

HOW TO LIVE QUIETLY

CHAPTER I

Peace -- In General

"PEACE! Peace! Anything for Peace!" How often we hear that, -- or, again, the exclamation, "Let us have peace at any price -- peace at any price!"

How little we seem to know that there is only one price to be paid for peace -- only one price by which it can be obtained. This price is so obvious that if I were to mention the price here and now, it would make but slight impression upon some of my readers; others might say) "Yes, of course that is so, but who is going to be able to pay that price; we cannot do it. Much as we would like peace, it is out of the question for us if that is its price."

Others, -- and these would be among the "anything-for-peace" people, -- would say, " Oh, yes, that may be so, but I can get peace more easily than that." And, if asked "How?" -- the answer would come in countless little artificial plans for not rousing the antagonism of other people. Countless forms of white lies which can give life a smooth appearance on the outside; some very black lies told for the same purpose; also little forms of flattery which serve to feed the complacency of those who might otherwise be roused to one form or another of jealousy which, in its expression, would interfere with the comfort of people about; other forms of flattery which would so delight its recipient as to draw out more flattery in return, or personal favors given to add to the pleasure of those about and so used to draw out more flattery and again more favors. Thus every one would feel comfortable because half the world's selfish desires would be catered to in order that the other half might be drawn out to cater in return.

This, put in rough terms, would be some of the recipes given by those who feel sure that peace can be attained "at any price"; and not only for the one and unconvertible price which these very people would think it impossible to pay. And, from the plane in which they speak, that which they call Peace, can be attained for the various prices they recommend.

I have seen their recipes work a hundred times, and more; so have many readers of mine; and perhaps -- only perhaps -- there are some readers who have worked those same schemes themselves and are working them now, every day of their lives, with a complacent idea of success and a comfortable sense of living on in this world undisturbed.

But none of these peace-at-any-price people know that it is spurious peace they are working for, and, in so far as they have attained anything, it is spurious peace that they have attained. Fancy digging with all your might, day after day, for treasure which, when found proved to be no treasure at all; then fancy that because such metal shines and appears to have value, those who dig dwell on its beauty and are made to believe themselves happy because they possess it, until one day a man comes near who knows good metal when he sees and tests it, and he tells the miners that what they have is not only no treasure at all, but that the metal has poison in it, and the sooner it is entirely out of the way the better! Just think of all that! The miners would not believe the honest metal tester, because, having traded their poisonous metal back and forth among each other, they would have come firmly to believe in its intrinsic value.

Perhaps some would laugh and say, "Oh, Yes, we discovered sometime ago that the metal was of no real value, but the people about us seemed to think it was, and so long as we could keep ourselves comfortable by continuing to trade with them, we thought it better not to disturb any one." And then again, they might add, "You see, we were not only comfortable ourselves, but the belief in the metal was keeping every one else about us comfortable. Would it not have been unkind to enlighten them?"

Let us go farther and imagine a group of people, even a whole town or city, dealing in counterfeit money. Counterfeit gold and silver -- counterfeit bills -- and the trade of the city going on for some time undisturbed, with the counterfeit money used always. Then suppose a man came from an honest country and showed these citizens the contrast in the ring of his gold and of theirs, -- the ring of his silver and of theirs. Would not most of the citizens, even with the contrast between the true and the false sounding still in their ears, say: "We have kept very comfortable with this money which you say is counterfeit -- our city

has gone on all right, and we are all having a very good time. We see no reason for changing." Then the man with honest money could say, "That appears all right now, but wait until you have to come in touch more with the country at large; you will find then., that your money will not pass, and you yourselves will be left with less than nothing. Remember I have warned you."

There is spurious peace and there is real peace. Spurious peace can be bought with any price. Real peace can be bought with only one price, -- in only one way. Spurious peace is so well made nowadays that it is surprising, even to one who knows, how often and how exactly it seems to be real. There is, however, no spurious peace, however perfect the counterfeit, but that some test can be brought to bear upon it that will show it up for what it is -- to be absolutely false and with a foundation of unrest, fear and greed. But real peace, put to the test, grows stronger, deeper, and more full of vitality. Indeed, all tests strengthen it and, deepen it and are the means of bringing it more vigor.

Spurious peace is sometimes thinner and sometimes thicker. At times a test will prick it immediately and reveal at once all that is contrary to peace underneath. At other times the hypocrisy has been going on for so long that the spurious peace is thick -- like a thick sugar coating over a very bitter pill. Then the false quality of peace is not discovered until after many tests -- sometimes very many tests -- and when at last the continued tests have succeeded in getting below the surface, the bitterness beneath the coating is more acutely bitter, more acrid and heavy in its odor than where the sugar coat is thinner.

Of one thing we can be sure: spurious peace is always superficial. It has no solid foundation whatever, any more than hell has. But, although superficial, the coating is often thick. I know a woman who impresses all those around her with her atmosphere of peace, and whose placid smile has such an apparently real calm in it, that many of her friends and admirers are lost in wonder at the peace in her character, and long to work that they may acquire that same sense of peace which she seems to convey to them. This is the spurious peace whose other name is complacency. Sometimes I think of a being like that as being in cold storage. Bring such a soul out into the sunshine of genuine life and the tendency to decay begins to work at once.

Or, here is another one who impresses those about her with her peaceful strength and love of use to others. This one feels that she is more popular in that pose. People praise her and fawn on her, and choose her from among her more genuine sisters as a rock upon which they can lean. And this same exponent of spurious peace is full of resentment and resistance -- all hiding in the background and never permitted to appear until the owner is out of the range of those with whom she would be popular, or unless she is surprised into being genuine by a sudden and unexpected test.

I know a man whose atmosphere of peace and quiet has delighted, soothed and comforted many, and yet this same man has, at times, seemed to have no bounds. to his complacent cruelty when his own selfish opinions or preferences have been contradicted, even though by people whose opinions might, from the eyes of the world, be equally respected.

Another man I think of, whose atmosphere of peace was even more alive -- and yet, when it came to the test of suffering, underneath this peace was the intensest fear. Sometimes the simple directness of a little child will expose the falseness of spurious peace entirely. A friend told me of trying to teach a little girl arithmetic, and while she was feeling very irritable, and even ugly, underneath, she suavely and with apparent sweetness went on explaining the problem. The child got more and more mixed and finally looked up quietly to her teacher and said: "I could understand it better, Miss Smith, if you were not so cross." Her remark gave Miss Smith a shock, and a severe one, for she had been so much occupied in sugar coating that she had given no attention whatever to the actual ugliness she was covering up.

Some of these people of whom I write (and I could cite many more) *believe* that they are genuine in their desire for good, -- some are genuine *in their desire*, -- but through inheritance or through bringing up and environment they have never known the difference between spurious peace and real peace. They have been entirely ignorant of their own hypocrisy. And, more than all, they do not know that peace *cannot* be bought at any price. There is only one price for real peace, and that price must be known and earned before it can be paid. It is worth working for -- it is one hundred thousand times worth working for -- as the real peace is immeasurably worth attaining. The difference between the real and the counterfeit is as great as that between life and death; the one is constructive and life-giving, the other is destructive and life-destroying.

It is not so difficult to earn the real peace as one would think, if we follow the path and are patient and willing to go step by step. Oddly, perhaps, one must have some idea of what spurious peace is before one can make a fair start to earn and gain the real peace. I suppose it is because our own selfishness is so full of a tendency to be gratified with spurious peace that we must begin by being somewhat keenly alive to

the difference between the counterfeit and the real. Even then we may often get sidetracked and wake to find ourselves complacently deceived. The first sensitiveness, however, stands us in good stead, and a slight reminder will bring us right back again to the straight road.

As we work to gain real peace, our sensitiveness grows keener and deeper, until the spurious shows to us in all its horror, and we wonder that we could ever have been deceived.

There is a great deal in life that is like the effects of alcohol or drugs without any alcohol or drugs at all. And, as we indulge in these psychical drugs, the effect is very much the same as from the material drugs, - only slower and more subtle. The complacency of spurious peace is an awful drug, and it dulls the sensibilities of those who indulge it very much as morphine does in a grosser way.

Real peace brings health of soul and body with it, with an interior sense of vigor, akin to, and finer than fresh mountain air. But *it must be earned*.

It is my purpose and my hope in this book to point out, in so far as I am able, the road to real peace, with here and there a guide-post marked " Spurious " that will be only a healthy warning to prevent unnecessary digression. I do not pretend to have found uninterrupted real peace myself. If I thought I had, that would, I am sure, prove that I had nothing to teach any one. But I do believe I have found the road to it, and that I am working my way, with many others, towards the Peace that lasts.

One thing I know, -- the finding of it, and the privilege of feeling its strength your own to use, does not depend upon other people; it does not depend upon environment; it does not depend upon circumstances, or even upon inheritance. In finding it, we must work as if we each one were alone in the world, absolutely alone, so far as any other human being goes. And as we find it, there is nothing that I know which brings us more truly into communication with our fellowmen, or enables us to give more to them or to receive more from them.

The price we must pay, and the only price we can pay for peace, having earned it, I shall try to make clear as I go along.

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CHAPTER II

Family Peace

ONCE I had the interesting and pleasant experience of visiting in a large family consisting of father, mother and several grown-up children. The house was very attractive and the household machinery seemed perfectly oiled. Every one in the family spoke kindly and seemed considerate for every one else; and yet, to a close observer, who was sensitive to the states of other people, it was very evident that all this consideration and apparent kindness was merely external and was carried on for the sake of undisturbed comfort, and not in any way for the sake of right. One could feel the resistance and resentment rising underneath in each member for one or all of the other members of the family, and could see how continuously the ill-feeling was repressed, and smoothed over, and sugar-coated, and never really conquered, -- never conquered for the reason that it was never allowed to come to the surface enough to be faced for what it was.

I doubt if any one member of that family realized himself the extent of the resentment which quietly simmered within him. It was pushed into the background so immediately upon its appearance. And one shivers at the thought of the volcanic eruption which must occur one of these days, either in this world or the other, before any one of those people could find themselves -- their real selves.

This was the very sublimity of spurious peace. It was what might be called a clean example of a family living in the strain of false peace.

Let us suppose, now, that every member of this family lost his inhibiting power so that all repressed feeling had to burst forth and express itself. What an infernal war there would be! It is terrible to imagine it. And yet, wouldn't even that fire and brimstone be preferable to the peaceful hypocrisy which really was carried on in innocent ignorance of its real quality?

When our selfish emotions are allowed to come to the surface, we can sense them in all their horror, and by refusing to act, to speak or to *think* from them, we open our hearts and our minds for better things to come in, and they always come. But it is a fact, and a very important fact, that our sensitiveness to the malignant quality of selfish feeling is dulled through our indulgence in such feeling, and is *equally dulled through suppression of the same feeling*. I think I may truly say that the dullness increases at a greater speed through suppression than through expression, and yet the expression makes us dull enough.

If we have been in the habit of resenting, of wanting our own way more than anything else, and being irritated and angry if we do not get it, and we are awake enough to the fact to think it worth while to begin to reform, the resistance and resentment to be shunned is gross -- so gross that in years to come, if it could be shown us, it would be as far removed from the deeper and finer forms of antagonism as actual murder is from the gross resentment. Happily, as we are persistent in refusing to act, speak or think from the grosser forms of resentment, they cease to trouble us and the hardest work comes in ridding ourselves of deeper forms of the poison. Such poison must be out of one's system entirely if real peace is to be found.

Now let us imagine this hypocritically peaceful family, not without its inhibiting power, but with an intelligent desire awakened to reach real peace through an actual freedom from all suppressed irritation. They might all agree to the wrong plane on which they had been living, and agree heartily and sincerely to work for reform with the hope of finding the real peace of which each one has begun to feel the need. After this first agreement, if they wanted really to succeed, all effort for co-operation should cease, -- cease entirely.

It is an impossibility for any corporate body, whether it be a family or a business firm, or a charity organization, to get anywhere in co-operative work unless individual work comes first. True, there are families who work well together because their selfish interests are the same. Let one member be thwarted in his selfish gratification through the action of any other member or members of the family, and the whole family at once begins to go to pieces as a working machine. So it is the same with business partners or with charitable organizations.

To find real peace as a family, each member must be ready and willing to give up his own way in so far

as it clashes with the rest of the family, with this one important exception, -- no principle which one really believes to be right should be given up to please other people. But in minor, unimportant things, there can be a constant giving up.

It is safe to say that if each member of our suppressing family should work alone and without comment with the aim of finding out all resistance and resentment in himself or herself, and as fast as it appears, refusing steadfastly to act, or speak, or think from it, the whole family would wake up some fine morning and find themselves co-ordinated, -- that is, working together in a way that would open their eyes with wonder to discover how always before they had been pulling apart.

Such work can be done only by each individual working alone steadfastly and with sustained concentration and not talking to others about what he is working for. When each individual finds the vigor of real peace within himself, that same peace unites men in working together. There is no other real indestructible co-operation.

If even one member of a family will work for his or her freedom from the rest of the family by persistently refusing to act or speak or think from resentment or resistance, it must eventually do much toward leavening the whole lump. Other members will notice the change, even in spite of themselves, and, if there is any life in them, will find themselves wanting to work in the same way. I have seen it proved. It is a slow process, of course; everything that is good must come slowly if it is coming to stay, but the little whiffs of freedom and real life that one gets by the way serve to strengthen the interest and give new vigor for the work which, leads to permanent freedom and peace.

A mother wrote to her daughter once -- a daughter who was suffering from a turbulent and progressing nature -- "My dear child, why can't you find peace?" The answer came, "Mother, mother, I do not want peace until I have earned it." From an inborn instinct the daughter knew that peace unearned was in reality no peace at all, and it is certainly true that the little oases of peace which one finds at resting times, in the process of earning, are as much better than the spurious peace in which many people wallow (I say wallow advisedly) as warm sunshine is better than the stagnation of a dark damp cellar.

One cannot do anything to make peace. Peace cannot be made. Peace comes. It comes when we have removed the obstructions to it. And when it comes, it is full of power for use.

It is astonishing, when we set ourselves to observing, to see how universal is the habit of feeling that our peace depends upon other people. If we do not sit down and deliberately say, "I would be all right if so-and-so were not selfish and disagreeable," or "If I were not steadily annoyed by the thoughtlessness, and the complaining of so-and-so, I could be peaceful enough." We are apt to carry about an almost unconscious attitude of grumbling at the various interferences to our own comfort, when the truth is that no one in the family is responsible for any one else, without being first responsible for himself. Not even are, the father and mother responsible for the children without being first responsible for themselves. Plenty of fathers and mothers will say, "We know that, of course." But how many *live* it? How many children are there suffering from the effect of a selfish or unbalanced character in father or mother? And these same fathers and mothers may be really suffering because their children are so disobedient and so regardless of their duty. The difficulty is that no one likes to face himself, and often the bad effect of the selfishness of father or mother is so subtle that it is hard to point to it directly. But when a man or woman does wake up to a suspicion that if he or she worked more truly to discover his or her own selfishness, and then refused to act or speak or think from such selfishness, the children might profit more than by one thousand efforts directed toward their discipline, it is surprising to see how soon that suspicion will grow to a certainty and how miraculously the children seem to improve without knowing the reason why. Of course the improvement in the children is not always immediate, although sometimes it is, but either slowly, or at once, the gain toward family peace is such as to prove without fail that peace comes through individual work within ourselves and not at all through the false responsibility which works to lash other people into peace, even if the other people are our own children.

When parents have made the discovery that the greatest help toward peace in the family is to conquer the selfish obstructions to their own individual peace, it gives them very clear minds toward helping their children to the same individual responsibility. Suppose a boy comes to his father and complains with fretful resistance of the behavior of his brother or sister. The father, because of his own experience, can answer with confidence and point out to his son the necessity first of refusing to harbor the resistance, and then the possibility of finding some form of greed in himself which may have originally roused his brother's animosity, even though indirectly. The boy will certainly respond to this if his father speaks to him out of his own experience.

When we speak to others from our own obedience to law -- it is really the law expressing itself through

us, and in that is real power; but a laying down of the law which arises from our own conceit or selfish responsibility has no real power whatever, although it has often a temporary appearance of power.

One necessity toward the growth to come from individual work is that we must find where we are truly dependent upon others for ability to do our work alone really well, and where we are dependent upon others for the best process of getting our independence. A realization of that fact, as well as of the fact of our bondage, is imperative if we are to find real peace.

As, for instance, suppose one member of a family rails at another member, which we all know is often the case; if the member railed at will not only refuse to resist or resent, but will listen attentively to everything that is said, no matter how much unjust abuse comes with it, there is very seldom a time when amidst all that is unjust he will not hear some criticism of himself that is just; let him be ready to acknowledge the truth of what is said, to himself or aloud, whichever may seem best at the time, and to act upon it. Often we are criticized very truly in a very disagreeable manner; in such a case, if we will discount the manner and make the right use of the matter, the effect is not only happy for ourselves, but our attitude takes the wind quite out of the sails of the ugliness of the other man.

You see it is like this. No one yet ever got angry and spoke from his anger that he did not, consciously or unconsciously, expect. reactionary anger from the other man, just as surely as, if you throw a ball against a stone wall, you expect it to bounce back at you.

Now suppose you stand in front of something which appears to you to be a solid stone wall, and when you throw the ball, it proves to be a fog which your ball goes right through, does it not follow, very naturally, that you cease throwing? That is the way it happens when a man throws invectives. at you; if You refuse to react, the invectives cease, -- provided you refuse to react in a really quiet spirit. But if you are quiet outside and are resenting inside, it is the effect of the inside resentment that is felt and your quiet serves only as an aggravation to your angry accuser.

To sum it up: The only way of earning family peace, real peace, is for each member of the family to feel first -- and I might say *only* -- responsible for his own clearness of spirit; secondly, for each member to give respectful attention to the ideas and opinions of the other members, however wrong they may seem to be. Thirdly, to work in this direction with persistent steadiness, and to be patient in waiting for results.

As I have said before, even one member working in that way will quiet and strengthen the family atmosphere. Certainly such work entirely avoids spurious peace, and if there is at times war or the appearance of war, it acts as a cleansing storm and clears would-be obstructions out of the way.

There are so many families and separate members of families kept chronically tired because of always carrying with them mutually or distinctly the weight of these obstructions to peace. How can one be expected to be at rest physically with the strain of physical contraction always with him? And how is one going to drop this physical contraction when its cause, which is mental resistance or resentment, is daily and hourly keeping the body tense?

It is interesting, while it is really the result of the most practical common sense, to see the effect even upon one member of a family who has made up his mind to blame no one but himself for his own resistance and who has worked steadily with intelligent insistence upon dropping such resistance whenever it appears. It gives one joy to think of it, -- and you might sometimes say of such a man that he could almost wish that the other members of the family would wrangle while he was present, so truly could he enjoy his freedom from bondage in watching the wrangle without entering into it or resisting it. The objection to these imagined delights would be that enjoying such freedom at the expense of others would open the way for the resistance to return, and before we knew it, we would be taken unawares and find ourselves back in the slough of human contention.

The real freedom from bondage to others brings us more truly into understanding sympathy with our fellow man, and that sympathy fills us too full of a healthy. desire to do our part toward helping our brothers to their freedom to make it possible to dwell on the delight of our own relief, although we are almost constantly at first in grateful appreciation for such relief.

Take the mere matter of argument, -- so many families are kept in hot water by the constant tendency of its members to argue all questions, whether large or small. If one member of the family has trained himself to argue without resistance, those who have the fretful habit of arguing with resistance will soon give it up, because the balls they throw have gone through the fog and disappeared, and not bouncing back to the original pitcher, the supply of balls gives out and the resistant arguer stops for want of ammunition.

There are no end of practical recipes which, if persistently used, are sure to give one freedom from family bondage and help all toward the freedom of family unity, but they are all details of the same thing.

First, never blame the other man for your own resistance or resentment, no matter who the other man is,

or how wrong or unjust his actions or words may have been. Cut yourself off altogether from the very slightest blame of him in so far as you are concerned. Put him out of your mind as if he did not exist. Never be satisfied until you have dropped such resentment or resistance so entirely that you feel that nothing could rouse it.

Even when you feel yourself to be in that happy state of mind, you will find that you are not safe; something unexpected will happen which will make resentment flame up in you in a way that will astonish you.

What then?

Be glad of it, because so long as there is any of the poison in your system, you want to know it, in order that you may use all the will that is given you to *refuse to act or to speak or to think* from it, and so get the vile stuff out of your system altogether. And even then when it has been proved out of our system altogether by having opportunity after opportunity to appear and never showing its taint at all, -- even then it is only by gaining a wholesome humility that we keep it out. It is a remarkable working of law to observe how when such poison is well out of our system, we not only find ourselves healthily interested to serve other members of the family, but we will find other members of the family unconsciously enjoying our society where before they have taken all opportunities to dodge it.

The healing power of fresh air never seems strange to those who are interested in the health of the body, -- why should the healing power of spiritual fresh air seem strange to those who long to find the health of the soul? Is it because so few of us have really experienced what it is to have long and uninterrupted breaths of spiritual fresh air? All real peace is full of inside fresh air,-- indeed it is inside fresh air.

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CHAPTER III

Peace with the Children

"Oh that child wears on me so, -- he is making me sick, and I know I shall break down altogether!"

This was the exclamation of a tired young mother, -- young, fortunately, for she learned her lesson in time to take care of several children and not have them "wear upon her." This exclamation of desperation had been wrung out of her many times before she had the good luck to say it once when a friend was with her and heard it, -- a friend who "knew better." This friend who was a mother herself, -- indeed, who had been a mother for so long that I am not sure but that at this time of which I write she was also a grandmother, -- waited until the especial cause of irritation was over and then quietly said:

"Did you ever think that perhaps you wear upon the child even more than he wears upon you?"

"What!" the young mother answered, "*I wear on the child!* Why look how he behaves, -- fretting from morning until night, never obeying until after I insist over and over again and actually force him to obey; never being happy with anything more than five minutes at one time. It is like having your brain constantly battered from morning until night to, take care of him. Of course he is my child, and I do love him, but I do not get much chance to enjoy my love for him with the life he leads me."

And then the unhappy mother stopped, perhaps for want of breath, but she gave her good friend an opportunity to answer:

"Didn't you tell me that when you were ill and had to engage a nurse for him, he surprised you with his placid happiness?"

"Yes, indeed I did. He not only surprised me, -- he made me indignant that I, his mother, who brought him into the world and loved him so much should be made miserable by him, and this nurse to whom I gave wages for taking care of him should get so much comfort out of him and he should be so happy with her."

"But did you never think of a reason for that?"

"A reason? What reason could there be?"

"My friend, you do not know anything about the realm of causes, do you? and how you are irritating yourself and wearing upon your nerves by fretting and fretting in the region of effects?"

It was so ordered -- or -- as some would say -- it so happened that this kind old friend spoke at just the psychological moment. She felt the young mother listening, and she went on to show her by practical details how she wore upon her little son. In the first place, the child had a difficult heredity, -- he inherited a temper and a tremendous self-will. Things had gone on so steadily from bad to worse between him and his mother that he, with the remarkable perception which some children have, had learned just the things that annoyed her, and took every opportunity to do them. Then she got angry and the boy got angry and they *batted* at one another. She had the advantage because she was older, more muscular, and *she was his mother. She felt that she had the right to impose her self-will upon him but that he had no right to impose his self-will upon her, because she was his mother.*

It was easy to see how the child's brain was getting injured -- easy to see that his irritability and fretfulness had become so monstrous that they dominated him and were wearing upon him and stunting his mental and moral development, and it was easy to see that his mother was causing it, -- easy for every one but the mother herself to see it. She was so engaged with being worn upon that she had no attention to give to the child she was harming, but now that her friend had her attention, she made her quietly, by a series of questions, trace the life of her child from the time he was born, -- when the self-willed little baby cried and cried himself into a state of furious temper because his mother did not take him up at once, and the mother became worn and annoyed and humored him for the sake of keeping him quiet, if only for a time.

The mother saw clearly that she had never been quiet herself, had never been patient herself, and had never conquered her own self-will; she saw that she expected the boy to obey *because she said so*, and that in the process of bringing up her child she was *really indulging her own self-will*. She saw that not only the

child was not wearing upon her, but she was wearing upon herself and upon the child too.

It was an unusual and remarkable awakening, and the process of "reversing her engine" so to speak actually broke the mother down so that she was ill in bed for some days. But her kind friend knew the cause of her illness, and the wholesomeness of it, and she nursed her, soul and body, until the mother was ready to begin again -- ready with a healthy sense of the watchfulness she must have over herself in order to keep sensitive enough to feel the first touch of her old enemies and shun their suggestions so positively and so cleanly that they could not take possession of her and the real mother-love and wisdom could take their place.

What I describe in a few words was a long, long process, but because this young woman was truly penitent, she persisted in her effort and she could be truly guided from the perception given her within.

This was a remarkable ease both in its errors and in its reform, and serves as an illustration under a microscope of very many similar cases.

In so far as I can see, it is never just to say that children wear on their parents. It is always just to say, where there are difficulties in their relations, that parents wear on their children. The children come into the world with no knowledge at all of the various forms of selfishness that is going to attack them from within. When a baby wants his own way and cries because he cannot get it, how does he know that there is anything wrong in that? Bless their little hearts! they have come into the world to start on a journey all new to them, -- full of stones to trip on and pitfalls to tumble into, and all these stones and pitfalls are -- in one form or another -- caused by nothing whatever but self-will. The varieties of self-will are endless, but if we know the elements of self-will and keep clear of them, we are safe from its various derivatives.

Now here is a child beginning his life's journey who does not know the elements, and yet as much is expected of him as if he did. The trouble is that the mother and the father -- either or both -- have not conquered themselves, therefore how can they teach their children to conquer? How can you guide a man safely along a difficult journey if you have never been on the same journey and do not know the way yourself?

The children are not our children, -- they are embryo men and women whom we are permitted to guide along the beginnings of their lives until they have a fair enough start to be ready to go alone. If from the first we realize that we are helping them to obey the very same laws which we ourselves are working to obey every day of our lives,-- if when the children are old enough to understand we take them into our confidence, and make them see that we do not ask them to obey us for any personal reasons, but in teaching them to obey us, we are helping them to get to where we, -- the children and ourselves, -- can work day after day to obey the same laws together, -- then their little individualities can develop normally with no sense of oppression on either side.

I know a little child who used to say, quite fretfully sometimes, "Why do you tell me to choose for myself? You know I shall have to choose the right way." I remember this little girl's going upstairs and crying all the way, " She told me to choose for myself, -- of course I shall have to do what she asked me to."

The child knew perfectly well which was the right way, and she was glad when she had done it.

Children have so much character when you give them enough margin and give it in the right way. This same little girl once when she had a very, very hard task before her, went to it screaming in protestation as loudly as she could scream, but never once offered to turn back or stopped to say she could not do it. She went in a perfectly straight and direct line to the work that was before her. It was an action that many an older person would have been grateful to carry out, and grateful for the strength gained in the process.

We have much to learn from our children, but first we must learn the absolute necessity of conquering ourselves before we can be fit to guide the children.

A child is very sensitive to the states of those about him. If I have not said a cross word but *am* cross, a little child will know it at once and will not only reflect my bad temper but will do various little naughty things to rouse my temper and make it worse, and then will turn and complain of me for being cross. The child does not know what he is doing; he is used by his own inherited embryo bad temper to rouse mine. I am the only one of the two to blame. We must, to really serve the children, not only conquer our appearance of wrong, -- *we must conquer the cause of the wrong within us.*

So many children learn to be hypocrites without thinking anything about it. I have a grown friend who is ill, and she has confessed that when she was a little girl the older people in the family used to ask her to run errands and she always consented and seemed so glad to be of service that the people all about loved and admired her, but she said that she was hating it all the time, and underneath this pleasant, willing manner she was "boiling with ugliness." When she grew older her nerves got over-tired, and she could not

inhibit so that all the repressed ugliness of her childhood came to the surface and she, as well as other people, had to suffer from it. I have known more than one child like this. It is a happy thing when a good friend sees behind the mask and can help the child to see the horror of such hypocrisy. No wonder, however, that the children fall into this pit. They do the errands and all the good things for the sake of appearance, in order to be liked and admired. Are not the greater part of the grown-up people in this world living more for the sake of how they appear than for what they are? How can we expect anything better of the children?

Often we hear: "If we want a nation to grow in the best of civilization, we must begin with the children," but how fully do we grown folks realize that if we want to be of any real use to the children, we must begin with ourselves? That is the most important fact in all of life, -- to look to ourselves for the fault first. We can -- when we have begun ourselves -- teach the children that; and whatever we teach children from our own inner conviction, a conviction gained by our practical obedience to law, -- they always learn.

"Mama! Mama!" cried out a little girl, "Willie hurt my feelings." "Well," answered Willie, sullenly, "she shouldn't have her feelings sticking out all over her." And "mama" took her little daughter aside and with easy persuasion showed her in child language the great mistake of having her "feelings sticking out all over her." In another room she took Willie all by himself and taught him the manliness and chivalry of being gentle with his sister. This lesson had to be taught and learned many times over, but each time it became more a part of the children who learned it, and finally the better way of each one looking to himself to find the wrong began to become a habit. And, you see, it was this way: -- "Mama" used to have her "feelings sticking out all over her" and "papa" used often carelessly to wound them. "Mama" had her eyes opened one day to the selfishness of those same hurt feelings, so, that the next time "papa" was irritable, the hurt feelings were dropped and nothing in "mama" reacted unpleasantly to "papa's" irritability. What happened then was that "papa's" irritability reacted with full force upon himself and he saw it in all its hideousness. And the bad habits changed, and "mama" and "papa," having taken the journey, were ready to show the way to their little friends. Their little son and daughter became no less, but rather more, a son and daughter because first they were their parents' little friends.

How often children will answer, when we begin to show them this true obedience, "Yes, but so-and-so did this and that." And how often do we have to repeat, "But you have nothing to do with what so-and-so did until you are quiet and loving yourself. If so-and-so had done something ten times worse, you have nothing to do with him until you feel as kind and as loving to him as toward some one else, who. has only been good to you."

A child will try to dodge by complaining of the injustice of this, and then you can acknowledge to him heartily that so-and-so was wrong but that so-and-so could not rightly complain of any one until he had put away his own wrong. "That is the truth, of course, but that is really none of your business now. Your business is to acknowledge your own bad feeling and to refuse to act or speak or *think* from it. Then see how so-and-so will appear to you."

Many, many grown people are suffering and chafing under the pangs of injustice, and if they could learn to cut themselves off from the cause of their anger or hurt feelings so *entirely* that they could work with undiverted attention on getting their own slates clean first, what wonders they could do for the children!

The babies' brains begin to be battered sometimes before they are a week old -- and the parents begin to wear on their children in one form or another almost at once, and so the wearing process goes on and on, and the children suffer for it and are stunted by it. But what can we do when so few parents would believe that all the trouble is in themselves? Perhaps more will come to believe it, and to work on the basis of this truth, as time goes on. Let us hope, and believe, so!

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CHAPTER IV

Peace among Friends

"YES, he used to be my friend some years ago, but we had a misunderstanding and it has never been the same with us since. Indeed, now we seldom are together -- I have not seen him for months."

That is not an unusual remark to hear, and it is not at all an unusual happening. Most people seem to be ignorant of the fact that a misunderstanding which is allowed to remain between two people, even though neither one thinks of it more than once a year, still leaves a fog in the brain of each, -- a fog which, if there is no opportunity to increase it by farther misunderstanding between the same two people, at least can be the breeder of other misunderstandings between each one of these two and other people.

An unpleasant misunderstanding is because of a state of mind, -- it is not because of a person, -- and no misunderstanding need continue if even one of the two parties concerned will keep a quiet mind. How do you keep a quiet mind? By positively refusing to resent or to resist whatever the other man says or does. Your friend may be remarkably foolish in what he thinks; there may be not only no justice in it, but no sense in it; -- that gives you no right to resent him. He has exactly the same individual right to be all wrong that you have to be all right. You cannot, in justice, deny him that right. If you do try to deprive him of his freedom to think as he pleases by your own resistance to his opinion, it is not the misunderstanding that is making the trouble, -- it is your resistance to it.

Suppose, on the other hand, your friend considers your opinion wrong and is resisting it even more than you are resisting his. That again is no business of yours. You have no right to interfere with his or any other man's resistance.

You see, what I am trying to make clear is that peace between two friends does not depend primarily upon both parties; it depends really at first upon only one. To, be sure, the peace grows and may be much sooner established if each one of the two friends works alone and with equal interest on refusing to harbor resentment or resistance, and so is enabled to give attention with a clear mind to the attitude of the other. That, of course, is ideal in the clearing up of misunderstandings and putting "friendly" quarrels out of the question. But no one of us has any right to depend in the very least on the attitude of the other man to bring peace. Of course, if the other man does his work while we are doing ours, so much the better. But if he is delaying or refusing to do his work entirely, while it makes ours all the more difficult, we can -- in so far as we, personally, are concerned -- welcome the difficulty. For the greater the difficulty, the stronger and the more positive must be our refusal to resent or resist, and that very effort will result in establishing more firmly within us peaceful intelligence and affection, which is needed to bring our friend to his senses. Especially will this be the case if, when our resentment has subsided, we can find fault in ourselves in relation to our friend which we can acknowledge directly to him.

The mind of a man who has been blind to his faults begins to be clarified much sooner if his friend acknowledges openly and without excuse his own fault. To begin with, the other man does not want to be outdone in apparent generosity, and that often leads to a genuine generosity, which enables him to see himself as he is in more than one detail, and to meet his friend's mind really.

I feel it almost a mistake to give even so little space as I have given above to what effect our attitude will have upon the other man, so much do I desire to emphasize the fact that what the other man is or does or says is none of our business, -- none whatever, -- until we have ceased absolutely to resist or resent him. When we have come to that living peace of mind ourselves, it is none of our business how it will affect the other mind except that we may be quite certain that sooner or later, if we wait patiently, the effect will be good. But just how the good effect will express itself we never can tell. Certainly not twice in exactly the same way.

How sick one gets of the false kindness of so-called friends! "I wish I could help you -- do let me do something for you" is said from a sugar-coating of "kindness" with resentment, resistance and a sense of superiority seething and sizzling underneath. No one can "help" any one really unless he has first removed the obstructions to a loving heart and a clear mind in himself. It is what we are that counts, first; what we do, second; and what we say, third.

One little action or one brief sentence expressed by a truly generous spirit from one friend to another will

mean more and be of more use than any amount of kindness or effort at helpfulness which covers up conscious or unconscious antagonism. It is surprising the amount of unconscious antagonism which one friend can carry against another, and of course until that comes to the surface and is faced and acknowledged for the evil that it is, the friendship has no soundness in it and no real peace.

"It takes two to make a quarrel" should be followed by "but one can make peace."

"We could be such good friends if only he were this, that or the other" is nonsense. It comes from the habit which seems now to be ingrained in human nature of persistently blaming the other man, whereas the truth is that *the other man is not in it*, -- it is always ourselves, and only ourselves.

When we have found peace in ourselves so that our friend does not and cannot rouse antagonism in us, then, if we drift apart, that is all right. It is because our interests are different and there are not the same things in the line of our living, and working, and thinking to keep us together. The friendship is not any less because there can be no intimacy. The lack of intimacy is not from lack of confidence,-- it is because there is less kinship of interest. It is pleasant when such old friends meet; they have a good time together and part happily, with mutual respect and no regret.

How many brains there are full of the fog of broken friendship, -- friendships broken because neither one has understood that in so far as he was concerned, his friend had nothing to do with the trouble between them, but *only himself*. Each one of the two friends could think that same thought *of himself, and of each one it would be true*.

If any of my readers can look back upon broken friendships with the thought, "We could have been such good friends if only he had been different," let him try to see the fallacy of that thought at once, and place the responsibility of the broken friendship entirely upon himself. It may be hard to do so; indeed, in some cases it may at first seem impossible. But one of the happiest lessons we have to learn in this life is that we can and we *must* do the impossible. So, in this necessity for one man responsibility, if we persist in it, as a remedy for broken friendship, what seems to be the impossible will be done. If the friend with whom we broke is out of our reach, so that having cleared ourselves from obstructions we are unable to go to him, we have done our work as well; and if he does not feel the result, others will. But, indeed, our original friend may feel it, even though we never see him again.

When we resist the state, past or present, of another man, we are in bondage to him, and when we find the cause of bondage in ourselves, is it not within the bounds of possibility that the other man may feel the relief of our release, even if we never see or hear from him again? It seems as though it might be so.

You see we are never in bondage to those whom we truly love. The more we love another, the greater our freedom. If we think we love and know we are in bondage, we can know that just in so, far as we are in bondage we do not love. There is no peace in bondage, and we are not delivered from bondage just because we are removed in space or time or both from the one who keeps us prisoner. Then again, we are never really in bondage to a person, but only in bondage to our own selfish attitude toward the person. So, as we continually persist in looking for the truth, we find more and more clearly the fact of our own personal responsibility to obey the law in all circumstances and in all our relations with others. And we find that in no way can we justly blame another for our own discomfort. In other words, our real peace of mind depends upon nothing but our own obedience to law. There is no "if" or "but" or "and" in this whatever. It is true in all particulars.

Impatience is a painful obstruction to the peace of friendship. If we are willing to wait for our friend to grow, -- if we do not expect him to be always the best of himself, -- if we are not surprised at various forms of selfishness, little and big, which make their appearance as we come to know him better, but wait patiently for him to find out his own obstructions, it will enable us to keep persistently near his best qualities, while waiting for him to conquer his defects. And it is a happy fact that getting free from our own obstructions of resistance and resentment has the effect of keeping us near to that which is best in our friend, and at the same time, it seems to awaken him to the defects in himself in a way that sometimes seems like magic.

One of the most wonderful things in the world is the effect we seem to have on other people when we are simply working in ourselves with no thought whatever of influencing them.

There were once two people -- apparently very true and real friends -- who had a falling out. Each one went separately to a third friend, in great unhappiness, with the whole story. The third person listened carefully, and in his answer, which was given very thoughtfully, he spoke hardly one word of the other, but referred each man alone to himself and his own mistakes. Fortunately he was listened to with trustful attention and intelligent acquiescence. Each one came to see clearly and acknowledge his own mistakes, and the result was that the friendship was not patched up to go on with further and similar interruptions,

but weeds were removed which were obstructing its growth, and these friends have grown in mutual wholesome sympathy to each other and to those about them. Each had grasped the principle taught him by the loving, intelligent friend to whom they had each referred. A principle like that, once grasped, is never lost; for the freedom felt in seeing it work only stimulates one to obey it more truly. A failure to apply this truth is the one greatest -- one might say the one only impediment -- to the peace of friendship.

The foundation of all true friendship is the friendship in marriage, and if this law of looking always to one's self first were followed steadily from the beginning, the beauty and the power of marriage would be felt deeply and much more universally than it is now.

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CHAPTER V

Peace in Social Life

IF an East Indian gentleman should be suddenly and unexpectedly placed at table in a dinner party in New York, the first impression he would get would be that of a general unrest. "General flutter" is, I know, a term that every one here will recognize as being very aptly applied to a women's luncheon. Women are apt to come to any social function in a state of excitement, to stay through the affair with more or less moderately increasing excitement, and to leave in the same excitement, either tempered or increased by fatigue.

But when I wrote of the impression of "general unrest" with regard to a more formal function consisting of both men and women, I used the term advisedly because I was thinking of the impression that would be made upon the habitually quiet brain of the East Indian. And I can well imagine that to our Western habit of noise -- noise that is audible, and noise that is inaudible, if I may use the expression -- what would seem to us calm and quiet would to the East Indian seem full of unnecessary disturbance.

We are told that at social dinners in some parts of India silence is not in any way considered to be in bad form; quite the reverse. If the host and his guests think of nothing especial to say, they say nothing, and the silence is neither awkward nor dead, but quite alive with thoughts which are getting in form to be spoken, and with the restful sense which each person at the table has of not being forced to speak until he has something to say.

Contrast this habit with the necessity felt at our own dinner parties for keeping up a constant run of conversation, and the distress of host and hostess, together with the discomfort of the various guests, if there is one minute of complete silence at a large dinner party. Five minutes of silence at such a function would be considered so abnormal as to bring long talked-of indignation and possible misery.

I remember noticing once at dinner a man who was a noted scientist and constantly had a mind full of interesting subjects for conversation, but who evidently had stacked his brain beforehand with information on matters of the day, literary and otherwise, to be brought out one after another in order that he might be sure to be ready to do his share toward keeping the conversational ball a-rolling. This man had not enough power for acting to enable him to hide entirely his effort, although I doubt if any one else noticed his spasmodic production of subjects, -- first, because he was a "big man" in the eyes of the world, and the minds of the people about him were too full of the honor of sitting at table with him; secondly, -- but of no less importance -- because each guest was too much engaged in being some one in particular himself and in proving his own conversational brilliancy to himself and to those at table with him. For they were all doing the same thing, only they were better actors and more clever to hide it than the "big man" was. Indeed, it seems rather to the credit of the "big man" that he could not hide it, for, after all, if he had dined and said nothing except when something occurred to him that seemed worth while, and that he felt would interest those about him, he would -- according to the custom of his country -- have been remarkably rude and ill-bred.

Indeed, this rattle of the Western tongue at all social functions is so entirely the custom of the country, and we are all so absorbed in our abnormal customs, that I doubt if many of my readers will at all appreciate the justness of my criticism unless they are willing to stop long enough to get a real perspective, and then I do not doubt but that they will agree with me entirely.

Think of the contrast between this belief in the necessity for a constant talk and the belief that steady talk not only is not necessary but more often interferes with the flow of ideas than uninterrupted silence, although, of course, neither one is to be desired.

Think of the contrast between a dinner party where the guests must be conversing all the time and one where intermittent silences are the custom and each silence is alive with actual thought which may or may not express itself later as occasion offers. People in this part of the world have not been silent in companies enough to learn that there can be as much and as happy a reciprocal exchange with those who are silent together as with those who converse. Indeed, sometimes the reciprocity of silence is far more real than that

of conversation, for people can be at swords' points with one another under cover of talk, but silence, to be alive and peaceful, must always be between friends, or at least between acquaintances who do not antagonize one another.

Silence is sometimes an awful revealer of discordant states of mind. This perhaps is one reason why there is so great a fear of silence in our social circles. Maybe also we each one are really so much more absorbed in our own lives than in the lives of those about us that we are afraid to be silent lest we should sink back into thoughts about ourselves and our own welfare, and we find it necessary to continue to talk in order to keep up the appearance of an interest in the affairs of others.

One can hardly imagine a deader silence than one where each member of the company is thinking solely and entirely about himself. Each one being self-absorbed, there is not even the appearance of exchange of thought; therefore, between these persons there is tendency to vacuum. Nature abhors a vacuum in the region of mind as well as in the region of matter, and it is rather shocking to think how in such a case of vacuum as this, evil would in some form or another rush in to fill the void. For self-centredness in all forms keeps out what is good and evil always takes at once its opportunity to rush in where good is debarred.

It is easy to see that active reciprocal life in silence is much more difficult to reach than the *appearance* of active reciprocal life in speech. Therefore perhaps we are too lazy to work for the acquisition of silence. Certainly in a company of people there can be no real quiet -- no real peace -- unless silence is not only possible but comfortable, -- not only comfortable but pleasant. For of course there is as great a difference in the quality of silence as there is in the quality of speech. Indeed, that the quality of silence should be alive with what is worth while is even more important than with speech.

When a number of people who meet together have acquired that happy possibility for silence, there is no question whatever as to when to be silent and when to speak. The whole habit of true balance between speech and silence is so normal that, having once acquired it, the orderly distribution of each takes care of itself. Nature tends toward health in mind and body, and having struck the normal key once, it is remarkable to see what variety and expansion of harmonies follow.

The trouble is that so many of our so-called civilized habits -- especially social habits -- are abnormal that our standard of normality is low. We need to wake up and raise our standards. No one ever really gained by trying for better things on a lower plane. One of the first standards which should be raised in this country is the standard of quiet. Only in real quiet do we get a true perspective. So far are we from the true standard in this matter of quiet that many people think of quiet as something dead and unproductive. How about the turning of the earth about the sun, or the turning of the earth on its own axis? Did you ever watch a sun rise or a moon rise, and feel the quiet of it? How about the growth of plants .and trees and forests of trees? Was it ever meant that human nature in its work should make so much more of a fuss than material nature in its work? The difference is this -- that human nature has the privilege of choosing, whereas material nature must go in the way which the Creator moves it. When human nature chooses its own selfish way, it makes a noise. When it chooses the way of law and order, it makes no noise, even when it is not silent; and when it is silent, the silence is alive with growing power, power given by the same quiet Creator who keeps all matter so in its work. Let us think of that awhile, and it will help us toward a standard that is real.

Let us imagine a dinner party where the speech and the silence are equally balanced, and at the end of which all who sat at table are refreshed, more full of living interest and more ready for the next day's work than when they sat down. No one is able to give a dinner like that now and have it a success. It would be, probably, out of the question to get a dozen people who would appreciate the normality of it enough to make the dinner interesting and pleasant. What is to be done then? Lectures on the abnormality of social functions to be given, with vivid pictures of the possible normality -- what it is and how to gain it? No -- a thousand times no! This is a reform that cannot be .brought about by any wholesale methods: indeed, it is doubtful whether any reform is deeply rooted which moves in masses. Often the surface has to be harrowed in order that the ground may be prepared for seed, but the reform is not in the harrowing, it is in the sprouting of the seed which took root after the ground had been prepared. The harrowing makes an agitation of reform which is not always beneficial, but the real work is done through the active conviction of separate individuals and grows quietly and powerfully like the growth in nature. In this question of a better and clearer social standard, in which, by the way, the balance of silence and talk takes a larger part than one would at first imagine, there can be no general harrowing. It would be extreme, perhaps, to say that there is not enough social intelligence in the country at present to make response to a general appeal, but it does at times seem so. However that may be, the only real change that might be brought about now

is through individual work.

"What," you will say, "is one individual going to quiet down a whole dinner party? Certainly no one woman could temper the clatter of an afternoon tea!" No. No one individual could at once quiet down a whole dinner party, and with regard to such reform I may courteously add it is no one individual's business. If this more normal state of social life appeals to any one, let him start the change in himself, with no hope whatever for accomplishing such a change in others. Let him start the change in himself not alone for the sake of his own comfort and peace of mind, although both will be very greatly enhanced by more normal habits, but because the change is worth while in itself and because if anything can really open the eyes of other people and bring them nearer to real living peace and enlarge their horizon, the work in ourselves which shows in results with no persuasive word will do it. You see when we do a bit of work in ourselves and feel and show actual results, sham is out of the question. A life like that puts us out of reach of hypocrisy, provided we are steady and consistent.

The trouble in this world often is that a man sees that a thing is good, and then instead of working to prove it by living, he feels it his duty to persuade his fellow men with words. The tendency is to like to show that we know a good thing when we see it, and to be admired for our perception and intelligence. If the tendency were more to live it first and only talk in answer to enquiry, it would be a happier world.

With regard to this matter of social balance, if any individual would like to prove it, let him first make up his mind to study to become an attentive listener. If another is talking to us, even if he is talking twaddle, he will feel more or less, according to the aliveness of his perception, the courtesy of being listened to. Sometimes such attention makes him sensitive to the fact that he has been talking twaddle, and if at a convenient pause he receives a sensible answer, he quiets down and is led into talking common sense almost without knowing it. It is interesting, also, when one is acquiring the habit of listening, to see how much one hears that is really worth hearing that would have been missed entirely if one had not been thinking especially to listen. If one man has been talking and his neighbor has been listening with a real deference -- not with a rushing desire to grasp the first pause to speak his own mind -- then the pause that comes after the first man finishes is a live silence. For one has been giving,-- the other receiving,-- and the life of reciprocal exchange is still going on. Not only that, but, when the other man speaks, his own courteous attention to his neighbor's ideas and the natural quiet which comes to every one through listening without resistance is very apt to draw forth more attention from the other speaker than he would otherwise have given.

After learning to listen truly, there will follow almost without effort the habit of giving thoughtful replies. And these two together, -- deferential listening and replies that show a courteous consideration of our neighbor's remark, tend of themselves, toward the balance of silence and speech which makes itself very happily felt in the small talk of little nothings as well as in deeper conversation of what is really worth while.

The only possible reform in such things must come from the silent and persistent effort of individuals, -- but the power of the normal is so infinitely greater than that of the abnormal that a few earnest, sensible individuals can have what seems to be a wonderful power among a, large number, -- sometimes without even knowing it.

We begin best to work toward finding the real delight of silence by studying to listen -- to listen with real and courteous attention. The more truly we listen to those about us, the better prepared we become for deep interior listening to the best that is within us.

Listening means, in the broad sense, giving our entire attention to some one or something. If we gave our entire attention to Nature when the opportunity came, and our entire attention to the human nature that surrounds us, with, at the same time, a willingness to see ourselves as we really are, we would find the way opened within us to enable us to give our intelligent attention to law, spiritual and physical, and to our best possible obedience to law.

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CHAPTER VI

Peace in One's Work

I KNOW a man who was at the head of a large and thriving wholesale dry goods business. The business had grown more from this one man's innate power for making money than from anything else, and not at all by the orderly process of an all-round growth which we often see when the head of a growing business has the executive power first and the money-making power as a derivative. This man of whom I speak was all money-making and no executive. His establishment, which was large, with a large force of employees, was in a state of disorder, and, as a consequence, in a state of constant unquiet.

The man grew half-awake with regard to the disorder and the unquiet. He engaged an expert to put his accounts in order, so that he had a system of financial record worked out to the finest detail. He mind his office so that each bit of work was deputed to man, time, and place, almost to the minute, and the spot. He heard of the "clean desk" method of business that the men who did the largest business in the most perfect manner sat during their business interviews at an absolutely empty desk, so far as the eye could see. He made his own desk "clean." I think he even took the inkstand off and let the eyes of his visitors rest upon an uninterrupted polished surface.

The organizing and the deputizing almost ran him into disaster, and the spirit of the office was no more quiet than before. Anyone with keen observation who went there could see that it was a large money-making machine that turned out at irregular intervals piles of coin, but made all the clatter possible about it.

A large, well-organized, regularly-working business might almost be called a beautiful thing to see, it is so clean an example of regularity, order and pliability. But there was nothing beautiful about this man's work; for there was no real order in it, because there was no quiet at the root of it. And why? Because the man at the head of the business did everything he could in an external way and in so far as attempting to rule other people went, to make the office orderly and quiet, but he did nothing whatever in himself. He made a noise when he came in, -- he made a noise all the time he was in his office, -- he went out with a noise. Sometimes it was more than a noise, -- it was a furore!

Not only was it impossible for an office to have the dignity and quiet which belongs to every well-ordered working house, with such an example as that before it every day, but, more than the example, the noisy influence brought in by the "head of the firm" could not be counteracted. And the man went on and on, day after day, in conceited ignorance of the fact that he was poisoning his own office and keeping its inmates in the disease by his own wilful refusal to cure himself.

One day of actual quiet in that office, which came from the really quiet spirit of its head, would have done more toward calming it down and putting it in order than years of organizing, deputizing and supervising without such quiet.

When a business man has a really quiet mind, the order of his business grows out of that quiet., It is as if, when the noise stopped, certain suggestions for the obedience to law and order could be heard. It is quite true and quite wonderful how much can be suggested to a quiet mind from within itself whenever such a mind begins to listen.

Now suppose one employee in that office was so impressed with its noise that he fell to wondering what could be done toward bettering it. He had no authority himself, -- his employer did not want suggestions on the noise question, and he felt a sense of disloyalty in talking about it with his fellow-workers, although he heard it commented upon in various pleasant and unpleasant ways by all about him. Suppose it occurred to this same employee that he would protect himself from the strain of such an office by keeping quiet in himself, and he -- by not resisting the noise and not responding to it -- found that by the steady use of his will, first every minute of the day, and then every hour, he could finally get his brain in the habit of quiet concentration, which would not only place him where he habitually ignored the noise, but would enable him to do his own work better and more intelligently. What effect would that have upon the rest of the office? If any one of the noisy clerks had in the least the sensitiveness of mind to suffer from the noise, he would be sensitive to the quiet of one man near him, and without any remark whatever, he would find himself working to get more quiet himself. When one's attention is once called to the vibrations of quiet they grow more powerful than the clash and discord of noise. But when one is whirling in the clash and

the discord of noise, and blinded by the dust such noise always makes, it is not easy for a quiet vibration to catch his mind.

However, our one friend in this noisy office would eventually do more than merely protect himself, even if he made only one less noisy man in the office. He would probably find a fellow-worker in another clerk, sooner or later, and then in one or two others, -- thus the quiet of the office might grow even from the efforts of one insignificant clerk, -- but it would be a long, long time before there could be a chance of such suggestion reaching the head of the business house.

. If the man was so immersed in his own noise as not to have the perception that only by beginning in himself could he change the disorder of his surroundings, he could not have the sensitiveness to perceive the quiet in one individual clerk, or in two or three, even. Nevertheless, it is fully as well worth while for the one individual clerk to find his oasis of quiet and stay there, for in that way he could not only do his own work better, -- he could not only save himself from the strain of the battering of the surrounding noise on his brain, -- he could hold himself in the state where he could be of use in a business way to those about him, provided any one should ever ask his help.

You see it is the standard for himself that was all wrong in the case of the noisy, business man, and it seems very difficult for men to learn that to make a thing right which has been wrong they must change their standard entirely and begin to work themselves in obedience to a higher standard. There could, it seems to me, be no better example of this mistake than in this man who spared neither pains nor expense to reorganize his office in order that it might have the quiet and dignity of an old business house, and then made not one slightest effort to live himself in obedience to a higher standard in order that he might himself have the quiet and dignity of a gentleman. The example is so extreme that as one think of it, one feels the absurdity so keenly that it hardly seems to be true. And yet that is what we are seeing about us in various forms every day, -- people who are trying to reform the sphere of their lives, whether in work or play, by giving their attention to the reformation of all people and things about them, and never once even thinking to begin by trying to reform themselves.

More common than this is the complaint, "My work would be so easy and pleasant if it were not for so-and-so, or this and that." And sometimes people touch lightly on a possible -- just possible -- fault in themselves and leave it at once to rail at the fault of others who, they feel, interfere with themselves.

Peace, and a margin of peace, is possible to every one. Indeed, real peace always gives us a margin. It is a refuge and a fortress, and nothing discordant can penetrate it. But to gain it one must work hard, and the work one has to do to gain peace is most invigorating to the mental and moral circulation, and consequently invigorating to the circulation of the body.

In whatever work one is engaged, whether it be a profession, a trade, or keeping a house or a home, -- if one welcomes all difficulties as opportunities, and does not tolerate in one's self any resistance to a circumstance or a man, the work has then begun toward removing all obstructions to peace in one's work.

Think of "Brother Laurence," who washed pots and pans in the kitchen and worked among his hogsheads of wine, always happy, always quiet, because he felt that he worked always in the presence of God. But "Brother Laurence" could never have found himself in the presence of God unless he had shunned clearly all obstructions to God's presence, which must have constantly arisen in his consciousness. Surely "Brother Laurence" often had the temptation to shrink from the drudgery of his work. Surely he must often have wished that the men about him could be more truly Christian, and he must have been tempted to annoyance at their rudeness or other forms of selfishness, but having once felt that he realized the presence of God must have made him more keenly sensitive to the obstructions which could arise in himself to interfere with such peace. "Brother Laurence" could never have been satisfied with spurious peace, or could never have mistaken it for real, and that being the case, he could only have found the real through removing the obstructions in himself. And whether we say the Peace of God or the Peace of Law and Order, it is all the same. There is no peace except that which is given us from the Lord God Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth.

"But," some one may say, "this peace, of course, is good to gain, but while we are aiming for it, will there not be a chance of falling back in our work, and not making our business grow? One must support one's self and one's family. One must earn the bread and butter. We cannot stop to sentimentalize or theorize."

My answer to that is that there is no sentimentalizing or theorizing about it; it is *fact* -- plain, practical, every-day *fact*. Except that our habitual standards are so low, we -- as a people -- would have grasped this fact and used it long ago, and would have then been ready for higher standards, -- higher standards, probably, than we could, even dream of now. As it is, we must be slow, perhaps because we have not the

ability yet to hold or to use to the right advantage all the good power we should get if we were quicker to grasp and use the better standards that are now before us.

As to the necessity for being quiet, -- take the simple matter of firing at a target. Would any one with any sense at all think that he could hit the target with a random shot, except by accident? Is it not as a matter of course that the man who holds the gun should get a steady hand and a direct aim? No one doubts this. Now there are one hundred places I -- one hundred thousand places -- in the work of life where a steady hand and a direct aim are even more needed than in the case of firing to hit the bull's-eye of a target. And yet in not one of these places would the man think to get his hand steady and his aim direct before taking his first action toward a certain work.

A man, to work with the truest intelligence, should steady his hand and be sure as he could that his aim was direct every morning before starting to work, and habitually in every new question or piece of work that may arise; and a woman should do the same, whether her work be outside or in the home with her husband and children.

Now how can we get a steady hand and a direct aim unless we have a quiet background? It is impossible. Not only that, but the more quiet our background, -- not with dead quiet, but with living quiet, -- the more steady our hands and the more true our aim.

How can we have a steady hand or a direct aim if our eye is askance at the misdemeanors or annoying habits of those about us? We are in bondage to every man, woman or child who rouses our antagonism. We must get out of bondage to our fellow-men if we are to do our work quietly. And all work must be done quietly to be done as well as it can be done. For the best quality of my finished work, I may sometimes be dependent upon other men who have another part of the same work to do, but for the best quality of my own immediate work, -- and more than that, -- for the healthy attitude of my mind toward my work, -- I am really dependent upon no man or upon no set of circumstances. I am free and independent, and if I stop for one instant to blame another man for my own mistakes, or for my own unhealthy state of mind toward my work, I am only befogging myself and interfering very seriously with the discovery of my own powers and their best use.

This power of an actual human independence is a very great truth, and an open secret, but it seems to be a secret, -- for I find very few who know it, and fewer still who understand it. The trouble is that men are living so entirely in this false dependence upon one another that they cannot recognize its falseness. It seems to most people to be a normal way of living, -- or perhaps an abnormality which is a matter of course. The privilege of recognizing its abnormality in all its falseness, and of working for the real and normal independence is one the value of which will be felt very deeply when we have used it, for a long enough time to actually prove it; and there is nowhere that this privilege could be taken with more gain to the individual and so to the world at large than in the every day life of all work, whatever the work may be.

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CHAPTER VII

Peace in Religion

WHEN one thinks of peace in religion, one's mind naturally turns first of all to the so-called heads of religion, -- the clergymen. There may be many clergymen who distinguish between spurious peace and real peace, and who have at least the germs of real peace within themselves. There are -- I am sure -- many whose peace is spurious and who never really wake up to the fact. Indeed, one might say that they have not even spurious peace -- for that does sometimes deceive its possessor into thinking it real, they have a thin appearance of peace on the outside to deceive the majority of their "flock," and within they are boiling and seething.

For instance, I knew of a clergyman -- and I fear that he is only a type of many -- who actually turned his wife against religion. He would preach on Sunday beautiful, eloquent sermons, ringing with appeals for a higher life. He would draw out from most of his congregation enthusiasm and admiration with emotional resolutions to do as the minister said. And then he would go home and during the week be so rude and self-indulgent, so literally bad-tempered, as to make his house a place of great unhappiness for his wife and his children.

His wife was too loyal to do or say anything that could expose the truth, -- too personally loyal, I might better say. For loyalty to the truth should come first, and to one's friend second. Indeed, we are more really loyal to our friends and can be of more real service to them if we are always unswervingly loyal to a principle first.

This wife need not have aired her husband's imperfections or ever voluntarily called attention to them, and when his beautiful sermons were referred to, and his people inferred from the sermons that he Must be a wonderful character, she need not have answered "Yes, -- yes," and when they assured her of their envy of her privilege of making her home with such a man, she need not have smiled an apparently happy acquiescence.

Of course, if she knew that her husband had severe and painful temptations, and was praying and working every day to get free from them, then she should stand by him loyally in his efforts, and protect him entirely from misconception when his temper got the better of him. But suppose she did not know he was trying to conquer himself, or see any slightest sign of it. Is it loyalty to the real man in him to work carefully to protect his hypocrisy.

This wife of whom I speak smiled and assented in public, and raved and resented in private. In her ravings, too, there was much sound common sense. "Hypocrisy," she said; "it is all hypocrisy. What does religion amount to? My husband is an actor who does his part admirably, -- so admirably that he deceives all his parishioners into thinking that he is the real thing. As for me, I see nothing in religion whatever. His sermons fill me with contempt. *There is no religion.*" And she would call her husband "the leading man in the ecclesiastical stock company."

If this woman had had common sense on even a little higher plane, she would have read the Gospel herself quite independently of her husband's profanation of it, and would have seen, if she studied diligently, that it was not the religion that was at fault in any slightest way, -- it was her husband. We can imagine her seeing this and working steadily herself to obey the principles that she learned in the New Testament. If she ceased entirely to resist or to resent her husband, and went to work with all diligence to put away her own selfishness, and to live sincerely herself, it might, eventually, have opened her husband's eyes to the horror of his own hypocrisy. Certainly, if anything could open his eyes, his wife's practical upright obedience, silently lived, would have done so.

No evil can hold its appearance of life for long in the presence of practical, daily, intelligent good living. Words in one's private life have little or no good effect unless they are backed by a conviction which comes from the real vigor of good living. Indeed, words with nothing real back of them rouse anger; they often rouse anger when something real is back of them. But when empty words rouse anger, the one who has spoken reacts with more anger. So is the truth of principle often dragged by men and women into their human bog.

There is no profession where "do it in yourself" should be more essential than in the ministry. What are

ministers supposed to do? Are they not supposed to show their congregation how to obey the Christian commandments? How can they show men the way to obey if they do not obey themselves? Was there ever a man I who could teach another man mathematics when he could not himself do the simplest example in fractions without mistakes? Was there ever a man who could teach another man how to be a good electrician, when he had never made electricity work in anything himself? Is there anything that anyone can think, of which can be truly taught by one who has had no practical experience whatever? Then how can obedience to God be taught by one who has never obeyed? How can trust in God be taught by one who has never trusted?

At best a true clergyman can be a little, perhaps only a very little, ahead. He must know that the laws he is working to obey are the laws for everyone else as much as for him -- the laws for him as much as for anyone else. It is really only our all learning to obey together -- but so seen these laws work in longer than others, and know that when things go wrong in ourselves, it is because we do not obey. Those of us who have proved them out a little more than others are more ready to show others the way. A clergyman's business is to show others how to obey, and how to trust.

Doctrine does not amount to anything if it does not teach us how to obey the commandments more truly. Worship does not amount to anything if it does not lift us to the ability of better obedience.

It sounds almost absurd to hear a young man say that he is going to "study for the Church." Does that mean that he is going to be unselfishly thoughtful of others? That he is going to shun all anger and resentment as sin against the Lord? That he is going to study to do all the duties of his life promptly and whole-heartedly?

The best preacher I can imagine is a man who, through finding himself out and recognizing the selfishness in himself, is in the earnest daily effort of acknowledging and repenting of his selfishness in detail, and through such experience has found humility. Such a man can tell other men and women how to obey. And what theological school is there that makes an examination into the inner life of a man essential to his ordination?

It is good even to imagine what use ministers could be in the world if they were true pilots because of their own experience in practical obedience to Divine Law, and if no one of them pretended to be doing anything else but to be learning to obey along with his fellow men. Such clergymen would indeed be the Father of their people, for the peace within them would be the peace of God.

"All religion has relation to life and the life of religion is to do good." A great philosopher has said that, and if it were truly realized and attended to, there would be life in religion, whereas very much so-called religion now is dead, and only galvanized into the appearance of life by superficial emotions. But a greater has said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." What that One says he means; it is living truth.

And yet, -- let me tell you the story of a man who was engaged in a large and useful work. He attended, to the details of the work in such a slovenly way that it made endless dissatisfaction among his associates and interfered materially with the use of the work. He was open neither to give nor to receive. If anyone went against this man's preconceived ideas, or innocently hit his personal prejudices, that one was shut out of his confidence and made to feel as far as it was possible that he was not liked.

This man of whom I write was prominent in his church, and those who did not have immediately to come against his narrow mind and slovenly habits thought him *an unusually good man*. Finally, after the interference in this good work had gone on for some time, one of his associates spoke of it to another and suggested, with all sincerity, that it seemed very strange that his religion did not help him to do his work better.

"What would he say if I asked him?" said the enquirer, and he was answered promptly by the friend to whom he spoke: "Why, any of these men here who call themselves Christians, if you should suggest to them that the laws of their belief when obeyed make one do very much better work, would be roused and angry at once. Their Church has nothing to do with their lives. The every-day life is to them one thing and the Church entirely another. They think they are good 'church men' if they attend the Sacraments and divine service at the proper times: if they give to the support and various charities of the Church and talk good religious talk in the fitting times and seasons. The fact in all its details that 'all religion has relation to life' is absolutely unknown to them."

When one thinks of it deeply and observes carefully, this state of things among "Christians" seems like insanity. It certainly is not spiritual common sense.

Spurious peace is the emotion of peace -- it has nothing whatever to do with peace itself. And there is no place where this emotional peace is so constantly cultivated as in the various forms of so-called religion.

The emotional peace sometimes gets such hold of people that even those who would most dislike it are deceived, -- for a time.

I remember visiting in a family where the atmosphere was so thick with this "religious" peace that it seemed genuine to me for some time, and I felt the pleasantness of the quiet, which I thought came from genuine living. The first thing that began to undeceive me was irreverence. The very forms of religious devotion which these people were so assiduous in following were spoken lightly of, and at times almost with contempt. When I courteously mentioned my surprise, they laughed and answered, "Oh! We do not mean anything by that." I said to myself, "I see you do not mean anything by your religion either."

Later, selfish indulgence and selfish dislike of one another became evident. I cannot see that there was one principle given in the Sermon on the Mount that that "peaceful" family did not disobey. Yet the "peace" went on and on. All that was said and done that was mean and disagreeable came filtered through the spurious peace, and sometimes dressed in monstrous flattery. Having lived in this family and found them out was an experience to make one work all the more heartily to be only what is genuine.

I remember once sleeping in the room of a young woman who was devoted to her Church. I had noticed the placid expression of this young woman's face and had also noticed her exceedingly snobbish ways and words, -- snobbish and hard-hearted they were toward her fellow men. This room of hers was filled with religious pictures, with good books, and beside her bed was a *Prie Dieu*. When I woke in the morning and looked about, I thought: " This is her amusement, her recreation, -- *her hobby*." It seems positively sacrilegious to say it, but I must say it because *it was so*.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

The One who said that knew that there was no peace but religious peace, and religious peace only comes by trying every day to live as He lived and allowing ourselves to be guided by His spirit within us. There is no difficult circumstance of life that any one can be in that he cannot find that same temptation in itself in the life of Christ and be enlightened by the way Christ met it. The practical beauty of that Divine character seems to be so little understood.

It is evident that the only way in which we can be guided by the spirit of Christ within us is by recognizing the selfish obstructions and refusing to act or speak or think from them, -- then we make room for the Life within to enlighten and move us, -- we learn to obey and trust.

If the bad-tempered clergyman had acknowledged his bad temper and all his other forms of selfishness and become wholesomely penitent, he would have ceased to be a hypocrite. If the family who gormandized religious emotion had found themselves out individually and collectively and seen the hideousness of their pose and refused to continue it, their Church would have become real to them and they would have been in the way of finding peace. Or, I might better say, they would be removing the obstructions so that peace could find them.

It is so with all of us, -- religious peace and peace of life are all one, and when we get knocked out of our religious peace by a person or a happening going against our will, we may be very sure that it was no peace at all. Happy is the man who goes to work with a will to acknowledge and to shun the obstructions. Active, loving, creative peace is sure to find him.

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CHAPTER VIII

Peace in One's Self

PEACE in one's self -- peace well-founded and making a strong background which is always there, quiet and steady, behind the disturbances of the surface -- is most difficult to find. How many times have we seen men and women suffering, suffering intensely, and really wanting to do right, who remain in restless pain because of some form of selfish disappointment which they do not themselves realize, and if an effort to point out the real cause of their disturbance is made, they would rather suffer than acknowledge it -- or so it seems.

I have seen a woman raving with jealousy, and calling it all sorts of names except the right one. First she called it indignation that her friend should be disturbed by these other people when she needed rest or time for her work. Secondly, virtuous surprise and pain that her friend should fail to see in such people the forms of selfishness that were to her so hideous. On and on she went, from one cause to another, -- every cause that she could find except the right one. One day her friend timidly suggested "jealousy," and the shower of details of indignant denial that came down upon her was not easy to meet.

Sometimes people are battered in their spirits more harmfully by the hard stones of selfish words than ever bodies were hurt by stones taken from the ground. It is surprising, too, to see the fearful hardness of so-called "love" when it does not get its own way.

You can tell spurious peace from real peace in yourself by giving it a test. Suppose you feel happy and quiet and something comes unexpectedly in the way of a cherished desire; watch yourself; if your whole mood changes at once, and you cannot get back the quiet state, you may label your peace as spurious and be glad you are rid of it. If you are disturbed and restless, and are looking for the cause, and want to insist upon this cause or that cause or the other, and no one of the causes you find give you any relief when you have acknowledged it, you may be sure it is *not* the cause.

Let me tell you this, which is true. I know it is true because I have seen it proved many times. *If we are restless and unhappy and find the true cause in ourselves, and refuse persistently to act or speak or think from that cause, peace comes to us.*

Take the woman who was jealous, -- if she had turned about and looked the jealousy squarely in the face, and seen it in all its hideousness, and then used her will to refuse to act or to speak or to think from it, -- she would have become a quiet, happy woman instead of going about with her brain in a mess and her whole nervous system in a constant turmoil. I do not say that the work of exterminating the jealousy would have been an easy one -- but until she saw what it was, she could not even begin to get clear. She might have gone about with efforts of kindness to serve this person and that person. She might have worked herself sick to save another from over-fatigue. She might have thought of doing one hundred good things and done them. There would never be lasting peace for her until she had faced her jealousy and refused to be dominated by it.

Sometimes I think our besetting sins have consciousness enough in themselves to hide behind screens and keep out of sight in order that we may not recognize them, because they know that if once they are really recognized by the soul they are plaguing, they will have to go. And then again they can be bold as bold can be, for they know their victim would never be willing to face them, so they can use him in all possible ways and keep him restless and unhappy, always turning him away from true causes by means of his own selfishness.

I have seen people excited and wretched with indignation for this cause and that cause and the other, as they said, when really it was their own pride and self-importance that was tearing them to pieces. If only one could take such people by their shoulders, and with loving interest for their freedom help them to see the pride, and get their intelligent acknowledgment of it, sometimes it would prick the bubble of their suffering at once, and open the way for real peace to come to them.

Pride, self-importance, jealousy, personal sensitiveness, contempt, -- are some of the arch fiends that keep us in the torture of restless suffering. How curious it is to see one who speaks almost habitually from

contempt getting roused and indignant because of the contempt of another. How many times we see people angry with others because of the very faults which they have themselves: and they are sincere, too. If you could at any time show them that these very forms of selfishness which they were angrily decrying were even more exaggerated in themselves, they would be very truly surprised, -- sometimes very humbly surprised.

It is the faults within ourselves that we are neither facing nor shunning that keep us away from peace.

A woman suggested to a friend who lived with her that it would help very much toward quiet regularity in the family if she were on time to her meals.

"Why," the answer came, "I am very seldom late; always -- as a child -- I have been prompt." When the fact was shown her that she was less prompt than any one else in the house, she still denied; and when told that if she would face and acknowledge the truth, she would save herself much strain, she answered: "What would you have me do if I am late once or twice, -- condemn myself?" And then she added, -- because evidently the fact was forcing itself upon her in spite of her resistance to it, -- "If I am late seven or eight times, would you have me condemn myself?" And the answer to that is: "No, do not condemn yourself at all, -- condemn the fault and refuse to indulge it."

What brings peace is when we face the selfishness in ourselves squarely in its true form, -- acknowledge it, repent of it, and refuse steadily to act or speak or think from it. I say "in its true form" because so keenly do people seem to dislike to know themselves that they will take credit to themselves for acknowledging a wrong, and persistently call it by another name, rather than face the evil in themselves for what it really is. They will say, "I am wrong here," or "I am wrong there" in minor places, without facing in the least their besetting sin.

If we once got a clear whiff of the fresh air which comes from really acknowledging and repenting, every one would not only face his temptation to selfishness squarely, calling each fault by its right name, but would be interested and anxious to call it by its very worst name, in order that it might be removed entirely, and no taint of it left in the blood.

This woman of whom I wrote above is unhappy, fretful and restless. She has inherited extreme selfishness and arrogance. She always gives the wrong reasons for her unhappy states of mind, -- either other people or circumstances or her health, -- and when, by way of helping her out, it is suggested to her that if she could find the true causes for her troubles, and face them, she would begin to get happy, she exclaims: "Acknowledge -- acknowledge? I don't understand you. I don't see anything to acknowledge." And so she goes on fretting and fuming and keeping herself wretched. Hers is an extreme example, I know, but it is not by any means unusual; indeed, so far as my observations go, it is most usual. I have caught myself in the same place too many times not to believe that I see truly when I observe it in other people.

A man who lived in the house with a very disagreeable and difficult person used to dread meeting him in the hall, and when this person was away from home, my friend suffered from dread of his return, until one day it occurred to him that it was not this other person he was dreading, -- it was *himself*! It was his own attitude of heart and mind toward the other that made him suffer, and not the other one at all. That was a release, -- and brought relief at once, for he could change his own attitude of mind and he could not change the other person.

I know how difficult it will be for many to believe this fact. "What!" you will say, "am I to blame if I suffer because so-and-so is mean, unkind, rude, and constantly trying to make it hard for me and for other people?" In so far as your suffering is selfish resentment or resistance, you certainly are to blame. Of course there is a sadness for the sake of the others which is full of real affection, -- and that is not a fault. But too many times we let ourselves think the suffering is not for our selfish selves. After a while one gets more and more sensitive to the pain of hurt feelings which comes from selfish resistance to discomfort brought by another, and the selfish suffering comes to be early recognized.

I knew a woman who had been treated with great injustice by a friend. She was a good woman, -- or wanted to be. She refused to be influenced by resentment. She did every kindness for the friend, and she wondered -- when really she had faced everything she could see in herself that resented or resisted -- why she could not feel at ease. She was speaking of this to another friend, who casually answered: "You are not willing to be taught by her." Quick as a wink this woman's anger came up; she was for a few moments like a tiger. "Taught by her? Taught by her?--a woman who has lied about me and done all she could to injure me in the eyes of other people, -- taught by her -- indeed!"

No one could be more surprised than this woman at the fierceness of her own anger. When it had subsided enough for her to think, she saw the truth. She had been feeling "good," and so superior, because

of what she supposed to be her real forgiveness of her friend, and the whole structure was built on a false foundation, -- a foundation of a sense of self-importance and superiority which was so much poison, and that is all. There was no humility in it, and there is no virtue, however fine it may appear, that is really anything at all unless humility is behind it.

Can we make our own eyes see? Can we make our own ears hear? Can we make our own food digest? No -- no -- no. We can only fulfil the conditions so that our eyes will see, our ears will hear, our food will digest. Surely if that is so, we are equally helpless in the matter of our own spiritual intelligence. If we can only fulfil the conditions, and that is work enough, we can take no credit to ourselves for the light that is given us because we do fulfil the conditions; neither can we take credit to ourselves for the power to act according to that light.

Humility brings with it great and increasing power because it only comes to us when we get out of our own light. And we can only get out of our own light by facing squarely the forms of selfishness that are in our systems and refusing steadily to act or to speak or to think from them. Then comes humility and then comes peace. It is not our peace -- it is peace in itself, -- and we are an open channel for it.

When our Lord said: " Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid," He meant what He said. It is practical truth, -- the Truth that makes us free.

There is a German doctor who has made himself famous by a method of probing into the consciousness and the subconsciousness of his patients and bringing up the poison, -- making them acknowledge that it is there, and so he believes that in that way he forces them to relieve their minds and nerves. It is, I believe, a kind of psychical emetic that he gives. I can see his idea, and follow his reasoning, but I do not see how he can do any permanent good.

Of course it is very generally known now that nervous illness is apt to be the inflammation of the self. It would of course follow that if we can recognize the forms of selfishness that are inflamed, and refuse to be dominated by them, the inflammation would subside and we would get well. But the fault in this method of which I speak is the belief that any man, woman or child can be forced to recognize their selfishness in detail. The selfishness can be pointed out to them, and if they are ready to see it, they will come to see it. But no one can be pushed or pulled or pounded into an intelligent understanding of himself by another man. That is the work God does for us and it is His prerogative. There is no science which can make a process of regeneration. There is nothing I know that gives one such a growing conviction of the infinite care of a Divine Providence like watching the growth of another soul, -- not intrusively watching but respectfully and reverently watching. If we look with a desire to see the selfishness of which we can be conscious, and refuse to be ruled by it, then when that is conquered in its grossest form we are permitted to see it in a finer and more subtle form, and we are permitted to see other forms of selfishness that were not evident to us before. And so, as the process continues, one who is really working for his freedom finds in himself obstructions in one year which he knew nothing about the year before, and expects to find during the following year selfish obstructions that he cannot see at the time.

It is a blessed discovery to find that the hurt feelings of personal sensitiveness are every bit as bad within ourselves as anger; it is a blessed discovery because so long as we are plunged in such grief without an intelligent knowledge of what causes it, we are in the full belief that it is justifiable, and more than that, that we are very much to be pitied and sympathized with. Very few would want the anger in them coddled and petted. The ugly nature of anger is always evident, and we have no doubt but that we should conquer it. But grief -- the painful, exquisite grief of personal sensitiveness -- who could ever think of that as evil, positive evil? And yet it is, and when once it is recognized it begins to have to the one who is tempted by it a murky, sickish flavor, which seems much more evil in itself than what might be called the poisonous snap of anger.

Blessed is the man or woman who has discovered that spiritually nauseating flavor within his own " hurt feelings "; -- that discovery is the beginning of gaining a happy and vigorous freedom, and any one who feels himself to be on the way to that freedom would leave no stone unturned to help his fellowman, if his fellowman will take his help.

To sum it up: Peace can never be made in ourselves. The only real peace is the peace from God. That can never be ours unless we shun the selfish obstructions to it. We can never shun the selfish obstructions except by finding what they are, facing them squarely, acknowledging them in detail and refusing steadily to act, speak or think from any one of them. Of course the process is slow, and we advance by ups and downs. Sometimes we seem to fall down altogether and are tempted to sit there discouraged. But sooner or later we learn that every time we fall, the right thing to do is to pick ourselves up and go on. Bye and bye

we do not fall so far, and later on we probably only trip a little. I imagine that to all eternity we are moving on.

You see when I am proud, or contemptuous, or jealous, or selfishly sensitive, and am calling these things by other names, I am living a lie. No one ever got anywhere really by living a lie, any more than any one ever solved a problem in mathematics by using the wrong figures, and the symbolism of mathematics in relation to spiritual growth is more truly fitting than one can know by merely superficial thought.

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CHAPTER IX

What Is Peace?

PEACE is the health of the spirit. When the body is healthy, every organ, every function in it, is obeying orders. Every part of the body is attending to its own business and doing its own work as well as it can be done.

To keep the body healthy, a man must obey steadily all the laws of health, must have enough fresh air, enough and the right kind of nourishment, enough rest and no strain. In so far as all the conditions are fulfilled, a body stays strong and well, and one very happy thing about it is that in so far as the body is healthy and we are able to forget it altogether, it does its own work faithfully day after day, hour after hour, minute after minute, and we need not think anything about it, but just guide it as a good and delicate instrument for all the uses of our lives.

The Creator keeps our bodies healthy if we fulfil the conditions of health. If we do not fulfil the conditions, He cannot keep us healthy, for even He cannot interfere with the working of his laws.

It is just so with the health of the spirit, except that to fulfil the conditions of health in the spirit is more difficult, much more difficult, than to keep the body well and strong. And why shouldn't it be? The spirit is for eternity and the body for only a short space of time at most.

Selfishness in one form or another is the disease of the spirit. I mean, the selfishness which is the root of all evil. Pride, self-importance, self-indulgence, worldliness, jealousy, desire to rule, all are different forms of selfishness and all are phases of the disease of the spirit. There is just this great and radical difference in the process of gaining the health of the spirit and that of gaining the health of the body. People, if they are uncomfortable in their bodies, are very glad to find the cause and to do their part to fulfil the conditions of health until their bodies are comfortable again. Not only that, but when the cause of the discomfort is really in their spirits, they will insist upon it that the trouble is with their bodies and go to the doctor and do this and that and the other for the health of their bodies, and then wonder why they do not get well.

It is not unusual to find men and women dwelling on the fact that they have this disease or that disease, and telling their friends of it; sometimes telling to the same friend the same story of disease twice over. They seem almost to be proud of being invalids, -- proud of the diseased state of their system.

On the other hand, moderately wholesome natures, when going to a doctor because of pain in some part of their bodies, are relieved when the doctor gives the pain a name, and say: "How good! The doctor knows what is the matter with me, and he can cure me. I will do exactly as he say now, and be well very soon." And the wholesome patient does exactly as the doctor says, and is well very soon.

Nature always tends toward health, and when we are fulfilling the laws of health, all the laws of nature are with us, and of course we get well.

All the laws of the spirit tend toward health. They as well as the body are governed by the Creator of all things. But just think of the difference in our habit of obedience. In the first place, there is a much greater inherited tendency to selfishness in our spirits than there is inherited tendency to disease in our bodies. And whereas we are ready to put our attention on disease of the body and to take the best means of getting free from it, we are not ready to acknowledge the cause of disease in the spirit, even though when we refuse to act or to speak or to think from an evil tendency, we become freed from it and are prepared to do better work.

It has not seemed to occur to most of us that the act of repentance is not only clean common sense, but that it is the first law of the health of the spirit. I have heard people confess in an easy sort of way that they had this fault or that fault, but they seem rather proud of it, for they go on acting and speaking and thinking from it, and the idea of being wholesomely ashamed of it and repenting, really repenting, never seems to occur to them. They are like the people who enjoy talking over their diseases with one another.

But most of us do not even acknowledge that we have any especial form of selfishness; we tend to think that all the fault is with circumstances or with other people. We look anywhere and to any one or anything rather than to look inside of ourselves for the cause of our spiritual illness, when looking inside of ourselves and acknowledging and repenting is the only way to get spiritually well. To be sure, many of us call ourselves "miserable sinners" every time we go to church, and some of us call ourselves in general miserable sinners once in a while out of church. But what good does that do?

Of what use would a doctor be who said to his patient: "My friend, your body is in a miserable state of disease," and then let it go at that, with this or the other general remedy or no remedy at all? Was there ever a man with any real intelligence who went about mumbling that he was a miserable invalid, and took no means whatever of finding out what specifically was the matter with him, and of getting specific remedies for his illness?

What could there be more unintelligent than our saying day after day that we are miserable sinners, and then taking no means whatever to find out where and how and in what way we are sinning? Common sense and respect for the law of cause and effect would prompt us to find the specific cause of our sin, and bring the right remedy to bear upon it. Thus and only thus can we be led into the atmosphere of wholesomeness which is spiritual fresh air.

When the Lord Jesus Christ said to us, And ye shall know the truth and *the truth will make you free*," do you not suppose that it was the truth about ourselves and our own spiritual health or lack of health that he meant as well as the truth about all other things? And again he said, "Not he that calleth me Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven." Are we not doing the will of our Father in Heaven when we are obeying his laws for the health of our spirits, as well as obeying his laws for the health of our bodies?

When I write that "Nature tends toward health" I mean that all the laws of God tend toward health, -- the health of the body and the health of the spirit. The trouble is, it seems to me, that our standards for the health of the spirit are too low. We do not take the standards of the New Testament and strive intelligently to live in obedience to them. We are altogether too much inclined to take the standards of the world about us, and are entirely too well-satisfied if we appear well.

Suppose it were the custom for all so-called civilized men to have deranged livers, or to have chronic catarrh, or some other chronic form of illness, -- every one would be used to it and we would take it quite as a matter of course that all about us should be in disease. Children would be born with the disease, whatever it might be, and it would naturally be the custom of the country and the general standard of health would be lowered accordingly. It is astonishing to see how entirely people's standards can get lowered so that they really do not suspect a standard higher than their own, but live in vitiated air and call it fresh air.

Now suppose that into a community with such an attitude with regard to disease there should come a man with a standard of health, -- sound, normal, quiet health. How long would it take him to wake up the minds of those about him to the fact of the low standard in which they lived and breathed? What a very short time ago it is that it was taken as a matter of course that cholera and yellow fever and other plagues must have their own way and ravage a country with suffering and misery until they got through, and see what a great difference the true standards of preventive medicine have already made. Countries in dread of disease have been cleared and taught to obey the laws of health so that there is no fear of disease whatever.

Spiritual disease cannot be swept away like that; there is no possible form of wholesale regeneration, thank God! All spiritual health in general must grow from work in each separate individual. Every man is as important as if he were the only one. -- the only one in the world, -- and he only loses his real place in that importance through inflating himself with self-importance. In so far as we find real humility does our real importance in the whole working of things become evident. Here again is the likeness found in the dead machinery of the body to the living machinery of the spirit.

It is interesting to liken the human body to a community of people and to see that in so far as each organ does its work distinctly from every other organ is the body healthy; so is the community of people healthy in so far as each member attends entirely and perfectly to his own duties.

If each individual soul would do his own work, -- would in himself work with an alert desire to know the laws of the spirit and to obey them; -- if each individual would get the habit of looking entirely to himself for the cause of suffering in himself, and would refuse to compromise in any slightest way, the gain in spiritual health that would come to the world would be wonderful, -- most wonderful. The best of it is that through this habit of each individual looking first entirely to himself and not blaming circumstances or the other man in the very least for his own discomfort, the whole family or community would become healthy.

Of course the health of each individual will work towards the health of a community of individuals, and as peace is the health of the spirit, the peace of each individual will tend toward peace for many individuals combined.

The greatest obstacle in the way now is this low standard among us with regard to blaming circumstances or other people. Unlike those seeking for higher standards with regard to the health of the

body, we have not to study scientifically to find out the laws of spiritual health. The best text-book that could possibly be is right here with us. It is practical obedience to it in detail that we need, -- not criticism as to whether the other man is obeying or not, but steady, persistent obedience in ourselves. Then, too, we need not dig into ourselves to find the various forms of spiritual disease. If we refuse to act or to speak or to think from the forms of selfishness that we do see, other forms of selfishness to be cast off will rise of themselves to our consciousness, and thus will the healthy growth of the spirit go on within us, the main work being done by the Creative Power, -- our work being only to fulfil the conditions.

"Gratitude, humility, and penitence connect our weakness with God's strength."

THE END



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