilled. The weeks passed into months and the months into years, and he lived and grew in spite of their predictions to the contrary. Is it not an astonishing thing that people of good sense otherwise, who show a very advantageous sympathy and kindness when their hearts are touched by some tale of suffering, betray so little sense in the presence of the sick and suffering? Is it possible that they do not realize the tremendous importance of the spoken word? Have they no understanding of the law of suggestion? Can they not see, at least, that the utterance of depressing comments reacts against them in the mind of the person to whom they are speaking? The most unpopular people in the world, to take no higher ground than this, are the people who are continually foreboding. They are so depressing that their company is avoided by all who have the choice, and the most

charitable of us can do no better for them than shudder inwardly when they approach.

It is just as easy, it seems to me, to scatter light and sunshine by a cheerful optimistic view of things as to increase the clouds and depression of those with whom we are brought in contact. Try as I would against it, I could never root out of my heart a certain resentment against those people, who, though perhaps with kindest intent, had prophesied danger and death to my son.

The little boy, Earl, cried very much more than Harriet did at his age, and was of a different disposition. He was much more persistent and determined in having his own way. My methods of training had therefore to be re-adjusted to meet his disposition, and the average mother would say that I was unnecessarily severe. I had so well proved the advantage, however, of my method of training in Harriet's case that I paid very little attention to anyone's advice or criticism, preferring to follow "the light within" as my guide in this matter.

I found that my neighbors and friends were bent on excusing the child, claiming that his usual fretfulness was due to his physical condition. I carefully watched him to discover if his crying ceased if I took him up in my arms, and if it began again when I put him down. I found that this was exactly the case, and resolved upon my course in consequence.

Harriet was then only four years old. My training had taught her not to annoy me, and she could not quite understand how this small brother could find apparent pleasure in doing the things so foreign to what she had been taught were right. She would try to quiet him when he cried, telling him to be a good boy and to go right to sleep "so her mamma would love him." It was hard to make her understand that he could not understand her, but he soon learned to look to her from me, knowing that she would answer his appeals, and he would cry loudly until she appeared and sought to soothe him.

As the months passed his appeals grew in number and frequency, and he was evidently cultivating a nature selfish enough to rule over the better and more self-sacrificing disposition of his sister, who would thus, without realizing what was happening, have become a servant to his wishes. On my watch, as I was, for anything of this kind, it is odd how insidiously this failing on his part flourished and grew. Harriet's care of him had its advantage to me in that it relieved me from the disagreeableness of correcting the child so frequently, and it is really a fact that I failed to notice for a long while what a serious situation was developing. When I found my mistake, however, I sought immediately to remedy it, but this I found to be a much harder task than I had looked for, a boy's disposition being naturally more selfish and stubborn than a

girl's. I regretted my lack of continuous scrutiny of his character for faults from day to day, before these weeds had had time to grow so profusely and luxuriantly in the garden of his little mind.

He developed a tendency, also, to forget quickly, and possibly the very next day after he had been corrected for a fault he would be found doing the selfsame thing. He did not seem to respect my wishes as Harriet did; or, to put it more exactly, although he seemed to feel it keenly for the time being, the effect was very transitory. I had no guide which I could follow in this dilemma, and "the light within" at that time burned dimly for me, or at best, its radiance came by fits and starts. There seemed to be no steady light which I could turn to, and I was left to work out some method by which I could cultivate in him the respect which I felt that he must entertain for me, if he would not become a slave to his own selfishness. The many little occurrences which made up the day's happenings continued to reveal to me new traits of character in both my children, and when I looked among my friends for parallel cases I found them all too frequently, but I did not find them such a guide as I cared to follow. I found many mothers who were at a loss, like myself, to know which was the right way to manage a number of children whose dispositions differed each from each.

The line of management which seemed favorable to the best development of one character, seemingly worked to the disadvantage of another. One was whipped, another scolded and still another coaxed. Thrown back upon myself again, I sat down, as usual, to wrestle the matter out alone. I concluded that these two children were diminutive man and diminutive woman, with opinions and personal rights which, though unvoiced, called for respect, as did the opinions of their elders. I argued with myself that although their elders were able, because of their superior strength and wisdom of years, to demand and even enforce their rights, we should be still more careful to protect these little men and women because of their inability to protect themselves, and by this I mean that we should be particularly careful to avoid humiliating them by such drastic treatment as whipping or scolding. It seemed to me that we must endanger their independence and respect for themselves when we *compel* them to yield their obedience without inviting their co-operation in the matter. Though I did not reason it out in this way, it seems to me now that the enlightened spirit of the age is altogether in favor of arbitration for the settlement of disputes, and arbitration, when it is reduced to its essential features, is really a method of hearing both sides and mutually agreeing upon a way which will preserve the self respect and the independence

of the contestants. I sought thus to act as arbitrator in the case of my children between their better and worse selves, impressing upon them the wisdom or advisability of taking a certain course, and inviting them to assist me in strengthening their better selves for their immediate or ultimate advantage. I endeavored to strengthen in them their respect for me by never allowing myself to treat any suggestion of theirs with that superiority which denies discussion, recognizing that many of the faults which they exhibited were but reflections of faults in me which might have escaped my observation if they had not so nearly held the mirror up to me. I tried to obliterate such faults in myself, feeling that as I made my own life better I was assisting my children to fashion theirs after a better pattern. My line of conduct was now clear in my mind, and I allowed nothing to move me from my path.

I found and still find that love and respect are the greatest of controlling powers. The influence of a whipping or a scolding is ephemeral indeed, and, apart from its effect upon the mother in thus inflicting pain upon her child, it engenders the effect of fear and rebellion in the mind of the young, and, worse and more deadly still, it engenders the loss of independence, self respect and strength of character. The whipped child says, "Just wait until I am old enough and I will do just as I please," and this marks the

snapping of the sacred ties that should bind mother and child.

I began to teach my children the value of their word of honor to me, and the necessity of thinking well of the consequences before they gave it. When they broke it, as they did, I exhibited the greatest disappointment, displaying an excess of grief for the purpose of making them understand the value of their agreement with me. I was careful, too, never to fail them in any agreement I made with them. I have heard mothers make promises to their children just to pacify them for the time being, and with no intention of ever making good their word; trusting, no doubt, to the idea that the promises would be forgotten before they would be called upon to fulfill them. But the child's memory is tenacious, and few of the things that are promised him for his future satisfaction are ever allowed to languish for want of remembrance. This is breaking faith with the child and we have no right to expect that he will do more for us than we are willing to do for him. I never grew careless, as I have seen mothers do in this matter, and I have been able through my sympathy with my children to put myself in the place of the child whom I have heard say to her mother, "You promised to look through your things and find me some pieces of silk to make my doll's clothes with this afternoon, and now you are going out and I haven't anything to do!"

The mother might have scarcely heard, or at least paid no attention to this claim, but she is planting the seed of distrust in the mind of her child, and this will bear bitter fruit. I venture to lay it down as an axiom, that no matter what may be the hereditary tendencies of children, no matter what their ancestors may have been or done, thought or said, the mind of a child is as a sheet of wax upon which you can write whatever you will. It is just as true to add that untaught and untrained children are of necessity selfish. They acknowledge no instinct or law but the law of self preservation. It is, "I for myself and the rest no where!"

It is our duty as mothers to plant good seed that a harvest of grain may smother the tares. Carelessness is responsible for many more bad children than heredity.

The *tendency* to vice of any kind, which is the utmost effect of hereditary influence, can always be eradicated from the child's mind by proper training, but let no mother suppose that her child, unattended and uncared for, will develop of itself a beautiful disposition. Weeds grow more easily than grain in neglected lands. I suppose that women will always be creatures of moods, but mothers owe it to their children to be very careful of their moods, and see that they do not find expression in their voices in the presence of their children. It is very easy to speak hastily and crossly to a child when we feel

morbid or cross ourselves, but I am thankful to remember that I trained myself never to grow careless in this particular thing, no matter what my mental condition might be at the moment.

I tried unfailingly to present to my children an outward demeanor of calm good humor. It was shocking to me to notice in other families how the careless, fretful mother was imitated in her language by her careless, fretful child. I have seen the child punished for manifesting this disposition, when in the very same interview I have traced its source in the mother's conversation.

Having begun to train my children with the respect due to my equals and friends, I demanded the same respect from them in return. Here, however, I found a difference in these two children. Harriet seemed to desire always to please me, whereas Earl, while willing sometimes to stand well in my estimation, occasionally showed a carelessness for my feelings. In these instances I expressed the greatest astonishment that he should be capable of so acting, when he knew what I expected of him, and I withdrew my approval or praise from him until, of his own accord, he tendered an apology. The apology was, of course, immediately accepted and the culprit re-established once more in confidence and told very plainly of the high opinion I now entertained of him. Moreover, every fault so expiated was considered buried, and was never referred to again.

The plan I followed to wean Earl's higher and better self from the disagreeable tendencies which had taken root in his nature, was to refer to his grosser qualities as belonging to some other boy who could not expect to receive any courtesy or attention from such a great lady as myself.

Whenever he forgot to do certain little things for me which he could very easily do, and I must say that he forgot very often, I would call him to me and when he came I would say, "Little boy, won't you please call my Earl. He is too much of a gentleman to allow his mamma to do things which he could do for her; besides he loves her too well." When he still hesitated, and I am bound to confess that he very often hesitated, I would ask him to go out and find my own sweet, little gentleman, who was always so kind to his mamma and sister. Earl would go away for a little while and then come back to me with the sweet assurance that the good Earl was here and ready to cheerfully perform his task. I would then assure him that I knew my Earl would never fail, and with arms about my neck he would promise to take better care of his mamma, and watch that no bad boys ever came near her to disobey her again. He would then renew his effort to be the boy that I loved and thought him to be.

He was not always so easily won, however, and when this bad humor took strong possession

of him, I found that my keenest weapon was to humiliate this bad boy by receiving his requests for attention with utter disdain. I never kissed the bad boy, nor did I love him, and he soon found that it made him much happier to be the other and more gentlemanly little fellow, who was always loved and respected.

In the presence of visitors I was very careful never to send my children away, unless there were some private matter to be talked about. On the contrary, I invited them to act the part of friends of the family, and introduced them gravely as my little daughter Harriet and my son Earl, with all the respect due to grown people. It was very easy to teach them never to interrupt or break into the conversation, and they learned not only to be courteous to visitors and friends, but, and this is rare in my experience with American youth, they refrained from obtruding their views and opinions upon the notice of their elders.

Readers of this book may consider that I have glossed over the faults of my children, but I do not feel this to be the case; and am thankful to say that because of the early training of these dear ones, I have not known the sorrow of selfish and disobedient children.

CHAPTER THREE

Strengthening the Bonds



THE last chapter concluded with an appeal to mothers to make themselves the closest and best friends of their children, and to make the child feel the full force of the mother sympathy. I wish to devote this third chapter of this little book more particularly to an appeal to mothers not to permit any influence, even the friendship of the girl or boy chum to become more precious than the mother's friendship.

It is natural for the young to turn to friends of their own age, and to make comrades of them. This is a healthy, normal desire, and the companionship of boys and girls is the outcome of this commendable instinct. It is true enough, I believe, that man is a gregarious animal, and little men and little women are not less true to this common instinct.

There are too many mothers, however, who have given their power over their children into the hands of the boy or girl chum. The danger of such a companion coming between the parents and their children may be looked for very early, and its presence detected even at the age of ten years, or younger. It is really a danger, chiefly because the association of the young, one with

the other, while it is healthful and helpful so long as this association is guided by the mother's riper experience, becomes a case of the blind leading the blind when a child has obtained possession of authority over another child.

I am afraid that I shall stand accused of using my observation of the short-comings observable in the families of my acquaintances to point the moral of every chapter, and attract attention to my own superiority of management. I cannot help this if the facts are as I write them. It is perfectly true that among my acquaintances I found sufficient opportunity to study the evil effects of this supremacy of the boy or girl chum over the influence of the mother or father. I found that in such cases the mother herself was chiefly to blame through her inability to share in the joys and sorrows and ambitions of her children. To quote one among many instances; I knew one mother who loved her daughter quite as much as I loved mine. She had given this child every advantage that a devoted parent could give, and often at the expense of her own comfort. Here, too, I draw a moral. It was borne in upon me that this mother had committed a serious mistake in granting to the child such precedence over her own interests as depreciated her worth in the eyes of her daughter, encouraging in the latter a selfish tendency to demand the fulfilment of her wishes irrespective of the inconvenience caused. Unhappily this

caused the child to associate her mother with nothing higher than the gratification of some selfish request or desire, and her real confidence and her real friendship were given to the girl friend with whom she spent most of her time. She talked over and planned her future, not with her mother, but with her chum, whose influence was more harmonious; and the self-sacrificing and overworked mother bemoaned the fact that her daughter paid so little regard to her.

It does seem unfortunate that I must hang my tale upon so many mistakes made by my acquaintances in the conduct of their family affairs, and I should be sorry to give the impression that I made no mistakes myself. Indeed I made many. I many times fell short of my ambitions to present to my children a model of motherhood. It is true that I have reason to be grateful for some of the mistakes, the effects of which I saw clearly written in the unhappiness of other homes. The example quoted above made me very cautious of outside influences which might separate my children from me at the time when they most needed my advice, and strengthened me in the effort to become the chum and the confidant of my daughter. In order to secure this result it was necessary for me to root out of her mind all fear of my approval or criticism. When she could understand that whatever her confidence might be, I should be careful to treat it with courtesy and never to

criticise it unkindly, she told me all her heart, and it greatly strengthened her frankness when I took her into my own confidence, and shared my hopes and aims with her. It was not easy for her to overcome her shyness when it came to disclosing the "secret of secrets;" the early adoration which she felt for a boy many years her senior. Our sympathy had become so quickened by this time that I divined that she was withholding something from me, and from her manner I guessed the truth. I was rather at a loss how to proceed in a matter of this kind, which, trifling as it might appear to an adult, was by no means a small matter in the eyes of a girl as serious as my Harriet, and I knew that here, above all else, she would require the advice of a friend rather than a parent. The way shown me was to become myself as one of her girl friends, and do exactly as they would do in wresting her secret from her.

While we were alone one afternoon I called her to me and asked if there were not some little secret that she had not told me. From her face I knew that I had divined aright, and also felt that it was something which she thought was too sacred to share, even with her mother. "I can guess what it is," I said. There was no answer. "It is about a boy, and I know all about boys and girls, and how they have their little sweethearts; why, I believe I had one when I was three years old." This had the desired

effect, and I knew that her confidence would be given me before she put her arms about my neck and bursting into tears, confessed her love for a boy who was so much older than she that he had "broken her heart, because he had considered her one of the little girls, and paid her no attention whatever."

I soothed her as I thought her girl chum would have tried to soothe her, and told her that the affection between girl and boy was quite a natural thing, and I spent much time in explaining that it must not be allowed ever to gain a mastery over her life, or it would quite unfit her to appreciate its beauty and necessity in the future. She must be very careful, I told her, not to allow anything like this to become common or usual with her, otherwise it would lose its beauty. I told her that I had learned all of this for her benefit, so that I could sometime tell her all about it. In short, I quickly and successfully guided her through this first influence, so keenly felt in her young life, and she has never known that I saw in it a possible first beginning of the entrance of another's influence superior to my own.

After this I knew that no matter what her heart might feel, she would have no secret that she could not tell her mother.

On one other occasion only did I recognize the intrusive power of another's influence in her life. A number of her girl friends wished

to attend a little party to be held at one of their homes, and it was arranged that Harriet should remain all night, returning with them to school in the morning. I could feel that her desire to go was very strong, and when my permission was asked, and I refused it, I noticed that the worst side of her nature was in arms at my refusal; and a stubbornness that had never before shown forth in her, to such a degree, took possession of her small being. Her great love and respect for me, in the building of which some years had been spent, was fighting against this exhibition of rebellion, but the fight was a very hard and severe one. I stood quietly waiting, and said: "This is not the real true nature of my child. There is some ungovernable power here consuming every particle of her better and sweeter self. This is the first time it has dared to make its appearance. It has been brought out through the influence of girls who do not love you, and we must win or lose this battle now. This struggle is quite enough to show you the great sorrow that will come into your life if you yield. My happiness as well as yours will forever be affected. You are only a little girl, but you have a great and beautiful soul to lose. I know that you will win in this struggle, and I shall let you fight it out alone while I go into the other room and wait. I know that you will conquer it, and I shall pray for strength to be given you to win this fight, and when you conquer you will be free of this

feeling forever. Just as soon as you have won this battle with yourself, I want you to come immediately to me, and we will be glad together." I left her standing in the room very defiant, and seemingly quite unmanageable, and I waited behind the closed door for some time; then the door quietly opened and she ran into my arms, mistress of a condition which has never again controlled her. She would often, after this, hasten to me, telling me that it was coming upon her, but by standing firm she overcame it, and she is now so perfectly the mistress of her impulses and temper, that I doubt very much if she is even conscious of a battle. You may be sure that this established a deeper and more lasting bond of love between us, and made her feel that she could come to me for help in any little disturbance of mind. She felt that I understood and appreciated her struggles, and this was the last time in her life when any outside influence thus threatened to come between mother and daughter.

CHAPTER FOUR

Bending Twigs



THE tendency of all children is to prevaricate. For this, an anxiety to please is quite as likely to be responsible as a fear of consequences. It is so natural for a healthy child to desire approbation for its actions that we may be prepared to find that the most difficult lesson to implant in its mind is that budding sense of duty which compels it, of its own volition, to speak the truth regardless of the consequences, whether pleasant or the reverse.

I found it cropping out continually in my own children, whose greatest delight seemed to be their mother's praise, and when things transpired which they had reason to believe their mother would not see fit to praise or commend, such things were very likely to be withheld from her.

Child-nature to which a lie soon becomes an impossibility can be literally manufactured out of the most unpromising material, even after the habit of falsehood has been formed. I believe this to be a fact because of my success with other children in whom the habit had grown to an alarming extent. I cannot say that I have had much difficulty in eradicating it from my own children. The method that I still pursued

was that of acting as the equal of my children, rather than as their superior. I aimed to develop a sense of justice in them, to throw them back, as it were, upon their own dignity and growing sense of honesty. It was not hard after a few experiments to show them that there was nothing to be afraid of in telling the truth, and that there was no use in telling a lie to me. I managed to get the idea into their minds that I should always try to understand how they felt when the undesirable occurrence had taken place. If, for instance, I sent my boy Earl for cream and he spilled it, there was no need for him, as I pointed it out to him, to come to me with any lame story about the accident. I assured him that he was not to blame in the matter; that there was plenty more cream to be obtained, and how much easier, simpler and more satisfactory it would be to everybody if he would just tell me the truth! When he found that the truth really saved him a great deal of bother, I had no more trouble with him.

I think that the deciding incident however occurred when there happened to be on one occasion a difference of opinion between himself and Harriet at a game of checkers. I never allowed my children to talk angrily to each other, and they seldom ever disagreed, but on this occasion Earl sprang up and cried out to me, "O, Mamma, Harriet has cheated me!" and burst into tears. I said very seriously, "Earl, what is that you say?" and he

repeated, "Harriet has cheated me! She did not play fair!" I said, "Come in here, both of you to me. Now, Harriet," I said, "Did you cheat your brother?" "Why, no," she said, "Mamma, you know I would not do a thing like that. He did not understand the game and I beat him, that is all!" "One of you," I said, "is telling me an untruth; now who is it?" I made a sign to Harriet which Earl did not see, and by which she understood that something was to be done for Earl's benefit. Then I said, "Earl, if Harriet has cheated you, she must be punished. Now," I said, "how would you like to have her punished? I shall leave it to you." The thought of Harriet possibly in tears and pain was too much for Earl, and he temporized and shuffled his feet. "Well, Mamma," he said, "I don't think she *really meant* to cheat me." "But," I said, "You *said* she had cheated you, and punishment is the only thing—now, how shall I punish her?" "Well, Mamma," he said, "I don't think she cheated, I think I told you a story!" The poor little fellow's tears fell fast, and he was the sorriest boy that ever lived. I petted him because he had told the truth at last, and took this occasion to show him how mean it was to say that Harriet had done a thing which she had not done, and I added that I did not know just what I ought to do about it. It was strange to me that he should be able to tell me things which he knew were not true, and then to accuse a lady, and that lady his sister!

I put him on his dignity by pointing out to him how I looked to him to always be a gentleman and protect his sister, and in every little thing that came up he must never forget that he must protect her; and this putting him on his dignity I found to be the most effective means of making the impression permanent. From that time on I never detected in him even a hesitancy about telling the truth.

I cannot make the outside world understand the close affection which existed between these two children, nor is it necessary to show its existence other than by a passing reference.

It happened that at one time, when Harriet was ten years of age and Earl about seven, an opportunity came to me to go to Alaska on a business trip. I was discussing it with friends, and mentioned that I could not very well go on account of the children. They overheard me say this, and also overheard me say that if it were not for the children I thought I should accept the offer and go immediately. I did not know that they were paying any attention to the conversation, as they were amusing themselves at the other end of the room; but in a little while Harriet stole out quietly into the adjoining room and Earl followed her; then they closed the doors very quietly, and I heard them discussing the matter in undertones.

Earl said: "Harriet, you know we are a lot of trouble to our mamma. She would be much

happier without us. She could go and do things and make lots of money if it wasn't that she has us to clothe and feed!" Harriet said: "Yes, it takes nearly everything mamma makes just to clothe and feed us." Earl said: "Well, Harriet, let you and me go into the spirit world, and we can be just as near our mamma as we are now, and she can do anything she wants to, then, and we can go wherever she goes, too." Harriet said: "Yes, mamma could hear and see us, and she would not have to bother looking after us." Then Earl said, very bravely: "Well, I wouldn't be afraid to go if you would take hold of my hand and go with me." And Harriet said: "Shall we go down and jump into the river? That would be a good way." Earl said: "Yes, if you'll keep hold of my hand, Harriet, I wouldn't mind." I do not think that any mother could have restrained herself as long as I did, but that was all that I could bear, and I rushed in and gathered them to me and hugged them and tried to make them understand that they were everything to me; that they were all I had to live for, and that my idea in going was not to get rid of them, but to be able to get things for them which would make them happier. I should have no incentive to work, I told them, if it were not for them. When I had succeeded in convincing them that they were all the world to me, then they both put their arms about my neck and dragged me over to a chair and insisted that I

tell them the story of the rich uncle and the poor family; and if I told them this story once, I must have told it to them from year to year five hundred times.

Not to weary you with the story in narrative form, I prefer to tell it as the children themselves usually managed to tell it. It ran something in this wise: "Tell us," said Harriet, "about the poor family and the rich uncle." "Yes," said Earl, "you know, mamma, how the rich uncle came to the poor mother who had eight children, and he said he wanted to adopt one of them, and he would give the child everything it needed!" "Oh!" said Harriet, "he had money, and houses and lands and everything, didn't he, mamma?" "Yes," Earl said, "and then at night after he had gone, the poor parents took a candle and they went to look at each one of the children; and they looked at this one and could not let it go, then they looked at that one and could not let it go, because the father wanted one and the mother wanted another one, and they found they both wanted them all, and couldn't spare not one, could they?" Then Harriet and Earl would conclude rapturously together: "And you couldn't spare either of us, could you, mamma?"

When Harriet was ten years old I used to try to develop her self-reliance by some such talk as this. I would say: "Harriet, you are so much help to mamma that she can send you anywhere at all and you can do just what she tells you to

do, without a mistake. You have just as much ability to perform errands carefully and well as a grown person, and your mamma always knows that whatever she tells you to do will be as well done as if she had done it herself." Then I would send her to the Post Office to get a money order cashed. She was so tiny that the clerks had to hold her up to sign it. She would go with the money to an office building, take the elevator up to the right floor, pay the rent and bring the change back to me in quick time. She was never late. I impressed upon her very strongly that she should always be punctual. I attribute her early confidence in herself chiefly to the strengthening effect of such suggestions given her. I never allowed her to entertain a doubt of her ability to do anything that was entrusted to her. I said: "You can do so and so, Harriet," and she looked to me as one who knew to a certainty whether she could or not, went straight ahead and did it. Very much, too, may have been accomplished by the strengthening suggestions given her at bed time, for the purpose of obliterating the effect of any failures during the day, which were to the effect that to-morrow she would do well, and just as I wished her to do.

With Earl, tears and smiles came almost together. He cried very easily and smiled as easily through his tears. It was not very hard to break him of this habit. In fact, I think he broke himself of it. All I did for him was to insist that before he came to me to tell me any story when

his voice was choked with sobs and he was excited, he should get calm first; get over it, stop crying and then talk. After he had done this a few times, he began to get over it much more quickly. It had a quick and magical effect. Then I caught him saying to himself when he was hurt, "Wait, it is not time to cry yet; wait!" This would postpone the tears indefinitely. When he was about seven he took the role upon himself of comforter to Harriet. If anything occurred to vex her he would say, "Don't cry, wait a little while!" He must have heard somewhere something of the idea of the independent intelligence existing between the central nervous system and the extremities, because I overheard him say once: "Harriet, when you hurt your finger it telegraphs up to your head to start up steam to get ready to cry. It says: 'I am hurt down here;' then the engine goes to work and begins to pump tears!" Anything that had an engine in it appealed to Earl very strongly. After he had assumed the task of breaking Harriet from crying, he concluded that he was bound to prove his theory and stick to it, and he maintained himself nobly. I have seen him hurt his finger and say in the most approved modern mental science style: "This finger don't hurt. Why," he would say, "it don't hurt at all. It cannot hurt unless I let it!" and this line of denial of sensation, which is familiar enough to Christian Scientists, came to him, I am bound to say, intuitively. He practices it to this day with the very greatest success.

CHAPTER FIVE

Asserting the Self



IT may be supposed that of my two children the one who would most readily grasp and apply the truths of New Thought would be the girl, but the reverse was the case. It was Harriet who listened very courteously to my exhortations on the subject and who promised to make certain affirmations for her own betterment. I could see however that she made her statements chiefly to please me, and that the fundamental truth of "assumption" found no lodgment in her mind, and did not appeal to her imagination. For example, when she had a pain in her back and I besought her to say that the pain was going away and that it would not hurt her, and finally that it had gone, she replied, "Yes, but it *does* hurt!" It was fully two years before she found any pleasure in working with herself in this way, and bringing her will to bear upon any physical condition which affected her. I have heard others adopt exactly the same line of argument which Harriet adopted in this matter, even taking the position that they were guilty of deceit in averring that a pain, of which they were conscious, had disappeared at their suggestion. They have accused me of sophistry, and I confess have made a very

good fight on the argument. But, it ought to be evident to any one who will reason a moment that this denial of pain having in itself the provably true effect of suppressing the pain, must of necessity be the truth, while the admitting of the pain is only a statement of what is at that moment true because of the passive mental attitude which entertains the thought sensation.

I do not wish to be ambiguous here or to split straws in controversy. My argument with Harriet would take the following line. I would say, "My dear, I know that the pain is there at this moment, but I want you to say that the pain is gone and tell yourself strongly and forcibly that the pain has gone, because then you will be putting yourself in the position of controlling the pain and causing it to disappear. You will really be calling out in yourself the power which is latent in you to control the unpleasant sensation. It is quite true that the pain is there, as you say, but if you will consistently work with yourself, and maintain that the pain is not there, then you will not allow it to be there; then you will be asserting your own sovereignty, and the pain will actually depart. Your brain will have performed the very simple function of interrupting the current of sensation from the nerve to the brain. After this interruption has taken place and you are no longer conscious of the pain, then the inflammation consequent upon the sensation of pain will subside and in place of the

affected part making an outcry to the brain, and consuming much needed energy in thus making its complaint known, the nervous force of your body will, instead, center itself upon the part and the work of healing from the center to the part affected will begin immediately to take place."

This, it seems to me, is the philosophy of mental healing in a nutshell; avoiding the obscure philosophy of the divine scientists.

It was about this time that my daughter Harriet injured her spine very seriously and complained frequently during the day of the pain it was causing her. This was entirely a physical injury, and since physicians could do nothing to help her, it was left to her and to me to assist nature in repairing the injury by mental suggestion. I felt that this could best be done by herself by awakening in her the mental power to govern this condition of her physical self. But it was extremely hard to get her to see the logic of self-treatment. She would agree with me in the very sweetest way, and would say many things to please me, but it was quite evident that her heart was not in it. Perhaps a keen sense of humor may have had much to do with her reluctance to follow a line of self-suggestion which seemed to her rather ridiculous. At any rate I have this fact to build upon, that it was not until she was seriously interested in her treatment, and had begun to make her affirmations of

health and strength with energy and determination, that her back began to get better. From the time she put her heart in the work she began to mend, and this was so noticeable to her, as well as to us, that it gave her courage to continue. The injury has been entirely repaired, and she does not know what a day's ill-health means.

There was no such difficulty in the case of Earl. It is a boy's nature, I suppose, to experiment, and it seemed as if his imagination, always keen and alert, reveled in the possibilities of his power over himself and over circumstances. He became a persistent "holder of the thought." If he wanted a thing, even if it was nothing but a pocket knife, *he thought for it*, and when he got it he would come to me and say in the most matter-of-fact tone; "Well, you see, mamma, I thought for that knife because I wanted it, and I knew I would get it, and here it is!" I think he was what we would call to-day a successful operator, because he developed an absolute confidence in himself along this line, and no ray of doubt ever entered his mind that anything would interfere with the operation of the law. I wonder how much of the ill-success of men is owing to the fact that they doubt? Doubt is ever their stumbling block; doubt and distrust of the self. To those who have grown faint and disheartened because of their frequent failures to achieve ends long thought for and desired, I would say; "Hold

the thought still, and in the face of delay and disappointment still hold the thought strong! Make the demand for what you want; make it without fear and without doubt, and it must by the law of cause and effect fall into your hands!"

There was a boy at Earl's school who intended to inform the Principal of something which Earl had done. He had broken the rules, and this boy had a grudge against him, and intended to "get even" in this way. Earl came to me and told me about it, saying: "Now, mamma, I know this boy is going to tell the Principal to-day; what shall I do about it?" I said to him: "You have broken the rules, and you must stand your punishment, whatever it is. But are you going to let that boy tell the Principal? Are you going to let him do it? He cannot tell the Principal unless you allow him to." Earl thought this over, then he straightened up and his eyes flashed, and he said: "Why, I had forgotten about that—I won't let him tell. I won't let him tell the Principal, because *I will think that he can't!*" I did not see him until he came home from school triumphant. "Well," he said, as soon as he got into the house, "the boy did not tell because I would not let him. I thought to myself all the time, 'You cannot do this, because I will not let you.'" I give this example for what it is worth, not because I mean to imply that the ethics in the case are very high, nor because I wish it to be thought that this is to me a conclusive evidence of the

absolute power of holding the thought, but in order that you may understand from it how strong a hold New Thought had taken of this boy's mind, and how he applied the principles of this philosophy to his immediate personal advantage. All boys enjoy the consciousness of power, and this self-confidence can be developed in the boy-nature to such an extent that he rises superior to what would seem to be insurmountable difficulties. Such a training cannot fail to be beneficial as a basis for character-building when that character is later called upon to meet the difficulties which test its strength in the outside world.

CHAPTER SIX

The Universal Mother



WE are apt to be selfish in our love for our children; apt to think them exclusively deserving of the highest regard in comparison with the claims of other children upon our hearts. It was left to a small boy, one of Earl's acquaintances, to teach me a much needed lesson.

It should be understood by every mother that in his companionship with other boys her son is quite certain to hear and possibly discuss things which are not considered proper for conversation among adults.

I had taken the ground in discussing this possibility with my children that the harm in such discussions lay not in the things themselves, but in the manner in which they were spoken of. It was not difficult for them to understand that there were some lines of conversation to which they could not give ear, and retain their self respect; and this frank discussion of the matter with them, I think, was responsible for a shrinking on their part from the familiar allusions to such subjects by their companions. If boys talked, as boys will, upon these matters in his hearing Earl would walk away.

On a certain day in summer he was talking to

a boy acquaintance standing outside the French windows of my room, which opened to the ground and were swung wide. Earl's acquaintance was saying to him things which, considering the manner in which they were said, were decidedly shocking, and I immediately called Earl in to me. He came in looking rather shame-faced, and I said very severely, "Earl, don't you know that that boy was saying things to you which you should not hear?"

Earl is a very manly little fellow, and in his anxiety not to earn the nick-name of "mamma's pet" among his boy companions, he was apt to avoid pushing himself into an attitude of condemnation of them in any way, and to a certain extent I encouraged this in him, because under no circumstances would I have him grow up with any feeling in his heart of aloofness from boys of his own age, or of criticism of the boy nature and its blunt method of expressing the things revealed to it. He was always quick to notice, too, how anxious I was to strengthen him in this independence of decision in all matters affecting his character, and I was therefore not surprised when he answered, "Well, mamma, you know boys will talk about these things, and I don't know that it does me any harm." "No, sweetheart," I said, "perhaps it does you no harm, but you have been taught better than to listen to them. That boy is not a fit companion for you. He has no right to say things like that to you, and you have no

right for your own sake to listen to what he says. You could have walked away from him, but you did not. Now, I forbid you to play with him any more. You must go to him and tell him that I forbid your speaking to him."

Earl went away very reluctantly to his companion, who, I discovered, had been listening acutely to what I had been saying, peering in at the open windows. Earl went to him and said gruffly that his mamma would not let him play any more, and he must go in. Then I heard the little boy say very earnestly, "Earl, can't I speak to your mamma just a moment? Do you think that she would let me talk to her and tell her that it is not my fault?" I called to him to come in and talk to me, and he came in and told me very earnestly, with tears in his eyes, that he had never heard any one speak to a boy as I spoke to Earl; that he did not have any mother to tell him what was right and what was wrong, and if I would let him play with Earl and come and talk to me sometimes, he would promise never to say anything on this subject again, and would try to be a much better boy. Then I took him in my arms and told him that he had shown me how narrow and wrong I was in this matter. He had taught me a lesson which I had never learned before, which was that I was just as much his mother as I was Earl's mother, and that from this time on he was to feel that he was just as much my son as Earl was, and he was to come to me whenever he wanted to tell me all that was in his heart.

This little incident served to touch a chord in my heart, which has never since ceased to vibrate. I can only call it the awakening of the universal mother love. It seems to me now that all children, the world over, are my children, and not mine alone, but they are just as surely the children of every woman grown. It is our duty, I see clearly, to recognize the fact that while our own children are so placed in our care that they of necessity receive more attention than we can bestow upon the children of others, yet whenever the opportunity to reach these other children presents itself to us we are recreant to our duties as mothers, unless we take them also into our hearts to just the same degree as our own children.

It is well enough to believe that your children owe much to you. They do. But how much we owe to them! They draw forth in us the expression of those qualities in which the soul finds its most abiding peace and happiness. Without them we are left to become narrow and self-centered, lacking in hearty sympathy with others, and therefore liable to become dwarfed and impotent in doing good as the years go on. Our children help us to grow mentally and spiritually better, and the greater our love for all the children who come within our radius, assuredly the greater will be our growth and happiness.

Earl is a boy who will bear a great deal of oppression from other boys without complaining,

but he is not a "milk-sop." He is a slight, delicate looking boy, with a great big heart in him, and a great big affection for a very few people. I must not leave the impression in your minds that my training has made him effeminate.

I do not approve of quarreling, but I would have my child able to defend himself either as boy or man against injustice at the hands of others. He came to me once with a story of how a bigger boy was constantly calling him names and holding him up to ridicule, and asked me what he should do about it. I said, "Why, sweetheart, take no notice. Do not pay any attention to him, and when he sees that you do not care he will cease to torment you!" Matters went on thus for perhaps two weeks, during which time Earl remarked on several occasions that the boy was still tormenting him without any reason and was making a "guy" of him before the other boys. He said that he would not be able to stand it very much longer, but I advised him to do nothing but wait, and the matter would adjust itself. Things reached a crisis, however, and he came to me one day with a tale of this boy who was older and very much bigger than he was, and in which the provocation was certainly more than any boy could be expected to stand equably. I asked Earl what he had done, and he said, "Why, I did not do anything. You told me to pay no attention and I tried not to, but it's pretty hard to have the other boys

think that I am afraid." "Well," I said, "sweet-heart, you have done quite right in obeying me, and this was just as much a test of strength on your part as if you had quarreled with the boy; but now," I said, "he is imposing upon you, and the time has come for you to take your own part. Now, when you act, Earl, I want you to do a thing thoroughly. As this boy is continuing to torment you, you must thrash him. He is bigger than you are, but that makes no difference. You must thrash him, and then you will find that he will not make the mistake again of insulting you before the other boys."

The thing was settled the next day, and lest it should be thought that I gloat over my son's prowess in a very undesirable branch of athletics, it may be briefly stated that the result was quite satisfactory to Earl, and that his opponent never again made the mistake of selecting Earl as a victim.

The spirit of New Thought is assuredly the spirit of non-resistance to evil, and although something can be said on the other side, I believe for adults that non-resistance is ever the better policy. To repay hate with love is indeed a check-mate to hate, and sometimes is the means of evoking love where hate has reigned before. This is almost too much however for the boy-mind to properly assimilate. I should prefer in my own children that they rather attempt to bring about an end of injustice by force than that they resign them-

selves to endurance of oppression. Let us endeavor to form in them a strenuous spirit and energy feeling well assured that upon this foundation a mature wisdom will build a philosophy in which force of arms is unnecessary and shortsighted as a policy. But we cannot quite expect the unformed character of the boy to immediately assimilate *all* the principles of the profound Philosophy of the New Thought, and I believe in one step at a time.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Fruit of Philosophy



THE Theatre has been roundly abused by all sorts and conditions of people as an influence for evil, but I know of nothing which so forcibly takes hold of the attention of the developing child as a strong moral drama well presented upon the stage. It was part of the training of my children to send them whenever possible to the matinee performances at the theatre. What they saw there took strongest hold of their minds, and even when "problem" plays were presented I did not see fit to withhold my consent to their going, more especially as we discussed the plots and situations very thoroughly when they returned. To me ignorance and vice are practically synonymous, and it has always been my wish to hide nothing from my children, feeling that if they are forewarned they are certainly forearmed.

Harriet made the acquaintance, while at school, of some girls who were not in any sense of the word fit companions for her, but the very frankness which I had sought to cultivate in her led her to discuss their ideas with me, and it was not difficult for me to show her that my ideal of the true woman was one who would bring forth the best in men and boys, and not the worst.

Her aim should be, I told her, to have boys say, always, that they were better for having known her, because they never ceased to respect a girl of this kind, and her influence would increase with the passing of time.

She fell so much into my way of thinking, that although girls of her age were submitting themselves to tight lacing for the attaining of small waists, she readily agreed with me that it was much better for her to have good health and a natural individual type of girlishness than to follow in this respect the bad example of her elders. She is extremely proud now of the fact that she did not follow the girlish vanity which conduces to the cramping of the human figure.

The New Thought appealed to Harriet as something new in its broadening ideas concerning life and death. She liked this phase of it even better than the practical application of self-assertion. Its philosophy took hold upon her, and showed her that there was more in her life than entered that of the average girl. It taught her that a beautiful character was more to be desired than the acquirement of all those things which her companions seemed most to live for; and it taught her also that true physical beauty has its germ in mental harmony.

We spent happy evenings together in which we discussed the beauty of looking beyond selfish satisfaction for that inward happiness which comes from communion with high ideals. I

taught her to hold nothing but pleasant thoughts in her mind ; never to be angry ; always to offer to every one the same serenity, no matter what they did to her or how they tried to annoy her. Soon she reached a point at which she could not feel annoyance. There seems to be no dark side to her nature. Today she avoids gossip, having been taught that she must pass by the faults of her friends in silence : that if she can find nothing good in them she is not to speak of them at all.

Really this training brought with it its own reward for Harriet ; because it made her very popular at school. Every one seemed to love her ; her teachers praised her, and her girl companions looked up to her as a sort of guide. The girls loved her and each seemed to want her for her special friend, but she avoided close intimacies of this kind.

Harriet's idea of God is of an infinite spirit manifesting through each one of us His own perfect goodness. She recognizes that the kingdom of heaven is within us, and that by first entering into this kingdom, we thereby enter into our rightful inheritance—a something of peace and gladness that is within the grasp of every human being. I do not mean that she practices entering into the silence for so many minutes each day, or anything of that kind ; but that she is now actually living the New Thought from day to day. She is serenely happy. Even her

grief has a rainbow at the back of it. She can find beauty in the most dreary and impossible things. She sees the sweet side of everything and it is a momentous fact that there is invariably a sweet side if we have trained ourselves to find it.

I often tell Harriet that she is a far better example of New Thought training than her mother, because she acts as a comforter to me sometimes in the face of difficulties that pull me down. I used to say on these occasions, "Your mother is a poor general today; she has lost heart!" And Harriet would reply, "Yes, mamma, but you have taught us how useless it is to cross bridges before we come to them!" She never worries or anticipates trouble of any kind.

So far as her practice of New Thought goes she has not as much faith in herself as she has in me in "holding the thought." She thinks that if I hold the thought for her she will obtain her desire more quickly than if she acts for herself. In this I tried to show her that she was wrong.

Harriet's nightly appendix to her prayer is so beautiful that I think it should be inserted here. After the "Now, I lay me down to sleep," etc., which she has said from the time she was a baby, she adds: "Mamma, may my life be spared that I may always be near you to help you and comfort you!" Then she gets up and puts her arms about my neck and wishes me pleasant dreams.

Have I not the right to be proud that I am the mother of this beautiful young soul? And yet, it does not seem to me that she belongs to me in that sense of proprietorship which parents usually entertain for their children; rather, she is like some rare spirit whom I am permitted for a time to instruct before she goes on her way to higher things, leaving with me a memory too pure and bright to have much of sadness in it.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Death and After



ONE year in the life of my children which has since seemed to me to be in the nature of a benediction to our companionship was spent in a little white cottage perched upon the brow of a hill overlooking a seven mile stretch of bay upon which, every evening, two thousand little fishing smacks spread their white sails. It was a year fruitful of results to all of us, and we used to spend evening after evening on the cottage verandah watching the white sails change to the coloring of the magnificent sunsets of the Pacific coast. The little fishing village at the foot of the hill was a busy point during the salmon season.

It was here that my children drank deep of the fresh pure air and of the freedom of which they had been deprived in the city, and the beauty and quiet of nature harmonized their minds to the acceptance of the truths which I was inspired to give them at this time.

Harriet and Earl sometimes made engagements with the boys and girls of their acquaintance to attend some amusement or game, and found, upon arriving at the appointed time, that the promises so given had been forgotten and the engagements postponed. This might have dis-

couraged them in their efforts to invariably keep their promises, if I had not seen fit to discuss the matter thoroughly with them.

Earl even went so far as to declare that since other people did not keep their words he could not see why he should. It was my habit, however, to take up things of this kind with them on Sunday morning, and in place of a sermon from the local clergyman we made of our cottage a church. I explained to them the necessity of exact truth and punctuality on their part, at home, at school, and in business, irrespective of whether other people showed them the same truthfulness and punctuality or not. I tried to make them understand that they had been given certain knowledge which was withheld from other children, and because of that knowledge they must teach, by their example, the true meaning of the word honor. I told them that it was not the praise of others which would be their reward, but that the consciousness of having done their duty would be all-sufficient for them; that they would find, when I was no longer with them to point it out, that when their consciences said, "well done," it was enough; but in addition to this satisfaction, I said, there will always be, as you grow up, a certain material reward which follows work well done. Their acquaintances, or employers it might be, would notice the thoroughness with which they did everything that came to their hands, and this notice would result

in the stamping of both of my children as people to be trusted. "The heart of the world," I said, "goes out to those upon whom dependence can be placed. The life of the business world is faith, but it is called 'credit' in business. The strongest basis, and in fact the only basis, for credit is character." With character, I told them, they would have at their disposal any money which they might need in business undertakings, and although in such talks as this I did not expect to interest Harriet as much as Earl, she never failed to grasp the worth and importance of character as a force.

We talked often of death and immortality, and to their minds death has become a very little step to take to something infinitely larger, fuller and grander than this life. Death, I assured them, is but a door. We had a constant reminder of how oppositely death is regarded by others in the example of one of our neighbors, who had a garden of beautiful flowers. These flowers would have made glad the heart of many sick and well people, but not one was given away until the announcement of a death in the community brought forth an offering of an abundance of blooms and blossoms. It seemed very sad to Earl that these flowers should be given to the dead. If he heard the snip of the scissors at work in the garden he observed that there would be a funeral next day; so invariably were these offerings made.

There was a little boy near by whose life had

been very miserable, and whom Earl had tried to help in many ways by giving of his books and toys. The boy died, and the snip of the scissors was heard next door. Earl came to me and asked why they should give the boy flowers when he was dead, seeing that they never gave him anything when he was alive.

I made this the substance of one of my Sunday morning talks to the children, and tried to make plain to them the difference in the religious belief of ourselves and of those who held death to be the shutting off of life and interest in life. As the preparations for the funeral were complete and the time came for the procession to form, I asked Earl if he wanted to go, and he replied, "No, I do not feel sorry as the others do who are now following him around with flowers. They look as if they are trying to make up for the things they did not do for him when he was here. I have nothing left to give him that I did not share when he was here."

The question of death and the hereafter, though by no means a cheerful subject to the majority of people, should, I think, have the sting taken out of it in the training of children. They are so susceptible to impressions of grief and sorrow, and their minds, plastic as clay, so readily assimilate the ideas of hope and encouragement that if it were left to me to order public observance of such customs as funerals I would abolish all hearses. I would turn the black plumed horses out to grass, or give them some other labor

to perform, more in keeping with what should be an expression of trust in the creator of this universe. The pall upon the coffin ; the line of solemn-faced bearers ; that astounding paradox, the hired mute ; the long procession of slow-promenading carriages ; the gloom and desolation of all this can produce only ill-effects upon the minds of either the young or the adult.

Is not all grief selfish, knowing what we do of the soul's immortality and of the assured life beyond, so much grander in its possibilities ? Accepting, as we do, the promise that "not a sparrow falleth" what right have we, if we call ourselves reasonable human beings, to make of a funeral such a pageantry of sombreness ? Let us teach our children to love and trust the Guiding Hand, and when it shall please Him to guide us to other scenes where our work will continue, let no one mourn our absence.

If I should die to-morrow I would have my children glad that I was happy ; not sorrowful, nor even tearful, but glad in my gladness.

Is it not wrong, this gloom and wretchedness at death ? I have tried to make my children see that death is but the gate which we open to enter the pleasant fields beyond, and in the communion that has been permitted me with those who have already passed over I have been assured that the next life is but a counterpart of this, carrying with it, however, possibilities of development, of happiness and of love, which are curtailed or withheld in this existence.

CHAPTER NINE

The Magnetism of Character



HERE is a quality in human beings which has been held to be indefinable. Even while its existence was admitted and its effects noticed, it has been considered to be a something which defied analysis; something which was not resolvable into the elements of which it is composed. I allude to that which is known as Personal Magnetism. It is certainly a good thing to possess, because those who have it wield a remarkable influence over others. Perhaps we recognize it most readily by its effects, even though we cannot understand what it is that produces these effects. We find that some people are sought out, honored and consulted while others as imposing in appearance, voice or manner are passed over. There was a time when I had almost concluded that this magnetism was simply an evidence of will power in the person exercising it. With full experience, however, my opinion on this point changed, and I am now fully of the belief that personal magnetism is another word for the outshining of *character*. This thought has often come into my mind from watching the influence which both of my children exhibit upon boys and girls of their own age and even older people. It is not that my

children are self-assertive ; no one could call them that, Harriet being even less so than Earl. The effect is not due to self-assertion at all, although I admit that self-assertion occupies a large part of the New Thought Philosophy. But I think there is something better to be got out of New Thought than even this result-bringing assertion which accepts no obstacle as being insuperable. There is something better than this ; it is that quiet trust in oneself which renders self-assertion unnecessary, which takes the place of self-assertion and leaves no room for it in the affairs of one possessing the quality of self-confidence.

To one who has been trained upon the lines laid down in this book there is a consciousness of passivity which is by no means inactivity. The energy is at its highest and the activity is ever increasing, but within—within, at the source of the power—there is rest ; freedom from anxiety, and activity without exercise of the will.

The man or woman in whom is developed this supreme trust may be and often is quite careless of results, and yet it will appear that such people achieve success in all that they undertake, while the most careful and conscientious planning exercised by the individual with any quantity of will-force thrown in is barren of results, or a failure. It seems to me that when this quality of life in harmony with the divine law, which is the basis of the character which I have

been seeking to lay before you, has been developed, there comes with it that peculiar influence upon other people for which we can find no other term than Personal Magnetism.

To explain my theory more fully I must say something here which may not, at first, find many friends among New Thought believers.

I do not think that New Thought people clearly understand what is meant by effort. To most of you "effort" means "I can and I will." To me "effort" means exactly the opposite; that is to say, repose. The nerves and muscles of a New Thought devotee are keyed to a high tension to perform his task and to crown his effort with success. My success has always come to me when nerves and muscles were relaxed. The New Thought devotee goes out into the world to look for things. My policy after mature experience has been to let things come to me. It is a strange fact that if the law is clearly observed, the law of concentration, we seem to be sought instead of seeking. But it is only too true that wherever there is impatience or anxiety there can be no satisfactory result in following my method.

One of the important observances of those who exert a magnetic influence upon their followers is silence, a habit of speaking but little. Another is absence of curiosity concerning other people's affairs. And another is a keen understanding of the rights of others with regard to

their freedom as individuals and their right to follow their own inclinations without criticism or interference on our part.

The tendency to criticise others is so common, and was so marked in my children, that I had a motto displayed upon the wall in a wooden frame. The motto consisted of four letters in large capitals, "M. Y. O. B." which, being interpreted, means "Mind Your Own Business." Perhaps this was the hardest part of their training, and I don't know how often I was compelled to raise my eyes inquiringly to the motto on the wall when their conversation encroached, as I thought, upon the rights of other people. In the course of a few months, however, even this warning glance at the lesson on the wall was unnecessary, and today they understand that others are entitled to the same freedom of opinion and expression which they claim for themselves.

There has been bred in them no lack of interest in their companions, but a lack of officious curiosity or desire to impose their will or dictation upon their companions. In the light of this fact my theory of the working of the law has been proved to be correct, because without effort on their part to pose as dictators they are accepted as leaders in their respective circles.

Am I not right then in saying that there is a passivity which is repose, which carries with it the potential qualities of the keenest activity? It is not very easy to make words, plastic and

adaptable as they are, convey exactly one's meaning, especially in discussing a question as involved as this psychological problem of the elemental factors of personal magnetism ; I must reiterate therefore, that to me, personal magnetism is simply a reflection from sterling character, and it has been aptly defined in the "Course in Personal Magnetism," published by the Psychic Research Company of Chicago, in the following sentence: "Personal Magnetism is that quality in man which attracts the interest, friendship and love of mankind." Putting the matter in a nutshell the essence of that course of instruction is that Personal Magnetism is the quality resultant from repressed desires. I cannot agree with the author of this able treatise in his conclusion, because, to me, a repression of desires which are natural and right is a stunting of growth ; nevertheless I recommend the course to the attention of my readers as having in it many points of excellent expression.

I hope that what I have said in this chapter will not deter the ambitious youth from setting a high mark of attainment. It is right that he should push on ; it is right that he should try his best to succeed. There is value in effort of any kind ; and even the aggressive self-assertion of the most ardent New Thought disciple is better than no effort at all. But my philosophy of life, as I have proved it to be true, is briefly that there is a higher power which orders our des-

tinies, and that it is our duty to get in harmony and in touch with this Intelligence at every moment of our lives, so that we may turn unerringly to it for guidance and instruction in all momentous affairs. When we are in such harmony with this divine purpose that our souls reflect back some of its light and happiness then we become fit instruments to hear clearly the voice within. In other words, our doubts and perplexities will be removed in proportion to the clearness with which we hear the voice speaking from within. Compared with this divine power how simple and futile must our personal efforts appear! Of what use is it for us to butt our heads against a wall when a voice distinctly tells us to go around the obstacle. Those who have come into the fullest understanding of this spiritual hearing seem to me to be the least anxious to assert themselves. They refer all matters connected with their lives, social, religious or financial, to this divine counselor and seem very well content to accept its dictates. To these people is given the trust I speak of in the early part of this chapter; that supreme self-confident passivity, most potent to perform great labor, most resourceful in all activity of brain and physical function, most influential in impressing others, most unassuming, most truthful, and most complete.

Thus to me sterling worth of character is the elemental quality of which personal magnetism is the effect.

CHAPTER TEN

The Application of a Truth



WE must be very careful in dealing with children not to misjudge them. It is all too easy to fall into the error of confounding a sensitive silence with stubbornness. Even the most sympathetic mother may make this mistake in trying to fathom that wonderful thing—the heart of a child! So sweet, so wayward, so gentle, so cruel—who shall guard us against our own errors in interpreting the emotions of a thing so complex?

I like best to teach by illustration, and the following account of an experience related to me some years ago by the person most concerned carries with it such an evident proof of the powers of suggestion in the life of a child that it needs no elaboration on my part. Knowing that I was interested in all New Thought teaching the father in this story came one day to see me, “to talk things over,” as he said. It is always helpful to compare notes with others interested along this line, and I recommend you to indulge yourselves in this practice whenever opportunity offers. I was therefore glad to see him. He plunged at once into the middle of his subject. He was a middle-aged man, well-dressed, well-kept, apparently, and a business-man to his finger tips.

“Now,” he said, “I don’t look like a crank, do I? You wouldn’t pick me out of a crowd as being anything but what I look, a plain, every-day man of business, would you?”

I assured him he might set his mind at rest on that score.

“Well, I thought I would ask you point blank,” he said, “because something has happened in our family which I call a miracle! No, I won’t say that either. I mean that the effects seem miraculous. That’s the same thing with a difference. Now, let me tell you about it. Perhaps it will be an old story to you, but I tell you it’s made a difference in our home — a big difference! We have an only child, a little girl, ten years old. She’s happy and healthy, a bright child, and quick. Up to about a year ago what we went through with that young one you would never believe! You wouldn’t believe me if I told you the things she did. It looked to me like obsession, as the spiritualists call it. She would get into frenzies of rage, stamp, bite, kick, smash things, anything and everything. We scolded her, coaxed her, whipped her, shut her up in her room, starved her — yes, I’m ashamed to say, we sent her supperless to bed many times — did everything we could think of — all no good; no good; time wasted. Just to give you an idea of the kind of things she did, here’s an instance I remember: her mother had dressed her one day in a new suit of clothes, new shoes, all com-

plete, and when she was ready to go out for a walk what do you suppose the little rascal did? Ran up to the bath room and locked herself in; turned on the water in the bath tub and rolled in it, spoiled everything she had on, and got a spanking for it! Well, that's only one instance in a thousand. Nothing we could do had any effect upon her. One day my wife said to me, "You are always talking about New Thought and the wonderful things it does for you in business, why shouldn't we try New Thought on Mabel?" "That's different," I said, "Mabel is too young to understand and she wouldn't listen to talks about 'All is good,' anyway." "No," my wife said, "but you could put things in such a way that she *would* listen. You could praise her to me in her hearing, and I could echo what you say, and in that way we might undo some of the harm we have done!" I was astonished. "Harm!" I said, "What harm have we done? Haven't we given up our comfort and peace for this ungrateful little wretch? Doesn't she spoil all your happiness? Has she ever shown you any gratitude for all the love you waste on her, putting my claims out of the question?" But my wife cut me off short. "That's just where we are wrong," she said. "You have put it all into words for me, and it's as clear as day. We are doing the child great harm. Every manifestation of temper she shows is something we have worked to bring about. We have made the

child what she is, and now we must undo it if we can. You must help me. You must do most of the training at first, because she will notice more particularly the things you say. You know, she is more afraid of you than she is of me.' That was a pretty hard thing for a father to hear, you know, because I had always loved the child and tried to do the best I could for her, but it was true! I had to confess it was true. So we concocted our plot, if you like to call it so, and resolved to put it into effect forthwith. I had been doing most of the *talking* about New Thought in that family, but when it came down to the point of *applying* New Thought in the case of our own daughter I had to let my wife map out the plan, and I followed directions. We had a good chance to begin that very evening. At dinner Mabel upset the salt on the table when she thought I was not looking, and when I reproved her for it she burst into such a howl of sobbing that she had to be carried kicking and fighting out of the room by the servant. My wife looked at me in a very exasperating way as if I had made a mess of things, and said, 'You missed a good opportunity there!' 'You wouldn't have me *praise* her for upsetting the salt out of pure mischief, would you?' I said. 'No, but you don't understand,' she said, '*We* made her mischievous. *We* must get the mischief out of her head. *We* must overlook all her faults for the present and insist, insist al-

ways upon her goodness!’ Well, I don’t want to weary you by telling you how many times I had to bite my tongue to keep still. It seemed as if that youngster just romped in devilments of all kinds for the next two weeks, but every day when I came home I would pick her up in my arms and say, ‘Oh! I’ve got the best and sweetest little girl in the whole world. There isn’t any girl I know as good as my Mabel!’ And my wife would say, ‘She has been so sweet all day. She never gives me any anxiety now. I’m just as proud of her as I can be!’ So that was the way we talked to each other about Mabel, and we took good care that she heard it all, too. I felt like giving up the game though, we seemed to be making so little headway, and really it was like telling a lot of lies right straight along. But my wife generally has her own way about things, and she said she could see a difference in the child. ‘You don’t see it,’ she said, ‘because you are not with her, but I have watched her closely and I can see she is trying to do better.’ The next day when I came home my wife met me in the hall; her face was radiant. ‘It is all right,’ she said, ‘I’ll tell you all about it later.’ That evening Mabel climbed up on my knee of her own accord and put her arms about my neck. ‘I’m going to be what you said I was,’ she whispered, ‘the best girl in all the world.’ And that’s what she is today. Her bad temper is all gone; she is anxious to help

us ; she is happy ; she is like sunshine about the place. That's my story ; what do you think of it ? ”

I told him I thought well of it and wished that the power was mine to tell it to the world. I did not think at that time that it would ever see the light through pen of mine ; but here it is, and I can only bid its message of love and happiness God-speed.

CHAPTER ELEVEN.

"You Can" and "You Will."



HEALTHY boy needs very little encouragement to undertake things, but he needs careful watching to see that he *carries through* whatever he undertakes. When he understands that you demand of him the keeping of faith with himself, there is bred in him a strong determination to "make good" in all his efforts. Boys are inclined to talk big for many reasons, the most common being a boast among their companions that they can do what so-and-so is doing, and do it better. When this tendency towards self-assertion crops out it is very necessary that we should not allow it to lapse into mere empty talk; very necessary that we should encourage the thought to take form in action.

Earl discovered that some of the town-boys were making money by selling newspapers after school hours. He came to me and said that he could make money that way, too. "Very well, sweetheart," I said, "if you want to, you may. But remember, Earl, if you begin this you must carry it through. You will be thrown among rough boys, who will play all kinds of tricks with you and make things very uncomfortable for you because you are a newcomer. You must not allow that to discourage you. When you begin

anything you must make a success of it. If you take this up at all you must continue it for two weeks, and then, when you have shown yourself and me that you *can* do what you say you can, you may drop it if you want to. But don't come to me in a day or two and say you are tired. Begin it and carry it through. The experience will do you no harm."

My friends were aghast at the idea of sending Earl to compete on a business footing with "those rough boys," but I could not see the matter from their point of view. If a boy has the right stuff in him it will be best for him to learn to hold his own in any company, and he must understand that any work is worth doing well for its own sake. If my boy wants to sell papers, then I want him to *sell* papers, and to meet any and all kinds of competition and discouragement squarely. Earl went forth to the newspaper office with the money in his hand for his first day's supply of papers. He bought his supply and went to work. He had dressed himself in an old suit of clothes after coming from school, and that may have been one reason why the other boys did not molest him. Another reason was, perhaps, that he had thrust his cap into his coat-pocket before getting down to business, as a measure of precaution against the prejudices of his fellow-workers.

He came home radiant. "I sold all my papers, mamma," he said, "and made forty cents easy. Some of the boys make a dollar a day, but they get a longer time to work than I can."

The next day was an equally good business day. By the third day the novelty had rather worn off, and the subject of newspaper selling as a means to the rapid acquirement of wealth was not brought up as a topic of conversation that evening.

On the fourth day he came back at dusk with a bundle of newspapers and a very doleful face. He was "stuck," he said. Couldn't sell his papers. He didn't like the job, anyway. And so forth.

"Come here to me," I said, and I stood him in front of me and looked him very severely in the eye. "Now, Earl," I said, "I shall tell you why you have not sold your papers. It is because your heart is not in your work. It is because you have grown faint-hearted and weary. No boy of mine can put his hand to the plow and look back. Never! You have been doing your work in a listless kind of way, wishing you were doing something else. Now look at me, Earl, and remember what I say to you. You can sell those papers, every one of them. You will go right out now in the dark and sell them all. You can do it. There is nothing you can't do when you resolve. Come! Let me see my boy act like the man I take him to be."

When I talked to Earl in this strain, it was odd to watch the little fellow's face flush, to see him straighten up, and his eyes grow bright, as he caught the infection of my suggestion. He

clutched his papers again and his face was eager as he said: "All right, mamma, I know I can sell them if I want to. I'm going to sell every paper before supper."

Away he went and came back in an hour with his full amount of money in his hand. "I sold them all," he said.

I heard no more complaints from him, and by the time the two weeks had ended he had worked up a good office trade among the business men, who were attracted by him and had recognized his punctuality. He was quite willing to continue the business, but I thought the experience had been gained, and advised him to turn his route over to another boy and go out of the newspaper line, for the present. All I cared about, I told him, was that he should keep faith with himself in everything he undertook to do; in the small things as in the large things, a promise to himself should be as sacred as an oath before a notary public. Moreover, I wanted him to know that all labor is sacred. Every task, however menial, well done, ranks as high, just because of its performance, as any other task. The essential thing, the thing which gives dignity to life, is that whatever is to be done must be done well. I think that this experience has been a very valuable one to Earl.

During some years of my life I made a business of giving physical culture entertainments in schools, selecting about twenty pupils from

each school and carefully drilling them in the work of Delsarte and other exercises. The training occupied two weeks, after which the entertainment was "put on" at the local theatre. I chose my pupils from the whole school ranged before me, picking out what I called "talent" here and there from the number of faces turned to mine in expectation of being selected, until I had chosen the required number. My instinct of selection never failed me here. Character and ability are written strongly on faces, and he who runs may read.

On one occasion I happened to have chosen the "bad boy" of the school. Everyone told me I had made a mistake. His teacher said he was incorrigible. His schoolmates said they couldn't do anything right where *he* was! I saw his mother. The boy was present at the interview. His mother said: "Albert is a bad boy, Mrs. Partlow. He won't mind anyone. He does just as he's a mind to, and I don't know whatever will become of him. Teacher says he's so bad in school she's going to report him to the Principal." I looked at the boy who was listening to this with his usual half-sullen, half-sneering expression, and said: "He won't be a bad boy with me. I can see talent written all over him. Wait until the entertainment comes off, and this boy will surprise you!" He did. He surprised them all, and he has continued to surprise them. I hear from him occasionally yet. He called this

the turning point in his life; but it seems odd to me that such good metal should have been so long overlooked for want of the stroke of the miner's pick.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Entering the Silence



CHILDREN are never too young to be trained in the New Thought. There were many things I might have added in the early days of my children's awakening intelligence had I known then what has since been made so plain. But it must be evident to you who read these pages that I was following my own intuition in their New Thought training and had no human guide.

It seems to me that almost the first thing to teach a child is how "to go into the silence." It is wonderful what an interest they take in this, and how beneficial it is in developing self reliance. My own children gave an hour of their time every evening after dinner to this practice. Earl called it "unharnessing." It was really a complete relaxation of mind and body; nerves and muscles were relaxed, and they were gradually taught to so control their thoughts that they could sit in the silence with me waiting in complete passivity for an hour of perfect repose.

Sleep is one thing; conscious repose is another.

I began their training along this line by giving each a watch to be held in the hand. I told them to concentrate their thoughts upon the

watch. "This watch," I said, "is only a point for you to concentrate upon. My desire is really to get you to such a pitch of concentration that you can hold your thoughts absolutely still or direct them utterly upon any subject you wish. That is, I want to teach you to drive your thoughts instead of letting them drive you. So, look at the face of the watch, and see for how long a time you can keep your thoughts perfectly still." When they began this practice their thoughts immediately flew anywhere and everywhere. They thought of the movement of the hands of the watch; then of the mechanism; then of the dial-plate; the town where the watch was made, and so on, running from one thing to another. They told me all this when we compared notes afterwards. I encouraged them to try a little harder next time. "What I want you to do," I said, "is to hold your thoughts still. That is the essential thing in concentration—to be able to stop the whirl of your thoughts and hold still—hold still—keeping the mind a blank. When you can do this you will be getting very near the heart of your individual self. You will learn to make your mind a blank at will, and the rest and refreshment that will come to you from this exercise will compensate you fully for all the time you spend in acquiring it. When you have attained to this control then you will be able to 'hold the thought' of success in your work for the morrow, or for any

special undertaking or desire you have in mind. In this way I want you to learn how to make your control of thought valuable to yourself. First will be the control of thought, then the direction of thought, with purpose, directing thought at your pleasure for your own advantage. How much more satisfactory that will be than being, as you are, now at the mercy of your thoughts!"

They saw the force of this reasoning and worked with a will. They found that they could hold their minds still while looking at the watch for a gradually increasing period of time. For a minute, a minute and a half, two, three minutes, gradually extending the time, while nerves and muscles were completely relaxed, until they could make their minds blank by concentrated effort for five minutes at once. When the attention wandered it was recalled by mental effort and the mind made blank again. Those who have not so worked with themselves have no idea of the feeling of utter rest that comes with the successful accomplishment of this exercise. To me it ranks first in importance of all exercises in the mental training of the young. They take great interest in it and it is never tiresome. The complete rest self-secured in this way is like no other rest or relaxation that I know of. There is the satisfaction of knowing that we are masters of ourselves, that we have brought that most unruly of subjects, the human brain, into

subjection to a fixed purpose. We feel that we shall henceforth find in ourselves a power of concentration upon anything we desire to master infinitely greater than before, and we know that there will be scarcely an hour in the day when we may not apply our new-found power to our immediate advantage. We look without and set ourselves to conquer obstacles. That is ambition. But have we conquered ourselves? The first battleground should be within, I think. The first real consciousness of power comes from the satisfaction within. What is the purpose of our lives here? Is it not to offer to the high intelligences, who are ready and waiting to communicate their knowledge to us, a harmoniously receptive mind? When the fight has been won and I can bring to the communion with the higher powers a spirit of peace and holy quiet, *then*, and only then, can I expect to hear and interpret aright the Voice that speaks without tongue. Such great results spring from the smallest beginnings. Looking at the hands of a watch! Communion with the Invisible; Seership; Adeptship; Harmony with God and the Unseen! It is the oak and the acorn over again; manifesting upon another plane.

Let me earnestly recommend all who read this chapter to apply themselves to this simple practice. This is what is meant by "making a center." This is "going into the silence." There is only silence when the thoughts are held

in bound. It is in this silence that the spirit speaks its message. It is the silence of Healing : the silence of Instruction ; the Eloquent Silence.

It has been shown me that my work is completed, and the next ten years of my life will be happy and quiet years. I do not know if this book will reach as many as I should like to reach, but perhaps it will be read when I am no longer here to speak. It may do good ; it cannot, I feel, do harm.

While I write this separated from my children for four months longer, I feel the assurance thrilling me that I shall be with them again in a little while, and shall tell them how proud I am to be their mother. The love that passeth understanding is most nearly approached, I think, by that which binds child to parent, parent to child.

Though there be pangs of parting, heartaches and sorrow, it is well, for all is good.

L. of C. 3

THE END.

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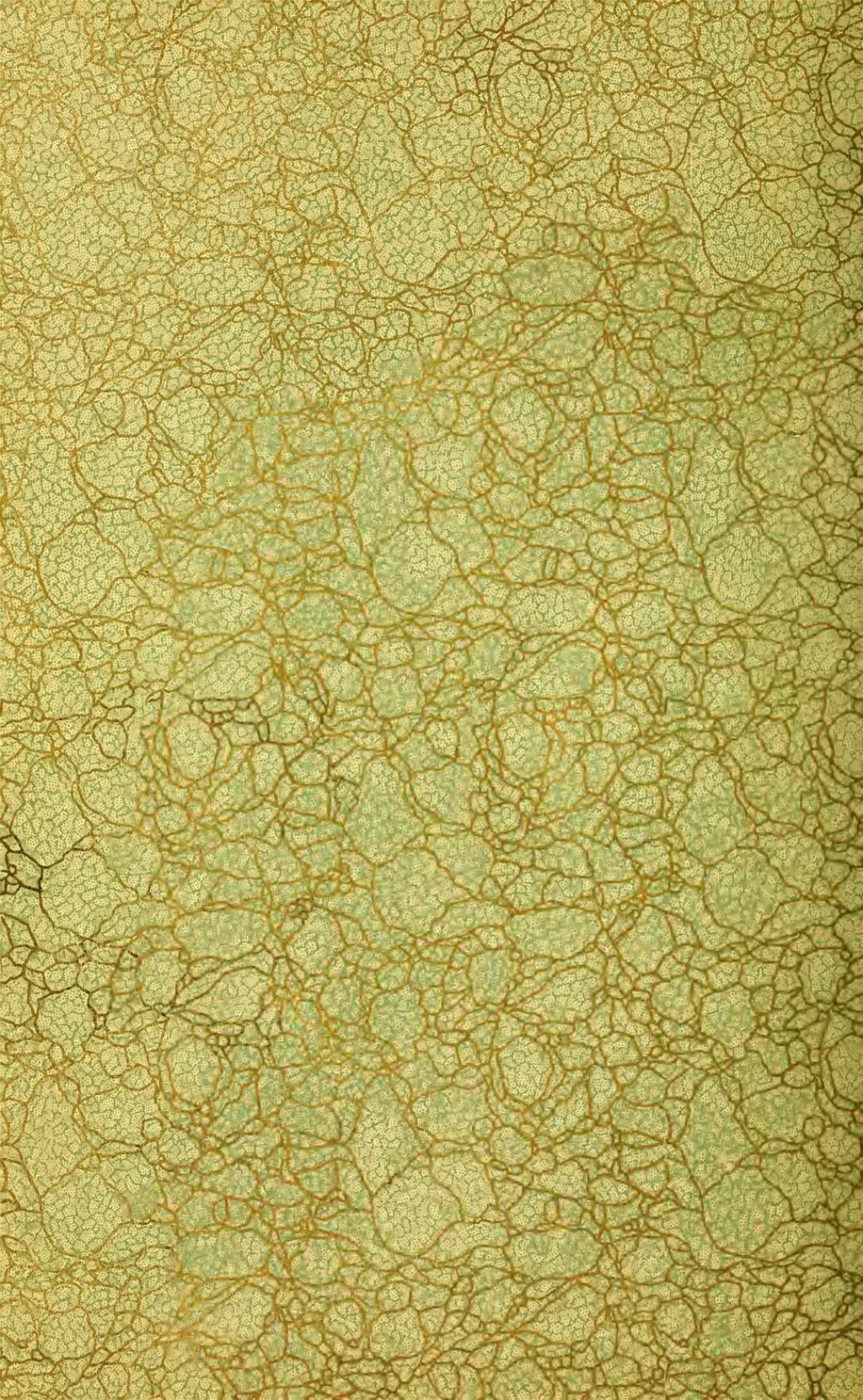
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